

Getting Started

Understanding the four Territorial Strategic Mission Plan goals

Small Group Study Guide



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory

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Introduction

In October 2010, The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga launched an extension to the Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP) referred to as TSMP: The Next Chapter. This extension contains four updated goals:

1. Make dynamic disciples of Jesus
2. Increase the number of soldiers
3. Take significant steps to eradicate poverty and injustice
4. Be a connected, streamlined and mission-focused Army.

James 1:22 says ‘But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says (NLT).’ This booklet is part of a series of sermons and studies to help you grapple with the goals, their biblical mandate, and how you might apply the Bible’s teaching around the goals in your life.

This particular booklet provides an overview of TSMP: The Next Chapter, starting with our territory’s mission statement, before expanding the four goals. A matching sermon series is also available.

More sermon outlines and study guides are available for covering the goals in more detail, including sermons and small groups studies on Dynamic Discipleship (goal one). Please note that the studies in this *Getting Started* booklet for goals one and three are largely a repeat of studies one and five of the dynamic discipleship series.

Style

While it is possible to use this booklet for individual study, it is designed for use in a small group setting (e.g. 5-10 people), relying heavily on discussion and the sharing of ideas.

The studies are designed to be thought-provoking, with questions to which there will hopefully be a variety of responses. Often there are no ‘right’ answers as many of the answers will be about you deciding how you will apply the Bible’s teaching in your life.

Each session follows the same format – an introductory idea or story followed by a time of discussion and study, concluding with time to reflect, apply what you have learned and pray. They are planned to take between 60 and 75 minutes, depending on the discussion. We encourage your group to spend time together socially and to pray for each other, so at least one and a half hours should be allowed.

Preparation

All you need is a Bible, a pen and an open heart. Make sure your Bible is a modern translation. References in this booklet are typically from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, but the New Living Translation (NLT), Contemporary English Version (CEV), New International Readers Version (NIrV) and Good News Bible are also recommended.

The leader is encouraged to pre-read the study so that they know what is coming. There are also tips at the end of this book for leading an effective study.

Guidelines

It is important that people feel comfortable sharing within the group knowing that everything discussed is done so in confidence.

If your group is new, you should start by agreeing to some guidelines, such as those below.

We wish you the best as you study God's word together.

Group Guidelines

We agree to:

1. Keep everything discussed in the group within the group (unless specific permission is given otherwise).
2. Provide equal opportunity for everyone to talk. No one is to dominate the discussion and no one will be forced to share if they are not comfortable doing so.
3. Only talk about our self and our situation, avoiding conversation about others.
4. Show respect for each other at all times.
5. Leave as friends. We want to allow rigorous debate, but we will not make conversations personal. Should we disagree, we will do so with grace.
6. Pray for each other.

STUDY 1

Our Mission

Getting started

The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga has a fantastic mission statement: *Caring for people, transforming lives, reforming society, through God's power*. It's simple, easy to remember and compelling.

So if it is so good, why do we need a Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP) with four 'mission goals'? The answer is we are using goals to emphasise a few specific areas, so as to be more effective in achieving the elements of our mission statement. To put it another way, if we find that the goals aren't actually helping us achieve more mission, it will be the goals that change!

It makes sense then that a study series on these mission goals would start with gaining an understanding of what our mission is in the first place.

One of the beauties of our mission statement is that it is holistic. For example, in helping someone with an addiction, you are caring for them, transforming their life and helping reform society. On the other hand, it is also specific. For example, while helping people with addictions does make a contribution to the reforming society part of our mission, this aspect also calls for more strategic approach – advocating for a better world. For the purposes of this study, we will take the more specific approach, looking at the different elements in detail.

Explore

A) CARING FOR PEOPLE

1. Charity, mercy, grace, kindness, love, concern, hospitality, support, interest. Which of these words do you think best describes caring and why?
2. How important is the word 'for' in the phrase? For example, what difference would it make if our mission was to 'care about people'?
3. True caring for people has no strings attached. What are some of the 'strings' we sometimes want to attach to our care?

- Is our 'care' to be for all people, or should we have a bias towards particular groups?

It is easy to slip into the trap of being in a relationship with God for 'what you can get out of it'. God is loving, kind, faithful, all-powerful, all-knowing, etc so clearly being in a relationship with him brings blessings! However, as our love for God grows, he expects our love for others to then grow also.

The Bible contains more than 300 verses on the poor, social justice and God's deep concern for both. This is second only to verses about idolatry. God clearly wants us to get the message that he is to be our priority and then we must care for the poor. Interestingly, these verses are not just in one or two sections of the Bible (so you can't say 'that was just Old Testament teaching') – they're spread throughout. Removing them from 'your faith' goes directly against the will of God!

- Look up the following verses to see example messages from across the Bible about helping the poor:

Bible section	Example verses	Message about helping the poor
The Law	Deut 15:7	
History	Neh 5:1-11	
Poetry	Prov 31:8, 19:17	
Prophets	Isaiah 58:5-8	
Gospels	Matt 25:31-46	
Acts	Acts 4:32-35	
Letters	1 John 3:17	

In *caring for people*, we are called to care for the individuals or families for whom we come into contact, and in particular, those who are struggling. It is a genuine one-on-one, get your hands dirty kind of caring, not 'from a distance' wishing good things for someone.

- What might *caring for people* look like in an effective corps? How about an effective social service centre?

7. What do you think The Salvation Army most needs to be able to achieve more of its mission of *caring for people*?

Did you know? The Salvation Army in New Zealand hands out 50,000 food parcels each year, admits more than 1000 people into its addiction programmes, at any time has 1000 learners in Employment Plus, and provides accommodation for nearly 300 people in supported accommodation (and we haven't mentioned budgeting, counselling, chaplaincy, aged care, family tracing or our hospice). This is supported by social services, accommodation and addiction services in Fiji and Tonga.

B) TRANSFORMING LIVES

Like *caring for people*, *transforming lives* is focused more on individuals and families, than on whole communities.

8. What do you think it means to 'be transformed'?
9. In what ways is the *transformation* different between people coming into contact with The Salvation Army, and people who profess to be disciples of Jesus within The Salvation Army?
10. Someone with an evangelism bent might argue that if you help someone manage their debts (or overcome an addiction, or find a job) but they are still not saved, what good is that. Do you agree?

Transforming lives is on two levels. For many people, it will be about helping them obtain the capacity they need to address their concerns (e.g. budgeting, counselling, social contact, etc.).

However, the Bible is full of stories of people being transformed through an encounter with Jesus, such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), Peter (Luke 22: 54-62; Acts 2:36-41) and Paul (Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:20-22). We believe the ultimate transformation is a life-changing relationship with Jesus.

12. What might *transforming lives* look like in an effective corps? How about an effective social service centre?

13. What do you think The Salvation Army most needs to be able to achieve more of its mission of *transforming lives*?

Did you know? On any given Sunday, roughly 6500 people will attend a Salvation Army corps in New Zealand, 1000 in Fiji and 200 in Tonga.

C) REFORMING SOCIETY

Unlike *caring for people and transforming lives*, the word *society* implies that we are looking much larger – at entire communities and our country.

14. In what ways do you believe our society needs reforming?

Most people have heard the example of setting up an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff to help people when they fall, or putting a fence at the top to stop people falling in the first place. Caring for people is more the ambulance while reforming society is setting up fences at the top. For example, caring for people might be about providing food for people who are hungry. Reforming society would be about attacking the injustices that lead to people not being able to feed themselves. The best way to do that is for society to seek God (2 Chronicles 7:14).

15. What influence can The Salvation Army realistically have on raising the moral standards of our society?

16. Here are some ideas for reforming society:

- Social justice projects
- Influencing local decisions through involvement in community groups
- Teaching Christian religious education (CRE) in schools
- Raising awareness of issues: appointing a champion; obtaining information from our Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU); holding community meetings; inviting guest speakers; writing letters to Parliament; maintaining a close relationship with your local Minister of Parliament

What others can you think of?

17. What do you think The Salvation Army most needs to be able to achieve more of its mission of *reforming society*?

Did you know? The Salvation Army has a specialist unit dedicated to social research and influencing decision makers in politics, government, business, media and education. (<http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-research/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/>).

D) BY GOD'S POWER

The fourth element of our mission statement is the least quoted, yet the most important – *by God's power*.

18. What happens if we try to care for people, transform lives and reform society in our own strength?
19. How can we ensure that we rely on God's power in living out our mission?

TSMP GOALS

In answer to the question 'what does The Salvation Army need most to achieve more of its mission', territorial leadership has decided on four main things:

1. **Dynamic disciples:** people who are passionate about Jesus and following him. This has two elements – new disciples and helping those who have become spiritually apathetic to renew their dynamism
2. **Soldiers:** people who can be relied upon in the spiritual war – who are committed firstly to Jesus (dynamic disciples) but also to The Salvation Army for the long term
3. **A focus on fighting injustice:** what better antidote for spiritual apathy than a focus on the biblical mandate to look out for the poor?
4. **Working smarter:** being connected (all working together), streamlined (efficient) and mission-focused (doing the right things).

These are of course the basic elements of the four TSMP goals that we will be studying over the coming sessions.

Reflect

Would you be described as someone who *cares for people*? Who are the people God has placed in your life who need your care?

Is your life being *transformed* to becoming more and more like Jesus?

What are you doing to help others have their lives *transformed* by Jesus?

Does your life reflect a desire for society to be *reformed*?

Apply

How has God spoken to you through this study? What actions do you need to take?

What can we do as a group to better fulfil the mission of The Salvation Army?

Pray

- For The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga – its leaders, its people, and for God to help us be more effective in our mission of caring for people, transforming lives and reforming society
- For the actions we have committed to this study
- For the next study, where we will consider what it means to be a dynamic disciple of Jesus

Going Deeper

- Find out more about The Salvation Army at www.salvationarmy.org.nz.

STUDY 2

Goal 1: Make dynamic disciples of Jesus

Follow-up

What is our mission statement?

How have we got on with the actions we committed to last time?

Getting started

The last instruction Jesus gave before going back to heaven was ‘to go and make disciples’. This is the first goal of TSMP: The Next Chapter.

So right up front, let’s start with a definition. A disciple follows a teacher and submits to their direction. Therefore, a disciple of Jesus seeks to know Jesus and asks him to direct their living. We’ve added ‘dynamic’, not to say you need to be extroverted, but to show that discipleship should be alive and vibrant.

The goal has two main aspects – both making new disciples and helping grow existing disciples. If you enjoy this study, we encourage you to continue with the separate TSMP Dynamic Discipleship study series.

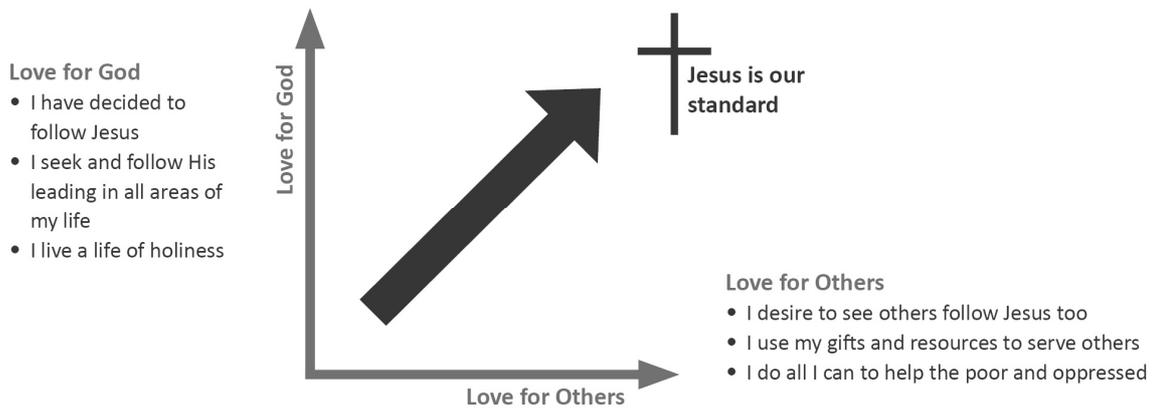
1. Think of someone you would describe as a dynamic disciple of Jesus? What made you think of them? What might you expect in a dynamic disciple?
2. What sorts of things might you expect to find in a non-dynamic disciple?
3. What words come to mind when you think about following Jesus?

Explore

If a dynamic disciple is someone who is following Jesus, what would He have us do? When asked which was the most important commandment, He replied:

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind’; and ‘Love others as much as you love yourself’. (Matthew 22:37-39, CEV).

Or more simply – love God and love others, as much as you can. We can never get to a point where we love God or others enough, so there is an implied ongoing movement.



LOVE GOD

4. How do you respond to the phrase ‘Love God and do as you like’ (Augustine 354-430)? What does it mean to love God as much as you can? If you truly love Him, what would people observe in you?

5. If you love someone, you will want to get to know them. Can a disciple of Jesus be dynamic without investing any effort into getting to know God and finding out His will for them? Explain.

Spiritual disciplines are behaviours that help us get to know God better, such as reading your Bible, prayer, worship, fasting and meditation. We call these disciplines because they require effort and commitment.

6. Romans 12:1-2 speaks of the need to be transformed. Look up the following verses to explore some of the ways the Bible says we are to be transformed.

Bible verse	How dynamic disciples are transformed
2 Corinthians 7:1	
Ephesians 4:23	
2 Peter 1:5-11	
Galatians 5:22-23	
Genesis 1:28-30	

Love for God is seen in a personal, ongoing commitment to knowing God and allowing Him to transform us into His likeness.

LOVE OTHERS

7. What do you think it means to love others as much as you can?

Look up the following verses to explore some of the ways the Bible says we are to love others.

Bible reference	How dynamic disciples love others
Romans 12:10,13	
Ephesians 4:12	
Matthew 25: 37-40	
Matthew 28:19-20	

Love for others will permeate every area of a dynamic disciple’s life. He or she shows love in their relationships with others, serves within the church family, helps those in need, and looks to see others become disciples of Jesus.

Reflect

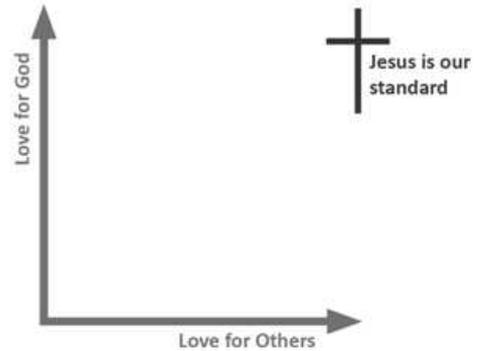
Being a dynamic disciple requires a daily choice – a choice to follow Jesus wholeheartedly; a choice to be disciplined about getting to know Him; a choice to allow Him to transform our life; a choice to love and serve others; and a choice to work towards helping others become disciples of Jesus.

So, how’s your discipleship journey?

Think about your love for God. Are you seeking to know Him as much as you can? Is your life being transformed so you become more like Him?

How are your relationships with others? Is Jesus asking you to do something specific for someone? Are you praying for friends to know Jesus?

Place a mark on the graph where you would see yourself. Why did you place yourself there?



Apply

As a result of this study, what will you do over the coming week to love God and/or others more?

Pray

- That we will be filled with a passion to love God and others more
- That The Salvation Army will be successful in making dynamic disciples of Jesus
- For the actions we have committed to for this week
- For the next study, where we will consider the need for soldiers

Going Deeper

- TSMP: The Next Chapter studies on:
 - Dynamic discipleship
 - Knowing God

STUDY 3

Goal 2: Increase the number of soldiers

Follow-up

What is the first goal of TSMP: The Next Chapter?

What is a disciple of Jesus?

Why did we add the word 'dynamic'?

What does being a dynamic disciple mean in practice (tip: the graph)?

How have you got on with the actions you committed to last time?

Getting started

We have an urgent need for people of passion and purpose in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga who are committed to building the kingdom of heaven on earth. The framework for this dynamic discipleship within The Salvation Army is as a soldier.

Preparing a study for an unknown group to look at soldiership in The Salvation Army is difficult. For example, a group of existing soldiers needs no explanation as to what is a soldier or the content of the *Soldier's Covenant*, whereas a group without existing soldiers will clearly need this information. This study assumes there is at least one soldier in the group who is able to provide answers to the content specific questions.

Similarly, any discussion around soldiership will inevitably raise questions about The Salvation Army and such elements as our doctrines; symbols (e.g. flag, mercy seat), ranks (e.g. officers, soldier's and adherents), abstinence, stand on sacraments, etc. Each Salvation Army corps holds regular soldiership classes to cover these topics (and more) so intentionally this content is not included in this study. If members of the group wish to discuss this information in more detail, we suggest you arrange for your local recruiting sergeant to come and lead such a study.

1. What do you think are the characteristics of a good (military) soldier?
2. How relevant do you think the concept of being 'a soldier' (in the generic sense) is to the Christian faith?

3. Is it possible to be a dynamic disciple within The Salvation Army and not be a soldier?

Explore

A. WHAT IS A SALVATION ARMY SOLDIER?

4. What do you know about being a soldier in The Salvation Army? For example (you may need to refer to the box below):
 - a) What is a soldier?
 - b) What sorts of things does a soldier commit to?
 - c) Who can become a soldier?
 - d) What's the difference between an officer and a soldier?
 - e) How many soldiers are there in the world?

WHAT IS A SALVATION ARMY SOLDIER?

Our Orders and Regulations for soldiers provide a definition:

'A soldier is one who has accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and who desires to fulfil membership of His Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army.'

To become a soldier, you sign a document known as the *Soldier's Covenant*. This document has two main sections – agreement to our doctrines (what we believe) and a series of statements you commit to (what we refer to as the 'therefore I wills'). There are more than one million soldiers worldwide, across 120 countries.

Salvation Army soldiership is much more than simply becoming a member. First and foremost, a soldier is a committed disciple of Jesus. Secondly, the covenant clauses cover almost every aspect of life (e.g. integrity, relationships, service, lifestyle, etc.). The expectation is that a soldier will see being a disciple of Jesus as the pre-eminent passion of life. The call of soldiership is to self-denial and service in the interest of others.

Officers are soldiers who have received two years officer training and who sign a further covenant making them available for appointment by The Salvation Army. These are our 'ministers' or 'pastors'.

B. THE CALL TO SOLDIERSHIP IS A BIBLICAL CONCEPT

The Bible tells us we're fighting in a spiritual war

Read Revelation 19:11-16 and 19-20.

5. There is clearly a spiritual war going on around us, but how relevant is this war to us (Ephesians 6:10-13)?

6. How does a soldier engage in spiritual warfare (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)?

Being a soldier requires sacrifice and discipline

7. Read 2 Timothy 2:3-5
 - a) What do you think it means to be 'a good soldier of Christ Jesus'?
 - b) What sorts of hardships would a soldier need to endure?
 - c) What would a soldier need to work hard at?
 - d) What is the relevance of 'not getting involved in civilian affairs'?
 - e) How might a soldier seek to 'please his commanding officer' (Jesus)?

A soldier comes under authority

8. Read Matthew 8:5-13
 - a) Why was Jesus astonished at the centurion's faith?
 - b) Why is it critical for soldiers to come under the authority of their leaders (Hebrews 13:17)?
 - c) Whose authority must a Christian soldier submit to?

C. WHY BE A SOLDIER OF THE SALVATION ARMY?

9. In what ways does it benefit someone to become a soldier in The Salvation Army?

10. In what ways does it benefit The Salvation Army to have soldiers?

11. What reasons can you think of why people within The Salvation Army choose not to be enrolled as soldiers?

The building of God's kingdom needs soldier-like disciples of Jesus. The image of soldiership reinforces the concept of discipleship – intentionality, purpose, sacrifice, determination, preparedness, and training. Jesus said those followers not prepared to deny themselves, to take up his cause and follow, were not worthy of him.

Let's face it, being a true soldier within The Salvation Army sounds impossible. For example, consider this statement from the *Soldier's Covenant*:

'I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral'. (Ever thought anything you shouldn't?)

In becoming a soldier, you are making a public commitment that says you want to set your spiritual benchmark very high, relying on the Holy Spirit's help. This kind of commitment helps both to raise your standards and to make you less likely to walk away from your faith when things get hard.

The Salvation Army, in being true to its historical calling, is engaged in aggressive kingdom building and needs committed help. Soldiers have declared that they are committed to following Jesus and that The Salvation Army can rely upon them to engage in the mission for the long term.

Goal two is to *increase the number of soldiers*. To achieve this, we need new soldiers – dynamic disciples who make a covenant with God to dedicate their lives to him and who can be relied upon to serve him through The Salvation Army.

We also need existing soldiers to speak highly of their covenant and to take their commitments seriously. It might be possible to be a dynamic disciple within The Salvation Army and not be a soldier, but it should not be possible to be a soldier and not a dynamic disciple.

Reflect

Are you a soldier? How important is your covenant to you? Do you need to re-commit to discipleship with Jesus and service through The Salvation Army?

If you are not a soldier, will you consider becoming one? What concerns or fears do you have? Will you pray about them? Can you attend a soldiership class to find out whether this is God's will for you?

Apply

What is God challenging you to do with regards to increasing the number of soldiers?

Pray

- Thank God for raising up The Salvation Army, and for the committed soldiers around the world who serve him faithfully day by day
- That The Salvation Army will be successful in increasing the number of soldiers
- For the actions we have committed to for this week
- For the next study, where we will consider the need to fight poverty and injustice

Going Deeper

- Mission Matters - soldiership preparation material
- TSMP: The Next Chapter resources – sermons on the ‘Therefore I Will’ statements of the *Soldier's Covenant*

STUDY 4

Goal 3: Take significant steps to eradicate poverty and injustice

Follow-up

Why do we need to increase the number soldiers?

What do we need to achieve this?

How have you got on with your actions so far – around our mission statement, loving God and others more, and soldiership?

Getting started

The concept of justice is well understood. Try distributing lollies unevenly between children and you'll quickly hear cries of 'that's not fair!' There is a deep sense inside us of what is right and when that 'right' is abused or wronged, our values cry out against it.

But I wonder how many of the kids really care whether some children have missed out – or just that they didn't! We have a natural tendency to accept a situation of injustice as long as we're the ones with more.

Bono, the lead singer in the band U2 puts it this way:

'It's annoying but justice and equality are mates. Aren't they? Justice always wants to hang out with equality. And equality is a real pain!'

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'social justice'?

2. Do you agree with Bono – are justice and equality related?

3. Micah 6:8 is a very well-known verse from the Bible:

'And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8)

How might you characterise an organisation or person focused on:

- a) faith (walking humbly with God)?
- b) mercy?
- c) acting justly?

4. The Salvation Army is sometimes referred to as a bird with two wings – faith and social services – needing both to fly. Do you think this is a good picture? Is anything missing? Do you have another picture that might better encompass Micah 6:8?

5. Is social justice something for all Christians, or does it just apply to social services?

Explore

Social justice is an idea that the world and everyone in it can live equal, safe and dignified lives.’ (Just Imagine, p13) It’s proactive – striving to make the world a fairer place, rather than reactive – providing charity.

Clearly our world is not equal. According to Worldometers (<http://www.worldometers.info/>), approximately 1.03 billion people are undernourished while 1.15 billion are overweight. Approximately 25,000 people die of hunger every day.

But this is not just an overseas problem. For example, in New Zealand, the gap between rich and poor has grown steadily over the past two decades; and Māori are poorly represented in statistics around income, health, welfare, crime and education (see *Just Actions*).

6. Whose fault is it that the world is not equal? Are people affected by poverty just lazy? Is this actually justice – you get what you deserve? What do you think causes injustice?

7. Any action that causes injustice is sin. There are two types – sins of commission (what we do) and sins of omission (what we haven’t done). What examples of each can you think of that cause injustice?
 - a) Sins of commission:

 - b) Sins of omission:

Read Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus referred to those who helped 'these brothers of mine' as 'righteous'? When we hear the term righteous, we think of 'being right'. However, the Greek word used in the New Testament is *dikaios*, which can be defined as bringing about the right thing (aka justice). He is looking for more than charity – he is looking for justice.

8. From reading this passage, how would you respond to the following comments?
 - a) To receive eternal life, all I need to do is help others? (Romans 3:28)
 - b) Money gets taken out of my bank account to sponsor a child somewhere so I have a tick in the box for eternal life (1 Cor 13:3)?
 - c) I'm saved by my faith, not by what I do (Matthew 25:41-46, James 2:14-17)
9. Read Exodus 3:7-14. When God asked Moses to go back to Egypt and lead his people out of slavery, how did he respond?
 - a) verse 3:11
 - b) verse 3:13
 - c) verse 4:1
 - d) verse 4:10
 - e) verse 4:13
10. What excuses do we come up with, not to fight injustice?

Reflect

One of the main excuses is ‘I don’t know what to do’? In reality, unless we’re a person of considerable influence, most of our individual actions will be charitable. However, by working together, we can make a difference.

Here are a range of things we can do together:

- a) **Become informed:** as a group, what can we do to become more informed about our community; movements such as Fair Trade, Micah Challenge and Make Poverty History; and The Salvation Army’s Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit? How can we inform others?
- b) **Change our attitudes:** see injustice as sin.
- c) **Change our spending habits:** do we buy things we don’t need? Could we buy second-hand? Do we ask where the item has come from and whether anyone has been exploited in producing it? Is there a fairer way to purchase this (e.g. fair trade)? How much of our income do we spend on others?
- d) **Invest in an income generating project:** organisations are having huge success helping mums in third world countries start their own businesses to lead their families out of poverty. We could all raise money for self-denial or a women’s ministry project, or sponsor projects through The Salvation Army’s overseas development or a site like www.kiva.com.
- e) **Our time:** what do we do for others? Can we volunteer at a local social service centre? Is there someone here who would become our social justice champion to keep us informed about issues, or who would like to lead a justice project?

Apply

What will we do as a group to strive for social justice?

What is the significant step to you that you will commit to today to help eradicate poverty and injustice?

Pray

Use the ACTS model of prayer:

- ❑ Adoration: for God who created a world that has enough for everyone
- ❑ Confession: for all the times when we have acted unjustly; or for our prejudices against others
- ❑ Thanksgiving: have everyone create *Gratitude Lists* – 10 things you are grateful for – and thank God for these
- ❑ Supplication:
 - for the people of the world suffering injustice
 - that we will be successful in taking significant steps to eradicate poverty & injustice
 - for the actions we have committed to for this week
 - for the next study, where we will consider how we can work better together.

Going Deeper

- ❑ Read *Just Imagine* by Roberts & Strickland
- ❑ Read *Just Actions* from The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU)
- ❑ Read *50 Ways to do Justice* by Fay Foster and Miriam Gluyas (produced by the Justice Unit, Australian Eastern Territory)
- ❑ Invite staff from a local Salvation Army social services centre to share a little of what they do and the difference they are making
- ❑ Sing or listen to the song *Hosanna* by Brooke Fraser
- ❑ Display a Global Village video clip (if the world were a village of 100 people) – search YouTube for Miniature Earth (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIUCTbi_XZs)
- ❑ Watch a movie such as *Amazing Grace* or *Pay it Forward*
- ❑ Have Child Sponsorship and Fair Trade brochures available

STUDY 5

Goal 4: Be a connected, streamlined and mission-focused Army

Follow-up

How have we got on with our actions around poverty and injustice?

Getting started

Icebreaker: how well do you know each other? Have each person say three things about themselves, two that are true and one that is a lie. As a group, see if you can work out which one was the lie.

A very old, traditional factory decided to install a new canning line so that it could sell its products through supermarkets. This represented a major change so they invited local dignitaries and past employees to witness the first running of the new canning line, followed by food and drinks.

Once the formalities were completed, the guests relaxed in small groups to chat and enjoy the food. In a quiet corner, the current distribution manager chatted with two retired past holders of the post who between them represented 60 years of the company's distribution management.

The present manager confessed that his job was becoming more stressful because company policy required long distance deliveries be made on Monday and Tuesday, short deliveries on Fridays, and all other deliveries mid-week.

"It's so difficult to schedule things efficiently – I don't know what we'll do with these new cans and the tight demands of the supermarkets..."

The other two men nodded in agreement.

"It was the same in my day," sympathised the present manager's predecessor. "It always seemed strange to me that trucks returning early on Mondays and Tuesdays couldn't be used for little local runs, because the local deliveries had to be left until Friday."

The third man nodded, and was thinking hard, struggling to recall the policy's roots many years ago when he'd have been a junior in the despatch department. After a pause, the third man smiled and ventured a suggestion.

"I think I remember now," he said, "It was the horses. During the Second World War fuel rationing was introduced so we mothballed the trucks and went back to using the horses. On Mondays the horses were well-rested after the

weekend - hence the long deliveries. By Friday the horses were so tired they could only handle the short local drops ..."

Soon after, the company changed its delivery policy!

It's very easy to fall into the trap of doing things the way they've always been done. How often do we stop and ask ourselves questions like 'why do we do things that way', or even 'why do we do that at all'?

In its early days, The Salvation Army was innovative and risky, having an attitude of doing 'whatever it takes' to bring people to faith in Jesus (salvation). If we dug deep, we would probably find that many of the things we do today came about through a desire to reach the people of the day for Jesus. We may also find that some of these things no longer reach the people of today.

Imagine a Salvation Army that again was clear about what it was trying to achieve and had an attitude of doing 'whatever it takes' to achieve this. We'd call that a connected, streamlined and mission-focused Army – or *TSMP goal four* for short.

Explore

Mission-focused

If you read any leadership or time management book, you'll hear a phrase that goes something like 'the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing'.

1. Why is having a clear idea of what you're trying to achieve and keeping this your focus so important?
2. Does your corps/centre have a clear idea of its mission and how focused are you on achieving it?
3. What do you think The Salvation Army would look like if it was truly 'mission-focused'?

Connected

The Random House Dictionary defines *connect* as 'to cause to be associated (e.g. to connect oneself with a group of like-minded persons)'.

4. How important is pro-activity to being connected?

5. The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga is a very large, complex organisation offering churches and a wide range of social services.
 - a) In what ways do we benefit from being connected with each other?

 - b) In what ways is it difficult to connect with each other?

6. What do you think The Salvation Army would look like if it was truly 'connected'?
 - a) Within a corps/centre:

 - b) Between corps and centres:

 - c) Between social services:

 - d) Between headquarters and the front-line:

Streamlined

While this aspect of the goal is focused mainly on organisational bureaucracy, it also applies at the local level.

According to the online Etymology Dictionary, the word 'streamline' was first used in 1868 and comes from the notion that water in a stream always flows in the same direction along the easiest path (stream + line).

To streamline something is to alter it to make it more efficient or simple. Being streamlined rarely happens by chance – it requires intent. Perhaps a 'streamlined Army' is one where the people regularly think about what they're trying to achieve, and then develop and follow intentional plans to achieve it.

7. How intentional is your corps/centre's approach to bringing people to faith?
8. How often do you think seriously about what you're trying to achieve and whether there are better ways of doing so?
9. What do you think The Salvation Army would look like if it was truly 'streamlined'?

STUDY

10. Consider the references in the table below. In what ways were the people involved mission-focused, connected and streamlined?

Reference	Mission-focused	Connected	Streamlined
Nehemiah 4:1-23	<i>(Hint: v1,20,23)</i>	<i>(Hint: v14,18,19,22)</i>	<i>(Hint: v13,16-18)</i>
Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35			
The early Salvation Army			

Reflect

What about in your setting? What could you do to be more mission-focused?

Are you clear what you are aiming for?

How connected are you as a group? How well do you know each other?

How connected are you within your corps or centre?

How connected are you with other Salvation Army centres in your area? How much do you know about them? Do you attend regional events (e.g. children, youth, rallies, etc.)? Do you visit other centres? Do you invite people from other centres to visit you?

How informed are people within your centre about the wider Salvation Army? How do you share this information?

Have you organised everything you do in a streamlined manner to help you be effective. Have you used the Evangelism Pathway and Discipleship Pathway workbooks provided within the TSMP resource packs?

Apply

What will we do as a group to connect with others?

What changes do you need to make in your life to be more connected, streamlined and mission-focused?

Now that you are at the end of this study, what will your group do next?

Pray

- Thanks for what we have learned and shared through this study series
- For perseverance to continue the habits and actions we have committed to
- That The Salvation Army will be successful in our goal of being a connected, streamlined and mission-focused Army.

Going Deeper

- What will you do for your next study? Consider the TSMP studies on Dynamic Discipleship and Knowing God.

Tips on How to Lead an Effective Study

Approach

These studies take into account some specific findings about how people learn, including that learners:

- ❑ are now-oriented – so we start with a few open questions to engage them
- ❑ learn best by saying and doing, not listening – so our studies are based around discussion, with only short comments or readings. We encourage the leader to facilitate more than teach
- ❑ bring experience – so we invite (expect?) most of the learning to come from discussions in the group, rather than new content in the study
- ❑ are self-directed – so we include a chance for them to apply their learning, individually.

The Need to Stimulate Interaction

One of the primary objectives of small groups is the application of the truth (James 1:22). Remember that people learn best by relating the learning to their own experiences and besides, our experiences also benefit each other.

For this reason, leaders should maximise interaction and use effective questioning techniques to draw out experiences and knowledge from the members, supplemented by short inputs of content. All content should then be discussed.

Of course, in preparing, you need to consider how much the members actually know about the topic as this determines how much content you suggest compared to how much you extract from the members.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE INTERACTION?

1. Set up the room as a circle so that everyone including the leader is facing each other.
2. Gather information by asking open questions which encourage people to expand and cannot be answered with yes or no.
3. Be careful with ‘why’ as it can sound aggressive and may make people feel defensive. Rather than ‘Why did you do that?’, try ‘What were your reasons for doing that?’

4. Use 'rebound' and 'boomerang' questions to have other group members answer questions before you do (e.g. 'What do others think?'; 'Does anyone have a different idea we should consider?').
5. Use closed questions only to check information or to cut someone off when you need to regain control (e.g. 'So you had a good time then?').
6. Watch for those who would like to participate and ask for their contribution. Read faces and body language.
7. See that everyone is involved in the discussion and has a chance to share.
8. Guide the discussion by switching from one person to another. Interject your viewpoint and experience occasionally.

COMMON MISTAKES THAT PREVENT INTERACTION?

1. Set up the room so that the leader is clearly separated from the other group members, and have the group members sitting in rows so that they can't easily see each other.
2. Ask lots of questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
3. Ask complex questions that no-one knows the answer to.
4. Answer all questions asked of you – and a few you ask of others as well.
5. Be afraid of silence. Don't give people time to think.
6. Pick on people and keep asking them questions. Pressure people to pray, read or speak.
7. Ask rhetorical questions. Anticipate when people want to answer a question then move on quickly.
8. Try to maintain control. Prevent all tangents as soon as you notice the conversation taking off.
9. Make questions sound conversational.
10. Ensure the group knows that you know all the answers.
11. Criticise people and allow people in the group to criticise others as well.
12. Be more interested in getting through the material than in the people who are present.
13. Share your viewpoint first.