	THE SALVATION ARMY UNITED KINGDOM TERRITORY WITH THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND **POSITIONAL STATEMENT** **POVERTY**

The Salvation Army is a worldwide evangelical Christian church and believes all people are created by God in his image and as such should be valued and treated with dignity and respect.
[1] The failure of people to recognise the worth of others has led to injustice and suffering.

The Bible, in the Old Testament, reveals that God acts to deliver the oppressed. He is concerned for justice, brings freedom from oppression and demonstrates a special concern for the poor and their suffering.[2] God makes clear that he requires the whole community to defend the cause of those who are vulnerable.[3]

The New Testament record shows Jesus repeatedly identifying himself with poor and marginalised people and preaching liberty to the oppressed.[4] This is an essential part of the 'new order' Jesus proclaimed, and challenges the view that people living in poverty are of lesser importance. Jesus teaches that all people are in relationship with one another. Therefore, everyone with whom we have dealings becomes our 'neighbour' and we must love our neighbour as ourselves.[5] Jesus affirms that anything we do for 'one of the least of people' we do for him,[6] demonstrating that our response to others is an integral part of our response to him.

The Christian Church aspires to live out the reality of God's new order. It works in God's name to bring release to people in need. The Church is made up of both rich and poor, living together as the Body of Christ, learning from one another. Having itself received the grace and generosity of God, the Church seeks to exemplify that generosity.[7]

The Salvation Army was founded within poor communities. It identifies with and includes the poor, seeking to meet physical, material, emotional and spiritual need. However, The Salvation Army recognises it is society's responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to adequate resources, services and opportunities. It is necessary to safeguard basic human rights to food, shelter and clothing, the right to economic initiative, productive work, just wages and decent working conditions.

The Salvation Army is committed to the alleviation of poverty through humanitarian aid and long-term development in those parts of the world in which it is present. It acknowledges its responsibilities towards others and the need for good stewardship. The Salvation Army in the UK and the Republic of Ireland is committed to addressing the needs of people living in poverty and stands in solidarity with the poor by:

> defending the right of people living in poverty to play a full part in their communities;

> advocating that poorer nations should have the opportunity to participate fully in political and economic activity and debate on an international level;

> speaking out for the needs of the poor when government and corporate policies could cause greater poverty, and also recognising and encouraging positive initiatives;

> supporting activities that can alleviate the economic burden for people living on a low income;

> recognising and responding to the particular needs of ethnic and other minority groups who are particularly affected by social and economic disadvantage;

implementing and encouraging the provision of education and vocational training, empowering the poor to help themselves out of the poverty trap;

listening to, learning from and building relationships with vulnerable groups to ensure people are not stigmatised by their circumstances, but are assisted holistically.

The Salvation Army recognises that it has a corporate responsibility to live out the gospel and Christ's call to care for the poor, and it encourages individual Salvationists to share in the discharge of that responsibility according to their means.

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[1] Genesis 1:27
[2] Isaiah 61:1-3, Isaiah 58:6-9
[3] Psalm 72:12-14, Micah 6:8 , Nehemiah 5:1-3
[4] Luke 4:18-21 quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2

[5] Mark 12:31, Luke 10:29-37
[6] Matthew 25:40
[7] Acts 11:27-30, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15