



MARCHING TOWARDS JUSTICE

*Community Organising and
The Salvation Army*

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. HISTORY.....	5
1.1 BORN FOR JUSTICE-SEEKING	
1.2 TAKING TO THE STREETS	
1.3 A WAR ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING	
1.4 BEYOND A FOOD BANK	
1.5 IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT	
1.6 LIGHTS IN DARKEST ENGLAND	
1.7 RE-IMAGINING THE PAST	
2. METHODOLOGY.....	15
2.1 VISITATION	
2.2 POWER ANALYSIS	
2.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	
2.4 PUBLIC ACTION	
2.5 SUMMARY	
3. STORIES.....	27
3.1 ILFORD SALVATION ARMY	
3.2 STEPNEY SALVATION ARMY	
3.3 WILLIAM BOOTH COLLEGE & CAMBERWELL SALVATION ARMY	
CONCLUSION.....	47
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	



INTRODUCTION



This short report is written to help local corps and Salvation Army centres get stuck into the gospel work of transforming their neighbourhoods. At the heart of Salvation Army missional engagement is the dual focus of evangelism and social action. As with any healthy, holistic view of mission, both aspects are properly integrated and cannot be separated. An often-neglected part of social action, however, is the role that seeking justice plays in moving beyond treating the symptoms of social injustice to challenging the causes. Following a tendency to elevate acts of service above acts of justice, *Marching Towards Justice* is a call for a return to our justice-seeking roots.

We begin with a glance backwards at the successful Salvation Army social justice campaigns at the end of the nineteenth century. In doing so we aim not to glorify them as unassailable heights that we can never reach again, but to bring them down to earth and expose elements that we can put into practice today.

In the second chapter, we outline a methodology for community engagement and justice-seeking at the grassroots. Drawing on tried and tested practices of community organising we look at four ways we can orientate our corps and Salvation Army institutions to integrate justice-seeking into our mission culture.

In the final section we root the theory in story. *Marching Towards Justice* ends with three case studies from some of London's most diverse and economically deprived neighbourhoods. We tell these stories not to elevate them above others but to encourage and inspire the mission of Salvation Army expressions everywhere. It is our prayer that whatever your connection is with The Salvation Army and whatever context you find yourself in, these stories will enrich your own missional practice.



1 HISTORY



One of the joys of being a Salvationist is the attachment we have to the heroic stories of the past. Our imaginations become absorbed with the end of the nineteenth century, when the giants of Salvationism roamed the earth. Their names set our hearts ablaze – General Booth, The Army Mother, Elijah Cadman, Elizabeth Cottrill... The places they walked evoke an air of adventure – the East End of London, Mile End Waste, The Blind Beggar Pub, The Quaker Burial Ground. Even their activities conjure up a feeling of suspense and excitement - The Maiden Tribute, Lights in Darkest England, The Whitechapel Elevator, and the Slum Sisters. These stories have become a part of us – the air we breathe.

The Salvation Army has an inspiring and vibrant past but it counts for little if we do not allow it to shape our practice today. As such, a glance back at early Salvation Army justice-seeking is an important strand in developing a framework for action.

1.1 BORN FOR JUSTICE-SEEKING

Everything about the language, terminology and methodology of the early Salvation Army points to a revolutionary movement seeking to turn the world upside down: a motto declaring “Blood and Fire,” a newspaper entitled “The War Cry,” marching bands, banners and flags, songs of freedom, a deep connection with those pushed to the margins of society and organised people with a strong, a unified message of a better life in this world and the next. Similar phenomena have been evident in almost every justice movement across the globe - from India’s independence marches, through the American Civil Rights Movement, to anti-apartheid action in South Africa. These were the tools of the first Salvationists as they sought to transform communities and today these same things can enable The Salvation Army to bring about change in a bold and public fashion.

The Salvation Army is a movement born for justice-seeking. Looking back to our roots we can see examples of a Salvation Army that was active in identifying issues, mobilising membership, building public relationships with others and taking action. The late nineteenth century was a particularly exciting time for this justice-seeking Army.

1.2 TAKING TO THE STREETS

The first taste of public action and confrontation with civil authorities came through The Salvation Army's desire to preach the gospel in market squares and town centres across the United Kingdom during the 1870s and 80s. Salvation Army processions and 'open-air' were often met with great resistance – by locally organised gangs dubbed 'the skeleton army' and by public authorities keen to deter The Salvation Army from obstructing public space. Salvationists were routinely arrested, charged with public order offences and imprisoned for making their stand. Even when faced with violence the Salvationists continued to march. Eventually, in 1892 Parliament intervened with a law that would allow public processions - handing a great victory to The Salvation Army. This was not only a triumph for Salvationists but for all movements seeking the right to hold processions and discussions in the street. Many reformers and activists held common cause with The Salvation Army on this, even when they disagreed on religion.

1.3 A WAR ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 1885 Salvation Army leaders joined the fight against child sex exploitation. Working in tandem with reformer Josephine Butler, The Salvation Army fought to expose the shocking levels of child prostitution in London. Catherine Booth corresponded with Queen Victoria and the Prime Minister on the issue and publicly condemned Members of Parliament for their lack of will in taking action. The Pall Mall Gazette ran a series of articles, written by journalist WT Stead with some support from The Salvation Army, detailing how easy it was to buy a child on the streets of London. The story, 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' rocked the British political establishment to the core.

All Salvationists across the United Kingdom were encouraged to join the fight, culminating in an organised and direct action on Parliament. Historian Roger Green writes:



The Booths wrote a petition to the House which in the course of seventeen days received 393,000 signatures. The petition was nearly two miles in length and was coiled up into an immense roll bound and draped with Salvation Army colors - yellow, red, and blue. The petition was then conveyed through London to Trafalgar Square, accompanied by an escort of mothers and the men cadets' band. To comply with the law that no procession should approach within a mile of Westminster when the House was in session, the petition was then carried down Whitehall on the shoulders of eight cadets and laid on the floor of the House because there was not sufficient room on the customary commons table.¹

The combined efforts of those involved brought about change - Parliament pushed through the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which raised the age of consent to sixteen, proscribed child abduction, and granted the police greater powers to search for kidnapped girls. In August 1885, The Salvation Army held a thanksgiving meeting in Exeter Hall, chaired by the General, giving praise to God for the change in law.

1.4 BEYOND A FOOD BANK

1889 was a crucial year for East London, the birth place of The Salvation Army. Many local men were employed in the dockyards where they were treated harshly and survived on poverty pay. When the dockworkers went out on strike, there was little to keep them and their starving families alive. The Salvation Army swiftly moved to action from the food depot established near the West India Docks, serving thousands of meals to those on strike. Ben Tillett, leader of the dockers' union, later recalled that The Salvation Army's action was a strong factor in the dock workers' victory on improved pay and conditions. From Australia, The Salvation Army sent proceeds from the sale of *The War Cry* to the London dockers' strike fund. The Salvation Army, it appears, had reached the intersection between providing a meal

¹ 'Catherine Booth' by Green 1997:p259

in service and fighting a just cause. This was the case of a food bank that moved from a hand-out to a hand-up. Despite their theological differences the two biggest religious figures in the East End - Cardinal Manning, the Archbishop of Westminster, and General Booth - were both widely praised for their interventions on behalf of the dockers.

1.5 'IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT'

In 1890, The Salvation Army published William Booth's great scheme for social reform – In Darkest England and the Way Out. Historians generally agree the work was greatly influenced by journalist WT Stead and Commissioner Frank Smith, a Salvation Army officer in charge of The Social Reform Wing who had strong links with the labour movement.² The scheme itself was a pivotal moment in declaring the dual mission of The Salvation Army to work for both spiritual and social redemption and aimed to work for the total and lasting transformation of the whole person. It appears that the experience of The Salvation Army establishing itself in communities where ordinary people were crushed by poverty had brought The General to this theological and pragmatic position. Whilst some contemporary social reformers and politicians were quick to critique the scheme, others were lavish in praise. There is no doubt, however, that In Darkest England and The Way Out, has an important place in late nineteenth century social reform and its contents continue to frame Salvation Army action today.

1.6 LIGHTS IN DARKEST ENGLAND

Of all the stories of early Salvation Army justice-seeking, The Lights in Darkest England project is perhaps the best-known. In the 1880s The Salvation Army leadership, in particular Catherine Booth, became involved with the plight of those enduring 'sweated labour.' For many

² 'Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement' by Bailey 1984: p149; 'Blood and Fire' by Hattersley 1999: p383



women and children in the East End of London, most of whom were families of dock workers, match-making in a factory or at home was one of the few methods of employment. Working conditions were appalling, the pay exploitative and the phosphorous used to make the matches damaging to health. Despite some improvement in pay and conditions following the 'Match Girls' strike of 1888, the match-making industry continued to use the white phosphorous that caused many workers to develop cancer of the jaw (known as 'phossy jaw') leading to a ban in some European countries. In 1891 The Salvation Army announced it would open up its own match factory only a few hundred metres from the huge Bryant and May factory in Bow and declared war on the match making industry!

A concerted and co-ordinated campaign was organised across the United Kingdom: The War Cry carried adverts for the Salvation Army matches; Salvationists were encouraged to 'bother' their local shop-keepers until they stocked the brand; The Deliverer – the Social Wing newspaper – narrated testimonies from the victims of 'phossy jaw'; Members of Parliament were given tours of The Salvation Army match factory which paid higher wages, allowed tea breaks and used an alternative, safer red phosphorous. The fight for change was to be a struggle over a number of years and involved those who were directly affected by the issue. The factory manager, Mr Nunn (a Methodist), was a victim of 'phossy jaw' himself, requiring sixteen teeth and part of his jaw bone to be removed. Many of the workers attended local Salvation Army corps.

The Salvation Army did not work alone – union leader Annie Besant had been organising the match-workers since 1888 and many of the Match Girls themselves had powerful voices of their own.³ In 1894 they formed the British Match Consumers' League building a strong coalition of support and the newspapers regularly carried stories about the match factory. However, maintaining a solvent business was consistently challenging for The Salvation Army and by 1901 the factory had to close. Nonetheless, by this time the highlighting of the deficiencies of the match-making industry had led to the improvement of factory conditions, workers pay and manufacturing machinery. Eventually

3 'Striking a Light: the Bryant and May Match Women' by Louise Raw, 2009

Parliament was to outlaw the use of white phosphorous in 1908 but by then hardly anyone was using it, thanks to the work of The Salvation Army and its allies.

1.7 RE-IMAGINING THE PAST

The stories of old have a power to impact the present. These stories remind us that we stand on the shoulders of giants. If they remain only as aspirational legends, however, they can rob us of what we can learn about the reality of justice-seeking today. The nuances of these stories are what carry lessons for our own time and context. Here are a few:

- The Salvation Army won nothing alone. Even though we like to remember these stories as our triumphs, in every case there were allies, collaborators and partners – people from very different theological, ideological and social positions tethered together by a common cause. Without these partnerships there would have been no victories at all.
- The campaigns involved a coming together of leaders at the top of the organisation and those affected by the issues at the grassroots. This mutual dependency was essential for success. The Salvation Army could legitimately fight the issues because it had in its ranks the very people affected. The campaigns were not conducted for the suffering but with the suffering.
- There was a willingness to risk reputation and agitate those in power to fight a just cause. The British Establishment – Church, Politicians, press - was often shocked by the tactics of The Salvation Army and newspapers were as ready to mock and caricature The Salvation Army as to lend support.
- It was a struggle – little came easily or quickly. Persistence and tenacity was key to success.
- The interplay between social service and social justice was used to great effect. Simply offering a hand-out was never enough.
- The Salvation Army used its influence to approach those with the power to make change. Public relationships were sought at the very top of the power chain including Prime Ministers and members of



The Royal Family.

- There was little fear of using bold, public action to raise awareness of the issues. Even in the face of great opposition, getting out on the streets and demanding attention was a key tactic in achieving success.
- The dichotomy between the physical and spiritual elements of mission does not seem pronounced. The early Salvationists appear to be completely confident in being true to their spiritual calling whilst fighting for social change in the public square. This was an entirely integrated mission that worked for the transformation of the whole person and the whole of society.

Let us then be encouraged that these stories of our forebears do not set a standard that is unobtainable. Instead, they inform, shape and provide fuel for the methods and action of a justice-seeking Salvation Army today.

2 METHODOLOGY



In this chapter we will explore how we can be directly involved in justice-seeking through our local corps and centres. There are four elements that are essential in bringing about lasting change: visitation, power analysis, training and development and public action.

2.1 VISITATION

At the very heart of Salvationist practice is visitation. By this, in accordance with Salvation Army Orders and Regulations for Officers, we mean, “personal contact with people... where they are to be found, with a view to furthering their spiritual interests.” In order to do this, a visit takes the form of spending 30-45 minutes with someone. The purpose of the visit is not to talk about the weather but to talk about



**CATHERINE
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matters of substance. It is our argument that “furthering someone’s spiritual interests,” or aiding their growth as disciples of Jesus Christ, involves engaging them in working for social justice. It involves their growth as an active citizen. To this end, the spiritual goals of the visit are also immensely ‘earthly.’ The conversation needs to encourage both parties to speak freely about themselves; their hopes and dreams, their testimony, the story of where they’ve come from and how they see themselves in the future. The aim,

in terms of community organising, is to form a ‘public relationship.’ It requires listening.

A visit is a space where relationships of trust are built, and these relationships are what build community. In the Salvationist context, we recognise that such social spaces are sacramental. In its broadest sense, a sacrament is the transmission, or connection with, the transcendent through material means.¹ Traditionally considered to be a sacred rite

¹ ‘Sacramental Causality in Aquinas and Rahner: Some Critical Thoughts’ by Tappeiner 1975: p243

or ritual, a sacrament has been described as involving the following: (a) a physical ‘element’, (b) a ‘likeness’ to that which is signified, (c) scriptural authorisation to connect the material to the transcendent, and (d) efficacy.²

These factors are understood to be the conditions for the possibility of a mode of revelation – a means for God disclosing Himself in the world – and can be seen in the social interaction that takes place in visitation. First, there is the physical element, which is the social interaction itself. Our sociality is material all the way down, because we are grounded in the world. As our minds are integrated to our body, so too our social interactions are integrated to the environment around us. In other words, the space of visitation is a physical ‘element.’

Secondly, there is a likeness in the social interaction to that which is signified. Our third doctrine describes the Trinity – three persons in the Godhead, undivided in essence and co-equal. In a visit, those involved are undivided in their sociality and co-equal in their need and development of community. A visit that involves reciprocity and mutuality, oriented towards developing a public, trust-based relationship is an image of the character of God.

Thirdly, there is scriptural authorisation to connect the materiality of the social space to the transcendent. This comes in Matthew 25, which is a very important passage for Salvationists. In an adaption, The Salvation Army Officers covenant commits the Officer to: (a) loving the unlovable, (b) befriending the friendless, (c) feeding the hungry, (d) clothing the naked, (e) giving drink to the thirsty, (f) visiting the imprisoned and the sick, (g) giving refuge. All of these actions, known in other traditions as ‘Works of Mercy’ require the presence of another person. The presence of another creates the conditions for the possibility of Christ’s presence. The key to Matthew 25 is:

Christ does not say that inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, it will be ‘as if you had done it unto me; but rather that inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me’³

² ‘Christian Theology: An Introduction’ by A.E. McGrath 2007: pp421-422

³ ‘Transformation Theology’ by O. Davies, et al 2007: p115



Finally, there is efficacy in the act of a visit that has been described above. The consequence of this sacramental act is the cultivation of authentic Christian community as strong and thick relationships are built between people. Power, defined as the capacity to act, is either a consequence of organised people or organised money. This power can either be dominant (power over...) or relational (power with...). The efficacy of a visitation is the production of relational power, meaning that people have the capacity to act.

In the early days of The Army, Catherine Booth recognised the importance of visitation, with each officer expected to spend 18 hours each week in visiting from house to house and to, “spare no possible effort besides for the good of souls.” Catherine herself committed to two evenings each week spent in visitations. She described this as a, “systematic course of house-to-house visitation,” which was “done despite the circumstances.” There should be no obstacle to a visit.⁴

2.2 POWER ANALYSIS

In the Hebrew Bible we read that a few days after Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he went to examine the walls he intended to rebuild.⁵ When Jethro spent a day with Moses, from morning to evening, he saw the burden that his son-in-law was under with no one else being given responsibility for leadership.⁶ Deborah would sit under a palm tree as people came to her where she listened to their needs and spoke wisely into their situations.⁷ Abigail was quick to analyse the power that was held by David and his army, and then appealed to David’s self-interest in order to save her family from destruction.⁸ In the New Testament we read that Jesus travelled the villages and encountered the needs of people, being moved by compassion to preach and heal, but also

4 Green 1997 pp95-6

5 Nehemiah 2:11ff

6 Exodus 18

7 Judges 4

8 1 Samuel 25

recognising the need for more workers.⁹ Even before creation, when the earth was without form and void, the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.¹⁰ Prior to any effective action, whether it's a building project, a battle, or the creation of the world, it is necessary to know the real state of things.

A key feature of all the Biblical examples given is that they were operating in the 'world-as-it-is' rather than the world as they thought it should be. There can sometimes be a danger that we don't have a true understanding of the 'way things work around here' and this nullifies our capacity to effect change. This is applicable as much to our corps as it is to our communities. A 'power analysis' is effectively a map of the relationships within an institution, and also a map of how a given institution interacts with other institutions. It can be summarised as:

A basic understanding of which leaders have followings and influence, how they relate to one another, who determines what decisions are made and how money is spent.¹¹

It might well be that an officer will carry out an informal analysis of these relationships when they first arrive at a corps. However, relationships and influence change through time. So, the best way to strengthen the corps as a whole is to share this 'mapping' exercise with others in the corps. It also provides a vital opportunity for all of the corps to join in. In the words of the founder of community organising:

The denial of the opportunity for participation is the denial of human dignity and democracy.¹²

With that in mind, a good and honest analysis of the relational power in a corps can only be done after a number of individual meetings (visitations). What will become clear, however, is that institutions like Salvation Army corps or those that corps will relate to, don't function

9 Matthew 9:35ff

10 Genesis 1

11 'Effective Organising for Congregational Renewal' by Gecan et al 2008: pp13-14

12 'Rules for Radicals' by S Alinsky 1971: p123



according to publicly stated policies or procedures. For example, the ‘official process’ may say that a proposal needs to be presented before a given committee, when, really, the committee’s decision might be based on one or two key influential people. In other words, institutions function according to relationships. That’s why it’s so important that we know how they fit together.

2.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

When Jesus was changing the world, he did not do it with a programme. He chose a small team who he trained to be able to carry out His mission. He trained these disciples in a number of ways. He told stories, like the one about the rich man whose manager was accused of wasting possessions,¹³ which helped the disciples give an account of what they were doing. He taught through example,¹⁴ so that they could see in Him who they were created to be. He also trained them through action, like when he gave them the loaves of bread to share,¹⁵ so that they also learned by experience.

In the same way, when corps are training their recruits to become Soldiers, we expect them to be more than just ‘Sunday Christians,’ living up to deep-seated, covenanted lifestyles which demand accountability and every-day commitment. This requires an internalisation of what it means to be a Salvationist, including the recognition that working for social justice is as essential to true discipleship as Bible study or social service.

With this in mind, the training and development of Salvationists through teaching, example and action should be a priority in any local corps. Before we discuss some ideas of how we think people should be trained, we would like to highlight the sort of training that we are not talking about. Firstly, we are not talking about training ideologues. Ideologues are great at telling people what to think and believe. They spoon-feed people the answers so that they can become parrots and

¹³ Luke 16:1

¹⁴ John 13:15

¹⁵ Matthew 14:9

quote the right phrase. We are talking about training people to think for themselves so that when they are isolated in the battle, they can make judgments with regard to action.

Secondly, we are not talking about training advocates. Advocacy is a popular word in relation to effecting change; however, advocates speak on behalf of others. We are talking about training people to speak for themselves. One of the key features of the match factory campaign was that those who were being treated badly spoke and acted for themselves. While being a 'voice for the voiceless' might make you feel good about yourself, wouldn't it be more powerful if the voiceless were developed to find their voice?

Thirdly, we are not talking about training programme directors. Programme directors are good at doing things for other people. We are talking about training people to do things for themselves. Again, while it feels good to get the 'rush' from an act of service, isn't it more powerful and more fulfilling in the longer term for people to learn how to act for themselves?

What kind of training and development are we referring to? This is leadership training. Training of this kind teaches people how to develop strong, trust-based relationships through the techniques of visitation described above. It teaches people how to hold effective public meetings, which keep to time. It teaches people how to carry out 'power analyses' and identify allies. This sort of training teaches people how to create and sustain a relational organisation rather than a bureaucratic one. Like the men of Issachar,¹⁶ this is the sort of training that develops leaders who understand the times – because they visit. They also know what Salvationists should do – because they understand relational power and the art of public action.

A feature of broad-based community organising approach to policy formation is that it builds an interpretive community that has the agency to undertake the identification and analysis of the problem and the resources to develop the ability and strategy by which to act in relation to the problem.¹⁷

16 1 Chronicles 12:32

17 'Resurrecting Democracy' by L Bretherton 2014: p129



2.4 PUBLIC ACTION

Nehemiah shook the front of his garment to show how God would shake people out of their homes if they did not stop exacting usury on their countrymen.¹⁸ Jesus gave testimony in the Synagogue to tell people what he was doing.¹⁹ Members of the early church sold their possessions and shared all they had which modelled a new type of community.²⁰ Pioneering Salvationists took to these sort of prophetic actions too. Two of the ways were wearing a uniform and holding ‘open airs.’ What a grievous situation it would be if it were the custom to wear ones uniform only in an Army hall or to hear a brass band only within four walls. It seems to us that the uniform was designed so it could be seen and the brass band designed to be heard, especially by those who don’t know Jesus yet! This brings us to the fourth part of justice-seeking: public action.

So far, we have described three elements that are essential to bringing about social and political change: visitation, power analysis, and training and development. Each of these elements are vitally important, however, they become neutralised for the purpose of justice-seeking without public action.

When deciding which action to take, it is important to remember that the appropriate action is the one that will provoke the reaction one is looking for. Like a visitation, actions always seek to develop a relationship. Therefore, actions are targeted and personal. Based on the power analysis, actions target the person who can make a decision.

Research

In order to understand what reaction is required, it is necessary to separate the specific ‘issue’ from the more general ‘problem.’ For example, the problem might be crime. The issue, in contrast, might be insufficient lighting on a given street making people susceptible to

18 Nehemiah 5:13

19 Luke 4:16-21

20 Acts 2

being accosted. A problem might be homelessness. In contrast, the issue might be the lack of affordable homes. Problems are generalised structural conditions, whereas issues are specific and winnable. You can do something about an issue! In order to separate the issue from the problem, it is necessary to learn as much as possible about the problem. As well as specialist and elite sources, such as books and experts, this comes from listening to people in the context of visitation.

The action itself

Public actions necessarily involve an element of the prophetic, in the sense that they creatively call people to a more just way of doing things. They should involve people as much as possible. For example,



**PUBLIC ACTIONS
NECESSARILY
INVOLVE AN
ELEMENT OF THE
PROPHETIC**

at a recent action, participants were told to come wearing caps as they were asking for a cap on interest rates charged by payday lenders. The action should be fun, so that people enjoy what they are doing. It's important to laugh! Actions should be creative in order to get the attention of bystanders, the media and the 'target.' They should be personally focussed, for example, targeting a named

person who has the power to make change rather than just a building or organisation. They should involve confrontation, in that they seek to come face-to-face with the targeted person.

Evaluation

When evaluating an action, there is a useful template used by community organisers, which could also be applied to actions of a local corps. Following an action, participants are asked to describe how they are feeling with one word. They then assess the turnout. How many people showed up? Logistics are considered. For example, could everybody see what he or she needed to see? Could everybody hear



what she or he needed to hear? Then the reaction to the action itself is considered. This is a response to the question: did we achieve our aims? Did the action generate the desired reaction? The next part of the evaluation then reflects on which leaders were developed through the action. The next question then asks whether we are more powerful as a result of the action. Has this action increased our capacity to act in the future? Finally, the action is given a grade. Evaluation gives grounds to learn from public actions in order to carry out better actions in the future.

2.5 SUMMARY

We have explored four ingredients for local corps to be effective at transforming their communities. The first of these, visitation, involves listening in order to develop strong relationships. The second, power analysis, involves understanding how these relationships fit together, both within a corps and in how a corps relates to other institutions. The third element of training and development prepares people for leadership in public life. Finally, participative and creative public actions, involving research, action and evaluation, target a person to provoke a desired reaction.



3 STORIES



3.1 ILFORD SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army has been in Ilford since 1886 and on its current site since 1904. These days, Ilford is a busy corps with a reputation for community engagement. This was recognised by The Salvation Army, when the corps received the award for ‘Community Services Programme of the Year 2014’ and by the local community, when it received the Mayors Award in the ‘Caring Redbridge’ category in 2013. The corps membership is very diverse with a mixture of people who have been at the corps a long time, Salvationists from overseas who have moved to the UK, and those for whom this is their first experience of church. The corps’ building underwent a significant refurbishment in 2013/14, during which the corps was able to continue and extend its ministry to the community.

Context¹

Ilford is located in the London Borough of Redbridge. Ilford, however, has something of a hybrid nature having officially been part of Essex until 1965. According to the 2011 census, Redbridge ranked fourth lowest in England and Wales and below the London average of 48.4% for the proportion of Christians residing in the borough. Christians account for 36.8% of the population, with 23.3% Muslim, 11.4% Hindu, and 6.2% Sikh. The ethnic make-up of Redbridge has changed significantly from the census in 2001 and for the first time, the number of people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups exceeded the number of White British. Redbridge had the highest proportion of Pakistanis of all London Boroughs and ranked seventh highest in the country. Significant changes have taken place in the locality, while this well-established corps has sought to carry out faithful Christian witness.

Listening

When Lieutenants Naomi and John Clifton were appointed to Ilford

¹ Statistics for all three case studies are taken from the 2011 census unless otherwise stated

corps in 2011, their first appointment as Salvation Army Officers, they were intentional about visiting people in the congregation, and spending time with those who came to the corps seeking forms of practical help. One of the first listening exercises involved a vision day at the corps where people shared reflections over a meal. John and Naomi learned quickly that, while it would be important to honour and support the musical ministry of the corps, it would also be necessary for the corps to draw on hidden streams of its tradition to discover a new identity. For example, as well as wonderful and vibrant musical festivals, the corps had been involved in a number of community initiatives. For example, running English language classes in the 1970s, the launch of an ecumenical employment charity in the 1990s, and an Employment Resource Centre in 2010.

Encountering raw human need

A pivotal moment for the corps took place in 2011 when two Soldiers volunteered to go on the borough's rough sleeper count. While they were out they met a man sleeping in a local graveyard. This encounter left them feeling powerless since there was little they could do to help. As a result the corps met with an ecumenical group looking to set up a winter shelter for rough sleepers in response to the death of two homeless men the previous year. The corps offered to host and manage the shelter and, within a matter of weeks, twenty-five men and women were sleeping in sleeping bags on foam mats in the upstairs hall. Soup was served each evening and clothes distributed. It was basic but it kept people alive. Each winter since then, the night-shelter has developed. The foam mats and sleeping bags have been exchanged for camp beds with pillows, sheets and blankets. Soup is now just the starter with delicious meals served up each evening. Film nights, art sessions and games allow guests to pursue their interests. Local hairdressers attend and the guests enjoy some pampering. At the end of each winter the team reviews and evaluates the shelter. This has led to a better referral pathway, more support in helping guests move on and improved training for volunteers.

During the four winters that the Redbridge Cold Weather Centre has been in operation, over 200 different people have made use of the



provision. Lizette Lungiambudi, who will enter William Booth College as a Cadet in 2015, reflected on the experience of the first winter:

I felt useless when we left him in the graveyard and that I wasn't able to help him especially as it was a cold night. I know that the shelter is only open for three months of the year but meant that during the coldest months of the year he had somewhere safe to stay and was provided with a warm meal. The fact that I was one of the volunteers who had given up their evenings and nights to keep the shelter going made me feel useful again.

The shelter has been significant not just because of the scale of provision, but because it builds relationships between people, and develops leaders by giving them an opportunity to act on things they care about. The corps has come to recognise the shelter as an incubator for leadership.

Nightshelter as a springboard

The opening of the nightshelter energised the Corps and led to new initiatives. In 2013, 'Recycles,' a bike refurbishment social enterprise began. Initially conceived as a means of training guests from the nightshelter with a skill that would equip them for employment, 'Recycles' takes unwanted bikes and makes them fit for purpose again. There's something prophetic about this action of restoring and renewing something that someone has thrown away. Some of the trainees have experienced homelessness or long-term unemployment, some have struggled with addiction, others have had few genuinely supportive relationships in life. Others just really love bikes! In the same hall where generations of Salvationists have sung, "I believe in transformation, God can change the heart of men... others may reject the weakling, I believe he can be strong,"² 'Recycles' gives the volunteers support in realising their potential and making steps towards employment. Working in partnership with the Redbridge Institute for Adult Education,

² *I believe in God the Father* – John Gowans, Salvation Army Songbook: 324

volunteers can now work towards a City and Guilds Level 2 Cycle Mechanic Course, the industry standard entry level for cycle mechanics.

Service isn't enough

The nightshelter is only possible because of the commitment of over 150 volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds. Salvationists are joined by members of other churches and faiths: Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists, and non-denominational believers, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, atheists and agnostics. Over time there was an increasing recognition from those involved that the shelter should not just be about serving, but about seeking justice in housing. What was required was a movement that was powerful enough to be heard and force change.

Building a movement

In 2013, the Corps was instrumental in the founding of Redbridge Citizens - a local chapter of the community organising network Citizens UK. In early 2014 the leaders came together to decide if they should intervene in local council elections. They were keen to hold a public assembly, where politicians would be invited and asked to commit to a range of proposals put forward by Redbridge Citizens. They wondered if they had enough power to really bring about change. Would people turn up? Would the politicians come? When they presented their 'asks,' would the politicians agree? It felt like a huge risk but the alliance decided to go for it.

On Tuesday 6th May 2014, 93 citizens gathered at Ilford Salvation Army hall. The diverse crowd included Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Jews. Three candidates for leader of Redbridge Council arrived and took their place. The agreed agenda of the member institutions of Redbridge Citizens was laid out. Two mothers from the corps stood up and testified about the challenges their families faced because of the borough's housing shortage and the impact the disrepair of their council homes was having on their families' health. The three councillors were pressed to make commitments to pay The Living Wage to all care workers, create a private landlords' register, explore the possibility of



a Community Land Trust in the borough, and to meet regularly with Redbridge Citizens to keep working on the agenda.

A lot of hard work had gone into the assembly: negotiations with politicians; a script carefully crafted; conversations convincing members to turn out. But this was just the beginning. The politicians were not asked to do something for the community but to do something with them. So in the months that followed, a small delegation met the newly elected Leader and deputy Leader of the council to follow up on their commitments.

Fighting for housing

One commitment the new council leader had made at the assembly was to develop genuinely affordable housing in the form of a Community Land Trust (CLT).³ The next step was for a council commitment to identify possible sites for the CLT. So, in February 2015, 100 members of Redbridge Citizens, including volunteers and guests from the nightshelter, gathered on the steps of the Town Hall. One of the beds from the shelter was set up to symbolise all the local people who could not afford to live in the area and were moved out of the borough or made homeless. A Muslim and Christian volunteer from the nightshelter placed a cardboard house over half the bed and then challenged the deputy leader of the Council to put in place a second house as a sign of the council's commitment to working with Redbridge Citizens to find innovative solutions to the borough's housing shortage. Days later, a small delegation followed up with the cabinet member for housing. The delegation included the Songster Leader, a nightshelter guest, and a corps Officer. Leaving the meeting the nightshelter guest remarked how good it felt to do something about the housing shortage rather than merely complaining about it.

³ A CLT is a way to develop genuinely affordable housing by taking land into shared ownership. This removes the inflationary considerations of the land value from the cost of rent or purchase, meaning they can instead be linked to the value of labour i.e. median income of a given area.

A long journey

Cedric Lungiambudi, one of the local leaders who has been at the Corps for 16 years, summed up the change that has happened since the Corps has shifted focus:

To me, Ilford Corps went from being a music institution to being a modern day Noah's Ark whereby, through the love of God, people try to shelter, care and preserve the life of all kinds of people who enter through its doors.

This emphasis on action has also been recognised by newer people at the corps, such as families outreach worker and Soldier Panna Simon who, when asked why she joined The Salvation Army, said:

I really loved that for the first time I had seen a church that really cares about the community, about people... not just the people who are part of the congregation, but everybody! As I describe it a church with an "Umph!" that cares for any human being, no matter of their religion, gender, skin colour, or past.

What is certainly the case at Ilford Corps is that, by using community organising methods and by focussing on some of the less-celebrated parts of the corps' history, an image of church has developed which reflects the scheme from 'In Darkest England.' This shift in focus and method has also resulted in numerical growth of the Sunday congregation from between 30-40 to recently counting 70 in a normal meeting for the first time in many years.

Challenges

There are many challenges facing Ilford corps. Sometimes new people arrive at the corps expecting a certain 'brand' but have not been able to buy into the 'new' vision. This suggests that embedding the practices of community organising into the long-term culture of the corps may take some time. This requires regular, conscious decisions



to build relationships with new people so that the newest person at the corps shapes the congregation as much as the longest-serving Soldier.

Another challenge is developing teams of local leaders and training corps members in the art of visitation, listening, building relational power in and outside the corps, and in public action. Without this, there will be the risk that the new initiatives could become service programmes that are ‘one of the things we do’ rather than justice-oriented public actions that reflect the Kingdom of God.

3.2 STEPNEY SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army began planting a new corps in Stepney when Lieutenants Nick and Kerry Coke and their one-year-old son moved into a house on the Ocean Estate in 2003. From the outset, the mission hinged on developing a wide range of relationships in the local community. Operating without a physical building of their own, the emphasis was on establishing relational networks rather than programmes. Whilst remaining distinctively Christian and active in preaching the good news of Jesus, the corps has constantly sought to build relationship with those from every faith and to create spaces where members of the community could deepen their shared life as neighbours together. Over time a corps made up of committed Salvation Army members has emerged from the community, playing a strong role in transformative mission.

Context

Stepney is a vibrant and diverse community, situated in the London borough of Tower Hamlets - the heart of the East End of London. Stepney Corps is the closest corps to where The Salvation Army began, half a mile from William Booth’s Statue on Mile End Road. The religious composition of Stepney is 48.7% Muslim, 23.8% Christian, and 11.8% no religion. 58.5% of the population were born in England and 21.8% were born in Bangladesh. Tower Hamlets as a whole has the lowest percentage of Christians of any local authority in the United Kingdom. Stepney is regarded as having very high levels of social deprivation

despite being sandwiched between the two wealthiest districts in the whole country – the financial centres of Canary Wharf and The City of London. The Church Urban Fund identifies the Parish of Stepney as having 43% of children living in poverty, one of the highest rates nationwide. The context is challenging for corps planting and the social interaction between different sections of the community is low.

Listening

When Nick and Kerry moved into Stepney they found themselves in a neighbourhood they knew very little about. They made the decision that before they started anything they really needed to learn about the community and this could only be done through listening. They committed themselves to attending community meetings, visiting local groups, volunteering at a local youth club and introducing themselves to schools, mosques and community groups in the locality. They were keen to learn about the context from residents themselves and to work out how God might want to use them there.

A corps built on relationships

The key value at the heart of Stepney Salvation Army, from the beginning to the present, is that of relationship. As the membership and congregation of the corps began to take shape, beginning with Sunday gatherings in the Cokes' front room, the emphasis was always on finding ways to share life together that honoured God and community. Over the years many people have passed through, as is the norm in a transitional inner-city neighbourhood like Stepney, and today the group that attend the meeting on a Sunday in a local community centre enjoy sharing breakfast together before an informal time of worship. The congregation is diverse in ethnicity and socio-economic background. There has been slow and steady growth in numbers year on year and a number of people have come to faith in Jesus.



Belonging

One of the things that really struck Nick and Kerry about the neighbourhood was the lack of integration between different sections of its diverse community. In the early days when they took their two young children to parent and toddler groups they noticed how people gathered only within their specific ethnic or socio-economic groups. They decided that it was time to become agents for change.

We felt convicted that relational poverty, like material poverty, is a form of injustice. Without reconciliation this wonderful neighbourhood could never reach its potential and Jesus' prayer for it to "be on earth as it is heaven" could never be answered. Like the first Salvationists who walked these East End streets we felt it was time to fight injustice and demonstrate an alternative way of living life in this world – one that reflected God's kingdom.

The work for reconciliation has taken many forms. Sports ministries have been a particularly powerful way of bringing people together through weekly football groups. The Babysong parent and toddler group has been one of the few spaces where real diversity can be found. The corps co-ordinated over a number of years 'The Deal With It Day,' a community festival that annually brought over 1000 Stepney residents together to openly discuss the issue of drug misuse in the area, as well as celebrate unity. Kerry ran a friendship group called 'Opening Doors' at the primary school her children were attending when each week a group of parents would take it in turns to host the others for food and conversation. Nick built relationships with local mosques meeting with the leaders and organising dialogue events between Christians and Muslims. They also spent significant time with neighbours in homes and encouraged corps members to do the same.

We discovered over time that we owed our credibility in the community as much to living and sharing the same space and issues as everyone else in Stepney, as to our status as Salvation

Army leaders. We weren't outsiders or 'do-gooders' who had arrived to save this community – we were neighbours who were willing to work with others for the common good.

Service and Justice

Over time the corps developed a number of different programmes – youth and children's activities, creative arts groups, a job club and a parent and toddlers group. They were keen to serve the community. Through listening and relationship building a number of issues began to rise to the surface – low incomes, long-term unemployment, inadequate housing and lack of safety on the street. The corps decided that it was not enough to treat the symptoms of these challenges through service alone, but they needed to address the root causes. Therefore in 2007, they joined Citizens UK. This community organising network brings together hundreds of organisations in London and beyond to tackle issues of common concern and fight for social justice.

Through the processes described in chapter two – visitation, power analysis, training and development, and action - Stepney Salvation Army has been proud to take public action on a series of issues and been part of some great wins for social justice:

Affordable Housing

Rising house prices driven by a buoyant London market have put 'affordable' housing out of reach for all but the wealthiest Tower Hamlets residents. Stepney corps has played its part in establishing a community land trust (CLT) in Mile End which delivers permanently and genuinely affordable housing for those living on low incomes and in overcrowded housing in Tower Hamlets, for generations to come. This campaign has taken many years to deliver and involved negotiating with the Mayor of London and powerful property developers. As the first of such projects in a UK urban environment, this model for affordable housing can be replicated in other places where seeping gentrification encroaches on local communities. Members of Stepney corps saw themselves as continuing William Booth's 'Cab Horse

Charter⁴ campaign that fought for all people to have the basic right of safe and secure shelter. There is still more to be done and with other organisations they are working hard to establish a second CLT in the borough. In March 2015, they met with the borough cabinet member for housing and a Junior Soldier of the corps spoke of the need for children to have a decent home to live in that they can call their own.

Street Safety

In 2014, institutions in Tower Hamlets Citizens came together to improve street safety. They identified that the street lighting in the borough was only half as bright as that of the wealthier borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Not only that, but many lights, particularly in open spaces were not working at all and police patrols were sporadic and haphazard. The corps attended a local street safety rally, providing musicians and proudly waving the corps flag! The mayor of Tower Hamlets attended and made firm commitments to improve street safety by fixing broken street lights, to review police patrols and install CCTV cameras in trouble spots, which has since been delivered.

Olympic Jobs

In 2012, The Olympic Games came to the East End of London. As part of a Citizens UK delegation, Stepney Salvation Army helped to develop a relationship with the organising committee and secured a number of commitments for an Olympics that would serve the people of the East End. Corps members worked with other community organisations to support hundreds of unemployed local residents into living wage jobs during the Games. Like the labour bureau concept outlined as part of the 'In Darkest England' scheme,⁵ local church and mosque buildings were turned into job centres where unemployed people could come and directly meet employers. One unemployed Salvation Army Soldier single-handedly facilitated employment for over 100 Stepney residents - including herself. She, along with another Soldier, gave her testimony about their journey from unemployment to a living wage job to Lord

4 'In Darkest England and the Way Out' by W Booth, 1890: 19-20. Booth highlights that in the East End of London there were many people who did not even have the right of shelter and provision afforded to horses.

5 'In Darkest England and the Way Out' by W Booth, 1890: 111-113

Coe - the Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games - and a packed assembly of 1,500 East Londoners.

The Living Wage

Like the early-day Salvationists supporting the dock workers and match-makers, this East End corps has continued to fight for London's lowest paid workers through support for The Living Wage⁶ campaign. Nick recalls:

It became increasingly common for us to meet cleaners, carers and catering staff, many working 50-60 hours a week with two or more jobs and still finding it impossible to make ends meet. Most of them were receiving the minimum wage but it simply wasn't enough to support a family in one of the most expensive cities in the world. The stories we heard could have been narrated straight out of In Darkest England and the Way Out.

One Sunday morning the congregation gathered outside the building they met in to pray for the community. From the street they could see the towers of Canary Wharf and The City glittering in the sky. These vast symbols of business, wealth and status right on their doorstep highlighted the inequalities in their neighbourhood. Feeling convicted to take action they completed a wage audit in their congregation and discovered a number of people who were on the minimum wage. One Soldier was a cleaner working for a housing association in the shadow of Canary Wharf. As he testified about the difficulties of raising his three children in Stepney on poverty pay, the corps was unanimous that it was time to act.

They began by researching the issue and discovered that the corps member and 30 of his colleagues were on contracts that not only paid the minimum wage but didn't allow for sick pay or holiday pay. The workers had been trying to raise their voices with their employers but with little success. On completing a power analysis of the situation, the corps recognised that it would be unlikely they could force change on their own. What was required was a strong, powerful voice that couldn't

⁶ The Living Wage is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. The current figure for London is £9.15 per hour. The national minimum wage is currently £6.50 per hour.



be ignored. Their next step was to talk with other members involved in Tower Hamlets Citizens to see if they could build a consensus for action. Consequently, one evening a group of leaders came together and The Salvation Army Soldier and one of his colleagues testified again about life on the minimum wage. The group immediately took the decision to write to the housing association CEO asking for a meeting. A few days later he responded with a date to meet.

The following month the meeting took place. Two of the cleaners were present, along with a Salvation Army officer, a Roman Catholic priest, a leader from the mosque, a union organiser, a university lecturer and a secondary school head teacher. The most poignant moment came when The Salvation Army Soldier looked the CEO in the eye and shared the story of how difficult it was to live on the minimum wage and how his family life could be transformed if he could earn The Living Wage. The CEO listened respectfully to his employee's testimony. It was a moment of grace – the 'upside down kingdom' in action, where the one considered to be powerless became powerful and a genuine public relationship was built.

A week later a letter arrived from the CEO. All 30 of the cleaners were to be given new contracts. Wages would be set at the Living Wage level, and sick pay and holiday pay were included. Amazingly, he went the extra mile and backdated the workers' pay for a whole year to a Living Wage level! It was an outstanding result. Justice had been served. Hallelujah!

Challenges

One of the key challenges for Stepney Salvation Army is the sustainability of a small corps in a very diverse and transitional inner city neighbourhood. Developing leaders and sharing responsibility within the whole corps is vital. Community organising has provided important tools in this regard: helping to establish an alliance between the corps and local mosques, schools, churches and a nearby university; developing and training leaders within the corps and empowering people to speak for themselves rather than being 'a voice for the voiceless;' providing a pragmatic framework for fighting for social justice and identifying how to campaign and win on issues. For

a small corps, Stepney Salvation Army does a remarkable amount, demonstrating that even a small group of people can change the world.

3.3 WILLIAM BOOTH COLLEGE AND CAMBERWELL SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army officer training College in Denmark Hill, South London, is home for up to 70 cadets taking part in a two-year residential course towards full-time leadership. The college has a rich tradition and history having trained thousands of Salvation Army officers since it moved to its current site in 1929. With its distinctive and imposing structure looming high above a largely residential area it cannot be easily missed. For generations of officers the training college remains a crucial part of their spiritual development and theological formation. The college is also the home to in-service training and development services (SISTAD) offering courses and support to a whole range of Salvation Army employees, members and staff and the Candidates Unit that facilitates vocational pathways and preparation for applicants to Salvation Army ministry.

Context

Denmark Hill is located in the London Borough of Southwark, on the edge of Camberwell, a very diverse and dynamic neighbourhood two miles to the south of central London. Camberwell is known for its connection with the arts, being the home to schools of artists over many years. The area has a mixture of very expensive Georgian housing and high, overcrowded tower blocks. 50% of residents live in social housing, with 77% of people living in flats or maisonettes.⁷ The ethnic profile of the Camberwell area is 48% white and 35% black (African, Caribbean, Black British). In recent years a largely hidden Latin American community has begun to emerge in the Camberwell area made up of people from Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Many of these economic migrants are employed in low skilled and low paid jobs in cleaning, catering and

⁷ Southwark Council, *Camberwell Community Profile 2011 Census*



hospitality services. In religious terms, Christians form the largest group (53%) and on Sundays, Southwark borough is said to have the largest gathering of African Christians outside Africa itself.⁸

Engaging in the neighbourhood

The William Booth College holds in tension its primary function as a training centre and its involvement and responsibilities in the wider Camberwell neighbourhood. For many years the connection with nearby Kings College Hospital has been particularly strong and links with The Salvation Army corps in Camberwell Green have provided an opportunity for generations of cadets to get involved in grassroots mission. In recent years Cadets have been required as part of their training to spend two hours a week on a Personal Initiative Project (PIP) participating in community-based mission activities. Not only does this enable cadets to root their theological learning in real life but also it helps to establish the college as an outward focused institution, involved in the transformation of its neighbourhood.

Citizens organising

In 2011, William Booth College teamed up with The Salvation Army corps in the borough of Southwark to join the emerging Southwark Citizens alliance. This group has 12 member institutions including primary and secondary schools, local community organisations and Roman Catholic, Anglican and Baptist churches. Together with Southwark Citizens, William Booth College has taken action on a whole range of local issues:

Crime

In 2008 in a South London neighbourhood not far from the college a 16-year-old schoolboy, Jimmy Mizen, was murdered in a bakery near his home. His remarkable family, taking note of a number of senseless murders of young people that took place in London that year, were

⁸ Roehampton University, (2013) *Being Built Together: a story of new black majority churches in the London Borough of Southwark*

determined to do all they could to prevent future incidents. Working with Citizens UK they helped to establish ‘City Safe havens’ – places of safety that young people in emergencies could turn to for help. The first havens were established on the street where Jimmy was murdered and now amount to over 300 in 62 City Safe zones across the capital. In 2011 William Booth College became a City Safe Haven agreeing to offer refuge to those in an emergency and reporting 100% of crime. This simple gesture is an important part of offering hospitality in the neighbourhood.

Relationships with Power

The William Booth College has impressive facilities. As part of its commitment to the neighbourhood, the college has hosted a number of events including Southwark Citizens assemblies. In April 2014, 170 local residents attended a gathering in the Assembly Hall in the run up to local borough elections. The assembly opened with a song sung by the cadets and a vintage recording of a speech given by General Booth. The main candidates for council leader and the borough police commander attended the assembly and made commitments to work on the issues of housing, child poverty, low wages, community relationships with the police and safer streets. A People’s Manifesto was launched with specific ‘asks’ outlining how the community and council could work together on issues, following an extensive listening campaign across the borough.

Housing and Wages

Not far from the college is Camberwell Salvation Army Corps. The commanding officer, Major Janet Martin teaches at the college as well as overseeing a busy corps programme. The hall in Camberwell is an active hub for connecting with the community, and staff and volunteers are intentional in listening to the plight of those living with injustice. The connection between the corps and college has enabled cadets and college staff to be engaged in the local neighbourhood. The key issues constantly highlighted by people living in the Camberwell area are sub-standard, unaffordable housing and low wages.

The corps has nurtured a growing congregation over a number of years and has a high percentage of Spanish-speakers, leading to meetings being conducted in Spanish as well as English. Since many of the lowest paid and poorly housed people in London are Latin



American migrants living in Southwark borough, it was no surprise that cadets from the college and members of Camberwell corps attended a pre-general election action in March 2015. Reminiscent of the cadets marching on parliament with a petition during the ‘maiden tribute’ campaign, over 100 people marched with banners to the iconic Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre where they secured support and commitments for work on housing issues and Living Wage jobs from parliamentary candidate and Councillor Neil Coyle. Cadet Sam Tomlin, who co-chaired the action, gave this reflection:

As a resident of Southwark borough and a passionate advocate for social justice I feel it is imperative I get involved in the issues my neighbours face. Marching down the Walworth Road surrounded by Salvation Army cadets and officers, representatives from local schools and members of a wide range of faith institutions was a moment of real community action. We weren't doing it on behalf of others, we were doing it with the community – many of those with us are facing very difficult situations, living on poverty pay and in overcrowded conditions. Gaining commitments from our politicians was an important step towards change.

Challenges

The key challenge for William Booth College is balancing the internal nature of its training programme and external engagement with the local neighbourhood. The partnership with Southwark Citizens has facilitated some fruitful work, enabling the college to play a role in local issues and affording Cadets opportunities to gain experience of justice-seeking and community organising. The transitional nature of cadet training poses a problem for long-term engagement but with the Camberwell Corps link and college staff connections with the corps, it is possible for this to be overcome. The recent establishment of a reading group on theology and community organising in South London Citizens, held at the William Booth College is another example of how members of the college are engaging with community organising. It is to the credit

of the college leadership that so much community-transforming work is taking place through William Booth College. Long may it continue!



CONCLUSION



In one sense, The Salvation Army expressions described here are quite different. One is a corps with a 130 year history, another is a new corps with a very different shape from the more usual model of Salvation Army, and the third a training centre that has loose links with a corps. Despite the differences in form, the shared essence of each is remarkable. For all the expressions, at the heart of everything is a commitment to Jesus Christ and the gospel. As would be expected in any Salvation Army setting there is a compulsion to look outwards - to engage in evangelism, to serve others and to work for the transformation of individuals and community. In each case, the neighbourhood and context are taken seriously. This is manifested in the way that relationships come before action. There is a willingness to build relationships with others, whoever they are, boldly reaching out across religious, ethnic, theological and socio-economic boundaries and listening to their lives. Importantly, there is also a strong desire not to collude with the injustice that is present in their neighbourhood. “Go and do something,” William Booth once said – each of the stories presented here demonstrates that there are Salvationists still heeding this call in dynamic and creative ways.

Each case study ends with a section on challenges. This is intentional. Firstly, to demonstrate that every Salvation Army expression has its strengths and weaknesses. We need to learn from one another and to see how we can offer mutual support as a Salvation Army family working together. Secondly, it’s important to be realistic. Struggles are an inevitable part of the journey and the trajectory is not always upwards.

In conclusion, we challenge you to action! In the words of Catherine Booth, “If we are to better the future, we must disturb the present.”¹ In order to revitalise social justice as one of the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, we call on Salvationists everywhere:

- To abandon the notion of being a voice for the voiceless by committing to help the voiceless find their voice.
- To pledge not to do for others what they can do for themselves.
- To develop strategies to address the causes of human suffering as an integral part of every social service initiative.
- To practice the craft of visitation, by building trust-based, public

¹ ‘Aggressive Christianity’ by Catherine Booth 1880: 48

relationships with:

- at least five people who do not share your faith, culture and theology in order to work for the common good.
 - at least five people who hold power, in order to agitate for change, holding them to account where necessary.
 - at least five people under your influence who you will train and equip with the skills required for public action.
- To take every opportunity to preach boldly the saving power of Jesus Christ and the coming Kingdom of God, by raising the flags, marching the bands and singing the songs of justice out in the public square.

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