



Reimagining Mission Post-COVID-19

Research and Development Unit

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Introduction

Author: Dr Naar
M'fundisi Holloway [1]

The Research and Development Unit carried out a territorial-wide piece of research in 2020 to look into how COVID-19 affected missional practice and thinking in various expressions of mission and church life within The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland [2]. The aim of this research was to provide insights into the question: How are we doing / will we do / will we reimagine mission as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? In order to answer this question, a literature review which identified missional trends that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as well as phone survey interviews and online surveys,

were undertaken with 404 frontline church leaders and staff to understand their experience and thinking during lockdown. They were asked to articulate their understanding of mission and what they felt God was saying to them about the future of The Salvation Army mission. The Salvation Army recognises mission through five priorities. These are: nurture disciples of Jesus, seek justice and reconciliation, care for creation, serve others without discrimination and share the good news. These mission priorities overlap and support each other and are not hierarchical.

In response to the research, senior leaders requested that this booklet be produced. This booklet is designed to enable corps and individuals to reflect on how they will reimagine mission in their contexts as they deal with changing circumstances brought about by the pandemic. It is also meant to help us think about our life with God, our life together and our life in the world. The booklet is based on key themes that were identified in the COVID-19 research, which are:



COVID as a Spur to Prayer and Lament

Why lament?

How can we integrate lament into our life together?

COVID as Trauma

How can we promote trauma-informed congregations which acknowledge the trauma congregants may have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

[1] Dr Naar M'fundisi-Holloway is an Action Researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ)

[2] This was commissioned by the Secretary for Mission and the Secretary for Communication

COVID and Discipleship

How will we reimagine discipleship?
How will we highlight some of the gaps in discipleship which have been emphasised by the COVID-19 pandemic?

COVID and Sharing the Good News

How will we explore what evangelism should look like post-COVID-19?

COVID and Inequalities (Part 1)

How can we better understand the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Spiritual (PESTLE[S]) inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic?

How we can be good news at the margins considering the PESTLES inequalities?

COVID and Inequalities (Part 2)

How can we be equipped to respond to and challenge Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Spiritual (PESTLE[S]) inequalities and 'Wicked Issues'[3] (Rittel and Webber, 1973, p169).

Theological reflection is required in order to fully engage with the themes outlined above. This is because they directly relate to faith and mission. The Four Theological Voices Model and Faith-Based Facilitation are two guides supported by The Salvation Army which can be used to guide theological reflection.

Models to Guide Theological Reflection

Four Theological Voices model



The methodology that guided the COVID-19 research was The Four Theological Voices model developed by the Action Research Church and Society team (ARCS). This model serves as a working tool for theological reflection and practice. According to this model, the Church lives out its theology and practice through the interplay of these four voices, these voices being:

[3] Wicked Issues are complex problems that are difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognise.

Normative Theology:

‘Scriptures, the creeds, official church teaching, liturgies’: this includes The Salvation Army’s traditions, mission, vision, doctrinal statements.

Formal Theology:

‘the theology of theologians and dialogue with other disciplines’.

Operant Theology:

‘the theology embedded within the actual practices of a group’: the theology/missiology that is being practised in various Salvation Army contexts.

Espoused Theology:

‘the theology embedded within a group’s articulation of its beliefs’: for example, the beliefs articulated by The Salvation Army at the frontline (Cameron et al, 2010, p54).

Therefore, corps and individuals can work through the chapters of this booklet by interrogating the Four Theological Voices to understand how their theology and practice are intertwined, subsequently guiding their reimagining of mission and practice. This exercise can also help to sharpen the understanding of each voice leading to deeper comprehension of mission in a given context.

The Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF) model

Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF) is a way of working that has been adopted by The Salvation Army having been considered fit to help build deeper relationships. FBF is a model which ‘helps people think, talk, explore and respond to their issues in the light of faith’. (The Salvation Army, 2010, p3) The diagram below shows the process that is followed during FBF.

The FBF process can be used as groups attempt to grapple with the issues raised by the COVID-19 research as expressed in the different themes. In addition to enabling better comprehension of issues being discussed, FBF helps groups build ‘deeper and healthier relationships’ (The Salvation Army, 2010, p6), facilitating unity as particular contexts attempt to reimagine mission. FBF can also be used as a tool to guide conversations relating to the Four Theological Voices Model.

FBF follows the following process:

Step 1 - Event or Issue: start with the issue which needs to be addressed.

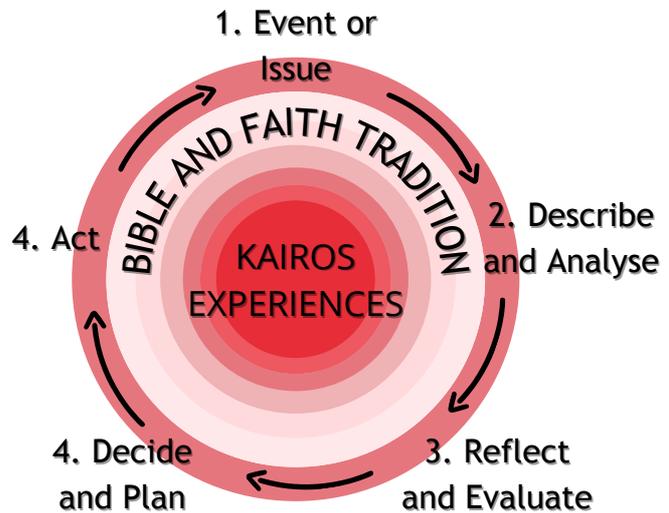
Step 2 - Describe and Analyse: describe and analyse the issue in detail.

Step 3 - Reflect and Evaluate: think through, raise and answer questions pertaining to the issue, look out for Kairos moments [4] and make time for prayer (The Salvation Army, 2010, p7).

Step 4 - Decide and Plan: think about decisions that the group can own and put into practice, create action points.

Step 5 - Act: act on decisions by referencing action points.

The completion of step five leads to a new cycle. Continuous evaluation is required even when step five is complete.



The chapters that follow create opportunities which foster reflection by encouraging readers to consider their wider context, eg how society has changed due to COVID-19 and how we remain intentionally missional in light of those changes. They also involve seeking God for direction as we work together as ‘one Army’ in reimagining mission post-COVID-19. The chapters will be structured using an FBF outline, with questions for reflection. Note that all Scripture references unless otherwise stated are from the New International Version (2011).

[4] Questions could include ‘How far does this project/activity remain true to its original aims and values? What insights or events or teaching from the Bible connect with this situation? What needs to be changed to make this situation better and of greater value for all concerned?’

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COVID as a Spur to Prayer and Lament

Author: Amy Quinn-
Graham [5]

Contributor: Lieut-
Colonel Jayne Roberts
[6]

As explored in the Introduction to this booklet, this chapter is designed to be used as part of a Faith-Based Facilitation process with a group in various settings, such as a Bible study group or an officers' fellowship. All literature referenced throughout this chapter is listed at the end for your ease of access.

Introduction - The issue

The themes of prayer and lament featured strongly in the literature review on emerging missional trends during COVID-19. Many authors identified prayer as a priority for the Church during the pandemic, especially in discerning the Church's place within the 'new thing' God is doing (Wells, 2020, cited in Your Neighbour, 2020). 23% of 378 corps officers felt God was telling them to slow down, reflect and spend time in prayer, listening to him, to discern how to move forward missionally in the future.

For several authors featured within the literature review, this process of listening

and discerning followed a process of lament. Authors likened this time of isolation and the loss of rituals, particularly those connected to how we worship God and come into his presence, to the exile experienced by the Israelites in the Old Testament, and pointed out that during this time lament became 'the spiritual language of God's exiled people' (McLendon, 2020, p6). Therefore authors, in particular Wright (2020b), are calling on the Church to resist the desire to come up with answers to the pandemic and instead allow a time 'of lament, of restraint, of precisely not jumping to "solutions"'.

Questions for reflection

Prayer and lament were identified as key to mission during COVID-19.

- Where do you see prayer and lament fitting into the Five Marks of Mission?
- How might lament help in mission where you are?



[5] Amy Quinn-Graham is an Action researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[6] Lieut-Colonel Jayne Roberts is the Spiritual Life Development Secretary.

Lament

- A crying out in grief (Merriam-Webster, Inc, 2021).
- A formal expression of sorrow or mourning, especially in verse or song (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2021b).
- To feel deep sorrow or express it ... by weeping or wailing (Collins, 2021).
- Synonyms include: weeping, wailing, beating one's chest, howling, bemoaning, singing (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2021a).

The First Step - Why lament?



You may be wondering what role lament plays for the Church as we move out of the COVID-19 pandemic. It may seem like an encouragement to dwell on the past and counter-intuitive to moving forward. However, as Wright (2020a) points out, our God is a God who laments. 'As the Spirit laments within us, so we become, even in our self-isolation, small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell' (Wright, 2020a). Therefore, there must be value in ensuring lament is part of the Church's pathway out of COVID-19.

For Dr Hugh Osgood, President of Churches Together in England, lament is a necessary part of moving forward after a situation that has brought so much pain, suffering and inequality. He tells us that 'if we don't weep over situations, we're not going to see situations change' (Osgood et al, 2020). After a traumatic experience, it's important for people to gather together and corporately debrief over what has taken place.

Clinically, debriefing is necessary for people to process their anger, frustration and sadness and to be able to articulate their fears. When it comes to Christian lament, this process includes identifying where God was in these past experiences and therefore being able to recognise God in the present and trust in his presence in the future.

Lament is both an individual and a group process. We must not only lament over society and what is happening around us, but we must also weep over ourselves and our sin, such as our complicity in upholding the structures of inequality that COVID-19 exacerbated. Equally, lament is not just about expressing sorrow and mourning over death. Of course, it is necessary to lament those who have died, especially during a time when the normal rituals surrounding death had been removed. However, there is also a need to lament the loss of opportunities and things that were deeply hoped for.

Lament allows resolution around what has been lost, and provides an opportunity for moving on, confident in God’s presence. ‘We can therefore affirm: God has heard our prayers of lament and will answer. We begin with lament. We continue in faith. We end with hope.’ (Ejdersten et al, 2021, p102).

Questions for reflection

- What has been lost during COVID-19 that might need to be lamented by you and your corps or spiritual community? Have there been new births missed? Healthy habits lost? What about long-awaited treatment for physical or mental health conditions?

Going Deeper - Where is lament in Scripture?

Psalms

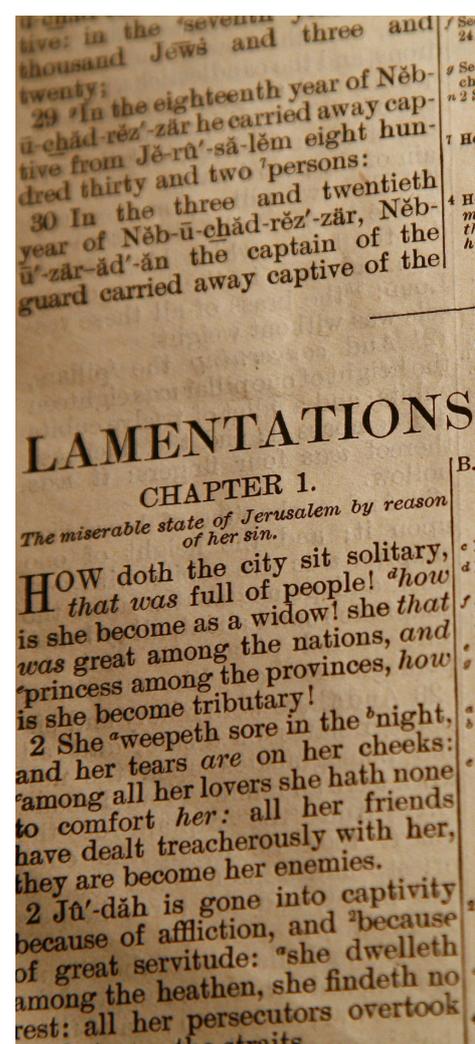
More than a third of the Psalms are psalms of lament. Here are some psalms that remind us to direct our pain and suffering at God, knowing he ‘is the only One who can do something about our pain’ (Brodie, 2021).

Psalm 6:6-9

“ I am worn out from my groaning.
All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.
My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.
Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard my weeping.
The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;
the Lord accepts my prayer. ”

Psalm 22: 1-2

“ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest. ”



Psalm 130: 1-4

“ Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you. ”

Job

Job demonstrates a model of individual lament that Stillman (2020) describes as ‘turn to God, voice your complaint, ask boldly, trust in God’.

The life of Jesus

There are various points throughout Jesus’ life where we get glimpses of lament; where Jesus weeps and expresses regret and sadness.

John 11:32-35

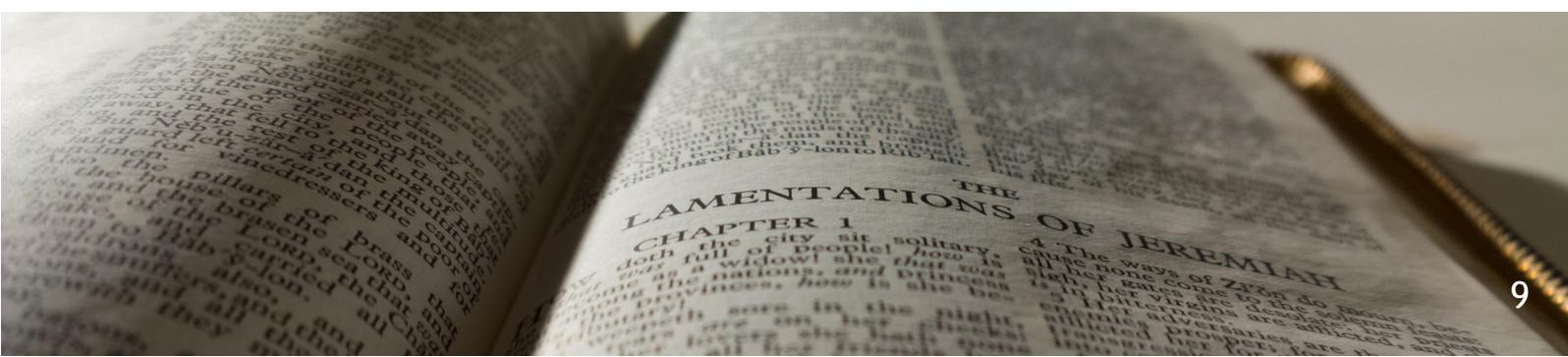
“ When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. ”

Jesus knew he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, yet he still wept, mourning the loss of his friend’s life.

Matthew 27:45-46

“ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ”



Questions for reflection

- Does anything in these verses stand out to you as significant in your own journey through the pandemic? How about others' journeys?
- Are there themes linked to lament that you feel God has been speaking to you or your corps or spiritual community about?
- Can you think of any other Scripture that your corps or spiritual community might find useful in prompting a time of lament?

Reflection - What could lament look like for me and my corps or spiritual community?

Start the conversation

Gather together some people from your corps or spiritual community and start a conversation about lament. You could begin by asking them to write on Post-it Notes what they already know about lament and then build on this by sharing relevant parts of Scripture with them.

Questions for Discussion

- How do you feel about the idea of lament?
- What would you find useful in processing loss from the pandemic either individually or with this community?
- How could we create spaces to lament as we move out of the pandemic?
- Following the Four Theological Voices model outlined in the Introduction to this booklet, how do you think your espoused voice (what you say you believe) and your operant voice (what you live out) align in the case of lament?

Create spaces to lament

You and your corps or spiritual community know what will work best for you. However, here are some ideas to prompt you. Thank you to Lieut-Colonel Jayne Roberts, Secretary for Spiritual Life Development, for these suggestions:



Storytelling:

If they're willing, two or three people from your corps or community could record their stories from the pandemic. These could just be short but may build solidarity and help people to feel more able to share, or even just acknowledge, their own stories and experiences.

Dedicating a space:

With an event as devastating as this pandemic, people may need more than a one-off moment to lament. Why not dedicate a noticeboard or the corner of a room or hall to lament, where people can write, draw or engage in other creative ways to process their experiences? You could keep this up/open for several weeks.

Sharing:

Ask people what they can offer each other. Is there a particular Scripture someone has found helpful during this time that they could share with someone else? If you have a WhatsApp or Facebook group, you can use this to share these resources with each other.

Utilise small groups:

If you have regular small groups, why not dedicate some of the prayer time during those meetings to prayers of lament? In fact, lament can also include a time of silence or space for people to respond in unstructured prayer as they feel prompted to do so.

Case Study

One corps in South London will be holding a special memorial service for those who have died during the COVID-19 pandemic. They recognise that people haven't been able to grieve in the same way during the pandemic and want to provide space for people to process their pain.

Previously they've also provided space on Mother's Day for people to lament the loss of mothers and mother figures in their lives. They've placed a vase of flowers at the front of the church and people have been able to come up, take a flower and place it in memory of the one they've lost.

Think about lament as mission

Just as you and your corps or spiritual community need space to lament and process your experiences of the pandemic, so does your wider community. This pandemic is

unique in that it's touched all our lives. This is not just something to raise money for or pray about for others; this has been our joint reality for well over a year. Part of loving our local communities right now may be providing them with space to lament and to see the Church wailing and weeping but still choosing, ultimately, to trust in God. How can you extend this opportunity to lament to those in the wider community?

[Moving Forward - Prayer and lament resources](#)

You may find these resources useful in exploring prayer and lament further as we move out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [World Council of Churches - Voices of Lament, Hope and Courage](#): These global prayers have been prepared to allow the many people affected by COVID-19 to express sorrow and nurture hope for the future.
- [Tearfund - COVID-19: Lament](#): This two-part Bible study explores what lament is and why it is important during this time.
- [Paul S. Williams - Chapter 5: Learning to Lament, from Exiles on Mission](#): This book chapter takes the reader through different elements of lament, such as 'active listening'.

If you would like more support around prayer and lament at this time, contact Major Christine Kingscott, Prayer Network at THQ (Christine.kingscott@salvationarmy.org.uk) or your Divisional Prayer Coordinator.

We'd love to hear how you and your corps or community find this chapter and the process of lament. If you have feedback or ideas you'd like to share with others, email rdu@salvationarmy.org.uk.

We hope you have found this chapter helpful.



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COVID as Trauma

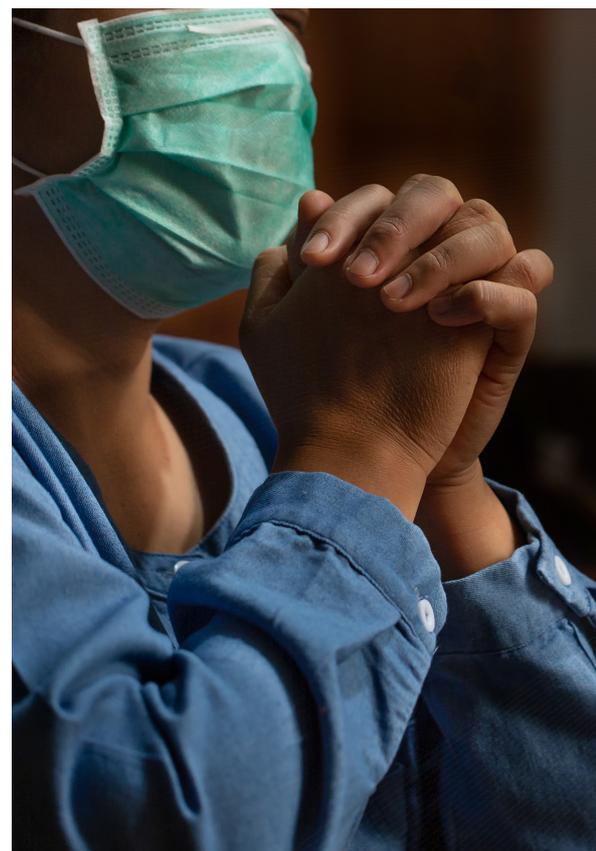
Author: Amy Quinn-
Graham [7]

Contributor: Captain
Nicky Watson [8]

This chapter is designed to be used following a Faith-Based Facilitation process [9]. All literature referenced is listed at the end for your ease of access.

Introduction - The issue

Research carried out during the pandemic suggests that COVID-19 will have been a traumatic experience. Whether directly or indirectly, trauma affects us all, and therefore the Church has a responsibility to ensure it is a safe space for people who have been affected by trauma to return to. The literature outlined the need for churches to adopt a trauma-informed approach to congregational life, including a space for a collective memory to be formed and for testimonies without a happy ending to be shared (Quinn-Graham, 2020). ‘Trauma’ was also mentioned by contracted services staff who undertook the anonymous survey during the first lockdown. They highlighted the need for guidance, support and training to ‘recognise and support those with PTSD in relation to ... bereavement and various outcomes causing anxiety and trauma’ (Knuckey et al, 2020, p145).



The First Step - Why ‘trauma’?

What is trauma?

‘An inescapably stressful event that overwhelms people’s existing coping mechanisms’ (van Der Kolk and Fislser, 1995, p505).

The Salvation Army’s Addictions Services describe trauma as:

“ a person’s unique experience of an event in which: their ability to integrate the emotional experience is overwhelmed; or they experience (subjectively) a threat to their life, bodily integrity or emotional stability. Therefore, reactions to traumatic events vary considerably, ranging from relatively mild, creating minor disruptions in a person’s life, to severe and debilitating.

”

[7] Amy Quinn-Graham is an Action researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[8] Major Nicky Watson is the Regional Chaplaincy Officer for the North-West Division.

[9] See introduction for FBF Cycle diagram.

What is clear from these definitions of trauma is that an event can be experienced differently by different people, leading to various levels of trauma. Everyone is different. You may feel that COVID-19 hasn't been particularly traumatic for you; however, it's important to recognise that for some, COVID-19 may have been 'severe and debilitating'. Additionally, the level of impact experienced by the pandemic may not be immediately obvious to you or to others.

Nevertheless, many are referring to the

trauma from COVID-19 as 'mass trauma', as it is affecting everyone in some way or another. An Australian study found that participants across five Western countries had PTSD-like symptoms as a result of the pandemic, even when they hadn't personally been exposed to the virus (Bridgland et al, 2021). This suggests that trauma can be experienced even for events that are yet to happen. Losing your job, not being able to properly grieve the death of a loved one, or even just constantly seeing so much news about the losses COVID-19 has inflicted on us all can be traumatic.

Why is it important that COVID-19 is acknowledged and processed as trauma?

If COVID-19 is not recognised as trauma, individuals, families and even groups risk experiencing re-traumatisation as the experience of COVID-19 triggers memories from other life events. Additionally, as church leaders move into new ways of 'doing church' and 'reimagining mission', it is important that this activity does not become a distraction that prevents them from processing their own pandemic experiences, as this could colour all their future work. 'You have a lens through which you see the world, yourself and other people. And events will colour that lens. [With enough stress], even when those events have stopped, some people are left with a coloured lens' (Trickey, 2021, cited in Prideaux, 2021).

Left unresolved, trauma can be passed on through generations. Trauma can develop into long-term mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. Trauma can also influence an individual's belief in God. 'Many people lose their faith because they experience God as being absent during the disaster that hit them' (O'Connor, 2011, cited in de Kock-Malan, 2019, p4).



Questions for reflection

- Thinking about the definitions of trauma - what are the effects COVID-19 could have had on individuals in your setting and the pastoral care they will require?
- How may people in your setting feel differently about their theology (or understanding of themselves and their place in the world) as a result of COVID-19? How do we assimilate this into our pastoring, support, worship, and teaching?

What does it mean for 'mission' that we acknowledge COVID-19 as trauma?

It is likely that your community and those outside of your corps also need space to process trauma from COVID-19. Throughout the SA mission and COVID-19 research 'mission' was most commonly described by frontline leaders as 'meeting need' and 'supporting people'

(Knuckey et al, 2020). Therefore, while the pandemic's traumatic impact may not be immediately obvious to you or those you're trying to support, it's necessary to create space for trauma to be recognised and processed, in order for other needs to then be met.

Questions for reflection

- How could sharing our own experience of COVID-19, and acknowledging the trauma we've experienced, help to build missional connections with others in our community?
- Scripture tells us that we worship a God of healing and restoration. How can our understanding of a healing and restorative God be used to help our mission where we are?

Going Deeper -Trauma in Scripture

What does Scripture tell us about trauma?

A scriptural theme that arose multiple times throughout the SA mission and COVID-19 literature review was the reminder that the Israelites spent time living in exile (Quinn-Graham, 2020). They experienced a loss of rituals and ways of approaching and connecting with God that could have overwhelmed their coping mechanisms and left them feeling that their life and stability was threatened, as described in the earlier definitions of trauma. Their pain is articulated in Psalm 137:1-4 when they cry out to the Lord, asking how they can sing their songs of praise and worship when they are in a strange and foreign land:

“ By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
There on the poplars
we hung our harps,
for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land? ”



Questions for reflection

- Did you and your corps or spiritual community lose any rituals or ways of approaching and connecting with God during COVID-19? If so, how did that feel?

Looking to the New Testament, it is likely that 1 Peter was written within the context of trauma. ‘For these early Jesus followers, alienation, suffering, hostility, possible persecution for their faith, being exiles living in diaspora, and living as foreigners, also in the face of Empire, were daily realities which might have caused trauma’ (de Kock-Malan, 2019, p2). Dealing with trauma requires reframing your beliefs and finding new meaning, as demonstrated by Peter through the coping strategies he gave his readers. He encouraged them - and therefore encourages us - to reconstruct the past and realise their identity in a new light, that of Jesus’ suffering.

“ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect...

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ”

1 Peter 1:18-19; 22-23

Questions for reflection

- What does it mean to you to look back at the pandemic in light of Jesus’ suffering?

Reflection - How to address the trauma

Adopting a trauma-informed approach

Now that you have a better understanding of trauma and the importance of acknowledging COVID-19 in this way, you may be wondering how to start processing this trauma or supporting others to do so. It's important to acknowledge that church leaders are not clinically trained and should therefore not be attempting to deliver individual interventions that aim to heal someone of their trauma. Instead, church leaders have a role in integrating a trauma-informed approach into congregational life and mission, supporting people to find new meaning and reframe their beliefs (Prideaux, 2021).

In fact, it is important that leaders recognise the impact of this trauma on themselves by taking time to reflect on how it has affected them physically and their energy to lead, their mental resilience with supporting others and the effects on their own practical theology (making sense of God in the world, the Church, their life, and their ministry). Any impact should be acknowledged, and leaders supported to recover and process their understanding.

What is a trauma informed approach?

A trauma-informed approach requires a shift from asking, 'What is wrong with this person?' to 'What has happened to this person?'

The Salvation Army's Core Recovery work is underpinned by six principles of trauma-informed care:

- Safety
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Trustworthiness
- Empowerment
- Cultural humility

These principles can give us the bedrock values that will inform our work together as worshipping communities and as we think about mission in the light of this trauma.



Case Study

Paul Huggins is a Lifehouse chaplain in Sheffield who works with people who have experienced the trauma of homelessness; often this is linked to other traumatic incidents in people's lives. Paul leads several support groups that are underpinned by the six principles of trauma-informed care. He says that one of the most helpful things that can be done in integrating a trauma-informed approach is to give people space where they feel safe, able to share as much or as little as they want, and the freedom to know they can get up to go or take a break for some fresh air. This nurtures the visitor's sense of safety, choice and empowerment, building trust.

Questions for Consideration

The following questions are helpful prompts to consider either individually or with your corps or spiritual community when embarking on the adoption of a trauma-informed approach.

- How can everyone coming into your space feel physically and emotionally safe?
- People who have experienced trauma need to know that individuals are trustworthy, that there are good boundaries, communication, and appropriate confidentiality. Do you and your corps or spiritual community reflect these values?
- Is your environment one where power dynamics are explored and there are positive, kind relationships?
- Are people given a choice in how they want to engage?
- Do you focus on an individual's strengths, encouraging them to build a healthy foundation to recover from their trauma?
- Are there plenty of opportunities for collaboration, for individuals to work in partnership to find pathways to healing and restoration?
- Do you practise cultural humility, where you listen to voices that have a different life experience from your own because of gender, race, religion, disability, health, sexuality, age, socio-economic status, immigration status etc?

Creative ideas for implementation

It's important to start this process recognising that everyone will respond to trauma in their own way and at their own pace. We encourage you to work with your corps or spiritual community to implement the right ideas at the right time and in the right way for them. Don't be afraid to bring in external support.

Make one-to-one pastoral care a priority, including for leaders. Work together to create a corps plan so that everybody is included, and it is ongoing. This support doesn't have to be delivered by just the corps officer.

Establish small groups where people can share openly, and everyone can have a voice. Building this environment may take time, so allow for this to be a long commitment. Don't rush people.

Share as a whole community. Reflect on God's presence throughout the pandemic and nurture a well of collective wisdom in how to move forward. Everyone's experience is valuable. Refer to Chapter One on Lament in this booklet for more specific ideas about how to share and lament together as a community.

Create space within the worship as part of the liturgy for testimonies of pain and suffering to be shared.

Take part in 'Postcards from the Edge', either as an individual or in small groups. You can upload your own photo to create a bespoke postcard where you can express an emotion related to the trauma of COVID-19, ask God a question, or outline a prayer or longing. Acknowledge the legitimacy of what has been expressed.

Create a space to reflect together on the numerous voices that have been guiding and instructing us and forming our opinions during this time. There's been a lot of noise. Which voices have been helpful, and which need to be filtered out? Where has God's voice featured?

Moving Forward - Making a plan

Going beyond a trauma-informed approach

Developing a trauma-informed approach is just one step in the process of creating space for COVID-19 to be acknowledged as trauma in both congregational life and in mission. We recommend aligning your plans and actions to this structure:

- 1 Build a trauma-informed approach into your corps or spiritual community.
2. Bring in as many voices as possible. For example, are there groups in your community who haven't been given a voice to process their trauma? Start by listening to them first. Can you work together?
3. Create a balance between activity and purpose, sharing and lament.
4. Revisit, reflect and redraw regularly.

Additional resources

If you would like additional support or resources, please contact Captain Nicky Watson, Regional Chaplaincy Officer, Homelessness Services, Southern Region on nicola.watson@salvationarmy.org.uk. Nicky is involved in The Salvation Army's recently launched Core Recovery work which supports the development of worshipping communities across the territory focused on creating safe and inclusive environments for those in recovery from addiction and anyone wanting to explore their faith and build genuine community.

We'd love to hear how you and your corps or community find this chapter and the process of adopting a trauma-informed approach. If you have feedback or ideas you'd like to share with others, email rdu@salvationarmy.org.uk.

We hope you have found this chapter helpful.

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COVID-19 and Discipleship

Author: Dr Naar M'fundisi
Holloway [10]

Contributors: Major Noel
Wright and Major Ian
Mountford [11]

This chapter is intended to enable reflection on whole-life discipleship for church leaders as well congregants. It is designed to enable readers to follow the Faith-Based Facilitation cycle [12].

Introduction - The issue

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way we gather and engage as a communal body of Christ. The Church has been challenged to reimagine ways of navigating this rapidly changing landscape due to the impact of COVID-19. Church leaders have had quickly to adapt and develop creative ways of engaging and discipling a scattered body of Christ due to COVID-19 social distancing measures imposed by governments. These social distancing measures have created catalysts for shifts in church culture, meaning the Church has had to acclimatise to being communal in a scattered way. Simple actions which were once considered normal - for example, embracing and hand shaking before and after service - have been replaced with remote greetings via Zoom and the use of icons to raise your hand or clap.

Amid this global pandemic, the Church in all its varied expressions of ministry has had to forge ahead with God's mission in

nuanced ways, proclaiming the unchanging word of God, providing hope and resourcing the body of Christ through whole-life discipleship. The challenge for the Church in this climate is to find ways in which to recover and maintain its central vocation, which is to make disciples while addressing the challenges that have come about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, there is hope. Roxenburgh and Romanuk remind us that 'the Church can still thrive in the midst of ambiguity and discontinuity' (Roxburgh and Romanuk, 2006, p14).



[10] Dr Naar M'fundisi-Holloway is an Action Researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[11] Major Noel Wright was Territorial Evangelist at the time of this interview and Major Ian Mountford is Territorial Mission Enabler and Corps Officer at Chelmsford Corps.

[12] See introduction for FBF Cycle diagram.

One of the findings which came out of the territory-wide COVID-19 research carried out by the Research and Development Unit in 2020 stated that there is need to invest in and equip congregants to be disciples and pastors in their local communities (R&D, 2020). This would enable them to be bridges between the community and the church. This means that The Salvation Army needs to invest in discipleship which enables leaders and congregants to grow spiritually and empower them to be agents of transformation in the places they work and live. This is what whole-life discipleship is. In response to the previously mentioned research findings, this chapter is an attempt to enable reflection (using FBF) on the reality of whole-life discipleship from a biblical and communal/relational standpoint. This reflection should enable readers to determine ways to disciple others and be disciplined in a way that embodies God's purposes for discipleship.

Who is a disciple?

A disciple is one who commits to learning from the one they chose to follow. Jesus' disciples were not only his students, they also had a personal attachment to him which in turn shaped their whole lives (Adeyemo, 2006, p1249). Jesus' disciples had a personal attachment to him. Their longing to be like him and walking in his footsteps shaped their whole lives. Therefore a disciple is one who flourishes on their daily journey with Christ (Major Ian Mountford). Discipleship also involves 'helping people to understand what it means to serve God's purpose in the whole of their lives and reminding Christians of the significance of their identity as disciples and the significance of their everyday places' (Hudson, 2019, p10). Therefore whole-life discipleship has the double effect of helping a believer grow in their own relationship with Christ, but also enable them to love their neighbour as God would have them.

Prayer

Our heavenly Father,

We are grateful for the work that you did on the cross of Calvary.

We are grateful that you are always drawing us to yourself.

We believe that your mission is to reconcile the world in all its fullness to yourself.

We are grateful that you have invited us to be co-labourers with you in your mission to the world.

Help your church to 'embrace our vocation as whole-life disciples making communities for the people of God to grow together in prophetic, provocative, grace-filled and mission-hearted discipleship, shaped by the word of God and connected into the world we're called to serve.' (LICC Imagine, p3)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

(Prayer by Dr Naar M'fundisi-Holloway)

The First Step - What is whole-life discipleship?

Whole-life discipleship enables the body of Christ to continue to grow and flourish spiritually. Neil Hudson suggests that the purpose of discipleship is to:

“ inspire and equip Christians for their everyday contexts and to develop Christians who have a renewed imagination of their Monday to Sunday contexts ... Christians that have a greater confidence around the difference they could make to their frontlines in schools, offices, shops, gyms, libraries, homes and wherever they are seven days a week. ”

(Hudson, 2019, xiii)

In the same vein, Bishop Graham Cray stated that ‘churches have to realise that the core of their calling is to be disciple-making communities’ (LICC, 2007, p4). This is discipleship which empowers believers to live a ‘Jesus-shaped life’ (Oxbrow, 2017, p8), Local churches have always been places where people learn to become disciples (Hudson, 2019, xv). These disciples are empowered to recognise that they are disciples of Jesus and regard their ‘everyday places as places of opportunity for the reality of God’s Kingdom to break in’ (ibid).

It can be said that everything we do as believers matters greatly to God. Therefore it is important that discipleship affirms that there should be no divide between what believers do in the ‘world’ and what they do in the confines of a gathered body, be it physically or virtually. The challenge becomes how we make whole-life discipleship part of the church culture and not another programme. Similarly, it is how discipleship can be developed in a holistic way so it develops whole life, as opposed to leisure-time Christians who live out their faith only at weekends and midweek church gatherings (LICC, 2007, p5).

Major Noel Wright suggests that effective discipleship makes people more aware about God in their everyday. He suggests fruitful/quality discipleship prompts Christians to reflect on questions like: Do I see my job as ministry? Does my church equip its parents to become better parents and grandparents in their ministry, to become a blessing to their children and grandchildren? How should I regard my interactions with the shopkeeper as mission? According to Major Noel Wright, this attitude helps a believer understand that what they do daily is living out mission. Major Ian Mountford suggests Romans 12:1-2 as a clear example of how mission is part of our everyday contexts.

“ So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life - and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture

around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.



Hudson makes a similar emphasis saying:

“ the primary way we grow as disciples is when we see ourselves serving God’s wider purposes ... disciples are not primarily formed on retreat, ... but in situations that demand wisdom, perseverance and courage. These places are not occasional exotic adventures; they are everyday places where we live out our everyday responsibilities.



(Hudson, 2019, p10).

Most churches share the desire to equip people for their everyday lives, but translating this desire into action can be challenging for various reasons. The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) in their 2007 research on church attendance highlighted ‘the struggle that churches have to equip Christians to live the whole of their lives as growing, missionary followers of Christ in a radically changed and rapidly changing culture and the resourcing that goes with it’ (LICC, 2007, p4). The challenge becomes how the Church can be mindful of ‘not reverting to inner piety as opposed to boldly living out their faith in Jesus on the public domain’ (ibid). In this post-COVID era, it is important for the Church to emphasise the strengthening of the socially distanced gathered (as our church buildings reopen) and the virtually gathered through whole-life discipleship by constantly drawing on prayer and the Holy Spirit as the main source to energise it. In addition, part of the role of being a part of the church community is to look out for one another and keep each other accountable when we make decisions relating to our faith. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1 Paul encourages the church in Thessaloniki to encourage and build each other up.



Questions for reflection

- What challenges might your local church face as it considers discipling congregants in a post-COVID-19 climate?

Personal Testimony: Discipleship for the everyday

I have been a Christian for many years and have had the privilege of living on three continents and belonging to various church congregations. Over the years I have observed the church fervently praying for leaders within the church so they would be effective in their ministry. Other prayers would be for those who were sick, bereaved or suffering. The final prayer at the end of each service would be for God to guide us all during the week and protect us. To that end, we would be dismissed in God's love until we met again. What would be missing is prayer that would encompass everyday contexts believers find themselves in.

For the past 12 years I have been planted in a church which is very intentional about praying for people in their professions. When I was a secondary school teacher, my pastor would call all teachers and students alike to the front to be prayed for at the beginning of each term. He and other leaders in the church would pray that we would carry the light of God in our schools and that we would have courage to use every opportunity to

bring Jesus to situations and conversations we find ourselves in. Similarly, Sunday sermons and midweek prayer and Bible study meetings would have lessons on how to live missionally in our various contexts.

I personally find the whole-life discipleship in my church helpful because I am always aware that I am a living epistle of Jesus Christ everywhere I am. I have a greater awareness that my life from Monday to Saturday is not divorced from my Sunday, Wednesday (evening) and Friday (evening) when I participate in church activities.

According to Hudson (2021), 'whole-life discipleship matters because God's people find themselves in places and situations where they can grow more like Jesus, and where they can demonstrate the reality of Jesus to others'. The church community should be a place where their acts are affirmed and continue to help them be 'better equipped to follow Jesus into whatever each day might bring'.

The impact of COVID-19

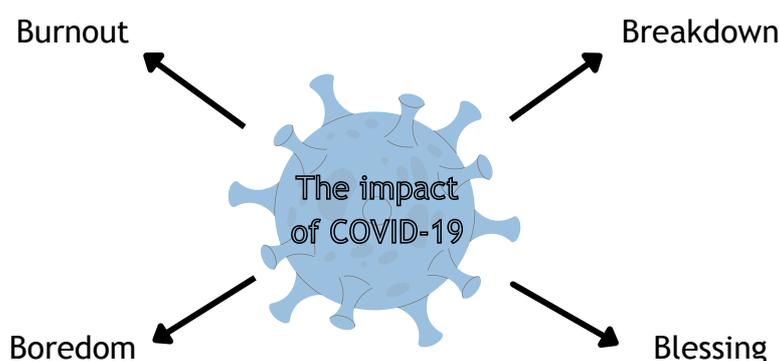
As COVID-19 restrictions are continuing to ease and society in the UK is slowly coming back to what is 'the new normal', we realise that the pandemic has affected people in a variety of ways. Gillian Tett, an anthropologist who is a journalist for the Financial Times, provided a generalised overview on how the pandemic has affected people using 'four Bs' - namely: Bored (after being trapped in homes for so long), Burnout (due to working long hours), Breakdown (caused by depression and anxiety due to joblessness, isolation, financial problems, broken relationships and fear of the pandemic, the loss of

family), and Blessing (enjoying time with family, enjoying open spaces and working without commuting and having more money) (Tett, 2020).

It is fair to say that the pandemic has affected Christians and non-Christians alike in the ways outlined by Tett and more. Therefore, the Church has an important role to play in discipling those within the Church who have suffered as a result of the pandemic. At the same time, it needs to disciple people in a way that responds to those that have experienced Boredom, Burnout and Breakdown within their contexts. Hudson suggests there's a need for our churches to 'press on in strengthening their scattered/gathered life and inviting the Holy Spirit in, inviting the Church to pay attention to this dynamic' (Hudson, 2019, xv).

Reflection

- List the names of people in your context who've been affected by COVID-19 in the following categories:



- Pray for each one of them.
- Pray for your church leaders, that God will give them wisdom to disciple you in a way which will help you grow your faith as well as support people in places you already are (Hudson, 2019, p2).

Prayer

Our heavenly Father,
 Help us to be mindful of those who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We remember those who are bored because they are trapped in homes;
 Those who are burnt out due to working long hours from home and failing to have a home-work life balance;

Those who are experiencing breakdowns due to depression, anxiety, broken relationships, loss of income, risk of redundancy and those who have lost their loved ones during the pandemic.

We thank you for those who have seen this as a period of blessing as they have had the opportunity to rest, enjoy more time with family, are more financially stable and have had the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of your creation by spending more time outdoors.

We pray that you, who are all-knowing and ever-present, would visit them in a special way.

We believe you are touched by our afflictions and that you are close to us when we are broken-hearted and crushed in spirit.

Use us as channels of blessing and as carriers of hope in hopeless situations.

Direct us so we can show love and compassion to those who are suffering.

And give us wisdom to know how best to support them.

Amen.

(Prayer by Dr Naar M'fundisi-Holloway)

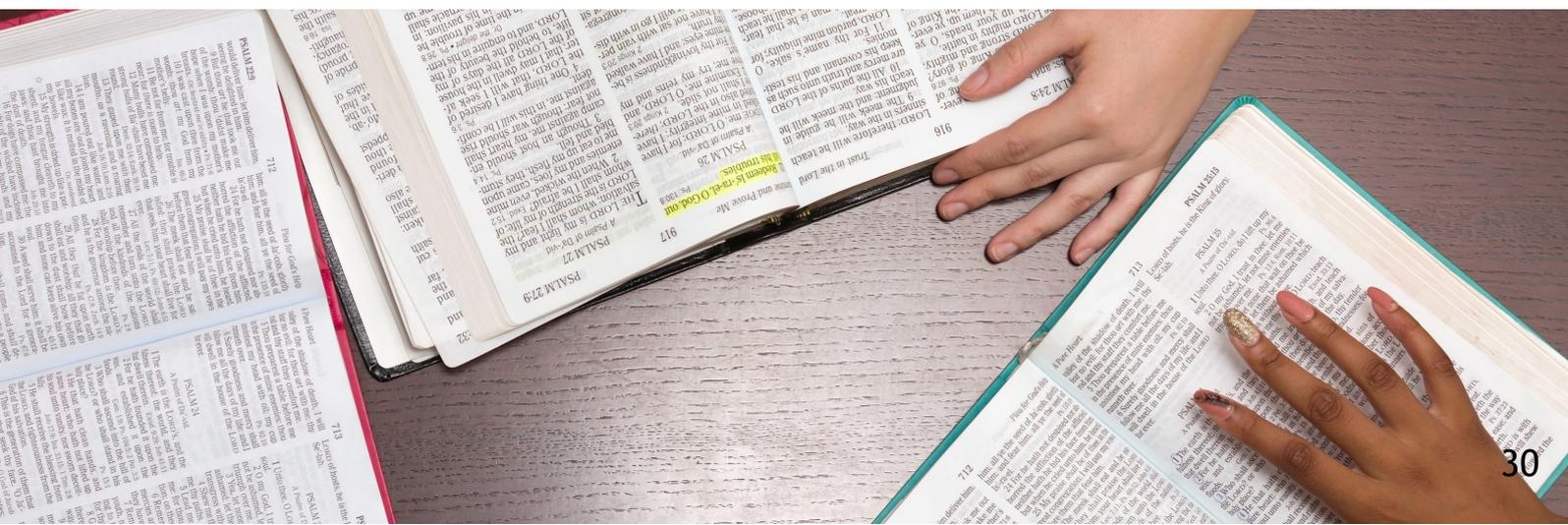
Going Deeper - What does the Bible say about discipleship?

The previous sections looked at what whole-life discipleship is and why it matters. It has been concluded that whole-life discipleship not only helps a Christian to grow in their faith, but also helps them become channels of blessing to people they encounter in their everyday contexts. It is recognised that God is already at work in the world, and humanity are co-workers with God in his mission to reconcile the world to himself

(1 Corinthians 3:9). In this section we will consider what Scripture says about discipleship.

The Bible demonstrates the importance of discipleship countless times. Tokunboh Adeyemo states that there are about 290 variants of the word 'discipleship' appearing in the Gospels and the book of Acts (Adeyemo, 2006, p1249). As disciples, believers are called to:

- Live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ - Philippians 1:27; Matthew 5:13-16; Galatians 5:13-26; Philippians 4:11-13.
- Live a life of humility following the example of Jesus Christ - Philippians 2:1-11.
- Live life as unto the Lord - Colossians 1:15-21.
- Live a life that demonstrates love towards God and love for your neighbour - Matthew 22:37-39.



- Live as God's sent-scattered people. In the scattered nature of our discipleship we are in contact with people who don't know Jesus. It is important to recognise that we are sent to be witnesses in our everyday lives - Romans 12:1-2; Luke 4:18. John's Gospel makes around 24 references to Jesus being 'sent'. According to Major Ian Mountford, 'Jesus' understanding of being sent gave him identity, clarity and purpose regarding his mission on earth.' Therefore, we gather as Christians in order to be sent (Matthew 28; John 20:21). Part of being sent involves reconciling of all things to Christ (Colossians 1:20). And as The Salvation Army, this reconciliation and witness can be embodied through the five missional priorities which it recognises (nurture disciples of Jesus, seek justice and reconciliation, care for creation, serve others without discrimination and share the good news).

Roxburgh and Romanuk remind us that 'the congregation comprises the people of God, called to be formed into a unique social community whose life together is a sign, witness and foretaste of what God is doing in and for all creation' (Roxburgh and Romanuk, 2006, p14). The question is, how can discipleship play a role in helping the Church live out these principles?

The Bible provides various references to help us understand what discipleship entails:

- Disciples are not only followers but also learners from their guides (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; Hebrews 3:7; 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1; Ephesians 5:1; Hebrews 6:12). Adeyemo states that 'faithful disciples are characterised by qualities such as abiding in Jesus' word, steadfast faith in him, loyalty to him, love for one another, walking in the light, bearing fruit and humble service to one another (John 8:31-36; 13:34-35; Matthew 22:37-39, 28:18-20)' (Adeyemo, 2006, p1249).
- Discipleship as a response to the call of Jesus means abandoning one's concerns and comforts (Mark 1:16-17; John 6:6-70; Luke 9:57-62; John 6:66-69; 2 Timothy 1:15, 4:10).
- There is a cost to discipleship (Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:25-33; John 12:24-26). Therefore, this cost should bring about 'transformation of a person's lifestyle and priorities' (ibid).

Reflection

- What can we learn from the characters in these Scriptures in relation to discipleship?
 - Ruth and Naomi: Ruth 1:16-18

- Samuel and the school of prophets: 1 Samuel 19:20
- Elisha and Elijah: 2 Kings 2:1-15
- The disciples of John: Matthew 9:14-17
- The disciples of Moses: John 9:13-34; Exodus 24:13; 33:11
- The disciples of Jesus: Matthew 10; John 6:60-71
- The Pharisees: Matthew 22:15-22
- How have you been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? What pastoral care might you require to support you through that?
- How has the impact of COVID-19 affected your personal faith and understanding of God, yourself and your place in the world? What kind of support might you require in order to move forward in your faith journey?
- What pastoral care might you need to help you to speak prophetically into issues affecting society today besides COVID-19?
- What pastoral care might you be able to give to others experiencing challenges?
- How does your own discipleship help to resource others?

Additional questions for leadership to consider:

- How has the impact of COVID-19 affected people's faith and their understanding of God in your congregation? How will you assimilate this into our pastoring, support and discipleship?
- In what ways can discipleship be done in a way that bridges the gap between Sunday and Monday or help to strengthen the relationship between their gathered and scattered lives?

Reflection - Whole-life discipleship in practice

Having looked at what whole-life discipleship is, its importance and what Scripture has to say about it, in this section we will consider how we can own and put whole-life discipleship into practice whether communally or as individuals.

As we decide and plan the way forward, Taylor suggests 'we must relinquish our missionary presuppositions and begin in the beginning with the Holy Spirit. This means humbly watching in any situation

in which we find ourselves in order to learn what God is trying to do there, and then doing it with him' (Taylor, 1972, p39). In keeping with this, Rev Ken Benjamin, Director of Church Relationships at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC), provides some ideas to help the Church go forward as a gathered/scattered Church in this post-COVID-19 landscape. He suggests that before the Church can respond to the world, it should ask itself these questions:

Presence:
Where are you sensing
God's presence?

Pressure: Where are
your areas of
pressure? (work,
personal life and
family)

Purpose: Do you
sense God's purpose
in this particular
time and why?
(Benjamin, 2021).

Moving from the personal to our place in the world, whole-life discipleship should not only encourage growth in personal faith but also ensure Christians have an impact in their everyday contexts within their communities (LICC, 2007, p4). Neil Hudson suggests the following actions to guide whole-life discipleship within congregational contexts:

- Keep prayer central (without becoming more about the tools and behaviours of discipleship rather than enjoying a life with God).
- Help one another learn the way of Jesus.
- Live it out myself as a leader.
- Explain clearly what the church is embarking on.
- Extend the invitation for people to follow Christ and to a lifetime of whole-life discipleship (Hudson, 2019, pp42-44).

Nobody knows what the post-COVID future holds, except God. We continue to hear predictions about the future within

and outside church walls. People are wrestling with what might be new realities. In his blog which looked at the shaping of the post-COVID world, Simon Hix, a Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics stated, 'The debate about where the world is heading post-COVID is also plagued by confirmation bias' (Hix, 2020). While the world might try to predict the future, Christians and non-Christians alike must figure out how to live in this post-COVID world. The role of the Church and church leaders is to continue to adapt their discipleship and ensure it is relevant for the world today and the challenges therein. According to Major Noel Wright, 'the Spirit is at work. Leaders need to teach/inspire, enable and equip God's people to live out their faith in their everyday conversations with shopkeepers, bus drivers, teachers and the many people they encounter in the everyday contexts. That is how we fulfil the Great Commission. We need to find ways to inspire and resource people for the everyday.' (Noel Wright, 2021)



Questions for reflection

- How will I position myself as a disciple who desires to flourish and be fruitful in my life as a Christian?
- What forms of discipleship are present within my church or local contexts?
- How can I seek out discipleship which equips me for life in my sacred and secular contexts?
- Who (in or outside my church) has the potential and capacity to disciple and guide me in my spiritual journey?

Additional questions for leadership to consider:

- How have we disciplined people in the past?
- How effective has that been?
- How do we disciple people in a way that enables them to live out their Christianity everywhere, in every place, activity, with everyone they meet?
- How will we equip congregants in a way that enables them to serve God and live well with others in this rapidly changing culture, while wrestling with the impact of COVID-19?
- How can these disciples be equipped to engage compellingly with the people they meet, those who perhaps have suffered greatly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? (ibid)
- What resources do we need to effectively engage congregants for whole-life discipleship?

Prayer

Pray for God's direction as you prepare to act on all that has been reflected on.

Having looked at discipleship in this chapter, what follows is evangelism. As mentioned from the outset, discipleship and evangelism cannot be separated. Effective evangelism flows naturally out of discipleship. While we are all called to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world around us (evangelism), we cannot minimise the importance of good discipleship. It is also important that disciples are grounded in the word of God if they must be sent. According to LICC, 'there is a direct connection between whole-life discipleship and evangelism. Lives which consistently display Christ create hunger for Christ in others. Evangelism without discipleship borders dangerously on hypocrisy' (LICC, 2007, p21). I came across a quote which stated: 'Globally, 98% of Christians are neither envisioned nor equipped for mission in 95% of their waking lives. But just imagine if they were' (Greene, 2010). This highlights the importance of discipleship for believers to effectively live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in all aspects of their lives.

Moving Forward - Discipleship resources

You may find these resources useful in exploring whole-life discipleship further:

- Greene, M (2010), *The Great Divide: The Biggest Challenge Facing the Church Today and What We Can Do About It*. London: LICC.
- Hudson, N (2019), *Scattered and Gathered, Equipping Disciples for the Frontline*. London, Intervarsity Press, 2019.
- Hudson, N (2021), *Why Does Whole-Life Disciple Making Really, Really Matter?* Available at: <https://licc.org.uk/resources/chapter-1-making-disciples-for-everyday-life/> (Accessed 25 May 2021).

*These resources can be found on OurHub in the Missional Journal Toolbox.

We hope you have found this chapter helpful.

We would love to hear how you and your corps or community find this chapter and the process of reimagining discipleship in this post-COVID-19 era. If you have feedback or ideas you'd like to share with others, email rdu@salvationarmy.org.uk.

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COVID-19 and Sharing the Good News

Author: Dr Naar M'fundisi
Holloway [13]

Contributors: Major Ian
Mountford and Major Howard
Webber [14]

This chapter is intended to enable reflection on evangelism for the Church. It is designed to enable readers to follow the Faith-Based Facilitation cycle [15].

Introduction - The issue

This chapter will explore the subject of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is also referred to as evangelism. Evangelism or sharing the gospel is one of themes which emerged from the territory-wide COVID-19 research conducted by Research and Development Unit in 2020 [16]. This theme is important because sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ forms part of The Salvation Army's five mission priorities [17]. Findings from the COVID-19 research identified mission as 'proclaiming the good news and extending Jesus with everyone' (Knuckey et al 2020, p159). In trying to understand the essence of evangelism, the literature review which accompanied the COVID-19 research considered the call to proclaim the gospel as relational and 'key to the Church's understanding of mission at any given time' (Quinn-Graham, 2020, p43).

This chapter flows out of the previous chapter which looked at discipleship. Discipleship is important because one's ability to share the good news of Jesus Christ with confidence flows in part out of adequate discipleship. This is because evangelism is an important part of our Christian witness. It was clear in the previous chapter that while Christians are all missionaries called to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit coupled with good discipleship cannot be overlooked. It is also important that disciples are grounded in the word of God if they are to share the gospel. In support of this, the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) states, 'There is a direct connection between whole-life discipleship and evangelism. Lives which consistently display Christ create a hunger for Christ in others. Evangelism without discipleship borders dangerously on hypocrisy' (LICC, 2007, p21). Mark Greene, the Executive Director at LICC also stated, 'Globally, 98% of Christians are neither envisioned nor equipped for mission in 95% of their waking lives. But just imagine if they were' (Greene, 2010). This highlights the importance of discipleship for believers to effectively live out the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[13] Dr Naar M'fundisi-Holloway is an Action Researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[14] Major Ian Mountford is the Territorial Mission Enabler and Corps Officer at Chelmsford Corps. Major Howard Webber is Mission Partner (Evangelism) in the Mission Development Unit (THQ).

[15] See introduction chapter for FBF Cycle diagram.

[16] Note that the terms evangelism, haring of the gospel or making Christ known will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

[17] Others include; nurture disciples of Jesus, seek justice and reconciliation, care for creation and serve others without discrimination. These marks of mission overlap and support each other.

This chapter will also consider the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the wider Church, mainly focusing on how Christians share the gospel in this post-COVID-19 world. Even though we now have a vaccine and there is assumed immunity, we know that the world as we knew it will never be the same again. Yet the gospel remains unchanging.

The COVID-19 research findings in relation to sharing the gospel

Looking back at the COVID-19 research responses from corps settings, respondents expressed their understanding of evangelism as a call to ‘invest in micro-level chaplaincy’. This meant equipping Christians through discipleship to be a bridge between the community and the Church. Proclaiming the good news of the gospel was also considered as prophetic, and therefore it was important to do it in a way that was relevant to the spiritual and physical needs of people in those contexts (Knuckey et al, 2020, p159).

Salvation Army (SA) officers also participated in the COVID-19 research and saw mission as responding to need, extending Jesus to everyone by proclaiming the good news. Their responses demonstrated that the mission of God is integral, which means it involves the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel (Lausanne). Some SA officers understood ‘mission as ... “preaching”, while others focused more on “acting out” the gospel, by being Jesus, sharing God’s love with others and responding to people’s needs’ (Knuckey et al, 2020, p160).

There was also a shared impression among corps officers that God was telling them to get out of their buildings and engage more with their communities. The research concluded that getting out of buildings ‘was less about getting out and meeting need in the community and more about getting out of the corps building in order to reach people with the gospel and/or deliver pastoral care to the existing congregation’ (Knuckey et al, 2020, p98). According to one of the respondents,

“ The Salvation Army’s mission is to forget about the buildings, to continue to work as his people, and to be seen in the community, doing what we’ve been doing, and not go back into our shells, but to go out and share with everybody. Whether it be through the food parcels, or whatever ... ”

(Female, East Midlands) (Knuckey et al., 2020, 98)

The fact that officers felt that God wanted them to spend more time in their local communities challenges the conventional way of doing church and sharing Jesus where the expectation is that people would come to our buildings and contexts in order to hear the word of God. In response to this, Laurence Singlehurst, author of *Lockdown Evangelism* (2020, p4) asserts:

“ The life of church has been touched and we relied on centrality of our church settings and building. Eg, conversations about faith, we have always drawn people to our building as a pathway to faith. We’ve lost the pathway and now we realise every lay person has become the frontline of mission. It’s their witness and connectedness and now they have to be empowered on how they can. We have gone from central to personal. ”

It appears that despite the limitations that were brought about by COVID-19 in 2020, respondents to the COVID-19 survey believed God still expects us to leave our places of comfort and engage more with our communities outside the church walls. God is challenging those areas of comfort which the Church has created where speaking about Jesus happens within church contexts.

It cannot be denied that COVID-19 has provided the opportunity for church leaders, church members and mission

agencies to be challenged to learn to share and live out the gospel in a way that resonates with the people we are trying to reach. One of the key notions of being Christians is that we are all missionaries sent by God to be living witnesses of Jesus Christ to the world. Therefore this chapter will also explore the fact that Christians are ‘sent’ and are ‘living epistles/letters’ of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the fact that creating a culture of evangelism in our congregations is key for the word of God to continue to reach our communities.

The first step - What is evangelism?

The word ‘evangelism’ means sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is rooted in the Greek word Euangelion which means ‘gospel’ or ‘good news’. This gospel is God-centred and not man-centred. It is a gospel which says that even though there is nothing lacking in God, through his love and desire to redeem mankind he sent his son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world so people can be reconciled back to God. Therefore, having been reconciled back to God by accepting his redemption, Christians have the mandate to share this gospel with others through evangelism.

The Lausanne Covenant written in 1974 by John Stott, a renowned English Anglican theologian for the Lausanne Movement, provides a comprehensive definition of evangelism:

“ To evangelise is to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that, as the reigning Lord, he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe ... evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new

community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world.



(Stott, 1974)

Some Bible verses which speak about evangelism are expressed below:

- Mark 1:14-15: 'After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"'
- Mark 16:15: 'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."'
- Romans 1:1: 'Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle (special messenger, personally chosen representative), set apart for [preaching] the gospel of God [the good news of salvation].' (AMP)
- Romans 10:15: 'And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"'
- 1 Corinthians 1:17: 'For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel - not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.'

These Scriptures imply that someone carries the good news and takes it to others who perhaps might or might not know it. Therefore Christians are to live as people who are sent by God to make him known to the world around them. This means that evangelism is not optional but a duty for all Christians. Some Christians do not see sharing the gospel as their responsibility. They are quite happy to be recipients of the benefits of the gospel (Kapolyo, 2006, p196). On the contrary, as Christians it is our responsibility to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and make the gospel known wherever we are, using whatever means are available. This means that 'the essence of evangelism is its message, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is defined by its message, not by its method, medium, or audience' (Chan et al, 2020, p37). The gospel of Jesus Christ is more about the message than it is about the messenger. The Holy Spirit helps to make the message believable. As such, the recognition that Christians are sent by God to be witnesses for Christ should be an important part of a Christian's identity and consciousness.

Christians are all qualified to share the gospel of Jesus Christ without being ashamed of it (Romans 1:16). There is a great importance on the ordinary church member to be empowered to pray, speak, give, and invite people to Christ without depending on ordained leaders to do so. Therefore this chapter serves as a reminder that all Christians are all in ministry as co-workers with God in his mission to reconcile the world to himself (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Prayer 
Dear God

Help us to be open to what you want to do with and in us. We pray that you will help us identify opportunities for people to hear your word through us. Help us create new connections to reach people for your Kingdom. Holy Spirit, empower us with the words we need to speak the word of God boldly and the zeal needed to reach the world for Christ. Burn the fire in us which will compel us to share and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ unashamedly and without fear.

Amen

Going Deeper - What does the Bible say about Evangelism?

In this section we shall consider evangelism in two parts: evangelism as being sent and evangelism as being living epistles.

Evangelism as being sent

Matthew 28:18-20 is a well-known Scripture which serves both as a mandate and confirmation that Christians are to share the gospel wherever they are and beyond. Before Jesus ascended to Heaven he said to his disciples, 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (John 20:21). Did this just apply to the disciples or to all Christians? This applies to all Christians because they have all been enabled to go and be witnesses for Christ's saving grace. In Acts 1:8 Christians are assured of power which

comes with the infilling of the Holy Spirit to enable them to be witnesses for Christ. In addition to this, the love of Christ 'compels' them to share Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). A person's conviction of the full authority of Jesus Christ enables them to obey Christ's commission to go (Stott, 1968). The mandate to share the good news is not a gender or personality-based directive. It is a mandate which requires Christians to be vocal about their faith as well as conduct their lives as living epistles. Jesus said:

“ All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. ”

(Matthew 28:18-20)



This verse aligns with the idea of being sent and then subsequently going. The words of the Great Commission are

“ centred around two active verbs, “go” and “make”. When Jesus issued an earlier commission the word “go” had a prominent place. We can expect that this Great Commission will intensify the “going” which should form an important part of the nature of discipleship.

”

(Kapolyo, 2006, p1196)

Christians are to embrace the idea that they exist in order to be sent, which in turn gives them purpose and an identity. According to Zambian theologian Joe Kapolyo (2006, p1196), ‘the Great Commission is given by the highest authority in the universe and it is binding in all disciples.’ Hence the preceding verse begins with ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’ (Matthew 28:18).

The command that Jesus gave to his disciples was to go everywhere without limitation and share the gospel. The same applies to Christians today. ‘The essential function of “all nations” is to clarify the worldwide scope of the Church’s mission’ (Terry, 2017, p339). This going does not mean people are meant to come to us. We who are God’s people are to go to where the people are. This does not necessarily mean going on mission trips, but how we live a life worthy of the gospel in our everyday contexts.

In Matthew 28:20b - ‘And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ - Jesus reassures the disciples of his presence despite his absence in the physical body. Jesus’ words ‘I am with you’ to conclude his commission were to serve as inspiration. This was a promise of

“ ...full consolation to the disciples and us that he is with us to pardon and forgive, to sanctify and strengthen, to defend and protect, to lead and guide, in sorrow and in joy, in sickness and in health, in life and in death, in time and in eternity.

”

(Mason)

John Stott describes Christianity as a missionary religion where God’s prerogative is to reconcile the world back to himself. He argues:

“ There are the five parts of the Bible. The God of the Old Testament is a missionary God, calling one family in order to bless all the families of the earth. The Christ of the Gospels is a missionary Christ; he sent the Church out to witness. The Spirit of the Acts is a missionary Spirit; he drove the Church out from Jerusalem to Rome. The Church of the epistles is a missionary Church, a worldwide community with a world-wide vocation. The end of the Revelation is a missionary End, a countless throng from

every nation. So I think we have to say that the religion of the Bible is a missionary religion ... Mission cannot be regarded as the hobby of a few fanatical eccentrics in the Church. Mission lies at the very heart of God and therefore at the very heart of the Church.

”

(Stott, 1995, p316)

In John 20:21 Jesus says, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ Jesus gave his disciples his power, his commission and the assurance of his presence. ‘The disciples were not supermen ... the Great Commission was not given to spiritual giants. It was given to an ordinary group of devoted, failure-

prone learners’ (Pesket and Ramachandra, 2003, p174) - just like us.

John Stott (1995, p316f) succinctly describes the authority that we have in Christ as we endeavour to live out the Great Commission by stating:

“ Only because all authority on earth belongs to Christ dare we go to all nations. And only because all authority in Heaven as well is his have we any hope of success. It must have seemed ridiculous to send that tiny nucleus of Palestinian peasants to win the world for Christ. For Christ’s Church today, so hopelessly outnumbered by hundreds of millions who neither know nor acknowledge him, the task is equally gigantic. It is the unique, the universal authority of Jesus Christ which gives us both the right and the confidence to seek to make disciples of all the nations. Before his authority on earth the nations must bow; before his authority in Heaven no demon can stop them.

”

According to Major Ian Mountford, ‘Jesus’ understanding of being sent gave him identity, clarity and purpose regarding his mission on earth.’ Therefore, we exist as Christians in order to be sent (Matthew 28; John 20:21: ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’) This idea of identity and purpose can also be seen in Matthew 4:19. Jesus asked Simon Peter and his brother Andrew to follow him and said that he would send them ‘to fish for people’. This demonstrates that the purpose of following Jesus involves participating in his mission to reach the world to follow him.

Jesus’ desire for humanity to follow him flowed from the burden he had for the ‘lost’, according to Major Howard Webber: ‘John 3:16 reveals the enormousness (sic) of Christ’s love, his burden, his concern that without him doing anything about it people would perish. Therefore, we need to have a burden of love like Jesus.’



Questions for reflection

- Read Romans 10:14-16-17: What is Paul trying to emphasise in these verses?

Evangelism as living epistles

2 Corinthians 3:1-6 (AMP)

“ Are we starting to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some [false teachers], letters of recommendation to you or from you? [No!] You are our letter [of recommendation], written in our hearts, recognised and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence and steadfast reliance and absolute trust that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficiently qualified in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency and qualifications come from God. He has qualified us [making us sufficient] as ministers of a new covenant [of salvation through Christ], not of the letter [of a written code] but of the Spirit; for the letter [of the Law] kills [by revealing sin and demanding obedience], but the Spirit gives life. ”

In this passage the apostle Paul speaks to the church in Corinth. He was trying to communicate that the presence of the church in Corinth serves as his letter of recommendation as he is the one who established it in the 18 months he spent there. This living epistle (letter) Paul speaks about describes Christians as living letters communicating the word of God not written using pen and paper, but that how people led their lives was testament to a life lived for Christ. Paul does not propose a sacred versus secular divide in the way Christians live their lives. This is because Christians represent Christ regardless of their environment whether among other Christians or non-Christians.

Paul also addresses the church regarding what ministry is. He discredits the idea that ministry is about drawing crowds, making people happy in the church,

having influence or indoctrinating others with the word of God. Instead, he sees true ministry as ‘ministry which makes people into living epistles of Jesus Christ’ (DePra, 2007). People become living epistles by the measure of what God is doing in their lives. How people live with their neighbours, how they conduct themselves in private and in public should be like letters communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit working in their lives in this way. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our lives consequently become vessels that glorify God.

In biblical times there was a practice of writing letters of commendation for preachers moving from one congregation to another. In today’s world our curricula vitae and references serve a similar purpose. These show how qualified we

are to do the job in hand. According to Paul, what is more important than letters of commendation is whether people's lives have been transformed by Jesus. Despite him being one of the greatest apostles in biblical history, some churches would not have written letters of commendation for Paul because they may have disliked him or thought he was not good enough. Hence he places importance on the manifestation of Jesus in people's lives over and above letters of commendation (DePra, 2007). People can be blinded by a person's ministerial qualifications or their level of participation in church activities among other believers without knowing their true character. However, the test of our faith and proof of how Jesus has impacted people's lives is how they live out their faith among believers and non-believers.

Being a living epistle means one's life speaks of Christ's saving grace. It means 'their life will display God's righteousness for his glory and that someone is a product of God's grace despite their failures. It doesn't mean this living

epistle is perfect but is a message that is written in a human being about the one who has done a work of grace in them despite their imperfect life' (DePra, 2007). This means one's life points to Christ and not to themselves.

Questions for reflection

- Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-12. In this passage Paul talks about what true ministry is. Consider the following questions with the understanding that all Christians are part of God's mission on earth.
 - What does life in Christ entail?
 - Does one primarily need qualifications to share the gospel?
 - What treasure does Paul refer to in this passage and of what use is it?
 - What role do God and the Holy Spirit play in making us living epistles of Christ?
 - Why does our relationship with God produce death according to this Scripture? How does this relate to our sharing of and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ?

A culture of evangelism

It is important that in addition to other activities that happen in our churches, a culture of evangelism and prayer is cultivated. This culture equips everyday believers to proclaim the gospel. Nothing strengthens evangelism more than a culture of prayer. It is equally important to declutter some activities which solely focus on befriending and not going as far as making Jesus known.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, history has shown that this is not the first time Christians have had to continue sharing the gospel despite the limitations brought about by a pandemic. Despite disease or persecution, Paul still evangelised while in prison (Acts 28:16-31).

“ Like the early Church, we must boldly step into the challenge of caring for the vulnerable and sick. We must address the anxieties and fears of those ministering on the front lines of the epidemic, and comfort those dealing with loss of loved one, destitute, abandoned and wounded. We must point them to the only One who can deliver/rescue us. ”

(Davis, 2020)

Questions for reflection

- How do you feel to know that by virtue of being a Christian you are an evangelist?
- Are you confident in sharing your faith? If not, why is that? What can help you in sharing your faith with confidence?
- Does anything hold you back from sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ or living out your faith in your community?
- In what contexts are you confident to speak about your faith? In what contexts do you avoid talking about our faith?
- Can you honestly say you are having ongoing spiritual conversations with a person or people that are not Christians? What impact does this have on your faith?



Prayer

Dear God

We pray for many to come to faith.

Help us make Jesus known in the places where you have placed us.

We pray for grace in our lives as we share the gospel.

Help us be an authentic community of believers who are authentic in the way we share the gospel.

Energise us to go to where people are and pray that when they hear your word, they will have an awakened spirituality.

Help us to sharpen our evangelistic focus so we preach a gospel which connects with the culture around us and brings redemption to the world.

Help us to share the gospel in a way that will in turn help to build up our faith.

We pray for boldness to enter gospel conversations with people and for clarity as we articulate the good news and bring your people to repentance. And we ask that the Holy Spirit come alongside our prayers and work.

Amen.

Reflection - Evangelism in practice

There are various ways in which people share the gospel. Some do it through formal sermons, others defend the faith (apologetics) using evidence, facts and logic, while still others embed it in their day-to-day lives. The gospel is not limited to certain people or cultures; it is transcultural, universal. It is not limited to those that are ordained, gifted, or extroverts. God empowers all to be his witnesses. Sam Chan (2020, p38), author of *Evangelism in a Sceptical World* says:

“ There are different models of evangelism in the Bible: sometimes it’s a logical presentation of ideas, sometimes it’s an event with emotional impact, and sometimes it’s through stories. Furthermore, different people experience God’s regenerating work in different ways. And because people will be persuaded in different ways -through logic, experiences, or personal examples - this leaves the door open for Christians to use different methods to evangelise. ”

Sharing of the gospel does not always occur in dramatic ways like witnessing in the streets or holding large crusades. The lockdown measures which were imposed as a result of the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic caused many churches to transition to technology by livestreaming worship via social media, Zoom, Facebook Live, Microsoft Teams and Facetime. These platforms proved to be great tools for sharing the gospel which were easily accessible, enabling people to worship remotely (Davis, 2020). The pandemic made the Church realise the importance of being equipped with evangelism tools which are relevant and effective. Furthermore it proved the importance of intentionally showing an interest in people using the technological tools which enable access to people albeit remotely. This is because the authentic relational way in influencing people for Jesus is the new way going forward in this new post-COVID world (Comer, 2020). ‘When we do relational evangelism, we need to make sure we speak to our friends with love and

compassion. We need to make sure that our gospel message will be good news’ (The Salvation Army, GFS).

For centuries Christians enjoyed the experience of gathering together at various points of the week to share fellowship. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that at a point in time this was not possible. The social distancing and lockdown measures imposed on countries by governments in order to control the spread of the virus caused the Church to fellowship in nuanced ways which did not require physical presence. This also had an impact on the way in which Christians shared the gospel. The Church individually and corporately had to reimagine other ways of sharing the gospel. These restrictions and limitations, however, did not annul the gospel. Despite government restrictions, the Great Commission remained the same. All the Church had to do was reimagine mission in light of the post-COVID-19 world.

We share the gospel not in our own strength but with the understanding that we rely on God and the Holy Spirit to help us. According to Sam Chan et al (2020, p24),

“ The essence of evangelism is the message that Jesus Christ is Lord. Evangelism is our human effort of proclaiming this message - which necessarily involves using our human communication, language, idioms, metaphors, stories, experiences, personality, emotions, context, culture, locatedness - and trusting and praying that God, in his sovereign will, will supernaturally use our human and natural means to effect his divine purposes ... We proclaim the gospel with the hope that our audience responds by trusting, repenting, and following and obeying Jesus.

”

It is our role to communicate this good news while the Holy Spirit convicts people of their sin and paves the way for people to accept God’s salvation willingly. He inspires and empowers us with words to share the gospel and simultaneously convicts the person hearing the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6).

The gospel can be hindered in many ways, primarily if our sole dependence is on ourselves and tactics designed to convince people of the gospel. While ‘a one-hit wonder’ approach works in some cases, Cromer (2020) suggests instead having an ongoing meaningful spiritual conversation with people as they journey to Christ.

Our ability to share the gospel in various ways as outlined above stems in part from how well congregants have been equipped or disciplined to speak about the gospel (LICC, 2021). This is because our delivery can draw or hinder people from following Christ. According to Major Howard Webber,

“ Before we speak about Jesus we need to listen, and not only listen to what troubles them. God is at work in the hearts of the people we meet long before we arrive on the scene, and we need to listen to them and what he may be revealing to us through what they say. We are very junior partners; he is the Great Evangelist.

”

Furthermore, it is when we listen that we are better able to use the good news to speak into those areas of brokenness and longing people could be facing (Vanderstelt).

Lynn Weston (LICC, 2021), LICC’s Director of Church of England Relations, speaks about six models of whole-life discipleship which can help people understand their fruitfulness as Christians as well as live out the gospel. These examples include:



Living out the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23): The fruits of the Spirit 'are the natural result of the Holy Spirit filling us, Christ living his life through us. Apples are the natural result of being on an apple tree. The question we all need to ask is, have I been filled with the Holy Spirit? Have I died with Christ, been emptied of "me", that I can be filled with the Holy Spirit?' (Major Howard Webber).

Making good work: For example, how can we support people that are going through challenges in life or those have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? How can we share the hope of the gospel with them?

Ministering grace and love: How do we live out the gospel through intentional acts of kindness?

Moulding culture: How can we intentionally live out the gospel in a way that changes the culture in the various contexts we find ourselves?

Becoming a mouthpiece for truth and justice: How do we speak about truth and justice in a way that connects rather than disconnects people? How do we speak with a prophetic voice with truth and justice in a way that is sensitive to changes in the world?

Being a messenger for the gospel: How do we best share stories about everyday lives of people trying to get through each day?

Questions for reflection

- Consider some of the equipping features for evangelism.
- Positioning: How can people adopt a relational kind of evangelism which is more of an ‘influence paradigm than a telling approach’?
- Deepening: How can we teach specific evangelistic/mission skills geared towards relationship building for the sake of the gospel?
- Influence: How can we ‘provide mission structures with coaching/discipling which is interactive, personal and includes real engagement with building ongoing redemptive relationships’? (Sam Chan et al, 2020).



Prayer 
Dear God,

Help us to be a church which offers hope in these uncertain times.
Use us in this this post-COVID-19 new normal to do great exploits for your Kingdom and help us cultivate a burden for those that need Christ.
We long see you move in the lives of people we meet. Holy Spirit, bring transformation to people that we encounter and help us joyfully encourage others to be in communion with you.
Change our church culture so that we can become a people that are longing for a life of evangelism helping people in their journey of faith.
Thank you for resources which we can use to help us evangelise effectively, and may your Spirit help us build networks/connections which will enable us to go to places where people need to hear your good news.
Amen.

This chapter has enabled us to think through the findings of the COVID-19 research carried out within The Salvation Army in 2020 and to consider what it means to share the gospel in this Post-COVID-19 world. This pandemic is one that has affected the 21st century in unimaginable ways. Life as we knew it has changed due to the presence of the virus. This change has made people realise that they are not in control or in charge of their lives and destiny. This realisation has caused many to seek answers from God. During all this, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ has not changed and continues to be shared across the world albeit in more nuanced ways. While Christians are called to have a personal relationship with Christ, that relationship is meant to compel them to introduce this personal Christ to the world around them. Therefore, the Church as a corporate body has an important part to play in ensuring that individual Christians are

disciplined and equipped to live as ‘sent’ people by God to be living epistles of Jesus Christ wherever they are at any given time. Munroe Saunders (Munroe, 2010, pIV) summarises the role of the Church in equipping Christians for evangelism as follows:

“ The church should be a worshipping community, a healing community, an equipping centre, and a deployment agency. There is an edge on which each one of us is living right now. This edge is a place where God is going to begin his work with us so that we will be able to minister with a new sensitivity, a new openness, new graces, and new power. Thus, we ourselves will be the gospel we are called to proclaim. Where the Spirit of God is allowed to work in full, strength through the human spirit, through reconstructed Spirit-filled vessels, the Church in any age will grow ... and be able to meet the loneliness of our disjointed world and make it whole.



”

Moving Forward - Evangelism resources

You may find these resources useful in exploring evangelism further:

- Greene, M (2010), *The Great Divide: The Biggest Challenge Facing the Church Today and What We Can Do About It*. London: LICC.
- Hudson, N (2019), *Scattered and Gathered, Equipping Disciples for the Frontline*. London, Intervarsity Press.
- Hudson, N (2021), ‘Why Does Whole-Life Disciple Making Really, Really Matter?’ Available at: <https://licc.org.uk/resources/chapter-1-making-disciples-for-everyday-life/> (Accessed 25 May 2021)

*These resources can be found on OurHub in the Missional Journal Toolbox

- Webber, H (2010), *Meeting Jesus: Inspiring Stories of Modern-Day Evangelism*. London, Shield Books.

We hope you have found this chapter helpful.

We would love to hear how you and your corps or community find this chapter and the process of reimagining discipleship in this post-COVID-19 era. If you have feedback or ideas you’d like to share with others, email rdu@salvationarmy.org.uk.

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COVID-19 and Inequalities (1)

Author: Dr Rebecca Harrocks [18]

Contributors: Jennifer Laurent-Smart and Peter Hobson [19]

This chapter is designed to be used following a Faith-Based Facilitation process [20]. All literature referenced is listed at the end for your ease of access.

Introduction - The issue

One of the most prevalent and recurring themes of The Salvation Army's COVID-19 research findings was the exacerbation of many of society's existing inequalities, including (but not limited to) geographic, socio-economic, gender, age, ethnic, digital and environmental inequalities. The research also highlighted an increasing prevalence of long and short-term contributors to inequalities such as domestic violence.

As Salvationists we must seek to understand how COVID-19 has compounded these inequalities, so we can reimagine mission to become better at being good news at the margins, and loving our neighbours. As Patel et al (2020, p110) have pointed out, the idea cited often at the start of the pandemic that COVID-19 does not discriminate is a 'dangerous myth, sidelining the increased vulnerability of those most socially and economically deprived'.

What is inequality

- 'Inequality - the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities - is a concept very much at the heart of social justice theories' (United Nations, 2015).
- '...the unfair difference between groups of people in society, when some have more wealth, status or opportunities than others' (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2021).
- 'We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar' (Barr, 2020).



Understanding the PESTLE[S] landscape

A PESTLE analysis is an established research tool that was used by The Salvation Army to analyse the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental impact of COVID-19, the resulting lockdowns, and the responses of individuals and society in the UKIT. A seventh area was added - Spirituality - because of the significance of faith to The Salvation Army as a church.

[18] Dr Rebecca Harrocks is a Researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[19] Jennifer Laurent-Smart is the Equality and Diversity Manager (THQ) and Peter Hobson is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (THQ).

[20] See introduction for FBF Cycle diagram.

These seven measures were used to research how COVID-19 will influence how we do mission. To practise mission we must recognise that not everyone has been affected equally by COVID-19, bringing to mind the ‘same storm, different boats’ analogy that was often cited in different forms in social media and the press during 2020, and bear in mind that some people were not in boats at all.

Pre-existing inequalities, linked to gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and health, have worsened due to exposure to the virus, the lockdowns, and

the far-reaching implications of both. Certain sectors such as retail and hospitality have been particularly badly impacted, as have the staff who work within them (Wilson et al, 2020).

Geographic inequalities have also been heightened; for example, the decline in economic output was estimated to have reached close to 50% in parts of the Midlands and North West of England during the second quarter of 2020, whereas in other parts of the country the impact may be half that (Money & Pensions Service, 2020).

Questions for reflection

- Who is your neighbour? We tend to associate the term ‘neighbour’ with groups or individuals we are comfortable or familiar with; is that truly accurate though?
- What do you think the existing inequalities are in your local community that may have been exacerbated by COVID-19? What do you think the impact has been on both individuals and specific groups within your community?
- How can you, both as an individual and a corps/centre, address these inequalities: practically, pastorally and spiritually?

The First Step

Being good news at the margins and listening authentically

As Christians, the first step to being good news at the margins is to listen authentically to those suffering from inequalities in society, and truly hearing what is being said by the voices of those usually ignored and silenced. Listening ‘to the world in which we live, to both the dominant and the marginal voices’ (Purdie, 2020, p11) is essential if we want to effectively recognise ‘who Jesus is and seek to live ... life in the light of this revelation’ (Swinton and Mowat, p8).

Roxburgh and Robinson (2020) remind us that Scripture tells us how the church in Philippi ‘was built from an encounter with Lydia, with a slave girl and a jailor’, in which a marginal and usually silenced voice was listened to authentically, resulting in positive and radical change. As a church with activist roots, it is important that The Salvation Army is listening authentically to those marginalised voices within our communities in order to properly respond to need, serve well and be good news.

We should not assume to know what is needed, but instead practise authentic listening to respond to the needs articulated by the marginalised, because ‘If we ignore the world we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world’ (Micah Network, 2001, p2). In this way we can also demonstrate respect and enable people ‘to be the architects of change in their communities rather than imposing solutions upon them’ (ibid).

Authentic listening is evidenced by responding to what is being said, and by being good news in meeting the physical, social or spiritual needs of those on the margins. As well as meeting needs on the frontline, being good news at the margins might include more long-term efforts and political campaigning to transform unjust societal structures that make some people more vulnerable to COVID-19 and the inequalities it exacerbates.



Questions for reflection

- What might cause people to feel marginalised or excluded, particularly in association with protected characteristics such as age, having a disability, or their relationship status?
- How can you create opportunities to authentically listen to marginal voices? Can you expand this, so these voices are not only heard but also help to shape and guide the agendas set?

Going Deeper

What does Scripture tell us about showing solidarity with those who are vulnerable?

Romans 14 instructs Christians to ‘accept the one whose faith is weak’ (v1) and not to judge or regard others with contempt (v3) if they have different views or ways of life from our own. But solidarity is much more than words and opinions; it also manifests in our actions. Jesus gives us many examples of how he showed solidarity with those who were vulnerable or who were considered secondary.

One of the best-known examples is Jesus

regularly eating with ‘tax collectors and sinners’ (eg Mark 2:15-17), people who were considered outcasts from polite Jewish society in first-century Palestine. He also showed solidarity with vulnerable people ostracised due to ‘sin’, such as the woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:36-50) and the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)[21]. This was quite a startling approach for the patriarchal society in which he lived.

[21] This latter account does not appear in the earliest biblical manuscripts

In Jesus' day, illness was often believed to be caused by sin, and to compound this, some conditions such as leprosy or haemorrhaging were deemed by Jewish law to make people 'unclean', as well as anyone who came into physical contact with them. This made people with disabilities into outcasts of Jewish society, and therefore highly vulnerable. Although Jesus could heal without touching people (eg Mark 7:29-30 / Matthew 15:28; Matthew 8:13 / Luke 7:9-10) he deliberately chose to make physical contact in some of his healings so demonstrating solidarity with those who were vulnerable and considered 'unclean' by way of their physical conditions.

Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy - Mark 1:40-41:

“ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”
Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!”

”

Questions for reflection

- Who do you meet who could be considered vulnerable?
- Jesus' method of showing solidarity through touch is not appropriate in our society, and even less so given COVID-19 safety restrictions. What was special when Jesus did so, though, is that it was important for his context. Thinking creatively, how have you shown solidarity with vulnerable people in the past, and how could you become even better at doing so? What does this look like in your context?

Case Study

Port Glasgow Corps in Inverclyde, led by Captain Ian Arthur, was particularly concerned about people's mental health over the pandemic and multiple lockdowns. The corps has been working with local partners to develop a mental health and wellbeing app, to show solidarity with those feeling low, isolated or vulnerable. The app helps people to monitor their own mental, spiritual and physical health and links them to support in the form of trusted contacts, experts with lived experience and local support groups. Previously this corps also produced a podcast about healthy grieving in lockdown.



Ministry 'with' (not 'to') that ensures equality, diversity, and inclusion

In order to be a truly integrated and inclusive Salvationist family, it is vital that ministry is done with people, and not 'to' them, so that they feel equal and included. This approach helps to eradicate power imbalances and promotes healthy, equal relationships within the corps or centre and the community, that allow people to journey further and more deeply in their walk with Christ, and provides them with an important sense of belonging.

Ministering 'with' and not 'to' recognises that we are all equal and precious before God, and it will probably look a bit different in different contexts. It recognises that we all have different gifts and strengths that we can contribute positively in supporting one another in ministry. Our own weakness might be someone else's strength, and vice versa. Ministering 'with' means humbling ourselves and learning from others, as well as lovingly and respectfully trying to tend to their needs.

Similarly, we all look different, come from varied places, and have different

life situations. An inclusive corps not only includes those with whom we are doing ministry as equals, but it also aims to reflect the rich diversity of its local community. This might look like varying ethnicities, nationalities, backgrounds, family structures, abilities/disabilities, orientations/identification, ages, etc, depending on the community within which the corps sits.

Questions for reflection

- What does doing ministry 'with' and not 'to' look like within your corps and the community?
- Does your corps reflect the diversity and demographics of the wider local community within which it is situated? If not, how could greater equality, diversity and inclusion be encouraged?
- What might some barriers to participation be? How can resources and materials be made more inclusive?

Reflection

Who may be more vulnerable because of COVID-19?

We have considered some of the ways in which we can respond to the inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19. However, in order to be able to effectively be good news at the margins, listen authentically, show solidarity with those who are vulnerable and do ministry 'with' and not 'to', it is also helpful to further consider who those at the margins actually are, and question where existing inequalities may have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Who might be more vulnerable as a result of COVID-19?



Older people:

Research from Age UK (2020) found that one in three over-60s have found their anxiety to be worse than before the start of the pandemic, which has had a far-reaching impact on other aspects of their lives. For example, 45% of people aged 70+ say that they are either uncomfortable or very uncomfortable leaving their house because of COVID-19, which has led to increased isolation, depression, lower fitness levels, and exacerbation of existing health problems.

People with disabilities:

People with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in facing a higher mortality risk from the virus, reduced access to routine healthcare, and the isolation of many having to shield due to being clinically vulnerable (Shakespeare et al, 2021). As with older people, shielding has brought to people with disabilities heightened anxiety, low mood, and isolation.

People from ethnic minorities, refugees, and asylum seekers:

People from ethnic minorities are at increased risk of both infection and death from COVID-19 (Iacobucci, 2020), whilst refugees and asylum seekers suffered reduced access to healthcare and vaccines, increased risk of exploitation, precarious housing situations, and a greater likelihood of exposure to the virus in deportation centres (Mukambang, 2020).

Women:

Women were another group particularly affected by the pandemic, especially mothers. Women were disproportionately represented at the frontlines of the pandemic's response (Zurlo, 2020), and yet women who were mothers took on the majority of home schooling (ONS, 2021), leading to an increased risk of unemployment for them (Petts et al, 2020). Women are also more likely to be suffering from Long Covid (Torjesen, 2021).



Children and young people:

Probable mental ill-health amongst 5 to 16-year-olds increased from one in nine children in 2017 to one in six children in 2020 (NHS Digital, 2020).

Young people were disproportionately represented in job sectors that were locked down, and their job and long-term economic prospects have suffered as a result more than other age groups (Costa et al, 2020).

Other considerations:

Certain geographic regions have been more greatly impacted in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases and detrimental effect on economic output. In addition, people working in certain sectors such as retail and hospitality have been particularly hard hit by the financial repercussions of COVID-19 (Wilson et al, 2020).

Questions for reflection

- There were many groups of people who were particularly hard hit by COVID-19 and its effects, such as single parents; those already struggling with mental health prior to the pandemic; or people living with domestic violence. Can you think of any others?
- Can you think of how you could start to help one or more of these groups of people, both individually and as a corps?

Moving Forward - Additional resources

For relevant help in your local area to identify the main groups, issues and activities that are already under way or planned in relation to inequalities, contact your local authority and they should be able to provide you with useful and recent information.

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COVID-19 and Inequalities (2)

Author: Dr Rebecca Harrocks [22]

Contributors: Jennifer Laurent-
Smart and Peter Hobson [23]

Introduction - The issue

In the last chapter we learnt how COVID-19 has made many of society's inequalities worse, the groups that may have been particularly affected, and how as Christians we can interact with affected individuals in the most helpful way. In this chapter we will now delve a little more deeply into some of the issues exacerbated by COVID-19, and reflect on how best to respond.

Responding to PESTLE[S] and Wicked Issues - The Submerged Tenth

What are Wicked Issues?

A Wicked Issue is 'a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden, and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems. Poverty is linked with education, nutrition with poverty, the economy with nutrition, and so on.' (https://wickedproblems.com/1_wicked_problems.php)

Responding to inequalities that have been worsened by COVID-19 is difficult as many 'Wicked Issues' are involved. These issues are complicated, interconnected, and have no easy solutions. For example, the Wicked Issue of COVID-19 is worsened by other Wicked Issues such as climate change, homelessness, domestic violence, unemployment, and other socio-economic factors, making it nearly impossible to resolve fully. As we saw in the last chapter, Wicked Issues can also have wide-ranging Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Spiritual implications.

The 'Submerged Tenth' is the 10 per cent of the population that William Booth said was living permanently in poverty. He also used the analogy of a cliff fall to explain how, although saving the person who has fallen into the sea is appropriate, it is much better to tackle some of the issues at the top of the cliff which caused that person to fall. In this analogy, people from the Submerged Tenth are most likely to be the ones falling into the sea, as well as being those most impacted by Wicked Issues.

[22] Dr Rebecca Harrocks is a Researcher in the Research and Development Unit (THQ).

[23] Jennifer Laurent-Smart is the Equality and Diversity Manager (THQ) and Peter Hobson is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (THQ).

Questions for reflection

- Wicked issues can be overwhelming, but do not let this stop you taking action. Think of the ‘Submerged Tenth’ in your corps’ local neighbourhood; what are some of the Wicked Issues that you think might make their lives more challenging?

The First Step - What are the challenges?

Domestic abuse

When the first UK lockdowns were announced in March 2020, there was great concern that many victims of domestic abuse would be stuck in dangerous situations with nowhere to turn. There was also worry that abusers were more likely to be triggered by the increased stress and pressures of being locked down.

Unfortunately, these fears seem to have been well founded. The domestic violence charity Refuge reported that between April 2020 and February 2021 the calls and contacts logged on their National Domestic Abuse Helpline increased by an average of 61% per month compared with January to March 2020. They note that these figures may not tell the full extent of the issue because being isolated with an abusive partner is likely to have made reaching out for support even more challenging (Refuge, 2021).

Survivors of domestic abuse are defined as those who are over 16 years old and who have experienced any form of domestic abuse from a current or previous intimate partner, carer or family member. Domestic abuse is usually considered to be a crime against women, which it is (Women’s Aid, 2020), but it is also important to recognise that one in three domestic abuse victims is male (ONS, 2020). Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, class, sexual orientation or social standing.

Domestic abuse can take the form of physical violence, but includes much more than this. Emotional/psychological abuse, coercive control, sexual abuse, financial abuse, stalking and online abuse can all be forms of domestic abuse, and the psychological effects from abuse often last much longer than the physical ones. Most of these forms of abuse are also crimes under UK law.

Questions for reflection

- What can you do to support people who may be experiencing, or have experienced, domestic abuse?



Unemployment

At the start of the pandemic, the UK governments acted swiftly to protect jobs through financial support schemes for employees and the self-employed. Regardless, over 800,000 jobs were lost in the first year (Powell & Francis-Devine, 2021), and although the jobs market is now showing positive signs of recovery (ONS, 2021b), the long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 are likely to reverberate down the years.

As with many effects of the pandemic, unemployment has impacted some groups and sectors more than others. People working in hospitality, manufacturing, retail, and the arts, entertainment and recreation industries have been particularly adversely affected (Powell & Francis-Devine, 2021). Employees aged under 25 were two and a half times as

likely than other age groups to work in a sector that was closed during the lockdowns (Joyce and Xu, 2020), and 70% of job losses between March 2020 and May 2021 came from amongst this age group. Young people who remained employed but are early into their careers are also likely to face reduced career progression in the short term, as well as the financial implications of this.

At the other end of the spectrum, workers over 65 have also been badly affected by COVID-19. They were more likely to be furloughed or suffer from decreased incomes than those aged 25-64 years, whilst 12% of over-65s who are still in the workforce are now retiring later than intended due to the financial impact of COVID-19 (Powell & Francis-Devine, 2021).

Questions for reflection

- What is your corps doing to support people seeking employment? Could you offer mentoring to young people, or volunteering opportunities to people who have been out of work for a long time, to help them back into the workplace?
- How can you as an individual support local businesses?

Poverty

Unsurprisingly, the extensive economic consequences of COVID-19 have increased poverty in the UK, and again, this has not been felt equally. Working-age adults form the group that has been the worst impacted in terms of poverty, because they have been most impacted by job losses and reduced earnings. Prior to the pandemic, 14.4 million people in the UK lived in poverty, and the most recent research suggests that the pandemic has increased this number by 320,000 (Legatum Institute, 2021).



The governments' financial support measures have prevented this situation from being much worse, though it is too soon to know what the long-term effects of COVID-19 on poverty will be. The closure of the UK Government furlough scheme, ongoing impacts on businesses, and the second pandemic of Long Covid which almost a million people in the UK are currently suffering from (ONS, 2021a), are some of the poverty-related challenges that are likely to echo long into the future.

Questions for reflection

- How can your corps support people suffering from the long-term effects of poverty?

Digital inclusion/exclusion

Digital inequalities were highlighted as a cause for concern very early on in the pandemic, as businesses and schools closed and many workers and students were forced to work from home with a heavy reliance on computers and internet access. The digital divide is the gap between people who have access to these, and those who do not. Digital inclusion has also been essential during the pandemic for people to access services, attend virtual medical appointments, make essential purchases, access news and information, and stay socially connected.



In terms of digital engagement, the pandemic has prompted the UK to make five years' worth of progress in one by 2021, but there remain troubling gaps. 5% of the UK population remain digitally excluded, without access or skills to use IT that is essential to full participation in society. Those who are more likely to face digital exclusion include those who are unemployed, people on lower incomes, older people, and people with disabilities (Lloyds Bank, 2021).

Questions for reflection

- What is your corps doing to close the digital divide amongst people in your local community? How accessible are its digital materials and offerings to those who are not digitally literate?
- How are corps members affected personally by digital exclusion? How can you help them to close this digital divide?

Going Deeper

How do we equip our responses?

Psalm 25:4-5

“ Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long. ”

Luke 5:16

“ Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. ”

Luke 6:12-13

“ One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles. ”

Jesus is regularly shown praying, especially around significant events; and so it should be with equipping our responses. The first step in knowing how to respond to the many inequalities caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic is to approach the Lord in prayer, and to ask for his guidance and wisdom in planning your response. The issues and the inequalities are many, and so you may need to think prayerfully through the questions of what you can do, and who and which inequalities you will prioritise in responding to.

There are two other big questions to consider. The first is, what resources does the corps or centre have? This can be in terms of buildings, soldiers, volunteers, relationships, time, or anything else that is at your disposal to help in supporting people.

The second question is, what are the needs in your corps and local community? It may be that your local area contains a particularly high proportion of specific groups that have been badly impacted by some of the inequalities of the pandemic, and that these are therefore a priority in your response.

Joining the dots in our responses

Deuteronomy 24:17-18

“ Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. ”

Amos 5:24

“ ...let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream! ”

One of the recurring themes throughout the Old Testament is a concern for justice. Justice is presented as an important value for the correct and fair functioning of society. In contrast, injustice in its many forms is shown to particularly disadvantage the poor and vulnerable, and make life even harder for them.

Similarly, The Salvation Army seeks to fight for social justice by serving suffering humanity and actively serving the community. Today, just as in the time of the Old Testament prophets, poverty and injustice can be closely related, as are the Wicked Issues that cause and compound them. As Christians, we seek to see all people treated fairly and equally, for all are precious and beloved children of God.

As part of this we must recognise that although Wicked Issues are complicated

Reflection

Partnership working and impact measurement

As part of using resources wisely and joining the dots, you may wish to consider what other services or organisations are working in your local community, and if you can work in partnership with any of them. Partnership working can open you up to new insights, increased capacity and reaching new audiences, to name but a few advantages.

Impact measurement is another really useful tool to ascertain whether your corps is meeting its mission and vision. Impact measurement can help you to assess, understand and develop the benefits and impact of how you are serving the local community.

and impossible to solve, we should try to ‘join the dots’ in our responses to injustices, as they are often closely related. For example, if you are a woman living in poverty or someone with a disability, then you are statistically more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse (McManus et al, 2016; PHE, 2015). In turn, domestic abuse is often a factor in women’s homelessness, substance abuse and poor mental health, so planning support services for people who have experienced domestic abuse should also consider how to assist survivors with other common issues they may face.

It is important to recognise the interrelation of many social injustices, and join the dots in the services that are needed to address these multiple and complex issues.



Case Study

At the start of the pandemic, Stornoway Corps needed to expand their food bank to meet local demand, and a local golf course offered to host this in their large premises. Corps officers Faith and Christopher Thompson also developed relationships with local businesses to build supplies, locate rural collection points and source more volunteers. They also helped the council to identify areas of high need and isolated locations from which people were struggling to travel to the food bank.

Questions for reflection

- Of the inequalities you feel called to respond to, are there existing partnerships that you could build upon to better respond to local needs?
- In what ways could your responses be further strengthened by building new relationships, and working in partnership with other churches, charities, or organisations in your local community?

Sacrificial service vs. keeping people safe

Thank you for your sacrificial service in responding to the inequalities caused and exacerbated by COVID-19. Please make sure you are keeping both yourself and others safe by following the latest government guidance, and taking precautions such as social distancing, mask-wearing and regular handwashing where appropriate.

If you are physically vulnerable to COVID-19 due to age, ethnicity, or an underlying health condition, please consider a less frontline and high-risk role by responding in an equally valuable manner such as prayer support.

Moving forward - Additional resources

The Salvation Army's Equality and Diversity Team is passionate about being inclusive and enabling people to experience a sense of belonging. If you would like additional support, information or guidance in relation to equality and inclusion, or if you would just like to share information about what you are doing, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team at equalityandinclusion@salvationarmy.org.uk or the Equality and Diversity Manager, Jennifer Laurent-Smart, at jennifer.laurent-smart@salvationarmy.org.uk.

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