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Introduction: The Salvation Army and the Officer

Magazine

1.1 Introduction

My first encounter with The Salvation Army came through a soldier who visited our family with Salvation Army publications. Later, I went to Sunday school at The Salvation Army. At that time my family were attending the local Methodist church, but their Sunday school closed down during the summer holidays whereas The Salvation Army program did not. A school friend, who was a junior soldier, invited me along. Later, other members of my family also attended. Three of my sisters and my mother became members and we were all heavily involved in Army activities at the local corps.

Around the age of 12 I felt a sense of inner calling to ministry and by the age of 19 I had let others know that I intended to explore the idea of becoming an officer within The Salvation Army. At 22 I left my home and family in Western Australia to travel to the Army’s Training College in Melbourne. Prior to this I had worked in the banking industry and completed an Arts degree in English. I was commissioned as an officer in January 1983.

Some 27 years later I am still a Salvation Army officer, working in the Personnel Department at Territorial Headquarters. I have also recently served on the staff of the Training College, working with cadets in formation for ministry. In addition to this I have served as a corps officer, in divisional youth leadership and editorial work. I also completed further studies in theology and spiritual direction.
These are the facts of the outer journey. But what of the inner journey that accompanies them? How can that be described? What images or experiences capture the essence of my life of study, formation and ministry?

Interestingly, despite many years of membership and service, one of the constant factors has been a sense of “not fitting”, of not being a true Salvationist. There has been the sense of looking the part, and living the life, quite competently, but not feeling the part. Why? There are perhaps several reasons.

Initially this sense of being an “outsider” arose from a sense of inferiority and lack of knowledge. I had not grown up in the Army. I did not have family connections within the organization and I really didn’t know that much about it. There was the sense of being on the outer because I was unknown and could not easily be “placed”. However, alongside this quite natural awareness of otherness sat something deeper. Some memories from my training experiences give some clues to this sense of disconnection.

An incident early in my training stands out. It was the experience of having a laminated card left in my room that set out a guide for prayer. A similar card is handed out today. It emphasized, quite naturally, the importance of daily prayer and set out a pattern for that prayer. While meant as a helpful document it listed so many different things to do – preparation, meditation, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, dedication – that it felt like a list you had to get through each and every time you prayed. I can still recall the feeling of puzzlement that came over me. I couldn’t readily engage with such a prescriptive formula for private prayer.

There was also, at times, a sense of unease with the lack of depth of theological questioning and engagement with issues. It did not satisfy that part of me that wanted to ask the hard questions, and consequently I did not engage with all the requirements of the program as I might have in other circumstances.
Another strong memory was being told, when we were having a bit of a grizzle about our hotel rounds, probably complaining about the work hours expected of us, that basically, “we had it easy”. Life as corps officers would be far more demanding. Here a concept was being imparted around free time and relaxation. We were expected to work well into every evening and free time was a half-day on Saturday. It didn’t quite square with me that this was a pattern for a healthy life.

Then, too, there has been the rhetoric of the movement. The Salvation Army has traditionally described itself in terms that I cannot always wholeheartedly relate to, or at least not in the way they are espoused. There is a strong emphasis on evangelism, which is to be expected, but I do not see myself as an evangelist. There is at present also a renewal of a strong emphasis on ministry to the marginalized, but my recent appointments have not given much scope for exploring my capacities in that area, and in earlier appointments I felt unequipped for such ministry. I did what was required, but lacked confidence and knowledge, and as a person who is cautious rather than confident facing the unknown, I tended to shy away from this aspect of the work.

What does it mean to be a Salvationist and reveal these realities? In the climate of The Salvation Army I experience on a daily basis, it is difficult. It means one is leaving oneself open to criticism. But not every Salvationist is a red-hot evangelist, or passionate about the marginalized – these are just the facts. The question is, can one be a true Salvationist and not be these things? Or rather, can one be a true Salvationist and respond to these things in a way that is true for one’s personality, spiritual gifting and spirituality? I believe the answer is yes, and further, that this has always been the case. There are many different ways of being a Salvationist, just as there are many different ways of being a Baptist, or an Anglican, or a Catholic. Salvationism is broader than is generally acknowledged, and, as this thesis will argue, the Army is richer, not poorer for this diversity, both in the giftings and passion of individual Salvationists and in their varying theological perspectives and spiritualities.
The key focus of this thesis is the uncovering of the presence of the Contemplative tradition in the spirituality of The Salvation Army. I argue that descriptors for Salvationist spirituality must be broad enough to encompass the realities of the lives of those who are Salvationists. The Evangelical and Social Justice traditions are inherent to the movement and it is clear that those who fit comfortably within these streams are seen as being in sync with the great traditions of The Salvation Army. The purpose of this paper is to show that the Contemplative tradition is also part of Salvationist heritage, as it has been for other significant evangelical movements and personalities, and that this has been the case from the very beginning of The Salvation Army. If this is demonstrably so, then one can argue from the evidence that being a Contemplative is a valid way of expressing the heart of what it means to be a Salvationist, and that ministries such as spiritual direction, which sit within the Contemplative tradition, are valid tools for developing and growing Salvationists as people of God.

As a person who has found a deep sense of connection in the Contemplative tradition I have needed to reassess my sense of being a Salvationist. I have received the message that there are limited numbers of ways of being a Salvationist and felt a distinct pressure, at times, to be someone other than who I am. Is this just my imagining? The messages are more covert than overt, but they are nonetheless present and powerful. How can that be addressed? The colloquial expression “coming out” captures one possible response.

In a sense I am “coming out” in writing this project, which is, in its own way, the culmination of several years of journeying. The fears I had when I commenced this journey have receded, but there are still some questions. What if others condemn what I say? What if those are powerful others? In the context of Salvation Army officership, there are people who can appoint me to whatever they decide I should do, people who can limit my opportunities to preach or teach, and people who can affect even where I live. There are people who can caricature me, label me, and even willfully misunderstand what I seek to say.
The feeling I am left with, actually, is “so what?”. Yes, there are people who exercise power over my life in the context of ministry within The Salvation Army. And there are people who are so closed to “the other” that they don’t listen with respect to other points of view. However, that does not cancel out the reality and validity of my own identity both as a person and as a Salvationist. I cannot be other than who God has called me and created me to be. If I recognize the sense of call to ministry in this movement, I must also recognize that it is the “real” me God wants to do the ministry, not a stereotypical version of a “Salvationist”.

There is limited validity in taking a stand based solely on an individual case. However, when one examines the broader historical perspective there is ample evidence that difference has always existed. The Contemplative stream and those who sit comfortably within it have always been part of the Army. It is to the presence and validity of this Contemplative stream itself that the argument will turn in the following chapters.

In exploring this argument I will begin by giving some historical background to The Salvation Army, and to The Officer magazine, which is the primary historical source used in this thesis. I will provide a broad outline of some streams in Christian spirituality and then move on to an overview of the Contemplative tradition and the ministry of spiritual direction. I will then engage with the historical evidence for the presence of the Contemplative tradition in the spirituality of The Salvation Army under key headings such as the practice of prayer; silence, solitude and the active-contemplative balance; and Salvationists and the Mystics. A final chapter will draw conclusions about the way in which the ministry of spiritual direction fits in the historic and contemporary Salvationist framework.

1.2 The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army cannot be described adequately using one-dimensional, or two-dimensional descriptors of a particular type of Christian tradition. It is a rich and complex
movement made up of many different streams. To understand it, we need to turn first to its beginnings.

The movement had its genesis in 19th century England. Its founders, William and Catherine Booth, shared a burning passion for the salvation of the impoverished classes of inner city London.

William Booth was born in Nottingham in 1829, the middle child of five born to Samuel and Mary Booth. The fluctuating finances of the family coloured his early life. At the time of William’s baptism, Samuel Booth described himself as a “gentleman” in the parish records of Sneinton, Nottingham. But, by the time William was 13 the family was facing financial ruin. William was removed from school, and apprenticed to a pawnbroker. Biographer Roger Green sees in this event two highly significant factors that influenced the young William Booth. Firstly, “William quickly became exposed to poverty and circumstances more dire, more difficult and more threatening than his own”, and secondly, “this dismal occupation created… a desire to escape. He longed for a better life.”

It was in these circumstances that the young Booth came under the influences of Methodism. Booth began attending a local Wesleyan chapel, and later, weekly class meetings. Converted at the age of 15, he began to preach in the streets of Nottingham and was soon advocating for the poor, including some of his young converts, whom he sought to take to chapel. They were, it seems, not welcome. Biographer Roy Hattersley remarks, “Although, according to Jesus Christ, the poor are always with us, they were not, in the opinion of Nottingham Wesleyans, to be with them in the Broad Street Chapel.” Booth’s converts were not permitted entry at the front door, but rather ushered in through the back.

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2 Ibid.,10
3 Ibid.
and “required to sit where the pulpit prevented them from offending the eyes of the prosperous parishioners in their reserved pews”.

These early experiences provide an insight into the influences that formed the core of Booth’s eventual mission to the poor. The unrelenting misery that he observed in his work, a passionate desire to see people experience salvation, and frustration at the lack of a place for the poor in the established church, were firmly embedded in his psyche before he reached the age of 20.

Booth moved to London for work and found himself again in the pawn-broking industry. He continued to preach as a lay evangelist before meeting a Wesleyan layperson, Edward Rabbits, who agreed to support him as a full time evangelist for an initial period of three months. It was Rabbits who arranged for him to be introduced to Catherine Mumford, a devout Methodist, who was to become his wife, and the co-founder of The Salvation Army.

Catherine was born in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, in the same year as William. Much of her early childhood was devoid of normal social contact with children her own age. Her mother, who had lost three sons previously, was protective and devout. The young Catherine was not allowed to read fiction, play regularly with friends or learn French and was at times “kept away from school in case she was exposed to some form of impropriety”.

Hers was a childhood marked by bouts of serious illness and much reading of Scripture. It is said that by the age of 12 she had read the Bible through eight times. There was also an early interest in theological and social issues. This interest expressed itself in her writing and in her actions. She formed strong opinions and was willing to act decisively on them.

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5 Ibid.
7 Hattersley, Blood and Fire, 42.
As Hattersley notes, “In Catherine theory and practice could never be separated”. We see this later in her convictions about issues such as women’s ministry where her belief in the rightness of a principle led her to act decisively on that principle and to encourage others to do likewise.

The marriage of William and Catherine was the beginning of a partnership that brought together William’s passionate concern for the poor and utopian hopes for a better future with Catherine’s high principles and strong convictions. From this partnership eventually emerged a new movement that we know today as The Salvation Army.

Initially known as The Christian Mission, the Army began in 1865. Today it operates in 111 countries throughout the world, where its work is centred on corps and social ministries including hostels for the homeless and transient; homes for children, the elderly and the disabled; day centres for early childhood education, the elderly, and street children; and drop in centres for youth. It runs addiction dependency programs; provides services to the armed forces; and engages in emergency disaster response and refugee programs. It also provides many services in local communities with prison visitation, police court work, missing persons bureaus, employment bureaus, feeding centres and the provision of emergency relief and other services. In some countries it also runs schools and hospitals, mobile health clinics and health education programs.

For most of its exciting but relatively brief history The Salvation Army has published an international magazine for its officers. This rich resource provides primary source material for the history of the movement providing evidence of the interests, passions and concerns of officers and leadership over these years.

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8 Ibid., 43.
1.3 The Officer Magazine

By the early 1890s the movement was already an international one and William Booth was looking for ways to communicate with his officer force throughout the world. This, of course, was at a time when travel and means of communication were much more limited than they are today. Booth decided that the way to address this was to commence a publication specifically designed for the purpose of communicating with his officers.

The purposes of the publication, initially called The Officer, were outlined in the first issue, published in January 1893:

1. Be a link between our souls and God; a definite means of spiritual blessing to each Officer under the Flag; a monthly bellows-blast to keep the fire brightly burning in their souls.
2. To link us to each other as the One Salvation Army.
3. To place within the reach of every Officer the best and newest plans for saving the world.
4. To furnish a supply of new and racy illustrations, incidents and subjects suitable for use in our meetings.¹⁰

The founder’s stated aim was to have a “mode of direct communication between myself and yourselves”.¹¹ The publication would provide a means to communicate with his officer force in much the same way, as he had, in the very early days, been able to communicate with them directly through the forum of “Officer’s Meetings”.

It is intended to make our new publication, as far as possible, a world-wide monthly “Officers Meeting”, presided over by the General, assisted by the Chief of the Staff, the principal Officers of the International Headquarters, and, indeed, by the various Commissioners throughout the world… here we can greet each other; we can publish the latest miraculous workings; pray for mightier outpouring of His Spirit, and help each other to greater earnestness, industry, and sacrifice in the War.¹²

A further intention was that the publication would provide further training for those who had received “Training Home” instruction and for those who had never had even this

¹⁰William Booth, The Officer Volume 1 No. 1 January (1893). Preface
¹¹Ibid., 1.
basic training there would be some guidance on how to conduct the salvation war. The Officer was also to be:

a great Army Advertisement Agency, where Officers can learn the latest novelties in Field Work… the newest ideas, the most startling methods, the most striking contrivances – in fact, all the most modern improvements and inventions for saving souls, making soldiers, and generally rolling the Old Chariot along.¹³

In order to fulfil this mission the General invited every officer in the world to contribute to the publication any new discoveries that would help men and women “into the possession of the forgiveness of sins, the obtaining of a clean heart, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or which, will in any other way be likely to make them more like God, and more useful to their fellows…”¹⁴

The first editor was Frederick Booth-Tucker, who was married to the Booth’s daughter Emma (the Consul). Subsequent editors brought their own stamp to the publication, but throughout there is a strong sense of the Army’s leaders, particularly its generals and key officers, addressing subjects of common interest throughout the world.

In this thesis The Officer is used as a primary source to document, and provide evidence of, the Contemplative tradition in the spirituality of The Salvation Army. Seventy years of the magazine were surveyed taking in the period 1893 – 1965, from the commencement of the magazine up to the centenary year of The Salvation Army.

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Introduction: The Research Project

¹² Ibid., 2.
¹³ Ibid., 3.
¹⁴ Ibid.
2.1 The Contemplative Tradition

What is the Contemplative tradition? For the purposes of this paper I want to delineate between the “Contemplative tradition” and “contemplative” or “centering prayer”.\(^{15}\) The Contemplative tradition can be described in much broader terms than contemplative prayer, which is a specific practice of prayer. The tradition is more about the total life of prayer, or the life of yearning for intimacy with God.

One of the simplest and most useful models for examining the Christian traditions is to be found in the work of Quaker writer Richard Foster, founder of the Renovaré movement. Foster identifies six broad traditions within Christian spirituality. They are the Contemplative tradition (the prayer-filled life); the Holiness tradition (the virtuous life); the Charismatic tradition (the Spirit-empowered life); the Social Justice tradition (the compassionate life); the Evangelical tradition (the Word-centred life) and the Incarnational tradition (the sacramental life).\(^{16}\) In his book, and in subsequent work founded upon it, he explores each of these streams through Scripture, the life of Christ, and the key figures identified with them.

Foster sees Christ as the “source” of each stream, and also as the embodiment of all the streams. His argument is that, like Christ, the church, and individual believers, need to model and embrace the fullness. It is not an either/or situation but an and/with.

These streams are not to be understood as limited to particular denominational groupings, rather, they are to be seen as broad streams which have informed the church universal at particular times and in particular ways. However, it is clear that we commonly use these “labels” to describe certain groups within the church. So we talk of “Evangelicals” or “Charismatics”, for example as though such terms cancel each other out. The reality is

\(^{15}\) Contemplative or centering prayer is an ancient form of prayer that is finding renewal in the present time. Key writers and teachers in this area include Thomas Keating, John Main, and M. Basil Pennington.

that there is much overlap of the streams within particular denominations and within individuals.

One benefit of the and/with approach is that the traditions can inform each other. Rather than being isolated and distinct, they are called into a dynamic unity. Thus the Contemplative tradition in this model has the potential to inform and add richness to the Evangelical and Social Justice streams, as it has, and the Evangelical stream has something to offer the Contemplative stream and movements within the church that value this way of being.

Foster defines the Contemplative tradition as the prayer-filled life in which believers seek intimacy with God. Therefore, a key dynamic in this tradition is the sense of being present to God, increasingly aware of God, and responsive to what God reveals. From this flows a growth in personal holiness, wisdom and grace. Among those Foster would see as associated with this tradition are the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the 4th century, the Benedictines, the Moravians of the 16th century and the Pietist movement of the 17th century.

Likewise, notable figures who sit in this tradition include people such as Clare of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Sienna, John of the Cross, Brother Lawrence, Madame Guyon, Therese of Lisieux, Evelyn Underhill and more recently Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen. These were men and women who experienced the life of faith from a Contemplative stance.

Salvationists would be most used to describing themselves, and being perceived as belonging to, the Evangelical and Social Justice streams. The Army is clearly aligned both by its origins, its doctrine, and preaching with these streams, with perhaps the Evangelical stream being seen as the most marked or central. David Bebbington, a key writer in the

17 Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water, Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*
area of Evangelicalism, identifies its key features as a focus on conversion, activism, the Bible, and the doctrine of the cross.  

Ian Randall, a contemporary Baptist historian, works within the framework Bebbington offers, but adds further to it in describing Evangelicalism as “essentially a strand of spirituality”\(^\text{19}\). In an article, ‘Evangelical Spirituality and the Church Catholic’, he demonstrates the connections that exist between Evangelicalism and other streams of spirituality. He identifies, for example, that the influences on John and Charles Wesley came from three different sources. Firstly, they came from Puritan stock, secondly, they and other evangelicals were influenced by “Catholic and high church devotion”, and thirdly they were influenced by some elements of mystical spirituality.  

Randall demonstrates connections with what can broadly be described as the Contemplative tradition (encompassing the influences of Catholic and high church devotion and mystical spirituality) in all four areas seen to be cornerstones of Evangelical belief and practice. For example, with regard to the Bible and prayer, he says: “For Wesley, the Christian life was nourished by the Bible and by prayer. Prayer included the use of words to express adoration, but also silence and the sense of God’s presence”.  

Randall gives further points of connection between the Evangelical and Contemplative traditions in the persons of Samuel Chadwick, who “used Catholic devotional manuals in his private prayers… and had a particular interest in the spirituality of the mystics” \(^\text{22}\), and F.B. Myer, who acknowledged his indebtedness to mystics such as Francis of Assisi, Brother Lawrence and Madame Guyon.

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\(^{18}\) David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989), 2-17.  
\(^{20}\) Ibid., 98-99.  
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 102.  
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 105.
This is precisely the pattern one finds in exploring the spiritual influences on early day Salvationists who drew deep from the wells of earlier traditions, particularly the Contemplative tradition.

But what are the contours of this tradition? How can they be described? If Evangelicalism is about conversion, activism, the Bible and the doctrine of the cross, what are the marks of the Contemplative tradition? This is a difficult question to answer briefly given the broad scope and long history of Contemplative spirituality, both in Christian and other religious traditions. It is a rich field of spirituality with many aspects, only some of which can be explored here. In this thesis I will focus primarily on its underlying goal and some of the ways in which that is expressed.

The heart of the Contemplative approach, in whatever practices it is expressed, is summed up in the word “desire”. It is an awareness of deep desire for communion and connection with God. It is a yearning and longing for union with God – to both lose and find ourselves in the immensity of God’s love and mystery. It sees the goal of life as total surrender to God but understands that desire for such surrender must be supported by disciplines that will sustain and progress the journey into God. So, for example, we see the desert fathers and mothers, leaving the safety of the city to seek God in the desert, a place stripped bare of distractions and comforts. They practiced the disciplines of solitude and simplicity to further their movement towards God, and to grow in trust of God. The basis of this movement is an opening up to God which requires both a giving up (of the false self with all its attachments) and an acceptance of the gifts that God bestows, however strangely they may come wrapped. It is the cultivation of an attitude of openness to God and a recognition of God in all things.

Thomas Merton describes prayer in this tradition as going beyond asking God to do things for us. It is, rather, the opening up of the whole person to God. It is less about methods or
systems, and more about cultivating “an ‘attitude’, and ‘outlook’ of faith, openness, attention, reverence, expectation, supplication, trust, joy”.

This openness and giving up of control is a key aspect of the Contemplative stance and is at the heart of practices such as contemplative prayer, the *examen* and *lectio divina*, for example. It is not about seeking to control God, or controlling relationship with God, rather it is about obedience and receptivity to the Holy who calls us into company with the God-self.

A further aspect of this is seeing the holy as permeating all of life. The Contemplative tradition sees God in all things, and identifies the potential to experience God in all things. So, for example, “Merton taught that simply walking with God is one of the surest ways of developing a life of prayer. Prayer such as this unveils the presence of God everywhere; God in the everydayness of life, in the body, in nature, and in the people we encounter.”

Another cornerstone of this stream of spirituality is that prayer begins in God. Julian of Norwich includes this as the first of three things we need to understand about prayer. All prayer is a response to God’s prayer and desire for us. Smith and Graybeal write, “The Contemplative tradition is a response to God’s longing that we spend time with him, that we create space in our lives to be with him.” The tradition reminds us both of the importance of time (which is a key focus of prayer in the Evangelical tradition) but also of space – physical space, quiet space, contained space – where we can encounter God. This adds to the Evangelical understanding of the priority of prayer by affirming also the

importance of creating conditions such as solitude, stillness and silence to facilitate prayer.

Evelyn Underhill, another writer in this tradition, identifies balance in work and rest as significant, alongside an active and disciplined intelligence. These are sometimes missing or undervalued elements in the Evangelical tradition. Writing in her book, *Essentials of Mysticism*, Underhill speaks of prayer as both work and rest, an essential rhythm that we see modelled in the life of Christ. She says:

> Prayer will include many different kinds of spiritual work; and also – what is too often forgotten – the priceless gift of spiritual rest...As in the natural order the living creature must feed *and* grow, must suffer *and* enjoy, must get energy from the world *and* give it back again if it is to live a whole and healthy life. So, too, in the spiritual order. All these things – the giving and the receiving, the work and the rest – should fall within the circle of prayer.  

This provides a strong corrective to the idea that productivity and busyness are all important. In the Contemplative tradition rest and rhythm are emphasised over and over again, from the insights of recent work on Sabbath keeping to the necessity for rest in God on a daily basis.

Another important aspect that Underhill highlights is the place of the mind in a genuine expression of Christian life. She argues that all our faculties belong in our relationship with God. It is the dynamic of feeling, will, and thinking, operating together, rather than separately, that makes a valid response to God and to others. She writes:

> In our natural life we need to use all of them. Do we need them in our spiritual life, too? Christians are bound to answer this question in the affirmative. It is the *whole person* of intellect, of feeling, and of will which finds its only true objective in the Christian God.  

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27 Evelyn Underhill, Excerpts from The Essentials of Mysticism in Foster, *Devotional Classics*, 112.
28 Evelyn Underhill, Excerpts from The Essentials of Mysticism in Ibid., 113.
Yet another important concept found in this stream of spirituality is the idea of listening to God, particularly as he speaks to us through Scripture or other inspired writings. The practice of *lectio divina*, or holy reading, was a central element of the monastic tradition founded by Saint Benedict in the sixth century. In his Rule, Benedict “made provision for each monk to spend several hours a day reading or listening to books being read”29. Michael Casey points out that in committing to this practice the monasteries showed their regard for reading “as an essential element in living a spiritual life and were prepared to invest considerable resources in ensuring that it would be possible both for themselves and future generations”.30 An underlying principle of holy reading is that the reader needs to open themselves up to the text, allowing it to speak to their condition.

In exploring the spirituality of The Salvation Army through the lens of the Contemplative tradition I will be citing primary source evidence to illustrate how these concepts were understood and expressed in the experience of Salvationists.

### 2.2 Spiritual Direction

In recent years I have studied and been formed in the ministry of spiritual direction. This is an ancient and well-documented ministry with roots going back to the early desert communities. For the last 20 years or more it has been enjoying a renaissance around the world and across various faith traditions.

I first encountered the practice in the novels of Susan Howatch. Howatch, a best selling novelist, created a series of six novels that explore “human relationships, theological concepts and large societal changes”31 within the context of the Church of England. In the

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30 Ibid.
first of these novels the main character, Charles Ashworth, has a spiritual director, and the reader learns, in the context of the novel, something of what spiritual direction involves.

My next encounter with spiritual direction was through reviewing a book by Margaret Guenther called *Holy Listening, The Art of Spiritual Direction*. The book left a strong positive impression with me, so strong that when looking for a field of post graduate study, years later, and hearing of a course in spiritual direction, the seeds planted in me by Howatch’s novels and Guenther’s book began to come to life, and I felt drawn to explore further what this was about.

The process of formation I encountered in training for this ministry became a window into another world. I had known intuitively that it existed, somewhere out there, but it opened up to me in ways I could not have imagined. The formation process teaches the skills of spiritual direction, but more importantly, conveys an understanding of the ministry as it is embedded in the Contemplative tradition. In discovering this tradition, its shape, writers, language and concepts, I finally found a sense of a spiritual “home”. It enabled me to integrate the disparate strands of my existence, giving me the language to coherently express my inner reality. It also helped me to explore why I felt like an “outsider” in the Salvationist tradition in which I had been nurtured and within whose structure I ministered. However, far from removing me from my place as a Salvationist, the discovery of a home base has allowed me to articulate how the “who” I am relates to the “what” I do.

As I worked to find the threads of connection between the Contemplative tradition, of which I was learning more and more, and the Salvationist life as I experienced it, I began to sense that the two were not antithetical, but rather that they share common beliefs and values. However, these beliefs and values are often expressed in different terminology. The language is not shared and therefore the connections are not made. Some translation work is required.
As I began in my own personal journey of translation I saw the value of articulating these connections for others and began to do so through my teaching and formation roles in my Training College appointment and also in wider spheres of teaching, such as the annual National Brengle Institute. As I did so, I became more and more convinced of the connection that exists between the broader Contemplative tradition and the spirituality of The Salvation Army.

Wanting to move beyond my own limited observations and opinions I decided to look for evidence of this in *The Officer* magazine. I sought to answer the question, “What connection does spiritual direction, with its roots in the Contemplative tradition, have with an activist, evangelical movement like The Salvation Army?” At first glance the connection may seem obscure, however, a look below the surface and an exploration of the history of The Salvation Army provides interesting and overwhelming evidence for a much closer relationship.

### 2.3 The Research Project

As previously noted, the Army’s spirituality has been defined by its activity, which highlights its passion for mission to the least, and the lowest, aimed at both their spiritual and temporal salvation. We hear something of this passion as we listen to the words of William Booth through the medium of *The Officer*. Booth was an activist with a clearly defined purpose – to save the world and win the war against sin on all its fronts.

This is the Army of popular Salvationist imagination, and the Army of primitive Salvationist rhetoric. It is a doing Army, a busy Army, an achieving Army. But could it be that it is also a praying Army, a holy Army, a thinking Army, an informed and informing Army?

The purpose of this research project is to articulate the connection between the Army’s missional framework and its spiritual roots. It is to explore the under-belly of this activist movement, which is conceived of as a relationship to the Contemplative tradition, with a
view to showing that spiritual direction, which is firmly embedded in this tradition, is a ministry which readily connects with, and has the potential to support, the ethos and expression of a historically grounded Salvationist spirituality.

The argument will be that like the marriage of William and Catherine Booth, with their complementary giftings and counter-balances, the Army’s activism also has its balance in the Contemplative tradition and that the beginnings, as well as the subsequent history, of The Salvation Army, show a strong and persistent engagement with this tradition.

Writing in *The Officer* magazine in 2003, Colonel Glen Shepherd wrote:

The Army has built its reputation on its activism – an activism of evangelism and holiness, of openness to the Spirit of God and his gifts, of social justice and involvement in community. It is an activism driven by our love for God and our vision of his will for the world around us. These are the streams that we see clearly as flowing into the river of the Army...

But there is another stream which is finding its place in our tradition, that of contemplation. Contemplation is the prayer-filled life, a longing for the presence of God. The life of contemplation brings us back to our first love – our love for God and awareness of his love for us. It anchors in a relationship with Christ, not in the disciplines or activities of a religious movement. It softens an intellectual faith by giving it life in a relationship. It creates in us a hunger to know God – by prayer and by study of his Word...

In a sense, its focus on God in contemplation is almost the antithesis of a spirituality rooted in evangelism and service. It is, in effect, what we are not. But that tension, that meeting of the streams, is what gives balance and richness to what we are and what we do.32

I endorse the description and assessment of the Contemplative tradition given here, but I would take issue with Shepherd’s assertion that this is “what we are not”. In reality, that stream which has the potential to “give balance and richness to what we are and what we do”, with its “prayer-filled life” and “longing for the presence of God”, is a part of Salvationist heritage.

It is not something new, but something that has always been. This Contemplative tradition, which is the seed-bed for the ministry of Spiritual direction, is a part of who Salvationists are: it has been a present, but hidden stream in the spirituality of The Salvation Army.

The thesis seeks to show that this hidden stream has been a vital source of spiritual nourishment for the movement. It works from the premise that to identify and articulate this heritage may in future assist Salvationists in claiming and re-claiming new ways to express this tradition in their contemporary personal and corporate lives. The ministry of Spiritual direction is one way in which this life giving “hidden stream” of longing for God can be fostered in the lives of those who call themselves Salvationists.
3

Prayer: Paradigms

3.1 Holistic Prayer

Prayer is an essential element in any concept of Christian life. It is central to the Hebrew Scriptures and to the teaching of the New Testament. It is a key component of all Christian worship, both private and public. It is considered one of the key spiritual disciplines for all Christian followers. But if we go further and look at what we mean by prayer, how it is practiced, and what we believe about its purpose, we will soon discover that Christians have very different ideas, beliefs and values about prayer. These may be consciously articulated or they may be less conscious, but nevertheless influential, in shaping relationship with God and others. They form part of our operational theology.

Our understanding of prayer is mediated through our personal experiences and by what we observe, read and are taught by the traditions in which we stand. In examining prayer from the perspective of the Evangelical and Contemplative traditions, for example, we find not different content, but different emphases and paradigms through which prayer is understood.

A key element in many understandings of prayer is that God “works” or “acts” in response to our prayer to effect change in the world and in people’s lives. Therefore the more we pray, and/or the more earnestly we pray, the more God will act. This concept is found in the Evangelical tradition where there is often a stress on fervency in prayer,

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doing serious ‘business with God’ and spending significant quantities of time in prayer.
Out of this perspective come movements like the 24-7 prayer initiative. Prayer, in this paradigm, is primarily engaging with God to bring requests, concerns and joys, as well as expressions of thanks and worship.

However, another way to understand prayer is as the means by which God changes us. The key understanding of prayer is not so much God acting in the world (an external focus) but God acting upon us (an internal focus). Prayer becomes the means by which God forms us into the likeness of His Son. It is a means of grace to us. This is the primary view of prayer in the Contemplative tradition. Thomas Keating expresses it this way:

Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union. One’s way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place, which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists.34

Christian prayer in the historic Salvationist tradition encompasses both these paradigms, which are not, essentially, antithetical. In both traditions there is the belief that God can, will, and does act in response to our openness to Him. The apparent schism we see in these approaches arises from an historic framework. Thomas Keating explains:

The method of prayer proposed for lay persons and monastics alike in the first Christian centuries was called lectio divina, literally, “divine reading”, a practice that involved reading scripture, or more exactly, listening to it. Monastics would repeat the words of the sacred text with their lips so that the body itself entered into the process. They sought to cultivate through lectio divina the capacity to listen at ever-deeper levels of inward attention. Prayer was their response to the God whom they were listening [to] in scripture and giving praise to in the liturgy.

The reflective part, pondering upon the words of the sacred text, was called meditatio, “meditation”. The spontaneous movement of the will in response to these reflections was called oratio, “affective prayer”. As these reflections and acts of will

simplified, one moved on to a state of resting in the presence of God, and is what was meant by *contemplatio*, “contemplation”.

These three acts – discursive meditation, affective prayer and contemplation – might all take place during the same period of prayer. They were interwoven one into the other. Like the angels ascending and descending Jacob’s ladder, one’s attention was expected to go up and down the ladder of consciousness. Sometimes one would praise the Lord with one’s lips, sometimes with one’s thoughts, sometimes with acts of will, and sometimes with the rapt attention of contemplation. Contemplation was regarded as the normal development of listening to the word of God.\(^{35}\)

This holistic form of prayer existed for centuries before developments in theology from the twelfth century onwards brought a more compartmentalized approach. By the sixteenth century:

Mental prayer came to be divided into discursive meditation if thoughts predominated; affective prayer if the emphasis was on acts of the will; and contemplation if graces infused by God were predominant...[these] were no longer different acts found in a single period of prayer, but distinct forms of prayer, each with its own proper aim, method and purpose.\(^{36}\)

What was lost in the process was the connectivity of the prayer experience. This has meant that in some traditions there has been little stress on the contemplative aspects of prayer, often marked by meditation, interior silence and wordlessness. Keating writes,

My conviction is that if people are never exposed to some kind of non-conceptual prayer, it may never develop at all because of the overly intellectual bias of Western culture and the anticontemplative trend of Christian teaching in recent centuries.\(^{37}\)

This is the situation for many contemporary Salvationists. However, earlier Salvationists grasped this more holistic understanding of prayer because they had themselves been exposed to this in their reading of classical Christian literature. They understood prayer as both changing the world and transforming the individual and had an awareness of the beauty and mystery of prayer. They were conscious of the reality that it is God who woos us to prayer, who yearns for us, and who is ready to meet with us both in the conscious

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 20.  
\(^{36}\) Ibid., 21.  
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 29.
words of our spoken prayer but also in the deepest, sometimes hidden, and often, unconscious desires of the true self.

3.2 The Divine Circle

This invitational understanding of prayer is portrayed visually in Rublev’s 15th century icon of the Trinity, a powerful image of three equal but distinct figures representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Various interpretations of the icon seek to unpack the symbolism inherent within it, but a significant observation for this study is that the three figures can be enclosed in both a two-dimensional and a three dimensional circle.

TRINITY -- A. Rublev XV Century
The first circle (shown above) encloses the three figures, but the second, imagined as going behind the persons and coming out to go around the viewer, encompasses him or her in the conversation.

This three dimensional aspect conveys the love of the Trinity which goes beyond itself to encompass the whole universe within its orbit. It describes an invitational and inclusive love, which holds and includes us. Henri Nouwen comments on the icon in this way:

The more we look at this holy image with the eyes of faith, the more we come to realize...[that it is] a holy place to enter and stay within. As we place ourselves in front of the icon in prayer, we come to experience a gentle invitation to participate in the intimate conversation that is taking place among the three divine angels and to join them around the table. The movement from the Father toward the Son and the movement of both Son and Spirit toward the Father become a movement in which the one who prays is lifted up and held secure...  

Nouwen goes on to say:

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We come to see with our inner eyes that all engagements in this world can bear fruit only when they take place within this divine circle...We can be involved in struggles for justice and in actions for peace. We can be part of the ambiguities of family and community life. We can study, teach, write and hold a regular job. We can do all of this without ever having to leave the house...of perfect love.  

This is a helpful image to hold as we explore the Contemplative tradition in the spirituality of The Salvation Army. Prayer is not removed from other parts of life, something distinct or separate, but is living more and more consciously within this already existing Divine Communion. Prayer is any movement that draws us more and more towards the Divine Centre.

Richard Rohr says we are “a circumference people”. We live on the boundaries of our lives. However, we are invited to enter the circle and undertake the journey to the centre of the Divine Self and our selves. “The great teachers,” says Rohr, “tell us not to stay on the circumferences too long or we will never know ourselves or God.”

It is, as Rohr suggests, evident that “the two knowings, in fact, seem to move forward together. This movement might also be understood as conversion, transformation, or growth in holiness.”

This journey was not unknown to earlier generations of Salvationists, for while they may have generally expressed themselves in the language of Evangelicalism, they understood themselves to be called to a deep, personal and loving relationship with God, expressed in compassionate ministry and a desire for personal and social holiness.

Dr Alan Harley, one of the Army’s foremost contemporary exponents of the doctrine of holiness, often refers in his teaching, to the historical development of holiness in the wider

39 Ibid., 20-22.
41 Ibid., 15.
church. He demonstrates that the Wesleyan, and therefore, Salvationist understanding of holiness has come from the older traditions of the Eastern as well as the Western Church. He says, “…Wesley’s doctrine of holiness of life finds its roots in the New Testament and the writings of mystics, theologians and Church Fathers, and is thus truly catholic in its origins.” My research of early Salvationist spirituality confirms this insight.

The Wesleyan understanding of Sanctification is ultimately a concept of “pure love”. As Harley notes, it is a life filled with holy love, marked by consistency and integrity of life, and requiring the initial and ongoing surrender of our lives to God leading to a process of growing in ‘the grace and knowledge of God’.

All of this is entirely consistent with the experience as it is described in the Contemplative tradition, where the language might be of a lifelong or ongoing conversion, or the inner journey. Transformation is the outcome of both God’s gift of grace and our cooperation demonstrated in commitment to spiritual practices that have definable and recognizable outcomes. This inner journey into the centre of God and self is a dynamic experience of love, which will always lead to genuine and compassionate engagement with the reality of our own and others’ lives. As one Salvationist writer notes:

When the heart is full of Creative Love it will not rest content in what it experiences of the Love, but will desire that others should know it too; and a life of loving effort for the souls of men is the result.

The following chapters give evidence of this essentially contemplative journey in the lives of Salvationists in the first hundred years of The Salvation Army, focusing firstly on the Salvationist experience of prayer.

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42 Ibid.
4.1 Priority

Throughout its history, and despite its activism, prayer has always been presented as a high priority for Salvation Army officers and soldiers, as numerous writers attest. Samuel Logan Brengle, the Army’s great holiness teacher, urged his comrade officers to be first and foremost, people of prayer. Writing in 1916 he says, “Be prayerful – full of prayer. Cultivate the spirit of prayer. Beware not to quench it. When you feel God wooing you into His presence, and calling you to secret prayer, go! He has a blessing for you…”[46]

Brengle’s words reveal an understanding of prayer that is gentle and warm rather than harsh, dutiful or demanding. God as the Divine Lover “woos us”, desiring to be with us. As the beloved, we are encouraged to listen to and respond to that loving invitation. For Brengle this requires the focused cultivation of a “spirit of prayer”, because our listening and response can easily be snuffed out by the busyness of life’s demands, including an over zealous response to the needs of the world.

Writing in 1927, Lieut Colonel Ernest Burton addresses personal or private prayer. Lamenting a general demise in public prayer meetings within the churches and the Army Burton turns his attention to the matter of personal prayer. He suggests that this too may become a casualty of too-busy lives. But, he asserts, “No amount of activity for God and His Kingdom, whether it be the conducting of Meetings, visitation, or any other sacred duty required of us in the position we may happen to fill, can take the place of personal

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‘waiting upon God’.\textsuperscript{47} The very first issue of The Officer magazine reflects this stance when it says

In the self-denying, cross-carrying gospel of the world’s Redeemer, do not forget the inestimable importance and privilege of prayer. All mighty warriors in the Church of God since the foundation of the world, who have shaken hell to any extent, have been men and women of prayer.\textsuperscript{48}

These are strong statements on the priority and privilege of prayer. It is essential for “warriors” and must be kept central. This is a point emphasized again in a review of a memoir of Rev. William Bramwell. Catherine Booth, had such a high opinion of this individual that she named her first-born son after him. The reviewer says,

He was very eminently a man of prayer. No matter how fatigued he was with the day’s work, or how late in retiring to rest… he invariably rose in the morning at five o’clock and spent some considerable time in prayer… without prayer he neither formed any design nor entered upon any duty; without this he never read or conversed, visited or received a visit… we also find that he generally fasted twice a week, and on these days devoted all the time he could command to meditation and prayer.\textsuperscript{49}

It is worth noting that this article appears during a period of rapid international expansion. In 1895 the Army reported on activity in Australasia, Canada, France, Guiana, Iceland, India, Japan, Newfoundland, Norway, USA and Zululand. It is against this backdrop of activism and expansion that officers were being urged to remember the priority of prayer and the value of a rhythm of engagement and disengagement for prayer. Bramwell is held up as an example of a man who took time for fasting, meditation and prayer. His stance is endorsed by the reviewer, who says, “this is a memoir that would be found profitable to read and read again, as it is sure to be of a help to the spiritual life”.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} Ernest H. Burton, "The Place of Prayer in an Officer’s Life and Work," The Officer Volume 44 Number 5 June (1927): 450.
\textsuperscript{48} The Officer Volume 1 No. 2 February (1893): 42.
\textsuperscript{49} "Review of The Christian Minister in Earnest; a Memoir of the Rev. William Bramwell," The Officer Volume 2 No. 8 August (1894): 237.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
The priority of prayer is the subject for the lead article in the April, 1928 edition of The Officer where the writer expresses concern about the neglect of prayer in the lives of some officers, often because of busyness. He cites many examples of great Christian leaders who made prayer a priority and also draws on examples from the life of Christ. Interestingly, the article goes on to emphasize that what may begin as a discipline, almost a chore, can become “an unspeakable delight”\(^{51}\). “True prayer is much more than mere petition. It is fellowship; it is communion of spirit with spirit.”\(^{52}\)

### 4.2 Prayer as Communion

The concept of prayer as communion with God is expressed frequently in the pages of The Officer. That communion is the result of commitment to the process of prayer, a process that changes us. Doris Rendell, for one, says, “the result of much personal prayer is usually seen in a change of expression from ‘Give me,’ to ‘Make me’. Our deepest longings are for an ever increasing knowledge of the Divine plan for our lives”.\(^{53}\) Rendell knows the temptation of the activist – “to plunge into all kinds of activities, rather than to wait with patience before God” – but here, she says, “…lies the secret of the difference between a spirit-filled life, and one that fails at the critical moment for lack of spiritual supplies”\(^{54}\)

Writing in 1927 Lieut Colonel C. Josephene Albright highlights the importance of praying as we truly desire, not as we think we should. She writes, “Some people pray for what they think they should pray for, not for what they really desire. This is not prayer and will never reach the heart of God.”\(^{55}\)

This concept resonates soundly with the Contemplative tradition. Our real desires are the beginning point for our prayer. We bring ourselves as we are, noticing the desires that

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\(^{51}\) “Too Busy to Pray?,” The Officer Volume 46 Number 4 April (1928): 270.
\(^{52}\) Ibid.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 381.
\(^{54}\) Ibid., 382.
\(^{55}\) C. Josephene Albright, “The Necessity of Prayer in the Life and Work of an Officer,” The Officer Volume 44 Number 1 January (1927): 12.
surface in us, and inviting the Spirit of God to engage with us in the reality of our lived experience. As Carol Smith and Eugene Merz note in their book, *Finding God in Each Moment*, the grace to be sought is the grace “to reverence my human desires as a place where God acts”.

This strongly Ignatian perspective is one that is found also in songs of consecration in The Song Book of The Salvation Army.

Albright’s article further emphasizes that prayer is a relationship in which God communicates with us and moulds us into the people he desires we should be. Quoting an un-named writer of the 16th century, she says, “prayer is not asking what we wish of God, but what God wishes of us.” It is about communion with and relationship to God. “Let us,” she writes, “cultivate more and more the spirit of prayer. Let us make our seasons of prayer not only times of intercession, but periods of devotion – of worship – of real soul communion. This is prayer in its truest sense of the word.”

That soul communion is beautifully captured in an article published in 1954. An unnamed woman officer writes of her experience as a young child. Sitting in the open temple of nature, she apprehended God, both immanent and transcendent, communing with her.

As far as the eye could see the wide veld stretched before and around me. If it was dangerous for a child to be out there alone, my parents were unaware of the fact; so was I. All I knew then was the pure joy of being a small thing in a spacious place, of being alone with wild flowers, birds and insects, of watching the sudden night spread in purple majesty over the mysterious, undulating expanses, of seeing the sky set with stars as close together as the freckles on my friend’s face. Yet I knew I was not alone – a mighty, friendly Presence was holding both child and world.

### 4.3 Prayer as Listening to God

In 1965 Colonel Daniel Larsen from the Danish Territory writes about the importance of quiet and listening in prayer. “Søren Kierkegaard”, he says, “has told me that as a certain

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58 Ibid.
man’s prayers gradually became more pious and fervent, he had still less to say. At last he
became completely quiet, yes, he became a listener…To pray means to become quiet and
to remain quiet until the pray-er hears God!“60

Brengle also saw prayer as being at least as much about listening as it is about speaking.
He says,

To keep the blessing [of holiness] we must pray to and commune much with the
Lord. We pray when we talk to God and ask him for things. We commune with Him
when we are still and listen, and let God talk to us, and mould us, and show His love
and His will, and teach us in the way He would have us go.61

An article in the November 1917 Officer magazine reinforces this. For true prayer, one
needs a “quiet, unhurried spirit”, and an understanding that “your chief business…is
listening, listening to God’s voice”.62

Of course, the movement from talking to listening to resting is part of the movement of
prayer from meditatio to oratio to contemplatio found in the traditional practice of lectio
divina. Salvationists knew this more contemplative dimension of prayer. Burton, for
example, writes of this experience:

Only the man or woman who really possesses the spirit of prayer will desire,
understand or value this form of Communion with God. In this form of prayer,
speech with God is not a necessity. Just as two persons, who enjoy true fellowship
with one another, find satisfaction in one another’s presence, often without
exchanging words, so in contemplative prayer, the soul finds inspiration and uplift
in mere recollection and the realization of His Presence, and in meditating upon
Him – His love, His will, His power, and grace.63

59 “Towards Spiritual Maturity, Aids to Devotion -- II” The Officer, No. 5, September - October (1954): 292.
61 Samuel L. Brengle, “The Meaning of a ‘Clean Heart,” The Officer Volume 7 Number 9 September
Wilfred Kitching (later General of The Salvation Army from 1954–1963) also wrote as one who knew something of this mystery and of the insights that emerge from such experiences. He says, “Some of the clearest perceptions of truth and goodness – which are the outcome of prayer – are beyond the power of man to utter…likewise…revelations that must remain wrapped in silence.” He notes, “I early came to feel that prayer was one of life’s mysterious forces”.

4.4 Lectio Divina

The practice of holy reading was one that early Salvationists were aware of. In the very first edition of The Officer, the writer alludes to it in this instruction:

The F.O. [Field Officer] should read his Bible not only for information, but for devotion. In doing so, let him read a very small portion at a time – on his knees before the Lord. [Similarly] every F.O. should read and study the doctrines held by the Army… Let him take a small portion daily and think it out, committing the texts to memory and going through it again and again.

This highlights one important aspect of lectio, that is, taking only a small amount of text, which is mulled over and allowed to sink deep into one’s spirit. Captain Fred Brown writing a review of John Baillie’s A Diary of Private Prayer and A Diary of Readings highlights what this kind of reading is like. It is… hardly reading in the ordinary sense of the word at all. As well could you call the letting a very slow dissolving lozenge melt imperceptibly in your mouth ‘eating’. Such reading is, of course, meant as directly as possible to feed the heart, to fortify the will – to put these into contact with God – thus, by the book, to get away from the book to the realities it suggests – the longer, the better…

Other significant aspects of lectio are outlined by Michael Casey in his book, Sacred Reading. These include choosing the right reading matter and reading through from

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65 Ibid.
66 “War Qualifications,” The Officer Volume 1 Number 1 January (1893): 20.
beginning to end. The principle is fundamental: “Spend as much time as you need before making up your mind, but once you make a commitment, stay with it.”

This principle is illustrated well by Mrs General Carpenter who, in an article for the new year, speaks of her own practice of sacred reading and how challenging but rewarding it is to “stay with it”. Writing in 1945, she says

For weeks I had been ploughing through Jeremiah. Patiently plodding, the share had turned out many prophecies of that gloriously faithful soul who, for forty years, had wrestled with the contentious, perverse, worldly-minded, backslidden children of God who at last, it is believed, stoned him to death. And – shame on me! – it calls for something of a concentrated effort to persevere right through the record of his experiences and foretellings.

In the thirtieth verse of the forty-ninth chapter, my eye fell upon two words. They blazed to my inner consciousness with the brilliance of a diamond on which the sun had fallen.

I knew I had my message for the year: ‘Dwell Deep!’

Another important dynamic in lectio is that we come to the text with a willingness to be open to what we receive. “We come to it defenceless and ready to be influenced,” Casey says. “The greatest enemy to this is our own willful refusal to budge beyond the closed circuit of our settled prejudices and pious routines."

This is an invitation to be open to texts from other traditions as well as those familiar to us or those that come with the stamp of denominational approval. Brown, in reviewing Baillie’s work, again makes the point that truth can come from many different sources. “John Baillie,” writes Brown,

was too big a man to belong to any one section of the Church alone, and a contributory explanation of this is seen in the wide diversity of religious background

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68 Casey, Sacred Reading, the Ancient Art of Lectio Divina, 5.
70 Casey, Sacred Reading, the Ancient Art of Lectio Divina, 6.
71 Ibid., 7.
represented in his diary of readings. John Baillie welcomed the light of truth from whatever source it came…72

This was a view shared by Salvationists who were open to many different traditions and points of view.

There is also a requirement for the reader to be prepared to grapple with the text. It requires a slowing down, and an entering into the experience of reading and meditation that is very different to the way we operate normally. We are used to looking for the “bottom line” and discard extraneous material. Instead in the practice of lectio we allow all we read to permeate our very being. As Casey observes, this is counter cultural.

In an era of hyperstimulation it can be difficult for people to realize that enlightenment comes not by increasing the level of excitement, but by moving more deeply into calm. There is a kind of monotony that…paves the way for a more profound experience.”73

An article in the 1899 Officer magazine illustrates referring to the autobiography of George Müller who is quoted extensively talking about his practice of prayer. Müller found that quiet physical activity was an aid to moving more deeply into the text and into prayer:

I began… to meditate on the New Testament early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord’s blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching as it were into every verse, to get a blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, but to obtain food for my own soul.

The results I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication, so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer…

72 Brown, “Devotional Classics, No. 2. John Baillie’s ’A Diary of Readings’ and ’A Diary of Private Prayer’,” 162.
73 Casey, Sacred Reading, the Ancient Art of Lectio Divina, 8.
With this practice I have likewise combined the being out in the open-air for an hour, an hour and a-half, or two hours before breakfast, walking about in the fields, and in the summer sitting for a little while on the stiles if I find it too much to walk all the time. I used to consider the time spent walking a loss, but now I find it very profitable not only to my body, but also to my soul…

Silence and solitude, both of which form part of Müller’s experience, support the movement into prayer and profound experience of God.

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5

Silence, Solitude and the Active-Contemplative Balance

5.1 Spiritual Disciplines

Mastery of a trade, art or skill requires many hours of gaining knowledge, and then putting what has been learned into practice. This applies to most areas of accomplishment, with few exceptions. Unfortunately, when we speak of spirituality and the goal of wholeness or holiness we may sometimes get the impression it follows a different set of rules. This has been particularly so in movements like The Salvation Army where great emphasis is placed on the work of God in making us holy and a lesser emphasis on teaching people how to nurture the life of God within them. This nurture aspect is an essential component of Christian discipleship. Individuals growing into the life of God need good teaching, coaching and lots of practice for ongoing progress. Spiritual direction is a discipleship tool for such nurture, as are the classical spiritual disciplines of the Christian life.

In his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard says: “A discipline for the spiritual life is … an activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and his Kingdom”.75 Disciplines offer a way to participate in the grace of spiritual growth. John Wesley called them “the means of grace”.76 They help to connect us with God who is the source of grace, assisting us to hear, focus on, and deepen our awareness of God and ourselves.

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Earlier generations of Salvationists were familiar with, and recognized the importance of, many of the classic spiritual disciplines such as meditation, prayer, fasting, simplicity, silence, solitude, submission, service, spiritual reading, and worship. Some of these are very evident in articles found in *The Officer*. This chapter highlights Salvationists’ understanding of the value and place of silence and solitude, and the virtue of an active-contemplative balance in spiritual life. A later chapter will also explore spiritual reading and the high place this was given in Salvationist spirituality.

### 5.2 Silence

In July 1918 Brengle contributes an article on Brigadier Eileen Douglas, an early Army writer. He says:

> Eileen Douglas was among the last survivors of a bevy of rather brilliant young women who were led to Jesus and brought into The Army over thirty years ago under the influence of the Army Mother and her gracious and gifted daughter, the late Consul Mrs. Booth-Tucker, and who were guided into careers of much usefulness as writers by the Chief of the Staff – our present General.

Douglas was a friend of Brengle’s wife, Elizabeth Swift, and shared their American home for a number of years. Brengle describes her as “my dear wife’s closest friend” and notes “her keen analytic mind” and the comfortable relationship both he and his wife had with her.

> If you wished to talk she would listen and make conversation easy by apt questions, by repartee and wit and wise observation. But if you wished to be silent and think your own thoughts, you could do so, for her mind and heart were so enriched by much reading, meditation, and prayer that ceaseless chatter was not necessary to her enjoyment and she could find entertainment within herself in silence as well as in much speech.

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78 Ibid., 14.
79 Ibid., 15.
These remarks suggest some interesting insights in the lives of these Salvationists, who were comfortable with silence, loved reading, and had good minds and engaging personalities. So often those who love silence are seen as lacking something, especially in an extroverted drum-beating movement. But here the quality was valued as an integral part of interpersonal relationships as well as a significant aid to personal and corporate prayer.

Writing in March 1930 General Edward Higgins speaks about the importance of corps prayer meetings. In this context they might more correctly be called ‘after meetings’. They were held at the end of a salvation meeting to secure “decisive action on the part of those whom we have been trying to persuade to submit their lives to God”.  

The general advises his officers on how they may best “work” these meetings to bring about the most effectual outcomes. He stresses that the meeting must be a “living thing” but says,

A ‘LIVE’ Meeting does not of necessity mean a noisy one. Life often does express itself in noise, but not always. I have known some of the mightiest and most moving influences sweep over Meetings in which no sound was heard. There is a time in a Prayer Meeting for songs of confidence, when opportunity is given for hearty expressions of feeling, but there is also a time for silent contemplation, when the Spirit of God should be the only One whose presence is consciously felt.

Silent prayer at certain periods of the gathering is usually very effective, and at times can be extended to embrace every fisher and every dealer with souls, so that the whole house is wrapped in the silence of soul-communion with God.

A Salvationist gathering “wrapped in the silence of soul-communion with God” captures beautifully the deeper longing of Salvationists to know God and the awareness that such knowing often comes through the discipline and grace of silence.

In an article, “Our Need of Quietness” Colonel William Murray observes that silence is to be found in nature. He writes:

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80 Edward Higgins, “The Improvement of Corps Prayer Meetings,” The Officer Volume 50 Number 3 March (1930): 177.
81 Ibid., 183.
Silence is one of the great features and forces of Nature. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storms and hurricanes are largely destructive; Nature’s great useful work is done in silence…All of the Creator’s work, from the beginning of time until now…has been marked by silent strength.”\(^{82}\)

Murray continues:

God would have us to learn of Him, to be quiet. And so he arranged day – and night; summer – and winter. He ordained the Sabbath, that men might have one day in seven to refresh their body, mind and spirit – and the better that day is observed, the stronger will be a nation…

But quite especially do those require times of quietness who are engaged in spiritual work. If we are to do the work to which God has called us, we need seasons when we are still, wait, rest, meditate…We need people who have learned the secret of quietness, of patient thinking, of worhipping; in whose lives the silence, not of death, but of springtide, produces new vitality.\(^{83}\)

An article included in March 1963 is in agreement. “Strange as it may seem, it is in the silence that we can speak to Him best: in the silence of meditation…in questioning silence…in troubled silence…in the silence which is a cry for help…and in awed silence,”\(^{84}\) says the un-named author. “We need times of outward silence if we are to know the inward sort…”\(^{85}\)

Also in strong agreement with this view is Brigadier H. Pimm Smith writing on worship. He addresses the value of silence in worship and says, “Many people are afraid of silence, but silence before God is a highway of worship”.\(^{86}\) He draws on an illustration from the life of Ignatius of Loyola, who would pause in silence for a moment before entering his church, and says, “What a help it would be to many Sunday morning

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\(^{82}\) William Murray, "Our Need of Quietness," The Officers' Review VI No. 1, Jan-Feb (1937): 63.

\(^{83}\) Ibid., 63-64.

\(^{84}\) “Silent Worship,” The Officer XIV, No. 2, March (1963): 144.

\(^{85}\) Ibid.

\(^{86}\) H. Pimm Smith, "Worship the Lord!,” The Officers' Review VII no. 5 September-October (1938): 419.
Meetings if folk entered the Hall in that frame or mind, instead of with the boisterous noise which too often accompanies the assembling of our congregations."\textsuperscript{87}

Commissioner Edward Higgins, later to become Chief of the Staff (1919-1929) and General (1929–1934), agrees. Writing shortly before commencing a Holiness Campaign throughout the British Field, the commissioner speaks clearly of the need for a helpful and holy atmosphere in worship. He specifically addresses the atmosphere appropriate to a Holiness Meeting.

…the whole “atmosphere” of the Meeting should be in harmony with the sacredness of its theme. I believe as heartily as anybody in the happy, rollicking, free-and-easy Salvationism appropriate to some kinds of Army Meetings… But there is a spiritual mood appropriate to a meeting designed to help men and women into the secret of a high and holy walk with God which we shall do well to cultivate…people should be able to anticipate with confidence; Tonight we shall receive something that will feed our souls. Here we shall learn something more of the art of holy living. \textsuperscript{88}

From the gathered meeting to the time alone with God, there is need for recognition of the holy which is often assisted by silence and solitude.

5.3 Solitude

In his book, \textit{Helps to Holiness}, Brengle emphasises the need for Salvation Army officers to be people “of the Holy Ghost” and links this to the need to keep prayer central by getting alone to be with God. The Holy Ghost, says Brengle, should be “sought in earnest, secret prayer”. \textsuperscript{89} He goes on to say, “I know of a man who, if possible, gets alone with God for an hour before every meeting, and when he speaks it is with “…the power and demonstration of the Spirit.”\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Samuel L. Brengle, “The Leakage of Spiritual Power,” \textit{The Officer} 4 No. 1 January (1896): 104.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
Albert Orsborn, writing in 1899, contributes an article, “Helpful Advice on Holiness”. In it, he writes: “Just one personal hint in addition to Bible-reading, observation of things in daily life, and storing up all available knowledge – get **Alone with God** and He will make you a fit instrument to teach and lead others.”

Writing in 1932, Commissioner Johanna Van De Werken writes on “The Life of Prayer”. One of the key things she seeks to communicate is the necessity of time and solitude for prayer; “*We must make time, and we must get alone,*” she writes. “All true saints, all men and women of prayer, have impressed this upon us.” Citing the example of Jesus, she mentions the need for soldiery in this regard and the possibilities for having Salvation Army halls open for prayer for this purpose. But she also lists other places that might provide solitude – a garrett, a bathroom, a field, ‘a hill just above the Quarters’ – and her own preference. “Personally, I have often had sweetest communion with God on a lonely country road.”

Van De Werken also comments on the need to become settled in ourselves and seek an awareness of God’s presence. “Having entered the ‘closet’, we must ‘close the door,’ in the truest and deepest sense, to all, and seek inward self-collectedness before we enter God’s presence.” Adjutant Robert A. Mackintosh agrees. Writing about the experience of solitude, he notes a perennial truth, “Some accept it; a few choose it; many avoid it if they can…Most people want to act in company. They love a crowd in both work and play. When they are left alone they take refuge in the wireless – anything to escape the silence of solitude.”

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., 44.
The same phenomenon is evident today, and we now possess a multitude of added ways in which we can escape – the internet, ipod, mobile phone, television, portable DVD players and so on. These things are not wrong but there are times we need to be alone.

How is the mystery of life to be solved except as each man works out the problem for himself? How is a man to get at the true values and the right perspective unless he does it alone? Only on the solitary way is a man able, so to speak, to get level with himself.\textsuperscript{97}

To have time for solitude one must achieve some sort of balance between engagement in ministry and disengagement in order to refresh oneself and seek physical, psychological, personal and spiritual renewal. This is not easy but it is essential for health and wholeness.

### 5.4 The Active-Contemplative Balance

The Salvation Army sees itself as an activist rather than a contemplative movement. It values quick response to emergency situations, availability to its public, particularly those who are in need, and the expenditure of energy in the salvation war. There is the sense even in its terminology of being an army on the move, an organisation with goals and objectives that must be reached. What place does rest then have within such a movement? What understanding is there of the need for rhythm, and pacing oneself? Is there an understanding of God as able to do things without our activity?

To answer this question we need to go beyond one generational experience. Looking back we see that early Salvationists were acutely aware that rest – both physical and spiritual – was important. This included the “rest” of prayer, but there was also an understanding of the need for physical rest.

Many articles in \textit{The Officer} magazine were written in relation to health, and what we today would call good self-care. This was something that was raised with officers from

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
the earliest days of the movement. We often think of burnout as a modern problem, but it is clear it has always been a problem amongst Salvationists ranks.

In 1910 Dr Robert Brown writes about the need for balance. He makes the astute observation that what is sometimes perceived as a spiritual problem is actually a health issue, a problem caused by poor diet or a lack of sleep or exercise. Brown emphasises the importance of listening to one’s body and argues for a holistic approach. The body, he says, must have systematic rest as well as systematic labour. If certain hours have to be spent in certain work, we should keep to the time allotted, and then give the body a rest or a change of labour so that it may be kept fit for its best in every way.»

Utilising the rather evocative term “brain fag” to describe an overtired brain that refuses to work any longer, Brown notes that this is common in younger officers who do not understand the importance of looking after “their God-gifted, exquisite, vital machinery”.  

In 1925 Brengle writes about a personal experience of physical and spiritual renewal. He begins by talking about St. Paul, describing him as “my most intimate spiritual guide” but comments that he has never found in Paul a love of nature. “In my forty years of intimate communion with him I have never once been inspired by him to look for the blinding glories of the passing days and seasons, of the pomp and splendour of star-lit nights”. However, he has found this, he says in Job, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs and Songs of Solomon, and in “the sweet talks and parables of Jesus”.

99 Ibid., 136.
100 Samuel L. Brengle, “The Universe in My Backyard,” The Staff Review Volume V Number 2 (1925): 140.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 141.
103 Ibid.
Coming to a place of complete physical breakdown Brengle needed to rest, and was invited to journey to the Rocky Mountains. However, he opted for a period of rest at home and discovered solace in his own backyard. He speaks of his experience of constantly pushing himself. “For nearly thirty years,” he says, “by day and night,

I have laboured for souls, sung and prayed and preached in crowded, steaming, ill-ventilated Halls, pleading with souls and dealing with penitents in an atmosphere so depleted of oxygen and poisoned that every pore of my body, every lung cell and red blood corpuscle cried out for fresh air, and now I have turned to my back yard to get what I need. It has been waiting for me for ten years.”

What is it that Brengle finds in his backyard? He describes what he sees: the flowers, a big oak tree, the birds, squirrels, ants, horse flies, and little un-named creatures. And despite the noise of “swift and speeding automobiles and loud, rumbling trucks…thundering trains and factory whistles not far away…here in this wee enclosure, partly in fact, and partly in imagination,” he says, “I am living a wilderness life.”

These are the words of a contemplative; one who is learning to pay attention to the world and to the multitude of ways it presents the life, energy and goodness of God.

…if health and strength can be found in the wilderness of plain or forest, or on mountain or sea, I believe it can be found among the teeming wonders, the mystic universes, and in the ocean of air and sunshine I find in my backyard.

The ability to disengage for the purpose of refreshment and renewal that was needed in Brengle’s life is still needed today. Colonel William Edwards writes of it in 1951. Articulating the importance of balance in an increasingly busy and demanding world, he says

among the secularizing factors produced by the wedding of industry and science, there is that growing momentum which has accelerated to a degree that is culturally alarming the pace of public life. The result is that we are in danger of losing the inner poise – that breadth and depth of vision which belong to the slower rate of

\[104\] Ibid., 142.
\[105\] Ibid., 143.
\[106\] Ibid., 144.
living. More than ever does it become necessary for us to find refreshment in the quietness that is the nursery of spiritual strength.  

Edwards could just have easily been writing for the current generation when he said,

The habit of listening to the still, small voice was never easy to acquire, and is perhaps never so difficult as now. Modern life concentrates men’s interests on external happiness, so much so that any withdrawal into quietness and contemplation is written off as escapism. But a balanced life can be achieved only as opportunity is found in it for contemplation as well as activity… A spiritual awareness is not a passive but an active capacity. Activity and quietness may be one in our lives even as they were always one in the life of our Lord.

Writing on the eve of his retirement, General Wilfred Kitching’s final words to his officers sound a similar note of warning and encouragement. There is need for both work and rest, for expending energy and re-gathering it. “Spiritual achievements are not turned on a production belt whose speed cannot be controlled. The richness of the human spirit and its essential character are largely determined…by our willingness to ‘be still and know’.”

True spiritual leadership comes out of a balance of activity and rest – a rest that is re-creative and life bringing. It is inspiring, new and fresh. He fears that Salvationists’ preoccupation with “‘busyness’ quite unrelated to any purpose” is “curbing [their] ability to create, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, new expressions in [their] service”.

Creativity needs time, space and rest to incubate. Kitching concludes his article by relating a counter-cultural story. It reminds us that the values of Western industrial and post industrial society, the values of the business world, are not ultimate values. There are other ways of viewing, and interacting with, the world.

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108 Ibid., 259.
110 Ibid.
A traveler in India met a seller of beautifully designed brass bowls and, asking the price, was told, ‘Two annas’. Seeing the possibility of selling such in a gift shop in her homeland she asked the price if fifty were purchased. The maker after some thought said, ‘Four annas each’. Expressing surprise that for a quantity more should be paid each, she was told: ‘If I repeat myself so many times I must have more money, for I shall need to go away in solitude so that my spirit can recreate itself.\textsuperscript{111}

This was something that earlier Salvationists seemed to grasp intuitively in their reverence for the Christian mystics of earlier centuries who demonstrated such creative energy in their ministries and in the heritage they left.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
6

Salvationists and the Mystics

6.1 Salvationists and the Mystics

Every movement has its heroes, people who model the values the movement aspires to and who others seek to follow. For Salvationists, there is William and Catherine Booth. However the Booths themselves had others they looked to, as did later Salvationists. Interestingly many of these role models came from much older traditions within the Christian church. One source of inspiration was Christian literature and one of the ways to discover who their role models were is to ask the questions, “What were Salvationists reading?” and “Who were they writing about and promoting as sources of inspiration and education?”

6.2 Literature

In its first year of publication The Officer asked its readers to respond to the question, “Which four books have been the greatest spiritual help and blessing?” Responses were received from 109 officers and the four books chosen by significant leaders were listed under their names. In addition, a list of all books, with the number of those who had chosen them, was produced.

The list includes much that we would expect: Finney’s Theology, Hymns of the Wesleys, Finney’s Autobiography, Law’s Serious Call, Life of John Wesley (Southey), Finney’s Lectures to Professing Christians and Life of Caughey, for example. But it is also interesting to see, from the perspective of the Contemplative tradition, those included
from the great classic writings of the church, among them: Life of Madame Guyon, The Fathers of the Desert, both submitted by Mrs Booth-Tucker; Pilgrim’s Progress (Bunyan); Introduction to Devout Life (St. Francis de Sales); Life of St. Theresa of Jesus (Edited by Cardinal Manning); Catherine of Sienna (Mrs Josephine Butler); and Imitation of Christ (Thomas à Kempis).  

Salvationists readily connected with their Wesleyan roots, and also with the broader church. In this they were firmly in the tradition of John Wesley who, while he was widely known and revered as the man of one book (homo unius libri) was, in fact, a man of many books. Onvar Boshears notes in his paper, “The Books in John Wesley’s Life” that Wesley was “an avid reader with broad interests”.  

Like Wesley, many early Army leaders promoted a culture of reading, and especially of reading that would bring depth to spiritual life. The Officer regularly contained reviews of current publications and made recommendations to its readers. These were not just of popular texts but often substantial works by key scholars. In reviewing them, comment was made on the reasons why reading them would be helpful, something Wesley had also done. These reasons were often expressed in quite “contemplative” language. In reviewing The Interior or Hidden Life, by Thomas Upham, for example, the reviewer writes:

One of the great reasons why we would recommend it is, that its careful perusal, leading the mind to contemplation and meditative action (my emphasis), is sure to result in inward searchings, and the affections and desires being drawn more Godward.  

The language and ideas of the wider church, or a different tradition, can provoke new thought and exploration and the Army embraced this. Successive editors of The Officer
continued a tradition of inclusiveness in the books they reviewed, recognizing the value in officers being exposed to other points of view and other ways of expressing shared truths. As the anonymous reviewer quoted above noted: “The most striking truths always expressed in the same style or language we find are apt to lose their force.”  

In 1909, we find The Officer running another competition in which participants wrote on “Abiding Inspirations of My Spiritual Life and Service”. Among those who had a share of the prize were a young Captain Albert Orsborn (later General) and a Captain Vincent H. Rohu. Rohu acknowledged that “Some of the mediums of inspiration to me would not, perhaps, be those through which spiritual direction would come to others,” but nevertheless talked about the books that inspired him, which included “the writings of the Fathers, for example, ‘Augustine’s Confessions’ and Pascal’s ‘Thoughts’.” He wrote also of the “exceedingly rich medium of inspiration” found in ‘The Imitation of Christ,’ of Thomas à Kempis, and Bishop Jeremy Taylor’s ‘Holy Living and Dying.’ “The former,” he says, “is my daily companion and friend, and I rank it next to my Bible.”

Compare this to the formative influences on John Wesley, as noted by Boshears and we see an immediate connection:

Aside from the Scriptures and the Book of Common Prayer, there were four major molders (sic) of Wesley's mind … Thomas a Kempis, Imitation of Christ, Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying, William Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life and his Christian Perfection, and Henry Scougal's The Life of God in the Soul of Man. These books made a lasting impression on Wesley.

Throughout the Officer magazines surveyed for this thesis there was a consistent pattern in relation to books and reviews, giving abundant evidence of the high value placed on

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117 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Boshears, “The Books in John Wesley's Life.”
reading. Reviews covered a wide range of texts and showed a depth of engagement with popular and classical material, including serious texts in areas of theology and spirituality. A good example of this is a review by Adjutant F.L. Coutts (another officer who became General) of *The Guiding Hand of God* by J. Rendel Harris.

In the review, Coutts acknowledges that, “The name of Dr. Harris is not, I think, a household word where Officers congregate”. Nevertheless, Coutts knew Harris as a “great Quaker scholar”. He had sat with Harris in a lecture on ‘the principle of uncertainty’ in physics, and later in a class with Alison Peers, an eminent Roman Catholic authority on Spanish mysticism. He reports how at the conclusion of the class Dr Harris was invited to say something, “A spare form arose,” writes Coutts, “swaying slightly, ‘My definition of the mystic life would be: The lover has found the Beloved’.”

There is something very rich in this distilled wisdom, at the one time both simple and profound. It is the product of years of study, yes, but much more than that, years of truth seeking and living. And in Coutts view, that is what Army officers needed more of, and in this we see him leading by example. Clearly Coutts himself was interested in these diverse subjects and willing and able to tackle Harris’ text, recommend it to others, and suggest ways in which it could be useful to his comrade officers. It is worth noting too that the book was on sale in Territorial Trade Departments.

A common theme that emerges in reviews and articles is an appreciation for the great saints and mystics of the Church. This is found from the very earliest days of the movement and consistently throughout later periods. When Evangeline Booth was elected as General in 1935 the first article in the January-February edition of *The Officer’s Review* is her address of acceptance after election by the High Council. In the same issue two books concerning women and by women were reviewed. The first was a study of

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123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
Saint Teresa, by Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, and the second, Evelyn Underhill’s, *The School of Charity*. In Teresa the reviewer sees a competent spiritual woman exercising leadership:

In Teresa’s genius for handling men and things, in her knowledge of finance, in her organizing capacity, as she founded her ‘houses’ all over Spain, we see the forerunner of the woman administrative Officer, especially the Women’s Social Officer.125

From Teresa’s attributes the reviewer turns to the work of Evelyn Underhill for inspiration. Both are described as mystics. But what is a mystic? And why were Bramwell Booth, and his parents, William and Catherine, described, at times, as mystics both by Salvationists and others?

### 6.3 Defining Mystics

Ursula King answers the question with a broad-brush approach and one that fits helpfully with the way in which we see Salvationists using this term in very comfortable, un-self conscious and open ways. She says,

A mystic is a person who is deeply aware of the powerful presence of the divine Spirit; someone who seeks, above all, knowledge and love of God and who experiences to an extraordinary degree the profoundly personal encounter with the energy of divine life.126

Mystics are often thought of as disconnected from the realities of life but true mystics rarely choose an inner journey at the expense of an outward one. They connect deeply with God and that connection often leads them back to the needs of the world in which they live. As Dr James Hurley noted in a recent seminar presentation, mystics express themselves in

… two ways largely determined by personality and context: outwardly in the world through specific roles or tasks; or, more inwardly in an inner searching often finding

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124 Ibid., 433.  
expression in a change of life style, writing, and or the arts. Usually both are present; it is a matter of emphasis.\textsuperscript{127}

This is what we see in the life of Teresa, Underhill, and the Booths. The goal of the mystic life is union with God, but this union, the result of commitment to ongoing exploration and deepening of their life in God, expresses itself in service to others. The mystic engages with the transcendent and the mundane in an integrated and coherent way. As King points out, the mystical experience is “an all-consuming love for both God and the world… an experience of a profound spiritual integration”.\textsuperscript{128}

Although Christian mysticism was developed and shaped by the experiences of the early desert fathers and mothers it is not limited to the experience of those individuals who detach themselves from the world. Rather, as Western monasticism developed it became clear that the:

…individual soul could… ascend to the highest ideals of the spiritual life and achieve mystical union with God but also be of service to other human beings through prayer and active good works.\textsuperscript{129}

This is abundantly clear in the lives of medieval mystics such as St Francis of Assisi who devoted himself to a life of prayer and service to the poor, and who was much loved by early Salvationists.

\textbf{6.4 Mystic Heroes}

Bramwell Booth chose to make a biography of Francis available to Army soldiers through his “Red-hot Library” series, which was designed to make spiritual literature available and accessible to as wide a body of readers as possible. As the book’s reviewer notes in a 1895 issue of \textit{The Officer},

\begin{footnotesize}
129 Ibid., 28.
\end{footnotesize}
That the biography of Francis of Assisi is a book that should be read can be taken for granted by the fact that the Chief of the Staff – so eminently a leader in practical holiness – has selected it as the first in connection with his “Red-hot Library” series now in press.\textsuperscript{130}

The reviewer drew a clear connection between the leadership of St Francis and of William Booth:

Anyone reading this cannot but be struck with the similarity of the Divine call of our beloved leader, and his first efforts and ingathering; especially as we look today upon the gigantic and glorious results of his having fearlessly and devotedly followed God’s direction.\textsuperscript{131}

Writing in 1932, Captain Albert Mingay reflects on how Francis’ story affected him. He describes Francis as “a spiritual giant, whose untiring zeal, tender love, charming simplicity and deep sincerity sweetened the world and turned his generation Godward”.\textsuperscript{132} Mingay says that one cannot read this story without becoming aware of “one’s own spiritual poverty”.\textsuperscript{133} He also notes that William Booth described Francis as “one of the most remarkable men the world has ever seen”.\textsuperscript{134}

St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Catherine of Sienna were also attractive models for Salvationists who loved their deep spirituality and its concomitant expression in care for the needy. Bernard of Clairvaux’s hymns, “Jesus the very thought of thee” and “O sacred head once wounded” were, and are still, included in \textit{The Song Book of The Salvation Army}.\textsuperscript{135} He was also the subject of another Army biography reviewed in \textit{The Field Officer} in 1906. As the reviewer notes, “Good men are peculiar to neither age, creed, nor

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130} “The Life of Francis of Assisi,” \textit{The Officer} Volume 3 Number 11 November (1895): 326.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 327.
\item \textsuperscript{132} Albert E. Mingay, “My Favourite Army Book, Francis the Saint,” \textit{The Officers’ Review} Volume 1 Number 4 July-August (1932): 302.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 303.
\item \textsuperscript{135} \textit{The Song Book of the Salvation Army}, (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1986), Songs 61 & 23 respectively.
\end{itemize}
nationality.”\textsuperscript{136} Bramwell Booth in writing the preface to the book took the same point of view:

Bernard was one whose own spiritual nature was cultivated in the highest degree for God, and one whose absolutely fearless courage for the interests of Jesus Christ’s Kingdom has, perhaps, never been surpassed.\textsuperscript{137}

Catherine of Sienna was also a mystic heroine for similar reasons. As King points out, Catherine’s mystical experiences led her to “go out into the world and help her neighbours out of love for God...she was not only an ascetic and mystic, but also became an activist, always motivated by God’s love for the human being.”\textsuperscript{138} One can see the attraction and the sense of connection for the Salvationist in such a life. Later, we find Catherine Booth likened to women mystics such as Catherine, Teresa and Julian of Norwich. Not one of them, however, was as much a favourite in the Salvationist tradition as Brother Lawrence, a mystic of the early modern period.

Brother Lawrence was written about extensively in \textit{The Officer}. We find substantial references to him in 1902, 1918, and 1926, for example, and right up until 1961. Bramwell Booth, in particular, loved Brother Lawrence’s \textit{The Practice of the Presence of God}, which was sold in the Trade Department. Of this book he writes,

> Of all the books that I have ever read, whether written in this or other languages, I think this little volume must come first for its powerful simplicity...every page ‘brings God nearer to the weak’.\textsuperscript{139}

Booth was drawn to the deep life of prayer Lawrence wrote of which included times of withdrawal for prayer but also a continual God-consciousness throughout the day. He urged his officers to follow Lawrence’s example, “Do you not see,” he says, “how great a difference would come about in your personal experience and in your work if, like

\textsuperscript{136} “Bernard of Clairvaux,” \textit{The Field Officer} November (1906): 423.
\textsuperscript{137} Bramwell Booth quoted in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} King, \textit{Christian Mystics, Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages}, 83.
\textsuperscript{139} Bramwell Booth, "The Practice of the Presence of God," \textit{The Officer} Volume 40 Number 6 June (1925): 441.
Brother Lawrence, you *habitually cultivated this realization of the presence of God in your life.*

Booth continues, writing with the consciousness of the contemplative, "More closely than mother, father, lover, leader, or friend, God is with you all the time, overlooking all that you are, even more surely than all that you do."

Protestant mystics were also well to the fore in Salvationist reading, and yet I have rarely heard Salvationists of my generation talk about the mystics from either the Catholic or Protestant traditions. If they are talked about, the term "mystic" is not used. Perhaps it is because, as King points out, "Protestantism is often better known for its suspicion of mysticism, rather than its support." However, as King notes, and this survey of *The Officer* provides abundant evidence of,

Protestant reformers were not indifferent to the mystical element in Christianity. Several of the founders of Protestantism and later Protestant divines were familiar with the mystical works of the Catholic predecessors. Much of the genius of Protestantism is expressed in hymns, creatively combining the art of music with religion in a way that powerfully underscores a deeply mystical Protestant piety and a great yearning for God's love and intimate presence. This is especially true of the two Wesleys, John and Charles, the founders of Methodism.

King here makes a highly significant connection between Protestant piety and the mystic tradition. But another connection that can be made is around theological understanding. The mystics, and we can include the founders of The Salvation Army among them, placed great stress on personal enlightenment and on the personal and specific leading of God. In other words, inspiration does not cease with the Scriptures, but God inspires and teaches us truth in every age through personal revelation and experience tested in the community of faith and held alongside Scripture.

Protestant mystics stated plainly that the mystic's supreme authority lies not in the written word of scripture but in the Word of God himself. Dependence on external

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140 Booth, "Knowing and Loving God, the Unseen," *The Officer* Volume 42 Number 4 April (1926): 269.
141 Ibid., 267.
142 King, *Christian Mystics, Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages*, 175.
143 Ibid.
authority was replaced by the guiding light and freedom of inner experience and conscience.¹⁴⁴

To see evidence of this in the life of The Salvation Army we need only think of Catherine Booth and her leadership on female ministry, or William Booth leaving the church to create his own movement, or the Army’s stance on the sacraments. All these give evidence of a freedom to interpret and understand Scripture through the lens of personal spiritual conviction and contemporary realities. We see a similar freedom in George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, who again, is written about extensively in The Officer. We find his life serialized in 1899 (May-November) and 1919-1920 (September-February). Fox is described by King as “a deeply spiritual man and talented organizer”¹⁴⁵ a description which would equally apply to William or Catherine Booth. These were, indeed, practical mystics.

6.5 Salvationist Mystics

The 1905 Field Officer contains an extract from the London Daily Telegraph regarding the bestowal of the honour, the “Freedom of the City of London”, on General William Booth. Booth is clearly regarded in this article as a mystic, from the very first lines where he is described as the “Peter the Hermit” of modern life. He is honoured for his contribution to national and international life and described as “the prophet of the slums” and as a “practical mystic”. The author states:

General Booth, in our own day, as much as any character of medieval or Puritan times – as much as Cromwell or Cecil Rhodes – is a “practical mystic”… The “practical mystic” knows how to deal alike with matter and spirit… this is the great vindication of General Booth’s career – that he has preached no doctrine of what we may call “selfish salvation”. Like every practical mystic before him, he has encouraged… the life of effort and the creed of work. He has incited his followers not to fly from the world, but to grapple with it and to cope with misery and evil in the midst.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 176.
¹⁴⁵Ibid., 181.
This was the external view, what of the internal one. Reflecting back to the beginning of the Army and his days as an office boy at the Army’s National Headquarters, General Albert Orsborn describes the Founder in these terms:

The Founder was the dominant figure. His travels were colossal, his influence pre-eminent… He was unquestionably one of the greatest in a world of great men. He was a hungry and restless hunter for the souls of men, and a moral and spiritual leader of continuously creative genius. 147

Creativity is one of the marks of the mystic, together with compassion for others, an engagement with the reality of darkness and pain and a prophetic stance, as Matthew Fox notes in his experiential definitions of mysticism. “The prophet is one who interferes with injustice”.148 This was the hallmark of Booth’s life and is currently being reclaimed as the essence of Salvationist engagement with the world. But this essence is the overflow of a deep, inner spiritual experience, which we find in the life of both founders.

In an article, “Catherine Booth as Seen by Non-Salvationists” S. Carvasso Gauntlett reports that Booth was described by Sidney Dark (editor of the Anglo-Catholic ‘Church Times’) as ‘a very genuine modern mystic’.149 She talked as one who knew God. Another writer, Dr. J.H. Gunning, described as “one of the most distinguished religious leaders of Holland” adds to this description, saying,

Right from the beginning to the end she brought me into the personal presence of Jesus Christ. From the moment she opened her mouth she took possession of her listener’s hearts and seemed to speak to them, not from without, but from within.150

Mrs General Carpenter, writing on “Catherine Booth’s Influence on The Salvation Army” on the fiftieth anniversary of Catherine’s death (1940) clearly sees Catherine as belonging

149 S. Carvasso Gauntlett, "Catherine Booth as Seen by Non-Salvationists," The Officers’ Review Volume X No. 2 April-June (1941): 95.
150 Ibid., 96.
in the great line of women mystics and leaders of earlier centuries. Tracing the role of women’s ministry from the time of Christ onwards, she says:

In the Middle Ages we find spiritual leaders amongst women of many nations; to mention a few – Teresa of Spain, Catherine of Sienna, Bridget of Sweden, Julian of Norwich, Madame Guyon of France. These women mirrored the life of Christ in their characters, and also displayed great powers of mind and administrative ability. Later amongst the Quakers arose notable women preachers, and still later the Methodists produced powerful and persuasive women leaders. But when we come to the years when The Salvation Army was but a thought in the heart of God, woman’s voice was almost silent in proclaiming the glad tidings of the gospel… Early in the nineteenth century – in 1829 – a baby girl was born in a country town of England. She was named Catherine Mumford. This child was destined to be God’s instrument to recapture woman’s voice in public witness for Christ, and to apprehend and declare God’s plan that men and women combine their powers in the Campaign of the Cross.  

Carpenter describes Booth as “the foremost woman evangelist of Great Britain, perhaps of the world”152. This article is followed up by another tribute to Booth, this time from her daughter, retired general, Evangeline Booth. Describing the complementary natures of her parents she wrote:

Activity was the air that my father breathed. Hither and thither he hurried, initiating, overcoming difficulties, confirming the waverers, discovering the opportunities of advance, selecting the shock troops who could be summoned to go forward. My mother never lost the habit of meditation. She was a diligent reader, particularly of books with which she sharply disagreed. Into the discussions of religion she entered, knowing the answers. She met skepticism, sophistication and cynicism on their own ground. She was an intellectual among the intellectuals.  

Booth emerges from these word portraits as a leader without peer, a prophet leading the recovery of women’s ministry within the broader church, a deep thinker, a robust intellectual, and at the heart of all, a person who exuded a sense of the personal presence of Christ in her words and her actions. Booth engaged with the world out of a deep

151 Minnie Carpenter, “Catherine Booth’s Influence on the Salvation Army,” The Officers’ Review IX No. 5, October-December (1940): 323.
152 Ibid., 325.
engagement with God, an attribute that we find deeply etched into the life of her son, Bramwell.

Writing, in 1956, to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Bramwell Booth, General Wilfred Kitching wrote, “To some, I have reason to fear, Bramwell Booth was a perplexing personality, and that because he was a man of so many gifts. Many were baffled because in this one character very many contrasting faculties were united.”

Kitching continues,

He was a deeply read theologian and yet, at the same time, an astute and keen businessman. He was in many ways a mystic (some of his poetry reveals that quality) and yet he was essentially practical.

A tribute by Commissioner W. Wycliffe Booth (a son) follows. He writes of his father’s capacity, saying, “Intellectually his gifts were surely exceptional, and his knowledge so wide as to range completely over most of the sciences.” His eldest daughter, Commissioner Catherine Bramwell-Booth notes, “Love was the dominant quality of his nature”. She quotes some of his early correspondence in which, using the language of the mystic he describes God as the Divine Lover, and talks about Christ in similar terms: “Jesus…His love is above a father’s love, more than a brother’s, stronger and sweeter than a mother’s, it is the love of an only beloved.” But, she hastens to add, in agreement with others, “…there was an intensely practical quality in his love. Bramwell Booth was not in danger of letting his mind rise into a cloud of ecstasy divorced from everyday needs.”

She beautifully describes the way in which his natural inclination, his contemplative nature, was integrated into the life he knew as the son of the founder and the inheritor of leadership in the militant salvation mission that is The Salvation Army. She is reported to

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155 Ibid.
have said, “Temperamentally, Bramwell Booth was a mystic...But necessity drove him on to the battle-field, and the mystic was almost lost in the soldier.”

There is so much pathos in that statement, the challenge for Booth to be true to himself and yet true to the “mission” and “movement” that emerged from his parents’ hearts. But Booth never really lost the mystic element as S. Carvasso Gauntlett, writing in 1931 makes clear as he describes his favourite Army book, Bramwell Booth’s *Echoes and Memories*. Referring to certain passages within the book, he asks the question,

There, and in some later passages of the same chapter, have we not a glimpse of the Bramwell Booth who, besides being an organizer and administrator, financier, law student, warrior, writer and religious leader, was also very much a mystic?

What we see in these lives is the balance of the contemplative, prayerful life, focused on union with God, and the outworking of that union in incarnational ministry within the world. The danger is always the one without the other, and this is a present danger for The Salvation Army and the church in every age. There is a need for both contemplation and action, right relationship with God and right relationship with others. One of the tools that can assist in maintaining this integral connection is the ministry of spiritual direction.

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**Conclusion: Towards Spiritual Direction**

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158 Ibid., 148.
159 Smith, “Union with God,” 500.
7.1 Towards Spiritual Direction

A key question posed at the commencement of this thesis was: “What connection does spiritual direction, with its roots in the Contemplative tradition, have with an activist, evangelical movement like The Salvation Army?” The thesis has demonstrated that the Contemplative tradition is part of the historically experienced spirituality of The Salvation Army and has been expressed in diverse but connected ways. It is found in the priority given to prayer, and in understanding prayer as a journey of ever deepening communion with God leading to union. It has been demonstrated in the understanding of prayer as listening to God, aided by the practice of lectio divina, and spiritual disciplines like silence and solitude. It is also to be found in the awareness of the necessity of an active-contemplative balance in Christian living and in the engagement of Salvationists with others’ ideas and experience. This is seen in their reading of Christian writings across diverse traditions and times, and in particular in their love for the mystic saints of the Church.

The Contemplative tradition has been a hidden but present stream in the spirituality of The Salvation Army. The ministry of spiritual direction, which is firmly embedded in this tradition, is a ministry that Salvationists can access confidently in the knowledge that this is a continuation and a further development of an engagement with the Contemplative tradition with which the movement has always been familiar and to which they have been historically open and welcoming.

There is no doubt that in recent years there has been a renewal of interest in the ministry of spiritual direction and what it offers to both the individual seeker and the church as a whole. The Salvation Army has, historically, seen itself as part of the mainstream church and has welcomed the movements for renewal within the church. Today, one of these movements is the development of the spiritual life through the ministry of spiritual direction. This can be embraced and owned as part of Salvationist life, just as we have
embraced and owned other aspects of Christian life that have come to us through the churches.

The Salvationist heritage as it is revealed in the witness of *The Officer* magazine shows an Army that is ecumenical in outlook and strongly for spiritual, intellectual and faith development. It is for the integration of body, mind and soul, and positive about spiritual guidance for both its officers and soldiers. It is for love for souls in all its dimensions. It stands to reason that such a movement is also de facto pro spiritual direction, which encompasses all these factors in its practice and whose aim is the graced development of each individual in their relationship to God, self, and others.

**7.2 Pro – Ecumenism : The Salvation Army and the Churches**

The Salvation Army has long maintained a positive relationship with the wider Christian community. In a series of articles commencing in January 1965 to celebrate the centenary of The Salvation Army, Lieut Colonel Bernard Watson writes about the religious foundations of The Salvation Army.

He notes the Army’s indebtedness to Methodism and to its founder John Wesley. “William Booth”, he says, “was a John Wesley man, and almost all of what matters to us, and what moulded our Army Founder, was a legacy from the Methodist Church.”

In an interesting argument he expounds the idea that “Methodism existed long before the eighteenth century”, agreeing with Church historian Rupert Davies who says, “Methodism is a recurrent form of Christianity”. “It is a reform movement, an urge for a return to first principles.”

This is a helpful concept that enables Methodism to be perceived in dynamic rather than static forms. Its essence is found in any reform movement which prefers personal converse with God to institutional forms, has a concern to bring the truth

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162 Ibid., 22.
to simple people, has a stress on holiness, re-affirms the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and institutes a semi-lay Church order.  

He argues therefore that the ancestral route of Salvationism is “the middle of the main road of Christian orthodoxy”.  

If there is a ‘lunatic fringe’ in Christendom…we are not of it…It is the religiously illiterate who see in The Salvation Army anything uniquely vulgar, ‘barmy’ or heretical. The informed churchman at times envies us, sometimes imitates us and, in his heart of hearts, knows he is of us and we are of him. Roman Catholics, whom we might expect to be our most hostile and stand-offish critics have said, ‘The Salvation Army has much in common with us,’ which is true… Salvationism… is not new theology but new tactics.  

In a similar vein, John Coutts asserts that “the Army is an integral part of the historic Church of Christ”. He notes that while “…the Army is a denomination with a history and theology of its own, originating in a particular Christian tradition in a particular time. Our debt to the other members of the Church universal is enormous.”  

Coutts’ article places emphasis on the theological and practical gifts the Army received but as we have seen in this thesis The Salvation Army also received much in the way of spirituality from the Church universal from all periods. In particular, in claiming the links to the theological revolution that was the Protestant Reformation Salvationists may have overlooked connections to more ancient traditions in Christian spirituality, including the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.  

**7.3 Pro – Spiritual Development in Discernment**  

Spiritual direction is firmly based in a tradition of discernment, going back to the teaching of St. Ignatius of Loyola who was an innovator in this area of spirituality. 

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163 Ibid.  
164 Ibid., 23.  
165 Ibid.  
Whereas earlier mystics saw the goal of Christian perfection as contemplation and divinization, Ignatius of Loyola was the first of the moderns to stress that the primary aim of the spiritual life is identification of the human will with the divine will, regardless of experiential effects.  

Ignatius introduced practices such as retreats and spiritual direction. His Spiritual Exercises form the basis of many spiritual direction and formation programs. As a process, spiritual direction both models and teaches discernment assisting the pilgrim in learning how to attend to the life of God in them. The need for this growth in skills was something that early Salvation Army leaders were cognizant of. Holiness of life was both an experience to be sought – a blessing to be received – but also an experience to be lived out in the growing consciousness of God.

This is a point made by Bramwell Booth writing in 1903 about the purpose of Holiness Meetings. Their purpose, he argues, is not only to bring people into the blessing or experience of Holiness but to teach them in such a way that they come to a deeper and more mature understanding of their relationship with God, the will of God, and their responsibility to share the life of God with others. This is a process of education and spiritual formation.

It is also a mistake to suppose that the only purpose of a Holiness meeting is to lead people into the enjoyment of the Blessing. That is one great end of the meeting, of course. But it is also important in such meetings to instruct those who are living in the Light, to show them how to discern and resist evil, to lead them to a better understanding of God’s will, and to help them fight more faithfully for the souls of those around them. Do not lose sight of all this. Our people will not grow old in Holiness unless they are watched over and taught and led.  

Today there is often no clear focus on this teaching aspect in Salvationist worship. This is one area where the ministry of spiritual direction could assist. My own experience of

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168 King, Christian Mystics, Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages: 146.
169 Bramwell Booth, "Comment on Things Small and Great," The Field Officer Volume 11 Number 3 March (1903): 82.
giving direction to both officers and soldiers is that it is this aspect of spiritual direction that is so transformative for individuals. They learn how to “discern and resist evil”, and are led to “a better understanding of God’s will” which transforms their living out of the gospel. There is also scope for teaching of this nature to be communicated in settings such as retreats or teaching seminars.

Developing the spiritual life of Salvationists was something of great importance to Booth as an article in the 1917 *The Officer* magazine highlights:

I have been impressed strongly of late with the need that some of our Officers should give much more attention than seems to be now the case to the development of divine work in their Soldiers. Many of our people, I fear, have not progressed very far beyond the first elements of spiritual experience.  

Booth comments that Holiness is more than a one off experience. “Holiness is something more than an act – of surrender on their part and of cleansing on the part of the Holy Spirit – it is a life.”  

The interview with Booth is continued in the March magazine, and is focused on encouraging officers to develop a sense of the understanding of God’s presence within their soldiers. Booth affirms that even people who may at first seem “unlikely” can and do desire to experience the deeper things of the spiritual life. An example of this is the story of a young woman attending one of the General’s Saturday night meetings. He noticed a book sticking a little way out of a small handbag she was carrying.

I spoke to her and found she was one of our Soldiers, a domestic servant, in a very humble position. I asked what book she was reading? She drew it out and I found it to be a well thumbed copy of Thomas à Kempis. To my great pleasure she testified to the help and blessing it had been in her spiritual experience and in her work. There must be many such amongst our people – men and women who are reaching out after a deeper knowledge of spiritual things – praying, seeking, thinking, and

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170 “The Development of the Spiritual Life in Our Soldiers, Notes of an Interview with the General” *The Officer* Volume 25 Number 2 February (1917): 73.
171 Ibid.
only needing definite encouragement to develop this appetite for all that feeds the life of God in the soul.  

Booth felt that this was not an exceptional case, but rather a general phenomenon. His advice to his officers was that they must help their soldiers to discern the movement of God’s Spirit within them. He asserts that God is with his people, guiding them and directing them not only through the outward circumstances of their life, but also “in the inner thoughts and desires and purposes of our being”. They need a growing discernment of God’s Spirit at work in their inner life but also a growth in their intellectual understanding. This openness to learning is an important part of developing an integrated spirituality. It is not faith with its head in the sand, but faith engaging with the world in all its diversity and challenges. A growing spirituality needs to be matched with growing intellectual understanding.

7.4 Pro – Intellectual and Faith Development

Frederick Coutts, a leader of significance within the movement, argued for the importance of knowledge and faith co-existing. He argued that knowledge is the friend not the enemy of faith and that questioning was to be encouraged in the faith sphere as well as the school room.

Knowledge is our friend, not our foe. If we regard it as hostile, why then do we stint and scrape to send our children to secondary schools? We cannot expect them to pursue the methods of free enquiry six days per week but not on the seventh. For my part, I would let them ask as many questions as they please.

Part of that knowledge development involves making time for reading. Major William Ozanne, writing during the war years to busy officers says,

War emergencies and the acute shortage of man power have added considerably to the multifarious matters demanding a Corps Officer’s attention, especially at larger
Corps, and ‘time for reading’ becomes a problem. The imperative need for reading, however, must claim part of our day...Only regular and retentive reading can save us from intellectual paucity.\textsuperscript{175}

He goes on to say, “We may excel as organizers – or entertainers – but we shall degenerate into mere ‘chatterers’ and miserably fail as preachers of the Gospel unless we read, and read assiduously.”\textsuperscript{176}

Senior Captain B. Darbyshire writes in a similar vein in an article from 1956. He speaks plainly, and with humour, about the changing world and the need for officers to be readers, and learners, both for their own sake and for the sake of their congregations. He writes,

> If we think we can hold our place perpetually in this highly educated world on the strength of a few cups of tea given out in the last war and a film about ‘Missing Persons’, we shall be, of all men, most disillusioned.\textsuperscript{177}

In the Australian context the Army has maintained its reputation in society almost exclusively on the basis of its social work and its efforts in the two world wars. The Salvation Army has high levels of public approval but falling attendances at worship which perhaps says something about the current need for congregational life to be strengthened in the areas of teaching and preaching. The Army does not appear to have kept pace with the intellectual growth of its soldiers and society in general. Darbyshire, writing 50 years ago, could be writing for today when he refers to the education levels in society, and the way in which Army youth and their parents for the most part grasped these opportunities. He says,

> These youngsters, and some not so young, who are accomplished in modern lore, have to sit and listen to you and me...every Sunday. I say have to, and I mean it. They cannot choose their officer. They cannot desert a place of worship which to

\textsuperscript{175} William Ozanne, "No Time for Reading?", \textit{The Officers' Review} XII No. 4, October - December (1943): 229.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} B. Darbyshire, "Army Officers and Their Reading," \textit{The Officer} VII, No. 5, September - October (1956): 338.
many of them represents all they have known of religion, and which they have
grown to love dearly. 178

The officer, Darbyshire says, does not need to be a brilliant person, or even well educated
in a formal sense, but, he says, “he needs to be both a good man and a reading man, if he
is to hold and instruct and inspire his congregation”. 179

There is a need for soldiers and officers to commit to spiritual and intellectual depth and
seek ways to nourish that through reading. Spiritual direction is a tool that assists in this
process by exposing pilgrims to the riches of books that they may barely know exist.
Because spiritual direction is grounded in the deep spirituality of the Contemplative
tradition it provides a window into that world where there is a vast amount of literature to
challenge, nourish, and teach the reader about the life of God in the human soul. This is an
education worth having.

Colonel William Edwards, the International Education Secretary at the time of writing in
1949, agrees with this stance. In his article, “Further Education” he notes that in reading
the biographies of early day Salvation Army officers, “one becomes aware that the
development of innate powers was going on throughout their lives. Education for them
was a matter of continual growth, adjustment and nurturing”. 180

Education was seen as something that supported the primary work of soul saving and
discipling.

Further education for our pioneers was also a gathering of strength in character, a
manifest ability to assume greater responsibility, developing signs of statesmanship
and, above all, an increasing sense of what was vital in their Army service – doing
justly, loving mercy, walking uprightly, and all crowned by doing the work of a
soul-winner. Their executive skill, second to their spiritual insight and
understanding of men, developed as a result of their applying themselves to further

178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 William Edwards, “Further Education,” The Officers’ Review XVIII, no. 6, November - December
(1949): 364.
education. For them education was the escorting of the soul to the frontiers of knowledge.  

He goes on to say, “A revival of theological insight is the first phase of the revival that we need...there is no substitute for sincere faith, intellectual integrity and spiritual insight”.  

But it wasn’t just a concern with regard to officers as earlier comments regarding holiness teaching demonstrated. There was also the understanding that soldiers needed to be developed intellectually and spiritually. Writing in 1950 Senior-Major John Atkinson quotes William Booth:  

> We ought to encourage the growth of the spirit of personal piety in our soldiers – the spirit of prayer, and faith, and love to God and man. Is there not a danger of resting too much on the bare fact of conversion, which, important as it certainly is, cannot rightly be regarded as more than the beginning of the Divine Life? … A divine infancy is good; but a holy, intelligent manhood is better, and brings with it the strength and confidence that not only qualify the soldier for standing up for Christ alone, but fighting for Him to the death, and leading others forward in the war.  

Alongside this intellectual development was a parallel development in spiritual life. As Atkinson points out, “thinking alone will not lead man to the heights of holiness and usefulness. Our people must be taught to pray.” Prayer is not something we can assume people know how to do and yet this is a widespread assumption that operates in the life of many Salvation Army corps. People must be taught to pray – how to pray, when to pray, discerning God’s responses to our prayers, problems in prayer and so on. All of these need to be addressed, and again this is something that spiritual direction can assist with. Atkinson concludes,  

> Down the years repeated warnings have been given that if the spiritual life of our soldiers is not developed, then the Army cannot function in all its fullness and

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182 Ibid.: 364.  
184 Ibid., 33.
power as it was meant to… We must keep our people away from the shallows. We must lead them out into the depths.  

7.5 Pro – Integration

An article by Lieut Colonel Gunnar Bolander from Sweden summarises the integration of all these aspects. He argues that education involves “the forming and the shaping of our inner self, which unconsciously influences our outer self too”. He cites a number of goals in education – to develop people as individuals and to teach independent thinking. But, he says, it is also to produce wisdom, manliness, sense and integrity.

In this process of being formed there is the necessity too of “time to be quiet, time for prayer, for reading and meditation. Without this quietness before God and the eternal world our soul perishes”. He talks also about the importance of art and music in this process and, like many others, puts emphasis on the importance of reading. Books, he says, “have a wonderful capacity of helping us to see ourselves and our life…the right encounter with the true book can become an encounter with life, and a fountain of power and renewal…”

All this, explains Bolander, means taking more time for ourselves, and while some would argue that this takes us away from our first calling – the salvation of souls – Bolander rejoins that there is more to saving souls than getting them to the mercy seat. This, he says, is only a small beginning. “It is after this that the real work begins – the tending and training, the guidance and instruction of these newly born citizens of the Kingdom of God.” He says,

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185 Ibid., 34.
187 Ibid., 121-22.
188 Ibid., 123.
189 Ibid., 124.
190 Ibid.
We have to acknowledge that in this work we certainly fall short. In many cases the work is done at random, and surely this is one of the reasons for our many losses and the backslidings of converts and soldiers. It seems as if we lack both time and interest for this work of care for, and guidance of, souls.\textsuperscript{191}

The issue remains unchanged today, and it is an issue that spiritual direction, can, in part, address with its process of one to one spiritual care for individual persons, and groups, beginning where they are and taking them to new depths in their relationship to God and others.

\textbf{7.6 Pro – Guidance}

In an article on The Holiness Meeting, Newton Parker, writes about the Holiness strand which underpins Salvationist spirituality, saying “Those who are sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost are generally the most useful people on earth”.\textsuperscript{192} He advises that when people seek sanctification, only “those of unquestioned experience and thorough training [ought] to deal with them”.\textsuperscript{193} He also comments on the need for ongoing spiritual guidance by someone more experienced in their understanding of God, the Devil, and how to deal with temptation.

If ever anyone needed a spiritual adviser, it is after a clear, definite experience as above described, for the Devil will come as he did to Jesus with all kinds of temptations in his effort to overthrow them...The Devil may throw wicked thoughts such as no one could ever conceive, into the mind; they must be told it is the Devil. They may think they should always be on the mountain top, or they are losing their experience; and they must be told that God does not want them to be always like that, because they could not stand it. They may find their appetite so changed, that they nearly starve themselves; explain that they must eat and drink now to keep well and strong for the glory of God. They may be led by the Devil into something fanatical and foolish, and which if they obey him, will lead them into darkness; they must be guarded, and helped to a resistance of these things.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 124-25.
\textsuperscript{192} J. Newton Parker, “The Holiness Meeting,” The Officer Volume 33 Number 4 October (1921): 281.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 282-83.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 283.
In other words, they need a good spiritual director. But this is a need for officers, and those more experienced on the pathway, as well.

Writing in 1956, in a series “Towards Spiritual Maturity”, Captain Karin Hartman from Sweden, expresses observations that she made following a time out of officership. Returning, she noted things that inspired her and some that grieved her. In this latter category she highlights the following: “One thing that has struck me is the lack of care for the souls of officers”. She goes on to clarify this remark: “By this I don’t mean meddlesomeness and fuss, nor ‘life-saving’ at the last moment, nor occasional officers’ meetings, but real guidance and advice in spiritual matters and personal problems.”

She links officer losses with a lack of necessary guidance, and argues that this is essential for all, even the healthy. Needing such guidance, she says, does not signify weakness, but simply signifies that all people need spiritual help and fellowship. Some see the stated need of some for spiritual guidance as a sign of lack of independence, she says, reporting that someone once said to her: ‘An officer should be able to stand on his own feet, without other people’s help’. “To my mind,” she says, this is a false ideal, out of touch with real life. Many of our greatest soul-winners and shepherds of souls have themselves had an intense need of spiritual help and fellowship...Soul care does not mean, of course, a fostering of the helplessly dependent upon a kind of spiritual children’s nurse. Let me emphasize that shepherding of souls is not fuss and twaddle.

Rather, as Hartman makes clear, it is about the insight that another trusted person can bring. Hartman argues that this is needed and is indeed a right, and draws on some words from General Bramwell Booth who said, on one occasion,

My dear Comrades, when you need help and guidance, when you need the support of the mighty arm of faith, when in time of sorrow you need intercession and

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196 Ibid.
197 Ibid., 94-95.
sympathy, you have the right to claim all this, and it is my desire that you should seize this right. The Salvation Army officer has many rights...but the most important of all is the right to receive spiritual help and guidance. 198

7.7 Pro – Love for souls in all its dimensions

The Officer’s Covenant is signed by every officer of The Salvation Army. In their covenant, officers promise

To love, trust and serve [God] supremely all my days;
To live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of my life;
To care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable, and befriend those who have no friends;
To maintain the doctrines and principles of The Salvation Army and, by God’s grace, to prove myself a worthy officer 199

What does this mean? What is love for souls? What does it mean to live to win souls? Writing in 1958, General Albert Orsborn, addresses this question. He recalls a visual image that he had obviously carried with him for many years and describes thus.

The Assembly Hall, Clapton, late 1905, five hundred upturned faces and more than that number of upraised hands, for some raised two, accompanied by young, passionately earnest and sincere voices as we sang

Fill me! Fill me. Create within me
Love that has a passion for souls.
Never I needed Thee more than just now;
Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit. 200

Orsborn asks the question, “did all those who sang have their prayer answered?” and wonders if not, why not. He suggests that they may not have fully understood what they were asking. He says, “Did I? Assuredly not then.” 201 He goes on to unpack what he now thinks it means posing the question, “Would you agree … that love for souls is the

198 Bramwell Booth quoted in Ibid., 98.
199 The Salvation Army, Officer Training College, Melbourne, Connections Brochure 2007.
201 Ibid.
indispensable hall-mark of a real Salvation Army officer?” (my emphasis). But, “Love for souls,” he says, “is more than love for sinners.” It means that people are the number one priority for the officer. “Love for souls walks the pavement of our common life. It does not take the grand-stand view. It gets down to the arena where there are wounds and wrongs, wreckage and weeping.”

While strongly emphasizing the importance of bringing people to salvation, Orsborn also makes the point that we must hold the converts we already have and grow them in the faith. “The proof of real love for souls is in the particularity of our Penitent-form work, and in the personal after-care of the convert.” He goes on to say

When I was in officer I was startled to find that, though through the front door of our Army – our Penitent-form – came a mighty host, it was almost cancelled out by the lost legions leaving by the back door. If only half of these converts not held, and backsliders slipping away were kept, and if they in turn won other souls, what a revival we should see.

Love for souls is the hallmark of both of the evangelist and the spiritual director, who excels at this work of after-care, of nurture, and discipleship, and whose ministry is the cure of souls. A real Salvation Army officer can be an evangelist or teacher, a counselor or social program manager, a hostel manager, or a spiritual director. Love for souls means loving people and in that loving taking Christ into their world in whatever way God has gifted and equipped us to do that.

The ministry of spiritual direction has the capacity to be many things including a guard to keep people from walking out the back door. But much more than that, it has the potential to enable people to grow into maturity as Christian disciples. We cannot, and dare not leave people to somehow muddle through on their own, whether they be new converts or well-established officers. We need to offer them, among other tools and gifts, the
marvelous, God-blessed and long authenticated ministry of spiritual guidance and direction, good teaching and opportunities for maturation of both mind and spirit.