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***Church Growth Theories and
The Salvation Army in
the United Kingdom***

***An examination of the theories of
Donald McGavran and C Peter Wagner
in relation to Salvation Army
experience and practice (1982-1991)***

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy***

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Abstract

The Church Growth movement, originating with Donald McGavran in 1955 and popularised principally by C Peter Wagner since 1971, has influenced evangelical mission internationally. Though originating in the context of cross-cultural 'missionary' work, it is perhaps now identified as a typically American approach, apparently relying on method and technique to accomplish its objective, which as the name implies, is the growth of the church, both locally and world-wide, since this is understood as the requirement of the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28: 18-20).

The Salvation Army (founded 1865) has been in decline in Britain certainly since the Second World War, and probably since the 1930s. In 1986 the Army formally espoused the Church Growth approach to mission.

There has been little published research into the effectiveness of Church Growth methods, especially in the UK, despite voluminous outpourings of inspirational and motivational literature. Virtually the only test of the principles (*Turning the Tide*) was produced in 1981 by Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson, investigating the reliability of Wagner's 'Vital Signs' in larger Baptist churches in England.

This thesis follows Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson by testing the principles in the specific context of The Salvation Army in the UK. The approach adopted, a questionnaire survey with reference to statistical trends, follows the pragmatism of Church Growth itself, asking whether the approach works, rather than whether it is theologically sound, though such issues are considered where relevant. The opportunity has also been taken to consider specific Salvation Army issues (uniform, music *etc.*) and their effect on growth and decline.

The work falls into four sections:

- The Salvation Army;
- The Church Growth Movement;
- The Questionnaire Survey;
- Conclusions and Recommendations.

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Introduction

This study is concerned with Church Growth theories and The Salvation Army in the UK. Church Growth, as a school of missiology, makes serious claims to provide a strategy for effective evangelism which is culture-sensitive, and which can be applied in a wide range of different cultures and theologies. However, although it was formally adopted by The Salvation Army in 1986, there has been no systematic evaluation of Church Growth in the specific context of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom. This study therefore is intended to rectify this omission, and through doing so, to provide evidence upon which the Army may improve its effectiveness in evangelism.

In order to demonstrate the relevance or otherwise of the theory, it is necessary to provide an understanding of The Salvation Army, including its methods and culture, as well as its origin and history. Chapter One is therefore a description of the Army, explaining some of its differences from other churches and outlining important aspects of its development.

Chapter Two deals with the development and teachings of the Church Growth movement, originating with Donald McGavran and chiefly popularised by C Peter Wagner, although others writers in the Church Growth school of thought are also considered, as are some of its critics.

Chapter Three presents the results of the original research which has been undertaken. This is the main part of this study, and is primarily based on a questionnaire survey which has been subjected to statistical analysis. In addition to Church Growth theory, the opportunity has also been taken to consider some related issues which fall beyond the scope of McGavran and Wagner, but which are relevant to a reconsideration of Salvation Army methods and strategy.

Chapter Four is a brief conclusion, summarising the more important findings from Chapter Three, and presenting recommendations for action by The Salvation Army based on these findings.

Finally, there is a comprehensive list of references to books, articles and other sources which have been cited, and four appendices with additional material and tables of data which could not be conveniently included in the main text, as well as a glossary of Salvation Army terms.

1. The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian Church, although distinctive in government and practice.

What is The Salvation Army? 1995

That The Salvation Army is part of the Christian Church is rarely doubted, at least in Protestant circles, although its non-sacramental worship (see 1.3.1 below) may leave questions in the minds of some from more ritualistic wings of the Church. Its distinctiveness is apparent from even a casual observation: no other denomination has a uniform which is worn daily by its leaders and frequently by most of its members.

It is a Christian movement, often uncomfortable with the name of church (which early leaders and members saw as presenting an unacceptable image), but is nevertheless a denomination within the Protestant tradition.

Derek Tidball says:

Historically, evangelicals have always emphasised mission. The priority of mission in the church, taken to its logical, and many would say unbalanced, conclusion, can be seen in the formation of the Salvation Army.

Tidball 1994, p.166

The Army likes to see itself as 'a permanent mission to the unconverted' (a phrase coined by Albert Orsborn, the sixth General), rather than a church, and sees its role as one emphasising mission (both social and evangelistic) rather than fellowship, worship or celebration – although recognising that all must be present in the Christian life.

The Mission Statement for the Army's UK Territory reads as follows:

- The Salvation Army is an integral part of the universal Christian Church.
- Its message is based on the Bible; its motivation is the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- Its mission is to proclaim his gospel, to persuade people of all ages to become his disciples and to engage in a programme of practical concern for the needs of humanity.
- Its ministry is offered to all, regardless of race, creed, colour, age or sex.

The Army now operates in 101 countries (*The Year Book 1996* p.38), having recommenced operations since 1989 in some formerly Communist countries where it had been proscribed¹. It is determinedly international, and ensures that leaders, especially at higher levels, are exchanged between countries. The current UK leadership includes Commissioner Dinsdale Pender, who is English but has served in New Zealand, South Africa and Australia, supported by Colonel Douglas Davis, who is Australian. More than 100 UK officers are serving in other countries in 1996, most of them in third world countries as reinforcements with specialist skills (speech by Lt.-Colonel John Rowlanes, Croydon, 24 March 1996).

Its name and methods evoke the image of the Christian as the 'soldier of Christ Jesus' (1 Timothy 2:3). It has been described as 'Christianity with its sleeves rolled up', and enjoys a high international reputation for its social work. Indeed, some people have been surprised to find that it is anything other than a religiously motivated social care organisation². Nevertheless, its main object is the salvation of souls, and the main thrust of its work is geared to that end. For instance, in the United Kingdom, which is the focus of this study, there are 967 corps, outposts and societies (churches or sub-groups of churches), compared to 121 social institutions (mainly residential, but including some which are multi-purpose), and 26 goodwill (community/social) centres (*The Year Book 1996* p. 220). Although there is some overlap and co-operation between these types of work, it is in the corps that the sense of evangelistic mission is most apparent.

1.1 Distinctive Features

The Salvation Army is distinct from other denominations, whilst being a part of mainstream evangelical Christianity, in fellowship in the UK with the Evangelical Alliance. If it were not distinct it would be hard to justify its existence, since many parts of its work are done equally well by other organisations, denominations and churches – but the differences lie primarily in its unique culture and methods. The Army's approach to work and worship, and its restrictive conditional membership give it an identity which is in some ways markedly different to that of other churches.

1.1.1 Military Style

The Army has a number of peculiarities among the Christian denominations. Most obvious are its military structure and style, reflected in the uniforms and military terminology, and in the use of a crest, brass bands, flags, and other martial trappings.

¹ These include East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (1990) and Russia and some formerly soviet countries (1991).

² This assertion is based primarily on anecdotal evidence: most Salvation Army officers and many Salvationists can recall occasions when someone has said, 'I never knew you had churches – I thought you just ran hostels ... [or some similar institution]'. There is no published record to support this, according to the Army's archivist, although she too has experienced similar conversations.

1.1.2 Social Service

The Army is also unusual (though not unique) in its institutionalisation of social service as an expression of its Christianity, providing help for disadvantaged people through a chain of social service centres and social workers, many (though by no means all) of whom are officers (ordained ministers) or lay members of the denomination.

1.1.3 Total Abstinence

The Army makes total abstinence from alcohol a condition of soldiership (full membership), following the lead given by Catherine Booth (see 1.8.1 below) who was a vociferous campaigner against alcohol. Among reasons given for this stance are the potentially harmful, and sometimes unpredictable, effects of alcohol, against which it is argued that the only complete defence is abstinence.

The Salvationist must also promise to abstain from gambling and from the non-medical use of drugs, as well as undertaking to observe the normal rules of Christian morality.

1.2 Doctrines

1.2.1 The Creed of the Army

The Army has a creed, or statement of doctrine, contained in eleven articles (*The Articles of Faith*, shown in Appendix A) to which each soldier subscribes at the time of entry into membership, or 'Swearing In'. These doctrines are not unique – they embody a basic summary of the essentials of evangelical Christianity. However, they do express distinctive emphases. The doctrines are amplified and explained in the *Handbook of Doctrine*, a reference work which is a required study for all officer cadets³.

Needham explains the selection of doctrines:

The essential doctrines ... were those that were directly supportive of mission. Wesley had simplified the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church to twenty-five for the American Methodist societies. Booth simplified to a bare eleven doctrines. Ignoring the metaphysics of doctrine, he retained only those he considered necessary for faith, and therefore for mission.

Needham 1987 pp. 72-73

The articles declare an understanding of Christianity which is western, Protestant, evangelical and Arminian.

³ This term, with other Salvation Army terminology, is defined in the glossary to be found in Appendix B.

The first, basic, doctrine concerns the inspiration of the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) as constituting the only Divine rule of faith and practice. There is no mention of verbal inspiration, which has made possible a range of views on such topics as higher criticism. Although the articles were drafted contemporaneously with the case of Professor William Robertson Smith, whose liberal views on biblical criticism led to the loss of his chair at Aberdeen (*The Case of Prof. Robertson Smith, 1881*), there is nothing in the article to forbid – or encourage – such interpretations. Early leaders were, however, generally inclined towards a conservative evangelical interpretation of the Scriptures; in 1886, Catherine Booth (the wife of the – or, as some would prefer, the joint – founder) condemned the ‘Christian free-thinkers who deny whatever seems to them objectionable in the Scriptures’ (Coutts 1977 p.9).

Over time, other views became acceptable – Commissioner A G Cunningham published a paper in 1927 which included the statement:

The evangelists may make mistakes in dates and in order of events, in reporting the occasion of a word of Jesus ... even though on a number of occasions of this kind the Gospels should prove to be in error, the GOSPEL is untouched; the word of God, the revelation of God to the soul in Christ, lives and abides.

Cunningham ended with a quotation:

If I am asked why I receive the Scriptures as the word of God ... I answer ... because in the Bible alone I find God drawing nearer to man in Christ Jesus and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation. And this record I know to be true by the witness of the Spirit in my heart⁴ ...

Coutts 1977 p.13

The quotation was from Robertson Smith.

Although it would seem that this word from Commissioner Cunningham (who was, by Army standards, a theological heavyweight) might open the way for doctrinal liberalism in the Army, this is misleading. The paper was circulated in *The Staff Review*, a confidential periodical distributed to senior officers only. It was probably not until the 1960’s that such views became part of the theological landscape in Britain, and more conservative views have remained dominant in other English speaking territories of the Army (including the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) (Coutts 1977 pp. 14-17).

⁴ In isolation, this statement seems closer to existentialism than to evangelicalism.

Shades of opinion will now be found on this subject throughout the Army, and are reflected in other issues. The differences, however, rarely emerge. The Army has an officer training college for each territory (or group of smaller territories), rather than for shades of theology; all officer cadets within a territory receive more or less the same theological education and training. Similarly, there are no easy opportunities for the dissemination of conflicting views – print media are owned by the Army, and are subject to oversight by the senior leaders in the territory (and in some instances by the international leadership); officers must agree not to publish independent material without permission. Therefore, although differences exist, they rarely surface (Coutts 1977 p.10).

The second, third and fourth articles of doctrine define the Army as theistic, Trinitarian and Christian.

The fifth article declares the need for redemption, because all men have become sinners, ‘totally depraved, and ... exposed to the wrath of God’, while the sixth declares the availability of redemption for all, a deliberate contrast to the Calvinist view that salvation is for an elect. However, no particular theory of the atonement is generally held, and several are taught, at least in Britain, as possible ways of understanding the issue (including Substitution, Satisfaction and Christus Victor, among others).

Larsson writes:

... the truth of the matter is that no one theory can hope to exhaust the full meaning of the Cross ... One day, perhaps, someone will arise who will explain it to us. That will be interesting but it will not be vital. It is not our theories of the Atonement which save us, but the Atonement itself.

Larsson 1974 p.22

The seventh doctrine states that the three persons of the Godhead are all active in different ways in the process of salvation, while the eighth declares that justification is ‘by grace through faith’, rather than by any kind of works. It also denies any Universalist interpretation, since faith is a necessary element. The final emphasis in this article states that the believer will have ‘the witness in himself’ – the indwelling Holy Spirit giving assurance of salvation and leading the Christian in spiritual growth. This, of course, implies that the Holy Spirit is given to all believers (in some measure, at least), rather than imparted at an initiation or other rite.

The ninth article declares the necessity for continuation in a state of salvation (by grace, through faith) and, by implication, the possibility of falling from grace (backsliding).

The tenth article is an inheritance from the Wesleyan tradition of 'entire sanctification' (Wesley 1872), by which has been understood a profound personal experience, sometimes called the 'second blessing', similar to the experience of salvation, but intensified (see 1.3.2 below). Samuel Logan Brengle DD (during his working life the DD was frequently mentioned – an indicator of its rarity), who became a commissioner, was the Army's leading teacher of holiness, which he described (following Wesley) as 'perfect love', and on which he wrote numerous books and papers⁵. This emphasis on *holiness* is distinct from the *charismatic* movement which has developed in many churches since the 1960s, being concerned more with the fruit of the spirit than with the gifts of the spirit – the outworking of God's will in a consecrated life, rather than a demonstration of His power. This point will be discussed further below (in 1.3.2).

The final article deals with eschatology: it affirms that death is not the end of human existence, and that there will be a general bodily resurrection (although spiritual rather than physical – 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44, 52-54) and judgement at the end of the world, at which point the eternal state of the righteous and the wicked will be declared. The terms used (*righteous* and *wicked*) seem to undermine the earlier claim that redemption is by grace rather than works – but this grace is dependent *firstly* on faith, and subsequently on 'continued obedient faith'. Those who do not take the step of faith, and those who do not continue in obedient faith, therefore remain 'totally depraved', deserving of 'endless punishment', while those who do meet these conditions will inherit 'the eternal happiness of the righteous'.

1.3 Distinctive Doctrines or Emphases

There are two areas of doctrine where the Army differs from many other evangelical churches. Firstly, in company only with the Society of Friends (Quakers) it does not observe any ritual sacraments (although it has developed its own – non-sacramental – rituals, including those used for the dedication of children, swearing-in of soldiers, commissioning of officers and local officers, as well as the rites of passage, such as marriages and funerals). Secondly, the Army (with some other conservative groups) did not initially welcome the charismatic phenomena which have appeared in many churches since the 1960s⁶.

1.3.1 The Sacraments

Several factors contributed to the decision to discontinue sacramental observance, but the Quakers were a major influence on Catherine Booth and George Scott Railton, two of the earliest leaders.

⁵ A selection of these books is mentioned among references cited.

⁶ In the USA, the Southern Baptists have recently expelled churches because of Charismatic practices, including speaking in tongues, contrary to the *Baptist Faith and Message*, a doctrinal statement issued in 1963 (*New Christian Herald*, 13 July 1996, p.2).

It has been, and is, argued that:

- Neither Jesus nor the apostles instituted sacraments as a form of ritual observance, and there seem to have been distinct differences in New Testament practice. Jesus *participated* in baptism (at the hands of his cousin), but since he had also participated in circumcision as an infant this would not be a convincing argument for repeating the one act rather than the other. The command in Matthew 28:19 could be taken to refer to water baptism – but equally to baptism in the Holy Spirit. The initiation of Communion or the Lord’s Supper can be understood as a ritual observance, and this is how the church’s tradition understands it – but it can also be understood as a hallowing of the daily meal.

Metcalf 1965 pp. 46-48; The Sacraments ... 1960

- Many of the converts of the Army had previously been drunkards: although non-alcoholic wine could be found, it was not easily available, and the taste of wine was sometimes sufficient to return an alcoholic to his previous life

Needham 1987 p.24

- As women became leaders in the Army, there was the prospect that a woman leader of a mission station or commanding officer of a corps would be in a position to administer communion; this would have been less acceptable in Victorian Britain than the idea of not observing the sacrament at all.

Needham 1987 p.24

- Many of the early missionaries and evangelists (and then officers) had come to help in Booth’s work from different churches with differing traditions of observance, and disagreements over the form of baptism and communion were proving a source of disruption out of proportion to the value which was experienced.

Needham 1987 pp. 25-26

William Booth decided, very gradually and provisionally (suggesting that settlement of the question should be ‘postponed for some future day, when we shall have more light’ (cited in Coutts 1977 p.73)), that for these practical reasons the Army should not practice any form of sacramental worship. He became convinced, and the Army still argues, that the sacraments were a symbol of spiritual truth, and that the substance should be sought rather than the shadow (that is, baptism symbolises new life, but it is the new life which is important, rather than the baptism; communion symbolises dependence upon, and life in, Christ, but it is the life in Christ which is important, rather than its symbol). Not everyone would agree with this interpretation of the meaning of the sacraments, and a more mystical interpretation would not permit the conclusion which has been drawn.

Salvationists who wish to participate in these sacraments may do so with any Christian church which will permit them (most Protestant churches will happily do so), but the Army itself does not practise the ceremonies.

William Booth's eldest son, Bramwell (who became the second General) was not convinced for a long time, and claimed to have been the last officer to administer communion (Booth 1925; *The Sacraments ...* 1960).

For the Salvationist, infant baptism is replaced by a simple ceremony of dedication; adult or believer's baptism by an 'enrolment' or 'swearing-in' ceremony as a 'senior soldier' (although, since many senior soldiers are ratifying decisions made in childhood, there may be a sense in which the parallel is with confirmation); there is no direct equivalent of the communion ceremony – as Robert Sandall wrote, 'The Salvation Army has no altar but that which is spiritual' (Sandall 1950 p.135).

Sometimes, the Mercy Seat or Penitent Form is referred to as an altar, but this is a symbolic reference to its *function*, rather than a description of its *nature*. The Mercy Seat (often a bench or row of chairs turned to face away from the speaker's platform) provides a place for people to kneel when experiencing a spiritual need – normally a desire for salvation or a wish for greater consecration – and to benefit from prayer and initial counselling. Therefore, although the object may sometimes serve a quasi-sacramental function, it has no meaning beyond that function, and is otherwise a plain, unremarkable, item of furniture.

It is claimed that the Army, with the Quakers, forms part of the prophetic, rather than priestly, tradition on this issue, aiming to make the whole of life sacramental, rather than providing sacramental interludes in life (*The Sacraments ...* 1960 p.78).

Albert Orsborn wrote (Salvation Army Song Book (1986) No. 512):

*My life must be Christ's broken bread,
My love His outpoured wine,
A cup o'erfilled, a table spread
Beneath His name and sign,
That other souls, refreshed and fed,
May share His life through mine.*

It is argued that the Army and the Quakers bear in this way a prophetic witness to the Church that divine grace can operate in the Christian life without the external, material occasions of particular rites (Coutts 1978 pp. 70-75).

1.3.2 Holiness and the Charismatic Movement

The Charismatic Movement or Renewal has become an important part of church life in Britain since the 1960's, adding a new taste of freedom to the worship and experience of Christians in many denominations (Calver 1987 p.48). Similar developments have appeared in the USA and other English speaking countries and in many other parts of the world. South America, particularly, has been much affected by this process. However, as Derek Tidball says:

The foundation of evangelicalism has always been the Word of God, whereas the charismatic movement starts with experience.

Tidball 1994, p.28

The Salvation Army has not been a participant in the Charismatic movement in any significant way. It has been concerned, rather, with the *Holiness* movement, following the teaching of Wesley and others (see 1.3.2 above) such as Pheobe Palmer (Tidball 1994, p.65), perhaps especially Robert and Hannah Pearsall Smith, who held a holiness convention in Brighton in 1875 (Worrall 1988 p.236). It is probable that there was some influence – perhaps mutual – from the Keswick Convention, founded in 1875 (Worrall 1988 pp. 236-237). The Holiness and the Charismatic movements are both associated with experiential religion, often including an ecstatic form, but their emphases are different.

The Holiness movement stresses ‘perfect consecration’ and ‘perfect faith’ (jointly an exercise of the will and a gift of God) revealed in the appearance of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance). It is seen as ‘Christlikeness’ (Coutts 1977 pp. 53-63). As with the Keswick Convention (Worrall 1988 p.237) the Army’s emphasis has gradually moved away from a climactic moment of second blessing towards a progressive deepening of spiritual life.

The Army’s approach to the ‘charismatic’ issue is consistent with its attitude to the ritual observance of sacraments, as shown by Needham:

In keeping with its Wesleyan heritage, The Salvation Army has traditionally used the word *holiness* to describe the sacramental life, and *sanctification* as the gracious act of God which makes holiness possible.

Needham 1987 pp. 18-19

The charismatic movement stresses the gifts of the Spirit through the manifestation of the miraculous, such as tongues, healing, prophecies, exhortation *etc.*, in addition to the more ‘mundane’ gifts such as hospitality and administration. Although in many cases the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit will appear in the same individuals, this need not necessarily be so. The Army has never accepted any tendency to associate the experience of sanctification with ‘signs following’ – particularly the contentious issue of speaking in tongues. This step *was* taken by some, forming a distinct Pentecostal branch of the church (from 1906), and later by some Charismatics, who introduced aspects of Pentecostalism into existing denominations and into churches (such as the ‘New Churches’ – formerly known as the ‘House Church Movement’) which are independent of established denominations (Calver 1987 Ch. 6).

This is not to suggest that these phenomena have not been found in the Army – along with others, such as being ‘slain in the Spirit’. Bramwell Booth wrote of an event in 1878 when ... ‘The Brother of the Blandy’s entered into full liberty ...,’ (*i.e.* underwent the experience of sanctification) ... ‘and then he shouted, wept, clapped his hands, danced amid a scene of the most heavenly and glorious enthusiasm ... others were lying on the floor, some of them groaning aloud for perfect deliverance ...’ (Coutts 1977 p.55).

A Salvationist writer (stationed in the Caribbean) in *The Officer* (a monthly international magazine circulated privately to officers) says:

... I have been in meetings where believers were "slain in the Spirit". I have also ministered to groups and individuals who were "slain in the Spirit".

... My personal observation is that not all of those who fell were "slain in the Spirit". (Here the gift of discernment was necessary.) I had to get help to minister to people who were demon-possessed.

When a person is "slain in the Spirit", inner healing, physical healing, power to live right, along with other God-given abilities are given as God sees fit. Not all believers will be "slain in the Spirit", but all can be "filled with the Spirit". Many "Spirit-filled" believers are given gifts and knowledge not given to some who are "slain in the Spirit".

Colbourne 1992

However, Bramwell Booth wrote (as General) in 1925:

Although some of our people have received what is spoken of as a gift of tongues, we have invariably found that one of the consequences has been a disposition to withdraw from hard work for the blessing of others and from fearless testimony to the Saviour.

cited in Coutts 1977 p.55

Speaking in tongues has been officially addressed from time to time, generally in a rather negative mode.

For instance:

... The only major New Testament passage which refers to ... [speaking in tongues as an ecstatic utterance] ... is 1 Corinthians 12:4 to 14:33, where Paul includes it in the list of activities of the Spirit. Throughout, however, he minimises its importance and emphasises its dangers.

... Paul's conclusion, therefore, is that intelligibility is more important than ecstasy (14:13-17). He would rather speak five words that will be understood than thousands in strange tongues (14:19).

In view of this clear scriptural teaching and because of the potential divisiveness of the abuse of this gift, Officers will not speak in tongues publicly, and will teach others not to do so in Salvation Army meetings.

Positional Statement...

And again, in a slightly softer form:

In keeping with the traditional practice of The Salvation Army, and because all Salvationists will want to pursue the “still more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31) of a self-sacrificial way (1 Corinthians 13), officers will not engage in the public use of the gift of tongues nor permit others to speak in tongues in Salvation Army meetings of any kind. This does not deny Salvationists the right to use the gift in their “personal” devotions

The Salvationist ...

In modern times (post-1950) the first significant exception to the negative tendency was the publication in 1975 of a small pamphlet entitled *Living and Walking in the Spirit*, written by General Clarence Wiseman. Recognising that the gift of tongues is contentious, with some claiming it to be essential, while others say it has no place in the Church today, Wiseman says, ‘surely such a situation demands charity both on the part of those who claim the gift, and those who view it with extreme caution,’ (Wiseman 1975, p.5). Wiseman points to Paul’s apparent attempts to downplay this gift (by omitting it from the list of gifts in Romans 12, for instance), and his emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit (love), rather than ‘the tongues of men and of angels’ (1 Corinthians 13, v. 1). Wiseman argues that Paul’s attitude is a sound example for the Army, which should be cautious, though not negative.

Therefore, he concludes:

The Salvation Army has always considered it inadvisable to allow speaking in tongues in its meetings. However, this does not deny Salvationists the right to use the gift in their private devotion, should it be God’s will to bestow it upon them.

Wiseman 1975, p.8

While this reinforces the view in *The Salvationist and Speaking in Tongues* (mentioned above), it may mean that an ‘authorised’ approach is itself a little negative, since Salvationists may have received little teaching on the subject, and only the few who were confident that they had received this gift would be likely to exercise it. The Pauline teaching in 1 Corinthians 14 is somewhat obscure, and can be interpreted in several different ways; however, it is clear that Paul envisages Christians speaking in tongues in church, because he gives them guidelines on how to preserve order when doing so (only two or three, and with an interpreter). The Salvation Army ruling is therefore rather different to that of Paul (although many other churches also differ, by encouraging massed speaking or singing in tongues during church services).

Other Spiritual Gifts and charismatic phenomena and behaviour have also been rare, with the result that a 'prophecy' delivered at Dawn 2000 (an evangelical conference) by Gerald Coates⁷ of the Pioneer Trust left many Salvationists in some confusion (Coates 1992). Meanwhile one can occasionally hear rude comments about 'hand-wavers' who are, it seems, thought less acceptable than 'hand-clappers'.

Eileen Colbourne's discussion on the phenomenon of being "slain in the Spirit" concludes:

Man has the tendency to wipe out as false or demonic any supernatural intervention of God that has never happened to him, or those he considers "spiritual". Some of the phrases he uses to show his ignorance are, "This is not the Army spirit"; "What is the Army coming to?"; "That's demonic".

From this we can conclude that the devil has robbed the Church for many years of its God-given gifts and abilities, and has put fear into the hearts of many because of his counterfeit. There is danger in everything, but we are to try the spirits.

What we need in the Army at this time is understanding, not the spirit of condemnation. Any sincere seeker should seek God for wisdom. He gives liberally. We need to remember, too, that God reveals his secrets to those who fear him.

The statement by Gerald Coates was published in *Salvationist*⁸, the weekly newspaper for members of the Army, and comment after publication (in the letters page, for instance) has demonstrated a diversity of views on the validity of prophecy today in general. However, it may be that the new possibility of publishing varying views on supernatural gifts and phenomena means that a change is beginning which will eventually allow them to be seen as a normal part of Christian life.

At a conference on evangelism held at Swanwick in September 1994, some 300 Salvationist delegates were addressed by Michael Green and Gerald Coates, and, during the course of impromptu prayers, many of them experienced phenomena such as falling over, unexpected laughter, prophetic insights into their personal and wider needs. This occurrence was reported on the front page of *Salvationist* (25 September 1994), where it was described as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The importance of the event (if any) is still not clear, but the reporting of it, with a positive slant, seems to be a new departure.

⁷ The remarks by Coates (allegedly under divine inspiration) suggest a renaissance for the Army, following its humbling. The comments suggest that the Army's influence is about to spread to key places in the UK, including the royal family, and that it will be given increasing respect by members of other churches, many of whom had come to regard it as something of an irrelevance.

⁸ *Salvationist* is the weekly newspaper published in the UK by Territorial Headquarters for Salvationists. It is the sister paper to the better known *War Cry* which is more of an evangelistic periodical than a newspaper.

Perhaps significantly, a month later the Army published *This Means War!* by Chick Yuill, which examines 'spiritual warfare' and seems to provide the most positive perspective yet on spiritual gifts and their use. Still, however, there is a 'health warning' attached to the book, as the Territorial Commander (Commissioner Dinsdale Pender) has added a preface which states:

... There is ... a difference between a considered Salvationist view on the topic of spiritual warfare and an official Salvation Army statement on the subject. This book is the former. ...

The book includes the following comment:

There are two equal and opposite mistakes which are often made with regard to this gift [*of tongues*]. Some denominations have made speaking in tongues the essential evidence of the baptism in the Spirit. This has no scriptural warrant and it is clear ... that Paul does not see this as the most important gift. Other denominations have gone in the opposite direction and have forbidden the use of tongues in public worship. Such a prohibition is in direct contravention of Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:39) and puts us in real danger of quenching the Spirit. As with so many other things, the answer to misuse is not non-use, but correct use in accordance with biblical guidelines.

Yuill 1994. pp. 100-101

Yuill does not spell out that the Army has for many years been making the second of the mistakes he identifies, but the publication of these views in an officially sanctioned book seems to signal a change in The Army's position on the whole complex of issues, although the change is by no means complete, and may yet be reversed.

1.4 The People

1.4.1 The Members

Adults

There is a significant attendance by non-members (*i.e.* people who have made no kind of commitment), amounting to 17% of a total adult attendance of 40,162 on November 5th 1995⁹ (Escott and Pickard 1995, pp. 8-9). However, adult membership take three forms:

- i) Full membership is that of the *soldier* (65% of adult attendance), who must be a Christian claiming an experience of conversion, and who is (in theory) a committed activist in the mission of the Army. The promises made on entry require that the soldier will 'renounce the world', abstaining from alcohol, tobacco and harmful drugs, as well as from profanity, obscenity and dishonesty, and will spend 'all the time, money, strength and influence' he or she can in the interests of 'the salvation war', obeying 'the lawful commands of their officers in so doing' (*Chosen to be a Soldier ... 1977, Appendix*). (See Appendix A for the full text.)

It is not required that soldiers wear uniform, and not all soldiers do so, despite some peer pressure. It is, however, officially required that all holders of office (including musicians and Sunday School teachers) should wear uniform – although unofficially exceptions are made.

- ii) People who have claimed salvation, but have not yet been accepted as soldiers are called 'recruits'; these can include young people (aged 14-18) who may have been Christians for some years but have not accepted the responsibilities of senior soldiership.
- iii) An increasing number of people (11% of adult attendance) are choosing to regard the Army as their place of worship, though unwilling to make the promises of a soldier. Such people are known as 'adherents'; there is no requirement that they make any profession of conversion or enter into any commitments, and adherents are consequently not eligible to hold office¹⁰.

⁹ The document cited is the summary report on an internal Salvation Army census, counting the people present in Sunday worship on November 5th 1995 according to various categories. The report, with other media and sources, is to provide a basis for Salvation Army strategy in the UK, as agreed by the Territorial Executive Council in June 1996.

¹⁰ There are now a few exceptions to this rule, particularly in relation to the administration of the concept of Planned Giving – a programme which encourages corps in financial self-support and mission development through tithing. The impetus for the Planned Giving programme has been provided by the Church Growth department at Territorial Headquarters. Other exceptions include some non-executive positions in which adherents may help in community service or similar roles.

The lay leadership is composed of 'Local Officers', who may be responsible for leading sections specialising in particular kinds of ministry or for general management or administrative responsibilities (such as the Treasurer or Secretary).

Those responsible for the main leadership in these areas have *ex officio* seats on the corps 'Senior Census Board', which is responsible for administering the membership of the corps. The Census Board discusses changes in membership, including the admission of new members; appointments of local officers must also be agreed by members of the Census Board and the corps officer. Removals from office or membership can only take place with the agreement of the Divisional Commander.

Other local officers (with roles as assistants) can be appointed wherever a need exists, but they normally have administrative or service, rather than decision-making, responsibilities.

The corps officer may be assisted by a 'Corps Council', which is an advisory board (not an executive committee) concerned with policy issues rather than personnel matters (the Census Board's area). All members of the Census Board are also members of the Corps Council, but they may be joined by co-opted members, not all of whom need be full members of the corps (*e.g.* they may be invited for their expertise on particular issues, such as property). In practice, the Census Board will often also serve as the Corps Council, especially in small corps.

The Army in the UK has a higher attendance of 'twicers' (people attending two or more services on Sundays) than most churches, with 43% attending more than one meeting (Escott and Pickard 1996, pp. 6-7), which is similar to only the Pentecostal (48%) and Afro-Caribbean (41%) groups of churches (Brierley 1991, p.47).

Most people attending worship in Salvation Army meetings are female, as shown in Figure 1. The figure of 63% compares with 51% of the population and 58% of that group which attends church in England (Brierley 1991, p.79). The size of the imbalance may seem strange in a church in which the leadership is predominantly male and in which the apparently male military image plays a strong part.

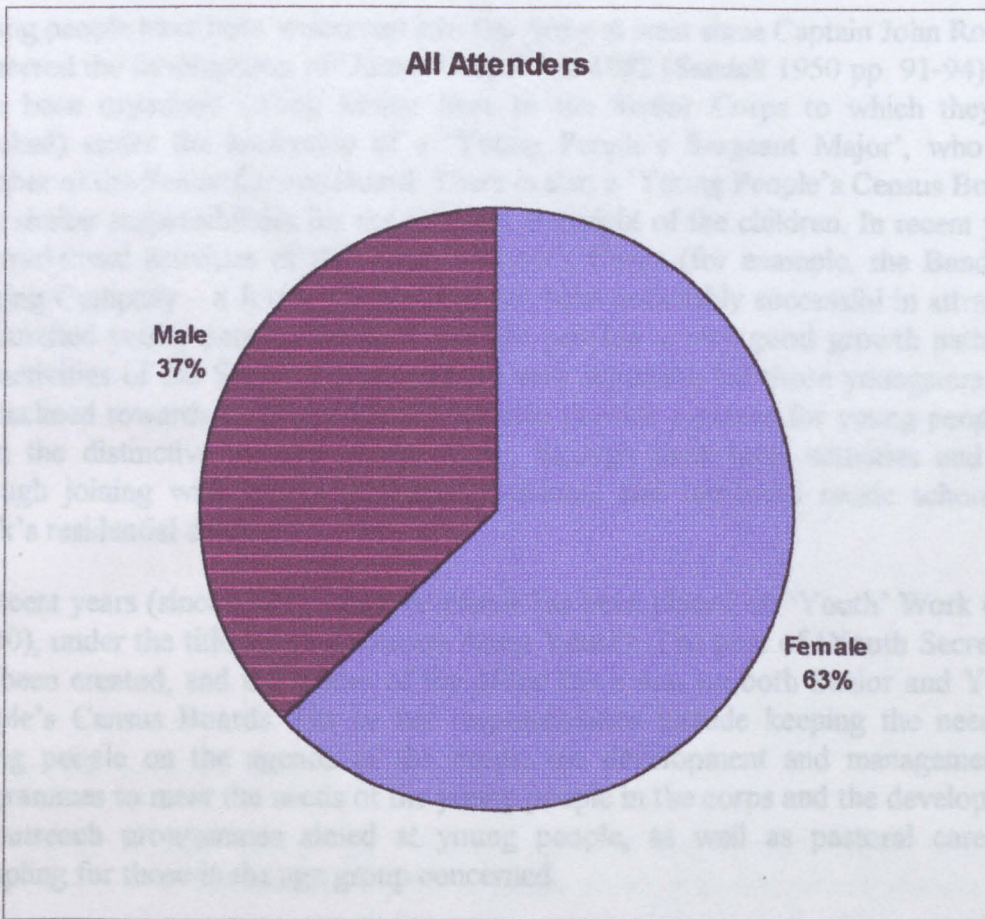


Figure 1: Worship Attendance by Gender (Escott and Pickard 1996, p.16)

The people attending Salvation Army worship meetings are also rather older than in most other churches, with an average age of 44, or 53 if only adults are considered, (Escott and Pickard 1996 p.18) compared to 39 in English churches overall (Brierley 1991 p. 100).

Young People

Children are eligible to be members of The Salvation Army as 'Junior Soldiers', though others attend Sunday Schools and other activities without (or prior to) making any such commitments. There were 10,522 children recorded as attending Salvation Army meetings (junior and senior) on 5 November 1995, of whom 5,084 were Junior Soldiers (Escott and Pickard 1996, p.8). A Junior Soldier must be aged 7 or over (it is thought that a child below this age would not understand the promises made), and must have accepted Jesus as his or her personal saviour. The Junior Soldiers' promise is a simplified version of that made by a Senior Soldier, containing no explicit statements of doctrine. Junior Soldiers and other children are organised in 'Young People's Corps', under the leadership and care of local officers, many of whom have undertaken special training in children's work.

Young people have been welcomed into the Army at least since Captain John Roberts pioneered the development of 'Junior Corps'¹¹ in 1882 (Sandall 1950 pp. 91-94), and have been organised (along similar lines to the Senior Corps to which they are attached) under the leadership of a 'Young People's Sergeant Major', who is a member of the Senior Census Board. There is also a 'Young People's Census Board', with similar responsibilities for the care and oversight of the children. In recent years the traditional activities of the Young People's Corps (for example, the Band and Singing Company – a Junior Choir) have not been noticeably successful in attracting unchurched young people, although they do provide a very good growth path into the activities of the Senior Corps, and are very satisfying for those youngsters who are inclined towards such activities. They also provide a means for young people to learn the distinctive culture of the Army, through their local activities and also through joining with others in annual divisional and territorial music schools (a week's residential course).

In recent years (since 1991) a new emphasis has been placed on 'Youth' Work (ages 13-30), under the title SAY (Salvation Army Youth). The post of 'Youth Secretary' has been created, and the holder of the office has a seat on both Senior and Young People's Census Boards. His or her responsibilities include keeping the needs of young people on the agenda of the corps, the development and management of programmes to meet the needs of the young people in the corps and the development of outreach programmes aimed at young people, as well as pastoral care and discipling for those in the age group concerned.

1.4.2 The Officers

Though there are no formal academic requirements for admission, entry into the officer ranks is normally via a one year course of correspondence lessons, followed by a two year residential course as a cadet in a training college. On completion of the course, the cadet is commissioned as a lieutenant, and must undertake further correspondence studies while working in appointments, before promotion to captain after five years satisfactory service. Following a total of twenty years service, the captain will normally be promoted to major. Thereafter, any promotions in rank will be made on the basis of ability and the nature of the work (*Orders and Regulations 1987 Vol. 2* pp. 100-101). See Figure 2 for the 1991 distribution of officers, by rank, in the United Kingdom¹².

¹¹ Since renamed as 'Young People's Corps'.

¹² The data for Figures 1 to 4 is from the *Disposition of Forces 1991*.

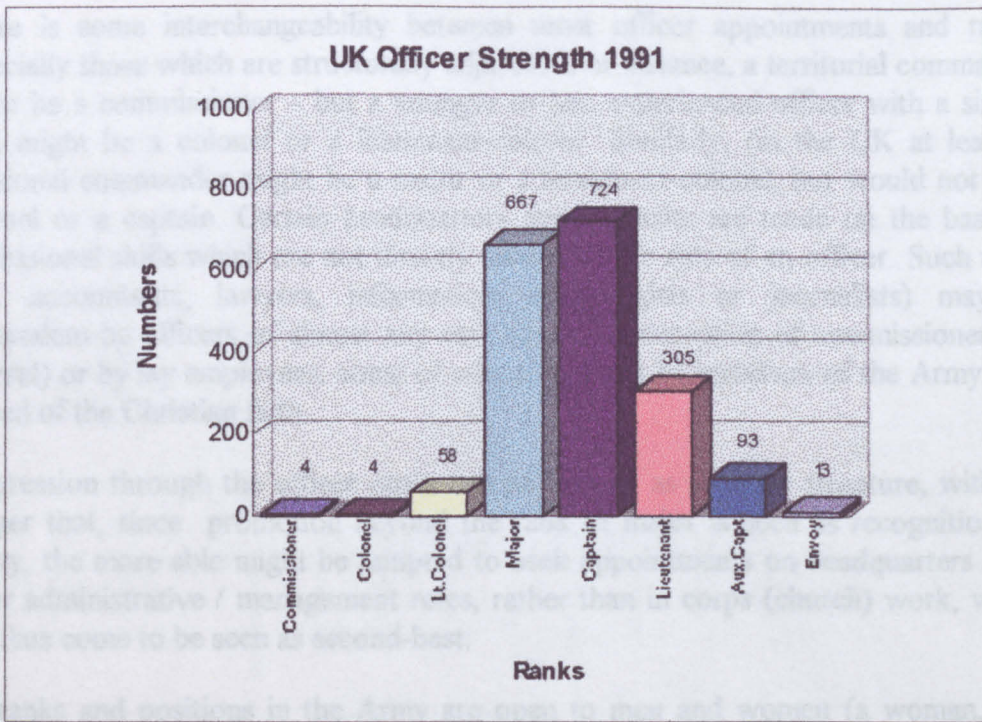


Figure 2: Distribution of Officers in the UK, by Rank.

The higher officer ranks are strictly reserved for people with particular responsibilities: a lieutenant-colonel is typically either a divisional commander or a headquarters officer in a relatively senior post; a colonel is normally either a head of a department or the territorial commander for a small territory; a commissioner is normally either the territorial commander of a larger territory or attached to International Headquarters in a senior executive post. There is one General at any time, assisted by a chosen senior commissioner, known as the Chief of the Staff.

The General is elected by the 'High Council' (an electoral college of all active commissioners and certain qualifying colonels), normally shortly before the retirement of the current holder of the office, although provision exists for the removal of an unfit person from office and the election of a successor (see 1.8.15 below). General Bramwell Tillsley took office in 1993, and became in 1994 the first General to retire on health grounds before completing his term of office. The High Council in July 1994 then elected General Paul Rader, who took office immediately upon his election. With the exception of the General, all officer appointments are made by officers at a higher hierarchical level; for example, a corps officer may be appointed by a divisional commander (in consultation with the Secretary for Personnel). The corps officer may be consulted, but has no power to accept or refuse the appointment (other than by resignation). The corps (church) will not normally be consulted about such appointments. This pattern is followed throughout the organisation.

There is some interchangeability between most officer appointments and ranks, especially those which are structurally adjacent. For instance, a territorial commander might be a commissioner – but a younger or less experienced officer with a similar post might be a colonel or a lieutenant-colonel. Similarly, (in the UK at least) a divisional commander might be a major or a lieutenant-colonel, but would not be a colonel or a captain. Certain headquarters appointments are made on the basis of professional skills which are not directly related to the role of an officer. Such tasks (e.g. accountants, lawyers, information technologists or journalists) may be undertaken by officers of almost any rank (with the exception of commissioner and general) or by lay employees, some of whom may not be members of the Army – or indeed of the Christian faith.

Progression through the officer ranks can be viewed as a career structure, with the danger that, since promotion beyond the rank of major is seen as recognition for ability, the more able might be tempted to seek appointments on headquarters or in other administrative / management roles, rather than in corps (church) work, which can thus come to be seen as second-best.

All ranks and positions in the Army are open to men and women (a woman, Eva Burrows, was the General from 1986 to 1993) but this does not imply an equality of opportunity, since most of the senior leadership consists of married men, assisted to a greater or lesser extent by their wives, while a much smaller proportion is composed of single women. Although there are a few exceptions, married women do not generally receive significant responsibilities (see Figure 3 and Figure 4 for the distribution) in consequence of which the real officer strength (in terms of appointments which can be filled) is more accurately shown in Figure 5¹³.

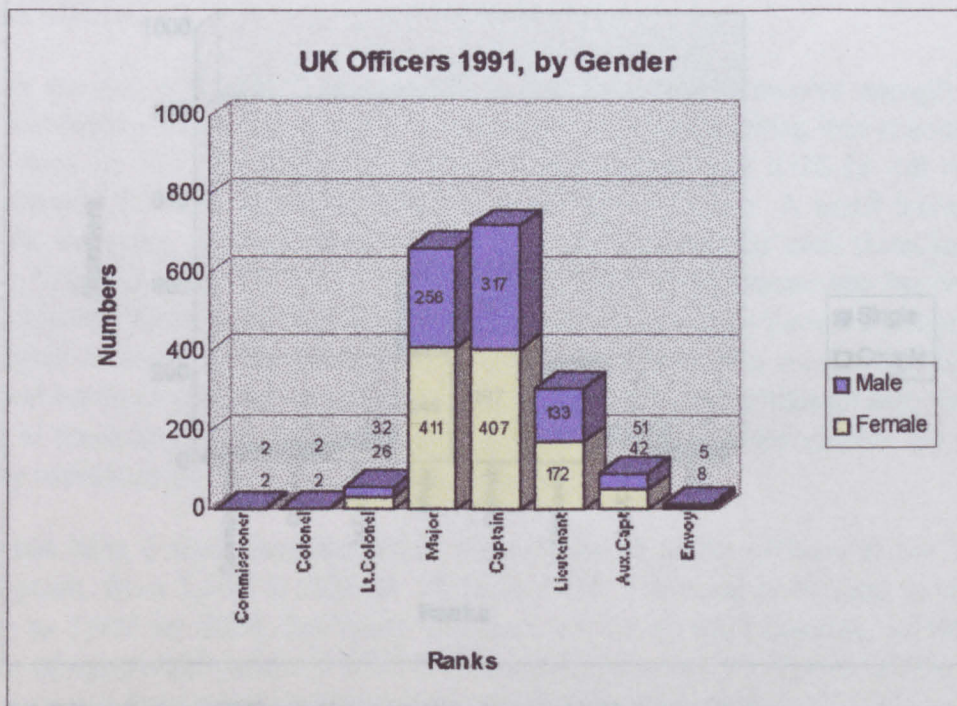


Figure 3: UK Distribution of Officers, Categorised by Gender

¹³ Some minor discrepancies have been unavoidable in classifying widows or divorced officers.

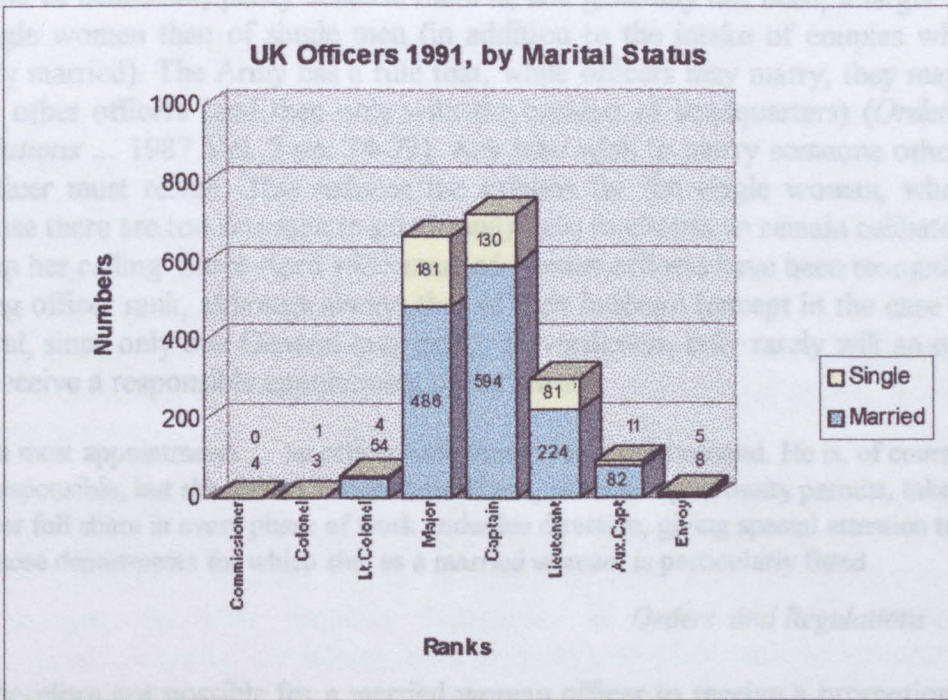


Figure 4: UK Distribution of Officers, Categorised by Marital Status

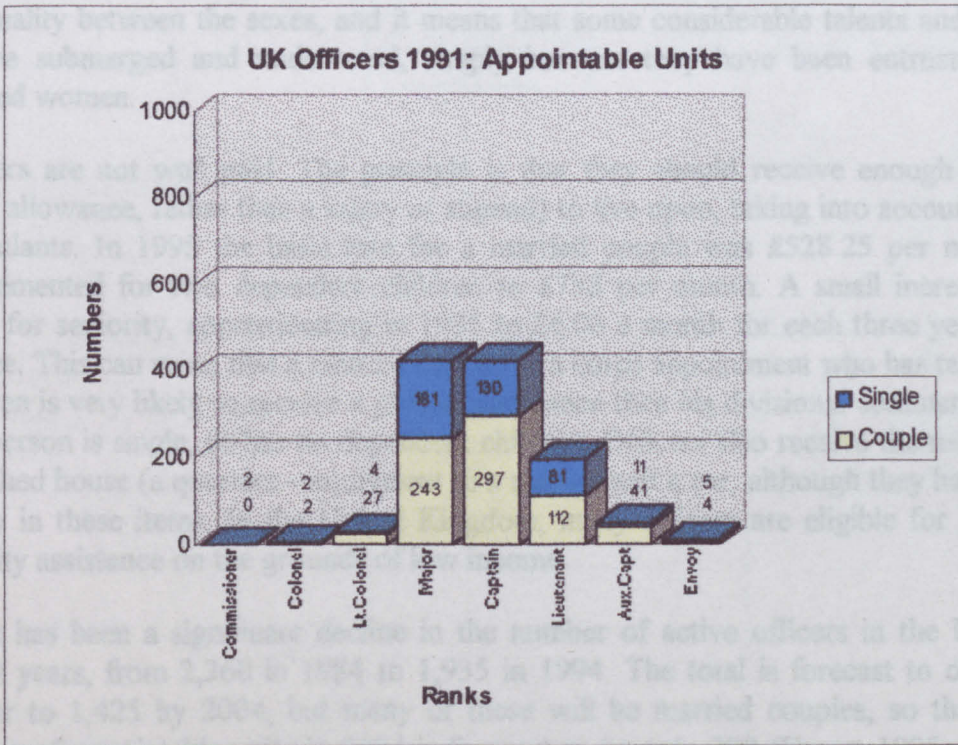


Figure 5: UK Distribution of Officers, Categorised as Appointable Units

There are proportionately very few single men serving as officers, particularly over the rank of lieutenant, partly because there is, and generally has been, a larger intake of single women than of single men (in addition to the intake of couples who are already married). The Army has a rule that, while officers may marry, they may only marry other officers (and then only with the consent of headquarters) (*Orders and Regulations ... 1987 Vol. 2 pp. 74-79*). Any who wish to marry someone other than an officer must resign. This reduces the options for the single woman, who may (because there are too few men to go around) have to choose to remain celibate or to give up her calling. Since April 1995 married women officers have been recognised as holding officer rank, although always that of their husband (except in the case of the General, since only one General may exist). Nevertheless, only rarely will an officer-wife receive a responsible appointment of her own:

In most appointments ... an officer-wife should assist her husband. He is, of course, responsible, but she should interest herself and, as far as opportunity permits, take her full share in every phase of work under his direction, giving special attention to those departments for which she, as a married woman, is particularly fitted

Orders and Regulations ... 1987

It is therefore not possible for a married woman officer to receive a promotion or to hold an appointment which places her in a position which could be seen as senior to that of her husband. This may be construed as true to the scriptural teaching (1 Corinthians 14: 34-35) that women should not have authority over men (for those who adhere to that interpretation), but it has two defects: it falsifies the Army's claim to equality between the sexes, and it means that some considerable talents and gifts can be submerged and under-used, simply because they have been entrusted to married women.

Officers are not well paid. The principle is that they should receive enough (as a living allowance, rather than a salary or stipend) to live upon, taking into account any dependants. In 1995 the basic rate for a married couple was £528.25 per month, supplemented for two dependent children to £738 per month. A small increase is given for seniority, approximating in 1995 to £6.00 a month for each three years of service. This can mean that a married captain in a corps appointment who has teenage children is very likely to receive a greater allowance than his divisional commander if that person is single, or has no dependent children. Officers also receive the use of a furnished house (a quarters – equivalent to a manse) and a car, although they have no equity in these items. In the United Kingdom, many officers are eligible for social security assistance on the grounds of low income.

There has been a significant decline in the number of active officers in the UK in recent years, from 2,360 in 1984 to 1,935 in 1994. The total is forecast to decline further to 1,425 by 2004, but many of these will be married couples, so that the number of appointable units in 2004 is forecast to be only 799 (Escott 1995a, p.6), based on a weighted trend projection from the period 1984-1994.

1.5 The Structure of The Army

1.5.1 The International Structure

In countries where the Army is relatively large (more than about 40 corps) it is constituted as a 'territory', otherwise it is a 'command'. There are, however, exceptions to this: Australia is divided into two territories; India (the first non-European missionary development) into five territories; the USA is divided into four territories with a national headquarters superimposed on them; some other territories are composed of several countries (the East Africa Territory, with over 300 corps, includes Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). There are, according to *The Year Book* for 1996, 53 territories and commands comprising 101 countries, although the Army's presence in some of these is extremely small (*Year Book* 1996).

International Headquarters (IHQ) departments exist to co-ordinate and manage work, and information about work, in the various territories and commands (by, for instance, allocating resources) and for the direct administration of headquarters itself (for example, the IHQ property department is concerned with International Headquarters' property, not international property). The international structure as of January 1994 is shown in Figure 6 (details obtained from The Salvation Army IHQ Personnel Department).

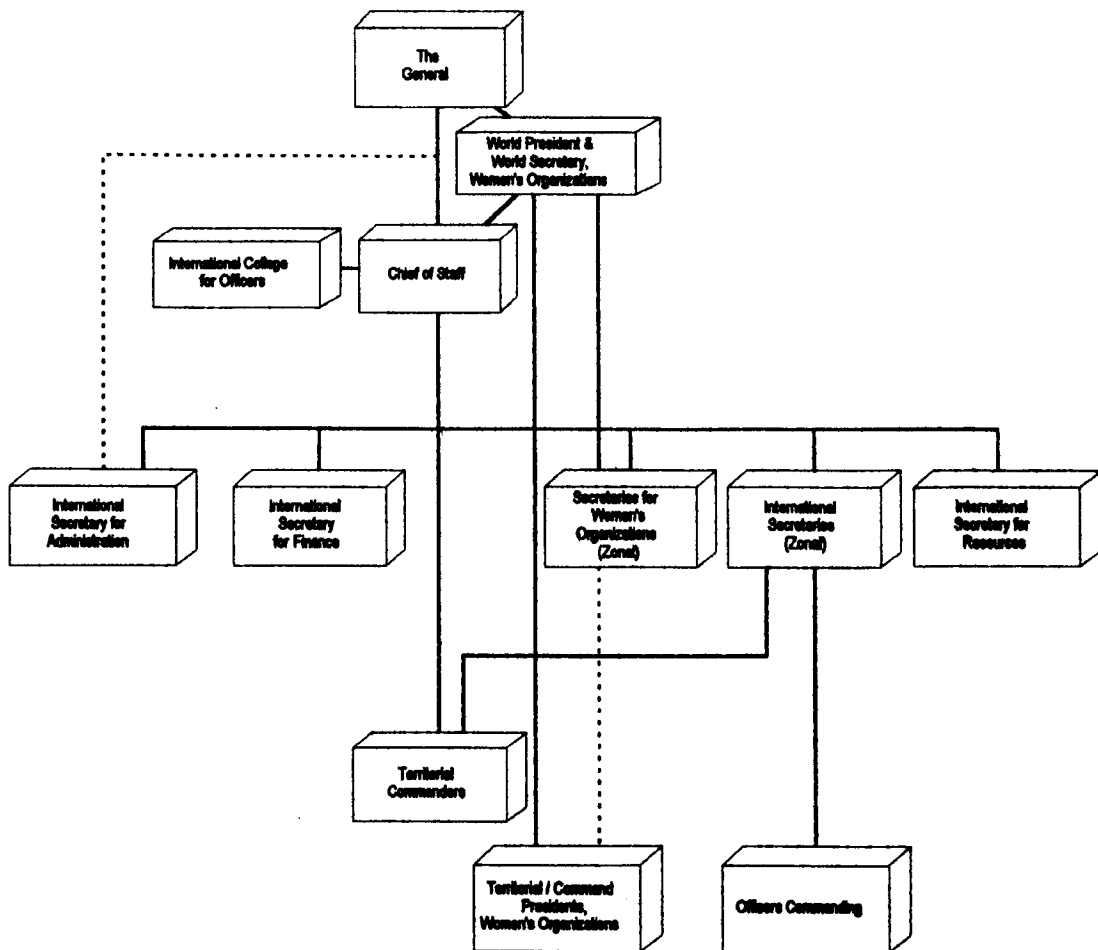


Figure 6: The International Structure 1994

1.5.2 The Territorial Structure

The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom was for many years a structural anomaly. Because the Army began in the UK and therefore the founder was originally the leader of work in the UK only, becoming over time the international leader, it was difficult to distinguish the spheres of influence of International Headquarters and of the various other headquarters in Britain. Legally, the General was the head of the UK organisation; all property was owned by The Salvation Army Trustee Company (administered by IHQ); there was no distinct territory for Britain – each department reported directly to IHQ.

This changed in November 1990 with a radical reorganisation as the United Kingdom Territory came into being (*The Administrative Review 1990*). This development has served the joint purpose of releasing the General and IHQ from UK responsibilities, while providing a more consistent structure for work in the UK. Perhaps the main change was the unification of the UK Territory under one Territorial Commander (TC) based at Territorial Headquarters (THQ) in London. Further changes are taking place in 1996 (Bale, 1996), so that the Army in the UK is currently being remodelled as shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

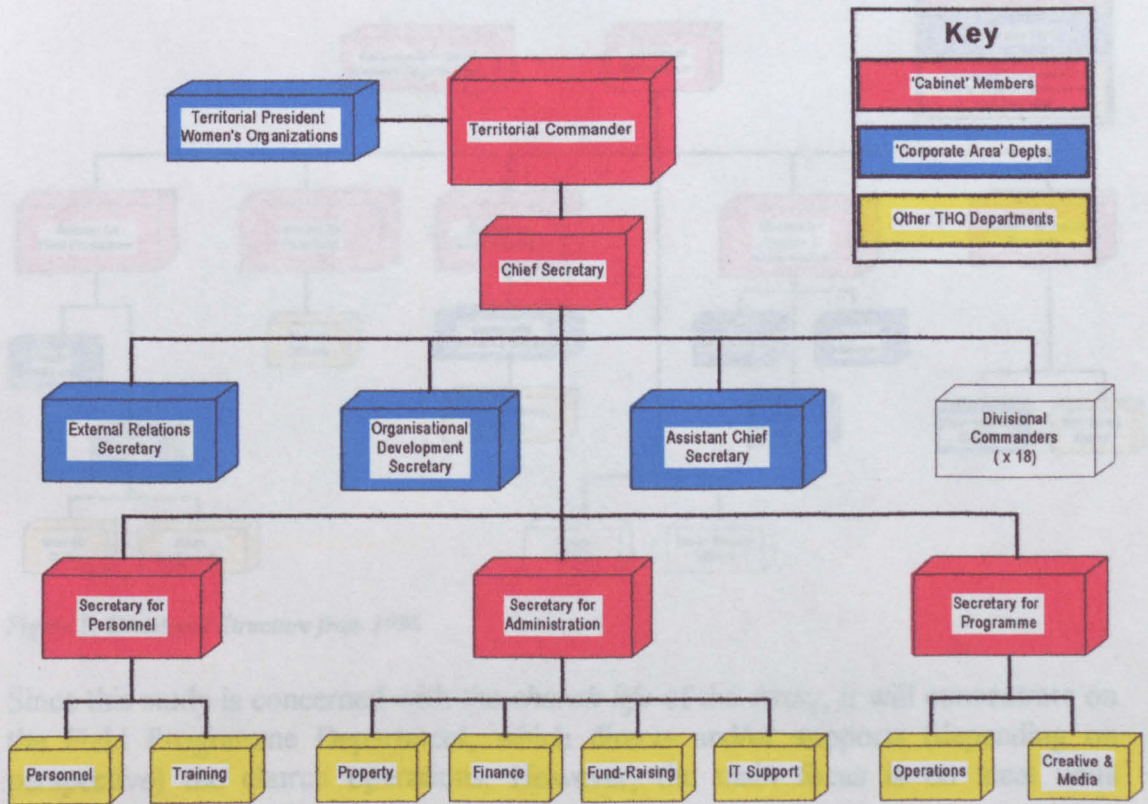


Figure 7: The United Kingdom Territorial Headquarters Structure 1996

In essence, the Territorial structure reflects the International. The main functional departments are (at present) the Field Programme Department and the Social Programme Department, the planned merger of which will form the Programme Department; these are supplemented and supported by the Administration and Personnel Departments.

In the new structure, almost all functional units (whether field or social) will be within 'divisions' (geographical areas), under the oversight of a Divisional Commander (DC) with the rank of either major or lieutenant-colonel, based at a Divisional Headquarters (DHQ). This supersedes the previous structure in which Social Service units were grouped in 'provinces' (similar, but larger, geographical units overlapping the divisions) under the management of Provincial Officers. The 1996 changes bring about a reduction in the number of divisions (from 24 to 18), and an enhanced role for the Divisional Commander, including responsibility for both Field and Social operations, as well as all other Salvation Army activity within the area. Although specialists work in particular areas in both THQ and DHQ, the intention is that each DHQ will form a workgroup, sharing information as necessary. This will be less easy to implement at THQ, because of the scale (each DHQ will have about 15 full-time staff, while THQ – even after envisaged reductions – will have some 200), but the intention is that the same principle will apply. This change is intended to dispel the bottle-neck effect previously caused by following only official lines of authority for all communications.

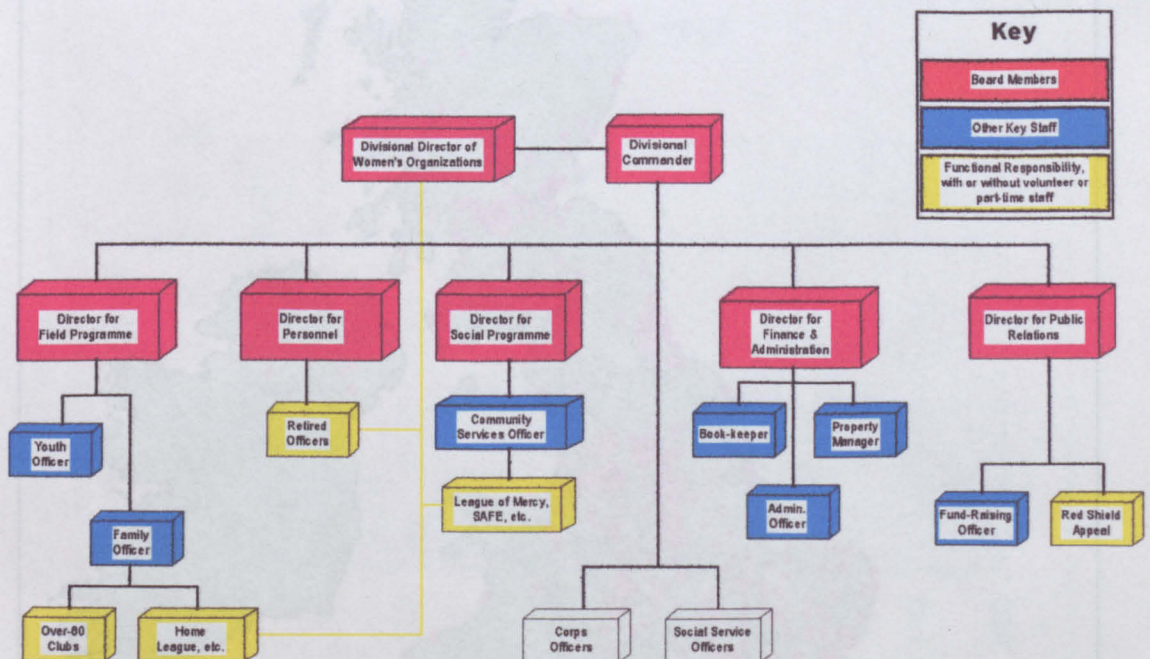


Figure 8: Divisional Structure from 1996

Since this study is concerned with the *church life* of the Army, it will concentrate on the Field Programme Department, which directs and/or supports (depending on perspective) the church operations. However, the main focus is on local units ('corps') rather than the denominational structures.

1.5.3 The Local Structure

Locally, the Army's church structure is composed of 'corps', of which there were, in 1995, 798, as shown in Figure 9¹⁴. The corps is the key unit of the Army, and may be associated with a number of 'outposts' and 'societies'. 'Goodwill Centres' are in many respects similar to corps, but are also specialists in community service and non-residential social service¹⁵.

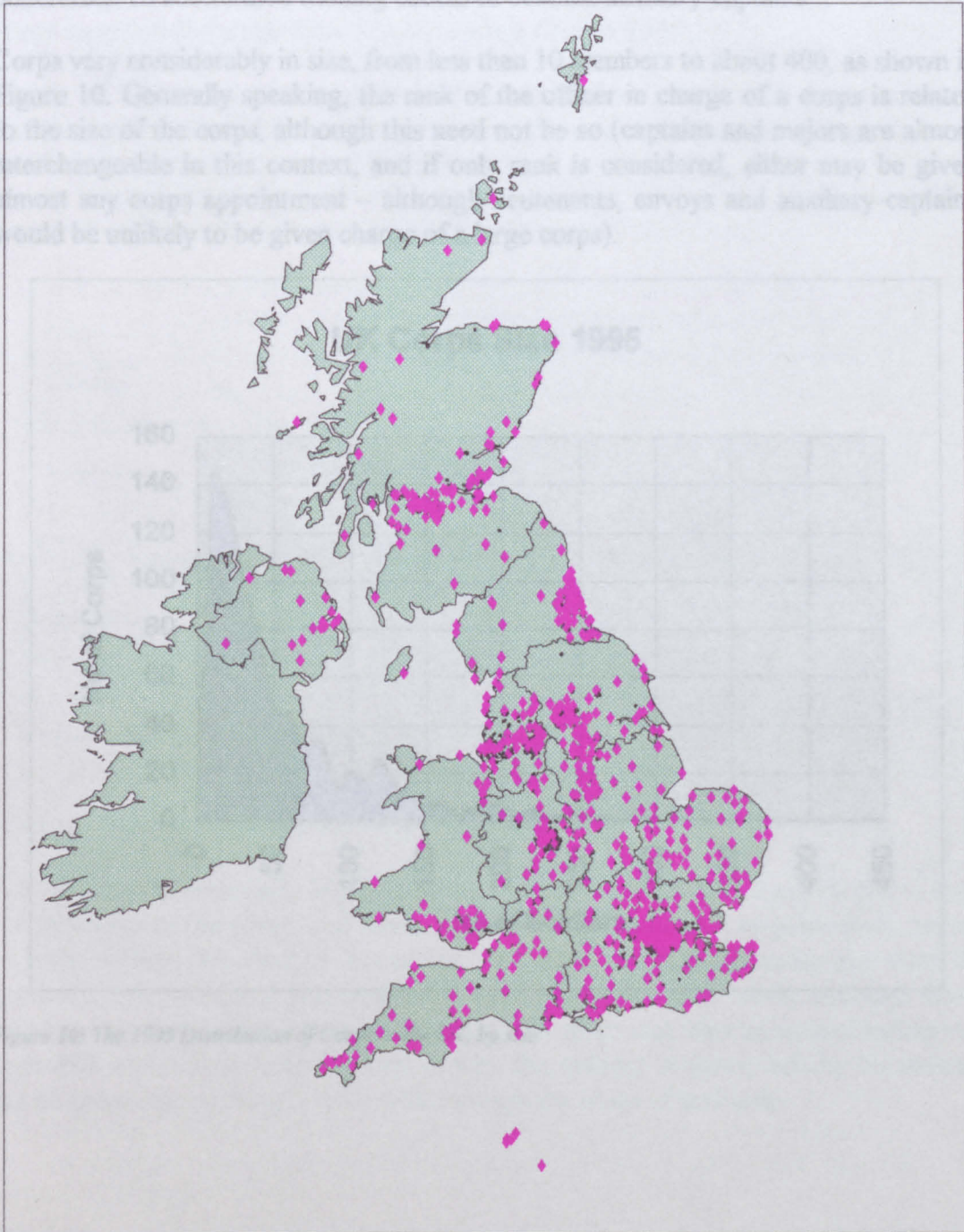


Figure 9: Geographical Distribution of Corps in the UK Territory.

¹⁴ Dublin is omitted for technical reasons.

¹⁵ Goodwill Centres began as 'Slum Posts', and generally serve underprivileged inner-city areas.

Corps and goodwill centres are normally (and ideally) led by one or more officers, usually a married couple or a single person, with the rank of lieutenant, captain or major. Most corps (88%) have officer leadership of some kind (*Disposition of Forces 1995*). Sometimes, a number of corps may be grouped together under one leader or leadership team; others may be directly supervised by Divisional Headquarters (DHQ), having no officer of their own. In some cases, leadership is provided by either lay leaders (known as envoys¹⁶) or late entrants to officership who have undertaken an accelerated training course to become auxiliary-captains¹⁷.

Corps vary considerably in size, from less than 10 members to about 400, as shown in Figure 10. Generally speaking, the rank of the officer in charge of a corps is related to the size of the corps, although this need not be so (captains and majors are almost interchangeable in this context, and if only rank is considered, either may be given almost any corps appointment – although lieutenants, envoys and auxiliary-captains would be unlikely to be given charge of a large corps).

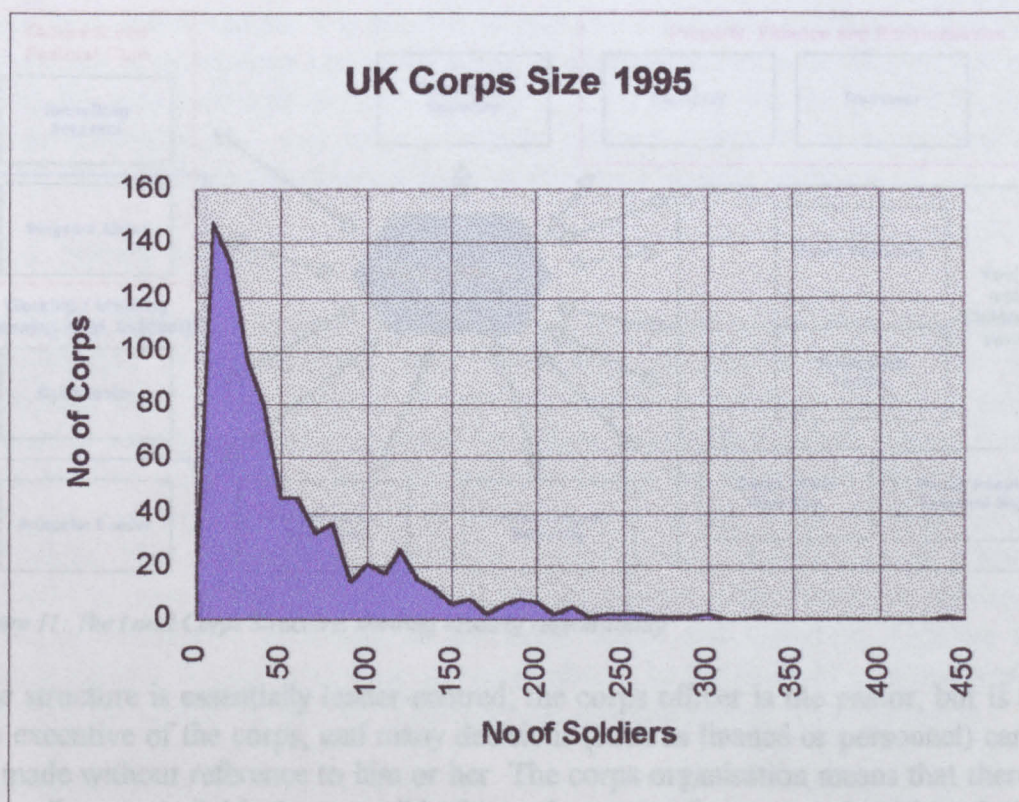


Figure 10: The 1995 Distribution of Corps in the UK, by size

¹⁶ There are in fact two kinds of envoy in the UK – Territorial Envoys, who appear in Figures 1 to 4, and Divisional Envoys, who may be part-time, or unpaid, or temporary or are for some other reason not recognised as regulars and therefore do not appear.

¹⁷ Normal entry to the Training College has a cut-off at age 40, after which applicants are not eligible for the standard training programme.

Although the mean size in 1994 was 57 senior soldiers, if corps are grouped in bands by size (1-10, 11-20, 21-30, etc.), the modal group is only 10-19, with 20-29 as a close second. More than 60% of British corps have fewer than 50 soldiers (Escott 1995b, p.3). In Scotland only a handful of corps have more than 50 soldiers, and more than half (56) of Scottish corps (a total of 111) have fewer than 20 soldiers (Escott 1995b, p.4). As will be shown below (1.8.18), the Army has suffered decline for a long period. The smaller corps tend to decline at a more rapid rate than their larger neighbours, leading to the loss of viability in the small corps, while the larger corps seem relatively unaffected by the decline (Escott 1995b, p.7)

Figure 11 illustrates the structure of an individual corps with many sections functioning – it should be remembered that the majority of corps, being relatively small, do not include all parts of this structure.

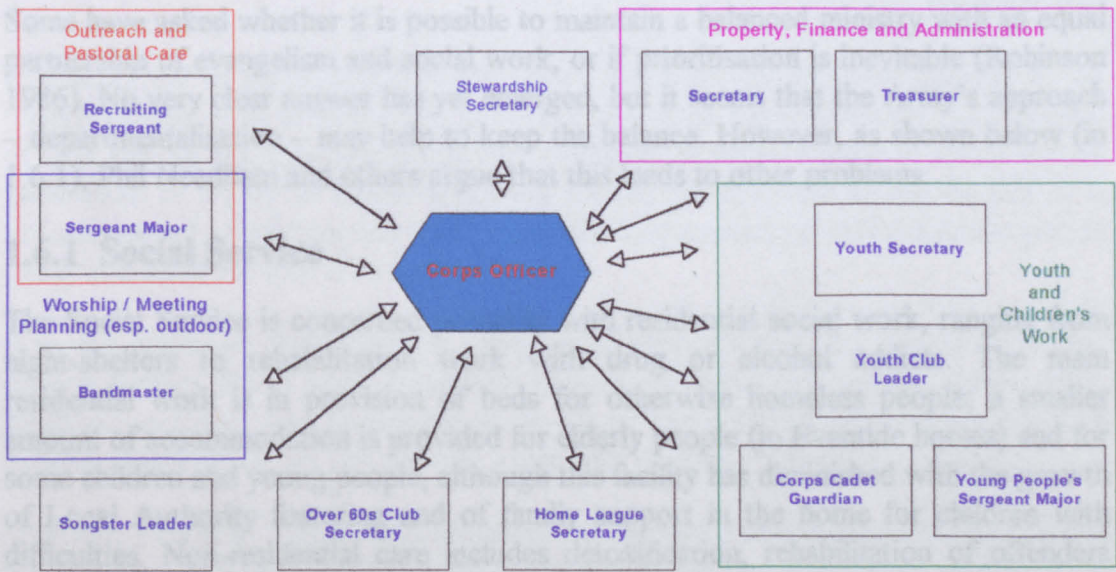


Figure 11: The Local Corps Structure, showing areas of responsibility

The structure is essentially leader-centred; the corps officer is the pastor, but is also the executive of the corps, and many decisions (such as finance or personnel) cannot be made without reference to him or her. The corps organisation means that there is, generally, one individual responsible for each aspect of corps work, although there may be some team work where appropriate, and there may also be several assistants, each with a particular task. In keeping with the military imagery, rule by committee has no place – everything is dealt with through the chain of authority.

1.6 Methods

In general, the Army in the UK now works in three types of operation, although there are specialisations within these categories, and a number of support functions exist:

- the Social Service is essentially a professional, institution-based caring service;
- the Field Service is the equivalent of a church network;
- the Field Service also includes Goodwill work, which can be seen as a hybrid of church and (non-residential) social and community work.

Some have asked whether it is possible to maintain a balanced ministry with an equal partnership of evangelism and social work, or if prioritisation is inevitable (Robinson 1986). No very clear answer has yet emerged, but it seems that the Army's approach – departmentalisation – may help to keep the balance. However, as shown below (in 1.6.1), Phil Needham and others argue that this leads to other problems.

1.6.1 Social Service

The Social Service is concerned primarily with residential social work, ranging from night-shelters to rehabilitation work with drug or alcohol addicts. The main residential work is in provision of beds for otherwise homeless people; a smaller amount of accommodation is provided for elderly people (in Eventide homes) and for some children and young people, although this facility has diminished with the growth of Local Authority fostering and of family support in the home for children with difficulties. Non-residential care includes detoxification, rehabilitation of offenders and others, counselling, and the family tracing service. Other kinds of service are added or withdrawn according to perceived needs and resources. Officers with appointments in Social Service are expected also to be members of a corps, in which they may sometimes act as Local Officers (*e.g.* as musicians or youth workers).

Irene Stickland says:

The social service movement in The Salvation Army is not a regretful spin off of 'spiritual' ministry. Instead it is an integrated part of the whole. Lieut.-Colonel George Carpenter said "Christian social service is not peripheral to our mission of soul-saving, it is indissolubly bound up with it. Christian social service speaks in every tongue without learning it. Christian social service is what holiness looks like out of uniform."¹⁸

Stickland 1986

¹⁸ Citing Carpenter, George 1978, *An Approach To A Theology of Christian Social Service*, Social Conference, Australia Eastern Territory p.2

The Salvation Army Social Service is now a professionally oriented agency, with many officers holding external qualifications for their work, and professional lay people (including non-Christians) participating in and leading elements of this work. This has caused some questions to be raised, since it seems to lead to an increasing separation of social work from the church.

Needham suggests that social work should be an outpouring of the fellowship of a congregation (although not subservient to the congregation's needs) and that the essential unity of Salvation Army service is damaged by too great a distinction between the two:

What has happened over recent years is cause for some concern. In our attempt to professionalize our services ... we have too often placed those services in the hands of workers who have no identification with our basic mission or who have no stake in our fellowship.

Needham 1986

It is important to distinguish Salvation Army social service from the concept of the 'Social Gospel' (see Worrall 1988, p.277). There is no suggestion that the Kingdom of God can be equated with social improvement, although neither is social service undertaken as a ploy to induce a hearing for the proclamation of the Gospel. It is undertaken out of a conviction that God is not only concerned with the whole person (body and soul) but also with society.

It is also important that Salvation Army social service should be distinct from (and *clearly* distinct from) Local Authority or any other type of secular social work. Needham suggests the 'Sacrament of the Good Samaritan' as a paradigm for such service, which he argues will provide a powerful Christian witness to the world.

Similarly, Professor James Read suggests that an undue separation of the church and the social service aspects of the Army might mean that:

... the rest of us, the laymen, are allowed to avoid our responsibility to provide for the needs of others when we can, offering the excuse that that is someone else's job.

When Jesus spoke of those who clothed the naked and fed the hungry and welcomed the stranger (Matthew 25), He was not, I think, suggesting that these be activities undertaken only by some – the professionals.

Read 1986

1.6.2 The Corps

This aspect of the Army is the most obviously *religious*, since it involves church attendance, participation in worship and the various other parts of life which are recognisably *church-oriented*. The work of a corps, however, introduces some special perspectives, which may differ from those of other churches.

It is overtly concerned with evangelism – *even if unsuccessful, the Army's culture (reinforced by periodic inspections) expects some efforts towards winning converts.* Some of these efforts are now institutionalised (perhaps even fossilised); for instance, open-air meetings were originally an attraction for unchurched people in busy thoroughfares – but they are now sometimes held in the same spot they always occupied, which has been otherwise deserted as a result of changed social patterns. Nevertheless, the outreach work continues, and this gives a key to the motivation of the corps.

Many corps offer a practical caring service to their community. This will often include a counselling facility, and may include such activities as the provision of meals to the poor and/or lonely, or the provision of a hairdressing or chiropody service for elderly people. In an emergency (such as the rail crash in Purley, 1989, to give an example from the writer's own corps), many of the corps members will make themselves available to serve the victims and the relief agencies.

The nature of the work of the corps will vary according to the personnel and their numbers, but will usually include work with children, old people (clubs *etc.*), and other types of meeting or religious service on Sunday and during the week.

Music is a key ingredient, and most corps have a brass band (which may, however, be very small – see Figure 12) and a songster brigade (choir) to lead or accompany worship on Sundays and at other times.

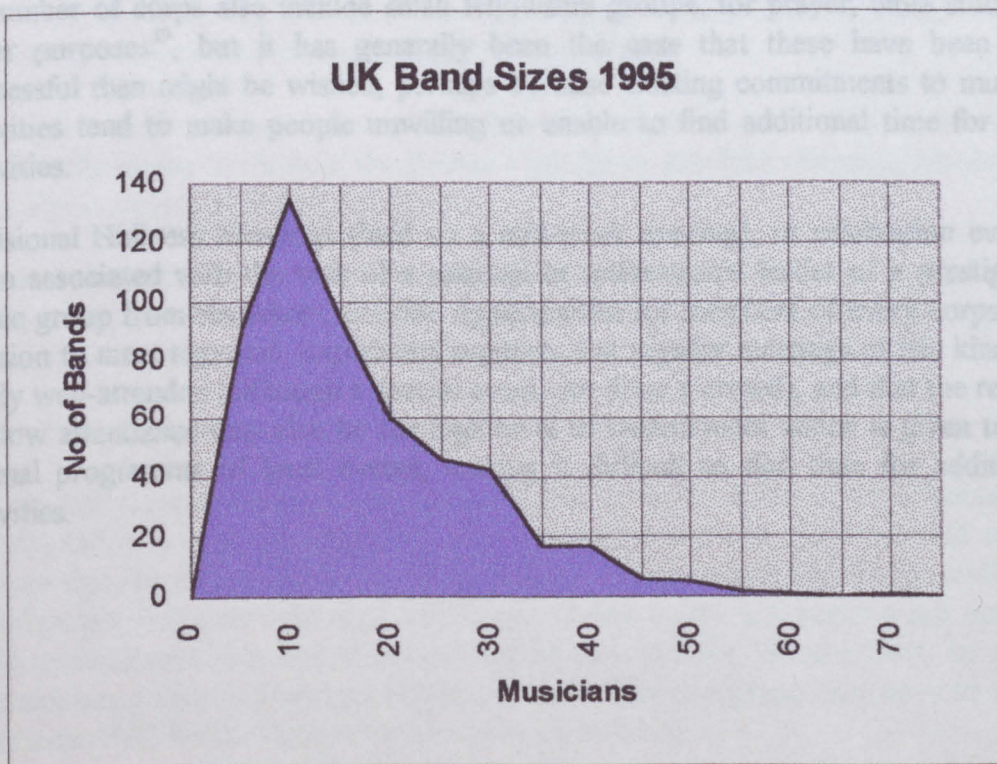


Figure 12: The Distribution of Salvation Army Bands in the UK, by size

In 1995 there were 8,159 'bandsmen' (male and female!) in the UK, grouped in 518 brass bands, although several (242) were in corps with no band, and an unknown number would be registered but inactive (Escott 1996, p.2). Therefore, approximately 18% of all senior soldiers were also 'bandsmen', and 26% were songsters, although several would have been inactive or in corps where no songster brigade was operating (*op. cit.*, p.11). On current trends it is forecast that by 2020 both percentages will decline (to 12% and 16% respectively) within a declining population of senior soldiers, so that by that date there will be at most 2,000 bandsmen and 2,600 songsters (*op. cit.*, p.15).

Some will also have other musicians, including pianists or organists and worship bands or rock groups. There are even one or two corps which include a concertina band or a string band (a Scandinavian import consisting of singers who accompany themselves on acoustic guitars). A distinctive Salvation Army feature is the 'Timbrel Brigade' – a group formed for choreographed tambourine playing, usually to the accompaniment of brass band music. Many corps will duplicate these musical groups by the addition of junior versions composed of children – often the offspring of the senior musicians, while in smaller corps the senior and junior bands are often amalgamated to bring about a satisfactory musical balance. Army musicians are frequently members of more than one musical group (a brass player may also be a songster), and since there is generally a weekly rehearsal for each group this can make a very busy life concentrated upon music.

A number of corps also include small fellowship groups, for prayer, bible study or other purposes¹⁹, but it has generally been the case that these have been less successful than might be wished, perhaps because existing commitments to musical activities tend to make people unwilling or unable to find additional time for new activities.

Divisional Holiness Meetings (held on a mid-week evening), or celebration events, often associated with the visit of a national or international leader or a prestigious music group from elsewhere, provide opportunities for members of every corps in a division to meet together. Experience suggests that *regular* meetings of this kind are rarely well-attended (although a special event *can* draw a crowd), and that the reason for low attendance may also be the high level of commitment which is given to the normal programme of local events, making it difficult to find time for additional activities.

¹⁹ It has been reported in June 1996 that increasing numbers of corps are using the *ALPHA* courses, developed by the Rev. N Gumbell of Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. However, numbers are not yet available to support this claim, nor is there any indication so far of success.

1.6.3 Goodwill Centres

A Goodwill Centre is in many respects similar to a corps – it has its district (similar to a parish) and (some) church-style events, including Sunday religious services. However, it is also a specialist centre for community service; whereas some corps have developed ways of practical service in their community, the Goodwill Centre exists for this purpose. To focus this, the centres are not permitted the full corps structure with musical and other activities and local leadership; instead, they may have one officer, or a team of officers, responsible for everything, but with their aim squarely on the practical. They may, however, employ a team of lay employees and volunteers to assist in the work.

The work of a Goodwill Centre may include the provision of meals to various categories of people, but particularly to the old, the poor, the lonely and the homeless. It will often also include day to day social and pastoral care for the people in the district (practically always a needy inner-city district) and various forms of recreational activity.

1.7 The Style of The Army

Two aspects of the style of the Army distinguish it from other branches of the Church: its uniform, and the music used in its worship.

Although its structure may seem at first sight to be distinctive as a military hierarchy, it is actually similar to those of the Roman Catholic or Anglican churches, involving a quasi-Episcopal hierarchical government.

The taste for military jargon, while unusual in the Church, is similarly not distinctive, as the metaphor has been frequently employed from the New Testament onwards, although perhaps not with such consistency.

1.7.1 The Uniform

The Salvation Army uniform was adopted soon after the name of the organisation (1878), and was originally intended to be an inexpensive suit of clothes that would indicate that the wearer, in the words of Elijah Cadman, ‘meant war to the teeth and salvation for the world’ (Sandall, 1950, pp. 42-43). In the UK today a full uniform outfit costs over £300, and thus tends to be reserved for ‘Sunday best’ by many Salvationists. Musicians who participate in more than one group may have to spend more than £500 for the various styles which are required.

Originally, the adoption of a uniform was a very appropriate reaction to the culture of Victorian England, where militarism was popular and many other people wore uniforms to indicate their work. The uniform adopted for men was much like that of a London policeman of the period, but with a peaked cap rather than a helmet. The women's uniform was similar, but included a long skirt and a 'coal-scuttle' bonnet, originally a rather large affair designed to fend off missiles. The ensemble was made of navy blue serge, trimmed with flashes of colour to indicate rank or position, and the letter 'S' on each side of the neck.

Today, the public attitude to displays of militarism is less positive, and there is a general disinclination to wear uniform unless (as with some banks and shops) it is similar enough to everyday wear to be unremarkable. In this environment, the wearing of Salvation Army uniform has sometimes been found to be a barrier to communication, and some modifications have been found necessary. The normal uniform today (since 1970) consists of a navy blue suit (but with a lapel style jacket instead of the old upright collar tunic) worn with a white shirt or blouse and a blue tie or brooch. The trimmings remain similar to those previously in use. An alternative style of uniform for informal use was authorised in 1990, consisting of a white shirt or blouse, trimmed with appropriate insignia, worn with, as appropriate, dark blue trousers or a skirt.

Not all Salvationists wear uniform, and there is some mild controversy about its continued usefulness. There is no sign, however, that it is likely to become obsolete in the near future, and a 1992 report from the Territorial Advisory Council²⁰ states the opinion that 'uniform-wearing is beneficial to the movement' (*Wearing Uniform is Beneficial*).

1.7.2 Music

Salvation Army music is distinctive in a number of ways. In no other church is a brass band a regular part of the worship, and this means that Army meetings have a sound which is different to other types of service. There has also been something of a 'ghetto mentality' about music, which has meant that the Army has been slow to accept musical developments affecting other parts of the Church in recent years – although this acceptance seems now to be accelerating.

In its earliest days the Army used the popular hymns of the day – soon supplemented by a mixed bag of 'converted' secular tunes to which were set 'sacred' words (sometimes little more than doggerel, but with some gems of spirituality among them). There are therefore Salvation Army songs, some of which remain popular today, to tunes such as *Champagne Charlie* (the origin in 1882 of Booth's much-quoted comment, 'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?' (Barnes 1975)) and *Here's to Good Old Whisky*. However, changes in copyright law (and, perhaps, an increased sense of responsibility) meant that this practice diminished.

²⁰ As its name suggests, the Territorial Advisory Council is a body of Salvationists set up to advise the Territorial Commander. It has no powers or functions other than to consider issues referred to it and to offer advice. This advice may or may not be accepted.

Today, the typical diet of congregational music will consist of some of the better known hymns from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and Fanny Crosby are popular) with additions by Salvationist writers from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, and a few contemporary songs, mostly by Salvationist authors and composers. Non-Salvationist writers from the late 20th Century were rarely included until about 1990, although from observation there may be an accelerating trend to change this practice.

The structure of a Salvation Army band (when personnel are available for all parts) is slightly different to that of the contesting band (such as Grimethorpe or Black Dyke Mills), giving a sound which differs both from the orchestras and groups which some churches now use to accompany singing and also from that of other brass bands²¹.

Salvation Army music has been subject to close control – for many years only music approved by the International Music Board could be used in Army meetings. In practice, this meant that only music published by the Army was used, since approval was rarely given for anything else. The introduction of informal music groups (following the *Joystrings*) in the 1960s meant that this regulation could no longer be followed rigorously, since the board was not able (despite efforts) to successfully monitor music for this idiom, and it is now the general practice that all music is available for use in meetings, provided that the legal issues (copyright etc.) are satisfactorily handled. (It must be admitted, however, that some centres will use any music, regardless of copyright, while others would still rarely use anything that was not published by the Army.)

These two elements – the existence of brass bands and the control of permissible music – gave Army music (and therefore its public worship) a distinctive character, but also denied to the Army the opportunities of sharing in the revolution in worship music which has taken place since the 1970's in many parts of the evangelical churches in the UK. This is now changing through the introduction of some of the worship songs used elsewhere, but some strange effects have resulted. If the newer kinds of songs are arranged for brass band instead of a 'worship band'²² they lose something of their character (a military drum beat doesn't work well with a song or chorus which was written in a gentle 'rock' style). If the brass band is not used some of the musicians may feel redundant and undervalued, which would be demotivating.

²¹ The principal structural difference is in the parts for cornet; Salvation Army arrangements do not include either repiano or third cornet.

²² The term 'worship band' has entered church use in recent years to describe an *ad hoc* group of instruments and singers, generally based on a rhythm section, but with the addition of other parts, particularly keyboards, guitars and brass.

1.8 The Army's Origins and History

1.8.1 The Founders

The Army was founded in 1865 by William Booth, a Nottingham-born minister of the Methodist New Connexion, with a reputation for effective evangelism. Booth had married Catherine Mumford in 1855, and during his term as a minister in the Gateshead circuit (1858-1861) Catherine had taken the unusual step of deputising for him when illness prevented him from leading services. This was the origin of their joint work as Christian leaders, which later led to the Army policy (1.4.2 above) that married officers should normally work together as partners (Sandall 1947 pp. 8-9).

Wesley and his companions had founded the Methodist Church in the eighteenth century intending it as (among other things) a reform movement in the Anglican church rather than a separate denomination. Among their reforms was a new emphasis on the doctrine of 'entire sanctification' (see 1.2.1 and 1.3.2 above), but over time this doctrinal stress diminished. During their term in Gateshead William and Catherine Booth each claimed to have received the experience of sanctification, or 'holiness', and they thereafter taught its availability for all Christians. 'Holiness Teaching' came in this way to be a significant strand in the later development of the Army (Sandall 1947 p.9).

The Booths wanted an appointment for William as a travelling evangelist, rather than a circuit minister, and they and their supporters engaged in some lobbying for such an appointment. The issue came to a head in March 1861 at a Conference, among the functions of which was the responsibility for ministerial appointments, including that of Booth. It was decided that he *would* be appointed to circuit work, but with leave to spend several weeks of the year in evangelistic work away from his appointment. William and Catherine Booth left the conference hall together, having decided on the spot that they would not accept this compromise, although Booth's formal resignation was not accepted²³ until June 1862 (Sandall 1947 p.11).

From then until 1865 they had no regular employment, both working as evangelists, drawing crowds in a number of venues around Britain – often in secular buildings, partly because they were not well-received by many church leaders and members (Sandall 1947 pp. 11-18), but mainly because such venues were the largest available buildings and were neutral in church terms (Booth-Tucker 1893). During this period, Booth formed his view that the best way to reach the 'masses' was through the speech, particularly testimony, of ordinary people in secular settings, rather than through scholarly (or 'churchy') sermons in ecclesiastical surroundings.

²³ Over fifteen years, Booth had been involved with three different branches of Methodism, having been expelled from the Wesleyans in 1851 and resigned from the Reformers in 1854 (Ward, p.55).

In 1865 the Booths moved to London, after a mission which Catherine had conducted in Rotherhithe to the east of the city (Sandall 1947 p.17). She had been moved by the poverty and impressed by some of the agencies which attempted to alleviate it, such as the Midnight Meeting Movement which existed to help rescue prostitutes (Sandall 1947 p.26). They made London the new base of their operations, so that Catherine could concentrate her efforts in helping the poor people, while William continued his revival campaigns (Sandall 1947 p.42). Both of them intended working through existing agencies.

1.8.2 Booth in the East End

Booth was invited to speak at a mission in Whitechapel, run by the East London Special Services Committee. This was a body much influenced by *The Christian Community*, a movement which originated with the Huguenots, and which had been re-organised under Wesley's patronage, although remaining independent (Sandall 1947 pp. 24-25). The committee, impressed, asked Booth to become the leader of their mission. This invitation was welcomed since it involved working for the benefit of some of the poorest people in the country (Sandall 1947 Ch. 5). Catherine accepted his decision, despite there being no obvious means of financial support associated with it, and when funds rapidly appeared from wealthy donors they felt that the decision seemed to be ratified by God (Sandall 1947 pp. 42-44).

As with Wesley, a century earlier, Booth intended to conduct a mission which would provide converts for existing churches (Sandall 1947 pp. 65-66). He found, however, that there were three main problems, later writing:

First, they would not go when sent.

Second, they were not wanted.

And third, we wanted some of them at least ourselves to help us in the business of saving others.

We were thus driven to providing for the converts ourselves.

(Sandall 1947 p.66, quoting Booth c.1885)

The mission (originally intended to be so temporary it needed no home more permanent than a tent) became an organisation, at first called *The East London Christian Revival Society*, then in 1867 *The East London Christian Mission*, and in 1870, when its activity had spread beyond London, *The Christian Mission* (Sandall 1947 p.133).

Booth met opposition – from the public, from other churches and chapels (Sandall 1947 p.108), and even from some of the original Missioners. Some of these later returned to their home churches or missions, as they had always intended to do; others were uncomfortable with Booth's holiness teaching, and some objected to the methods employed – open-air meetings, street processions, a 'Penitent Form' for use by converts making public decisions to become Christians (Sandall 1947 pp. 46-47).

However, some of those converted through the Mission stayed to become involved in its work, and other Christians were attracted by the methods and by the success with which they were accompanied. Many of the meetings at this time were held in tents, theatres, dance halls *etc.*, which not only were the only venues available but also avoided the cultural obstacle which church buildings presented.

Meanwhile, Catherine Booth was conducting independent itinerant work in other parts of the country, with an approach which proved very acceptable to more educated (and affluent) people, whom she was often able to persuade to finance – and even volunteer for – Mission work (Sandall 1947 pp. 97-98).

1.8.3 Rapid Expansion of the Mission

Branches of the Mission were thus opened in other parts of London, predominantly to the east, and a Headquarters was established in 1868 with the purchase of a public house, *The Eastern Star*. The Headquarters was transferred to the Whitechapel Road in 1870, and to Queen Victoria Street in the City in 1881 (Sandall 1950 p.207), remaining there (with a partial interruption as a result of war damage in 1941) until the present.

From the beginning Booth regarded the training and deployment of his converts as a vital part of his work. They were expected immediately to witness to others (Sandall 1947 p.104), while also seeking their own sanctification. ‘Holiness Meetings’ were established (Sandall 1947 p.86), and the Mission’s holiness teaching became influential within and beyond its own ranks. William Bramwell Booth, the eldest son of William and Catherine, became widely known in the 1880s for his ministry as a teacher of holiness (Sandall 1947 p.167). George Scott Railton, who became the Secretary of the Mission in 1873, later wrote, ‘These holiness meetings, and that teaching of holiness, were the root and secret of all the success of the Army’ (Railton 1912).

Developments continued with branches of the Mission opening in Norwood and then in Edinburgh in 1868 and 1869. Although those first two extensions of work did not survive long, the mission was invited to Croydon (still at that time outside London) in 1869, and the work which started then remains one of the largest centres of The Salvation Army in Britain (known as Croydon Citadel, Corps No. 9)²⁴. Other extensions followed, often as a result of Catherine Booth’s visits to towns around Britain. Converts of the Mission also travelled to other towns, witnessing as they went. They formed Mission stations, and Evangelists were sent by Headquarters to take charge of these stations.

²⁴ The early Christian Mission building in Croydon also survives, although no longer under Salvation Army ownership and now in dilapidated condition.

By 1875 the Mission stations had become too numerous for direct management by William Booth, and routine administration was delegated to the Secretary, George Scott Railton, and later to William Bramwell Booth (usually known, for clarity, as Bramwell Booth), the eldest son of the founder. The Booths and their associates believed in the application of business principles to religion, regularising forms and methods according to their effectiveness. Their original aim had been to transplant the administrative machinery of Methodism to the Mission, including the general oversight by a representative committee. However, the Missioners found this method of government cumbersome, and at an extraordinary meeting of the committee, enlarged for the occasion by the inclusion of all Mission evangelists, in January 1877, the decision was taken (ratified by the Annual Conference in the following July) to abolish Conference rule (Sandall 1947 pp. 198-199). This action placed William Booth in sole command of the Christian Mission, although Conference was continued in later years as a 'Council of War'.

1.8.4 The Mission becomes an Army

Britain was probably at its most militaristic at this period, with an empire to gather and defend, and numerous overseas adventures (such as the Crimean War) taking place. The members of the Mission (and of other churches) became fond of militaristic language – Sankey's²⁵ song *Hold the fort!* was much in vogue – in keeping with the culture of the time. A particularly inventive evangelist (Elijah Cadman, a former chimney sweep who later became a commissioner) took to referring to himself as 'Captain Cadman' and to Booth as the 'General of the Hallelujah Army' (Sandall 1947 pp. 226-227). During May 1878, almost inadvertently, the name of the Mission changed. A report was published which (in proof) contained the sentence, 'The Christian Mission is a volunteer army of converted working people'. Booth amended the proof by substituting the word 'salvation' for 'volunteer', and the phrase caught the imagination of the movement (Sandall 1947 pp. 129-130).

The Mission held a 'War Congress' in 1878, when a Deed of Constitution was established (on August 7) declaring the doctrines of the Mission and placing the General Superintendent, William Booth, in sole charge of the property and programme of work, and also giving him the power to nominate his successor²⁶ (Sandall 1947 pp. 233-238).

²⁵ Dwight L Moody, an American evangelist, toured Britain with his soloist Ira D Sankey, during 1873-1875, culminating in a series of evangelistic meetings in London in the spring and summer of 1875 (Worrall 1988, pp. 230-234).

²⁶ This was later modified by Deed Poll (July 26 1904) to provide for the removal of an unfit leader and the appointment by election, rather than nomination, of a successor. The Salvation Army Act 1931 transferred ownership of property to The Salvation Army Trustee Company, and provided for the perpetual succession of leadership through election by the High Council (a body of national and international leaders of the organisation). This constitutional position has since been confirmed, with modifications, by The Salvation Army Act 1965 and The Salvation Army Act 1980, the latter establishing the legal position of the General as a Corporation Sole (similar to the bishops of the Church of England) and delegating to the Army the power to make future changes in its constitution without further reference to Parliament, subject to the usual legal safeguards, such as judicial review where interests may be affected by the decisions made.

By the end of 1878, the term 'The Salvation Army' – originally a description – had become the most usual name for the Mission, and this was subsequently ratified on June 24 1880, by a memorandum on the Deed of August 7 1878, formally changing the name of the organisation.

During that year, as the name changed, so did terminology and practice: stations became corps, a flag was adopted, and military titles assumed (sometimes apparently at random). Military uniforms began to appear over the next two years. At the opening of the War Congress in 1878, Cadman (typically) said, 'I would like to wear a suit of clothes that would let everyone know that I meant war to the teeth and salvation for the world!' (Sandall 1950 pp. 42-43). The intention of those designing the uniform was to make the wearer recognisable as a 'Salvationist', while rendering unnecessary any tendency to follow transient fashions. It was to be cheap enough for anyone to afford, and adaptable to changing conditions. Thus, the uniform worn by Salvationists in many countries is different from that in Britain because of differences of climate, culture and wealth, while that in Britain has evolved over time in an attempt to avoid the appearance of cultural inappropriateness (though it may be fair to question whether a dress uniform of *any* military style remains culturally appropriate in much of Britain today). Initially, however, many adopted whatever came to hand, including police-style helmets, shakos, and plumed hats (Sandall 1950 pp. 42-44). Uniforms began to be regularised in 1880, including the first appearance of the distinctive bonnet (even then, complained about by some of the wearers as being old-fashioned (Sandall 1950 p.47)), and by 1883 headquarters was 'offering uniforms for men and women at most reasonable rates' (Sandall 1950 p.45), although considerable variation continued for some years, particularly for brass bands.

1.8.5 A Growing Army

In those years the Army grew rapidly, as shown in Figure 13, having by July 1879 a hundred places of 'divine service', generally converted from places of secular amusement. (It should be noted that many of these were hired for religious services, reverting to their conventional use for the rest of the week.)

However, the growth should not be overstated. Although vast crowds filled the halls, theatres and other venues, comparatively few became active Salvationists (Ward, 1970, pp. 94-95). Many of those attending were spectators rather than 'joiners', and these would move elsewhere after a while, either looking for a different spectacle or rejecting the demands which were involved in membership.

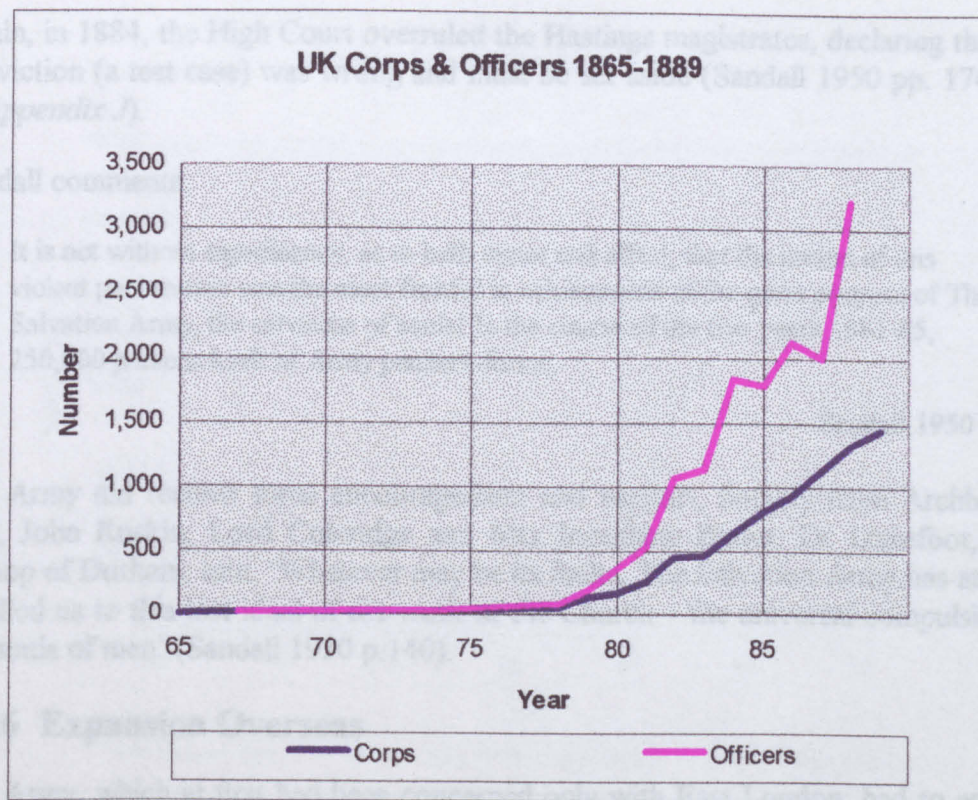


Figure 13: Early Growth: 1865-1890

There was considerable opposition from ‘Skeleton Armies’²⁷ composed of the ‘roughs’ in particular areas, often financed and organised by breweries or their agents. More serious than such mobs was the opposition of people in authority, including the police and several town councils and magistrates’ courts, and apparently also the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, who in advice in 1881 to magistrates seemed to suggest that the Salvationists were blameworthy for provoking attacks. Since a Salvation Army procession ‘might provoke antagonism’, he said that magistrates could interfere forcibly to prevent it. This interpretation of the law was so obviously unsound that it provoked a storm of protest from numerous sources including *The Times* and the *Solicitors’ Journal*. One London newspaper is reported as saying that it was ‘perhaps the greatest stroke of fortune which had come to The Salvation Army’ (Sandall 1950, p.176).

According to *The Salvation Army: its origin and development*, the year 1881 saw 669 recorded assaults on Salvationists, as well as various attacks on property used by the Army. The law seemed at first to follow the Home Secretary’s view that the attacks were the fault of the Salvationists, 86 of whom were imprisoned. However, the High Court (Queens Bench Division) in 1882 ruled that this was unlawful, and that Salvationists should be free to pursue their ‘lawful and laudable aims’. Nevertheless, suppressions by force and by the use of legal machinery continued in a number of towns (including Hastings, Basingstoke, Sheffield, Worthing, Coventry, Weston super Mare and Truro).

²⁷ The term Skeleton Army seems to have arisen as a result of the adoption of a ‘death’s-head’ badge or crest by some of the mobs, as well as because of its supposed similarity to the name of The Salvation Army

Again, in 1884, the High Court overruled the Hastings magistrates, declaring that the conviction (a test case) was wrong and must be set aside (Sandall 1950 pp. 174-197 & *Appendix J*).

Sandall comments:

It is not without significance, as to both cause and effect, that the period of this violent persecution was the most fruitful in achievement of the great purpose of The Salvation Army, the salvation of souls! In the course of the five years 1881-85, 250,000 persons knelt at Army penitent-forms.

Sandall 1950 p.183

The Army did receive some encouragement and support, notably from Archbishop Tait, John Ruskin, Lord Coleridge and Mrs Josephine Butler. Dr Lightfoot, then Bishop of Durham, said, 'Whatever may be its faults, The Salvation Army has at least recalled us to this lost ideal of the work of the Church – the universal compulsion of the souls of men' (Sandall 1950 p.140).

1.8.6 Expansion Overseas

The Army, which at first had been concerned only with East London, had to enlarge its vision very quickly.

Membership figures have never been published for this period, and many records were destroyed in 1941, making the production of a full picture of development impossible. However, Year Books and other publications were published by the Mission and later by the Army, giving numbers of centres and officers, both in the UK and overseas, and these figures, illustrated in Figure 14, are taken as an indicator of the development path. (This may be misleading, since, as shown by Gill, it was quite possible for the number of centres to increase while attendance at each – and eventually in total – was decreasing. This would bring about an increased number of poorly attended centres, as proved often to be the case (Gill 1993, p. 173). However, in the absence of central figures it is the best estimator that can be found.)

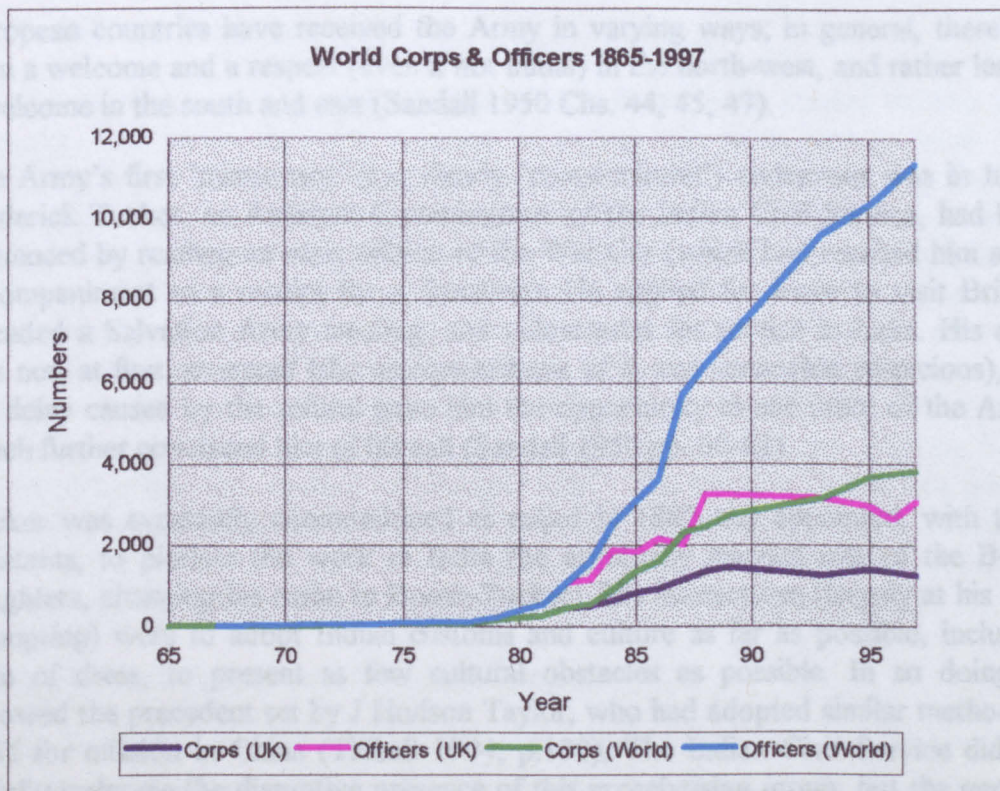


Figure 14: Early Growth in the UK and overseas: 1865 - 1897²⁸

A Salvationist family from Coventry emigrated to the USA in 1879 and set up a branch in Philadelphia, working in an abandoned chair factory. A year later, Booth sent Railton (the first Commissioner) and a party of seven 'hallelujah lasses' to help the pioneers and expand their work. In 1886, Booth himself visited the USA and found there 238 corps, under the leadership of 569 officers, mostly American (Sandall 1950 Ch. 41).

Similarly in Canada, a convert from England had begun the work of the Army by himself in London, Ontario, where the official opening came a little later, in 1882, with the appointment of officers sent from New York (Sandall 1950 Ch. 43).

In Australia, immigrant converts from different parts of England met in Adelaide in 1880 and together established a corps, after which they appealed to Booth for officers to take charge. He responded by sending Captain and Mrs Sutherland (Sandall 1950 Ch. 42).

In Europe, France was the first non-English speaking country to be 'invaded' on 4 February 1881. Booth responded to invitations by sending his eldest daughter, Catherine²⁹, with two other women (Sandall 1950, p.261). Although never strong, the Army in France is known and respected among the small Protestant population, and the social service which it provides, particularly in Paris, is valued.

²⁸ Many figures are not available, and the gaps have been filled by interpolations based on the contemporary trends; this will not reveal any unusual results in individual years.

²⁹ The grandmother of Stanley Booth-Clibborn, who died in 1996 after retiring in 1992 as the Anglican Bishop of Manchester.

European countries have received the Army in varying ways; in general, there has been a welcome and a respect (even if not initial) in the north-west, and rather less of a welcome in the south and east (Sandall 1950 Chs. 44, 45, 47).

The Army's first 'missionary' (*i.e.* clearly 'cross-cultural') endeavour was in India. Frederick Tucker, an Assistant Commissioner of the Indian Civil Service, had been influenced by reading an early edition of the War Cry (which had reached him as an accompaniment to a receipt for a donation). He applied for leave to visit Britain, attended a Salvation Army meeting, and volunteered for service in India. His offer was not, at first, accepted (the unexpectedness of it was somewhat suspicious), but the delay caused by the refusal gave him the opportunity to see more of the Army, which further convinced him of his call (Sandall 1950 pp. 60-61).

Tucker was eventually commissioned as major in 1882 and appointed, with three assistants, to pioneer the work in India (he eventually married one of the Booth daughters, changing his name to Booth-Tucker). His instructions (largely at his own prompting) were to adopt Indian customs and culture as far as possible, including style of dress, to present as few cultural obstacles as possible. In so doing he followed the precedent set by J Hudson Taylor, who had adopted similar methods in 1865 for mission in China (Tidball 1994, p.130). The Indian Civil Service did not initially welcome the disruptive presence of this proselytising group, but the genuine caring nature of the Army's service eventually made them welcomed by the people and the authorities alike (Sandall 1950 Ch. 46)³⁰.

The Salvation Army began work in Africa when Major and Mrs Simmonds³¹, with one assistant, were sent to 'open fire' in Cape Town in 1883 (Sandall 1950 Ch. 48). By 1891 the Army had reached the whole of the present Republic of South Africa, and has subsequently spread through most of the (non-Islamic) continent³². In some parts of Africa the Army is now growing very rapidly.

³⁰ Today, this is less so; the modern state of India is very protective of its own culture, and evangelistic enterprise by Christians is not appreciated. The Imperial state of India was inherited by the Republic of India (mostly Hindu, with a large Sikh population in the Punjab and other minorities elsewhere) and also by Pakistan and Bangladesh (both of which are almost entirely Muslim). Whereas evangelistic efforts are not welcomed in India, they are definitely discouraged in the Islamic states (in few of which, anywhere in the world, the Army has been able to operate successfully). The Salvation Army continues its work in Pakistan and Bangladesh, but it is basically as a welfare organisation; very few converts are recorded, and those which do occur seem to be almost entirely from the lowest castes and classes (carried over to the Muslim state from its Indian origins), some of whom see conversion to Christianity (which is outside the caste system) as being a step up from being on the lowest social level (source: interview with Derek and Jan Pike, recently serving as medical and administrative workers for the Army in Pakistan).

³¹ Unusually, it was Mrs Simmonds (*nee* Rose Clapham) who was in charge of the new venture. Her gifts as an evangelist enabled her to spearhead new openings, while her husband operated in a less prominent role (source: Gordon Downey, based on personal research in London and South Africa).

³² Today most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, have some kind of Salvation Army work, although in some instances (such as Ethiopia and Ruanda) this mainly takes the form of relief operations for refugees, rather than any overtly evangelistic activities.

1.8.7 Officer Training

It was realised very quickly that potential officers in the Army needed training to fit them for their work. In 1879, a group of young men were sent to work with Ballington Booth (a son of William) in a form of apprenticeship training. By May 1880, a training home for thirty women had opened in Hackney, and a similar establishment for men followed soon afterwards. During this expansion phase it became apparent that such training facilities were inadequate, and a large property (a former orphanage) in Clapton, North London was acquired in 1882 and converted into a suite comprising a 'training garrison', a large auditorium (seating more than 3,000) for public meetings and numerous additional buildings (Sandall 1950 pp. 69-70). This remained the centre for training until 1929, when the William Booth Memorial College was opened in Denmark Hill³³. The training period was initially only a few weeks, extended to 6 months in 1896, 9 months in 1904, and 21 months from 1965³⁴, since which time it has included a four month period in a training appointment, sandwiched between two residential periods (Sandall 1950 Ch. 12).

1.8.8 Consolidation and Standardisation

William Booth felt the need to consolidate the doctrine and work of the Army, and a document called the *Articles of War* was produced, containing at that time 6 articles:

- i) a profession of personal experience of salvation;
- ii) a pledge of separation from the world and of loyalty to Jesus Christ;
- iii) a pledge of allegiance to the Army and obedience to its officers;
- iv) an expression of faith in the possibility of holy living;
- v) a pledge of total abstinence from alcohol and other harmful drugs;
- vi) a promise to devote all leisure time, spare energy and money to promote the 'salvation war'.

³³ The College is still the centre for training officer cadets from the United Kingdom, and cadets from other countries are also accepted, although most territories now provide their own training in a form which is more appropriate to their own culture.

³⁴ The training period now includes in total a one year preliminary correspondence course, 21 months as a cadet, and 5 years in service, during which time the officer must complete further correspondence studies according to each individual's own aptitude and interests; only at the end of this period and on satisfactory completion of the prescribed studies is promotion to captain granted (Orders and Regulations ... 1987, Vol. 2, pp. 99-102).

This move towards consolidation was reinforced by the publication of various volumes of *Orders and Regulations*, of one of which Bramwell Booth later said:

I think ... my father gave more attention to the *Orders and Regulations for Field Officers* than to anything else he wrote. His anxiety was to compile in that book a set of regulations which would perpetuate The Salvation Army, and preserve it from the mistakes and confusions which have befallen so many other societies in the religious sphere. In that book you have the Founder's spirit and the spirit which animates The Salvation Army.

Begbie 1919 Vol. II p.158

Similar volumes over the next few years included *The Doctrines and Discipline of The Salvation Army* (1881), a training manual for officer-cadets, *Orders and Regulations for Soldiers* (1890), and *Orders and Regulations for Social Officers* (1898). Regulations for practically every aspect of Salvation Army life and work came into being, and have been maintained and modified until the present.

Recognising that issuing instructions would serve no purpose unless there was some way of monitoring performance, William Booth instituted a system of reporting, through the chain of command, so that headquarters (and, so far as possible, the General personally) could know how well the Army was performing against the instructions and expectations³⁵.

1.8.9 Church Relations

The Army was not easily ignored at that time, whether by those it opposed or by those on the same side. Some church leaders disliked it – often for its undignified approach – but others welcomed it and expressed admiration (even if sometimes grudgingly).

The Methodists were the first to give formal recognition to the Army, inviting Booth to address the Wesleyan Conference (London) in 1880, and attributing a growth in membership to the activities of The Salvation Army (*Church Times*, 18 November, 1881).

³⁵ This system of reporting continues to the present, mostly through statistical returns. These returns take several forms: a local corps provides monthly information on the number of attendances (by category), souls saved and re-consecrations, hours spent by the corps officer in pastoral visitation and community service, and personal money gifts (known as cartridges) by the corps members; annual returns are submitted giving membership numbers (by category), the number of local officers (by category), and the numbers of members of particular parts of the corps structure. Similar returns are also provided for young people's work. Social and other institutions provide monthly returns on the number of individual items of help provided (e.g. bed/nights), as well as attendances, souls saved *etc.*, for the religious services which are held. Each centre (of any type) is regularly visited and inspected by a senior officer, who seeks out additional information and confirms that which has been already submitted. This chain is continued throughout the organisation, except that the report for a territory is compiled by the Chief Secretary (the second in command) rather than the Territorial Commander.

The Roman Catholics, naturally at that time, viewed the Salvationists as heretics with an odd phraseology which, however, 'appears to be the dialect which goes home most directly to those to whom it is addressed' (*The Tablet*, October 1881).

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (Dr Rankine) spoke of the Army in 1883 as 'a great fact in the religious world', and Professor J Stuart Blackie published at the same time an approving account of his visit to an Army meeting in Edinburgh (Sandall 1950 pp. 144-145).

In 1882 the Church of England established a Committee of the Upper House of Convocation to consider the possibility of an alliance with the Army. This was not, however, acceptable to the Army and the attempt was abandoned. The Anglican Church later established in 1885 a similar kind of work, named the Church Army. This movement was founded by Wilson Carile and F S Webster, both of whom had (briefly) been Salvationists previously (Sandall 1950 pp. 146-158).

King Edward VII in 1904 said to William Booth, 'What do the clergy think of you now?' Booth replied, 'They imitate me!' (Sandall 1950 p.158).

1.8.10 Social Service

The Army began its work in the poorest parts of London, where the misery of poverty was often anaesthetised by alcohol and exacerbated by the ensuing drunkenness and alcoholism, with all the ensuing vices. A Mrs Collingridge organised a 'drunkard's rescue brigade' in 1870 in the Shoreditch branch of The Christian Mission. Catherine Booth adopted the idea in 1874 as part of the central programme of the Mission, followed in many other parts of the world. However, the first organised social work was a programme of rehabilitation of prisoners, started in 1883 in Australia, and adopted in 1884 in London and subsequently elsewhere (Green 1986). After early abortive efforts, a scheme to help 'fallen women' was begun in 1884, under the care of Mrs Bramwell Booth. Maternity care, particularly for unmarried women, was begun in London and developed elsewhere. Although no longer necessary in Britain, due to a changed moral climate and social attitudes, such hospitals and homes are still in use elsewhere.

1.8.11 Campaigns

The Army has been involved in several direct action campaigns against social evils. The *Eliza Armstrong* case of 1885 was one such, resulting from a scheme by Bramwell Booth, with W T Stead (the editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*) and others, to demonstrate and condemn the ease with which a girl of 13 could be procured for sexual purposes. After following all the steps which were used for the entrapment of girls, Stead published the story, and he and the Army (with others) campaigned for changes. Eliza Armstrong had remained unharmed throughout, but the demonstration had broken the law, and Stead was imprisoned on conviction, although Bramwell Booth was acquitted. The outcome of the case was the raising of the age of consent in England and Wales to 16. Ironically, it was the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* of August 1885 (which had, as a result of this agitation, been rushed through parliament) under which Stead, Bramwell Booth and the others were charged.

Similarly, it was agitation by the Army, with others, which directly led to the liberation of the girls in the licensed brothels of Japan. In 1900, five years after the establishment of the Army in that country, Commissioner Henry Bullard opened a rescue home and publicised the existing (but at the time inoperative) law which permitted prostitutes to leave their employment. For three centuries previously it had been virtually impossible to leave – the women were practically slaves. Bullard summoned his forces, about 50 officers, and marched into Yoshiwara, the red light district of Tokyo, to ‘proclaim liberty to the captives’ (Luke 4:18). Despite opposition, some of it violent, the Salvationists provided the girls with information about their rights. The ensuing publicity induced the government to amend the regulations again, making it much easier for prostitutes to leave their work, regardless of the terms of any contracts which might exist. Over the next year, 12,000 women obtained their release (Sandall 1955).

In 1933 France was using French Guiana (Devil’s Island) as a penal colony, from which return was almost impossible since the sentences normally included imprisonment on the island followed by a period as a ‘liberated’ man, still on the island, for either the remainder of his life or a term similar to that served in prison (if less than 7 years (Péan 1953). With the consent of the authorities, the Army sent officers to work with the liberés and convicts, while campaigning in France for the abolition of the system. This campaign was eventually successful, the last convict returning to France in 1952 (although several liberés chose to stay on, feeling unfit to face the voyage through infirmity, and were cared for by the Army).

There has, however, been little involvement in similar campaigns since the 1950’s, and Read argues that:

... to the extent that we have shifted our focus from social reform to the provision of social services, we have lost the evangelical Wesleyan vision which motivates Christians to strive for the establishment of God’s kingdom.

Read 1986

1.8.12 In Darkest England

Writing about the Army’s social work and theology, Green says:

The Booths were not unsympathetic to the physical plight of people, but that aspect of ministry was relatively unimportant to them initially ... [However] ... There was a dramatic change in the later theology of Booth. After 1889 his theology evolved to include an understanding of salvation as not only personal but social as well, and that theology provided legitimacy, organisation and direction for the social ministries which had eventually found their way into the work of The Salvation Army.

Green 1986

In 1890 Booth, with W T Stead (the editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*) as his amanuensis, produced a book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, in which he analysed the social problems he saw and outlined his plans for alleviating them (Booth 1890), many of which have since been adopted in Britain by either The Salvation Army or the Welfare State machinery (or both) – and also by other agencies. However, Booth's impetus towards social work was not simply one of social concern. He was to a large extent motivated by his evangelistic mission.

Ward writes:

[Booth had observed] ... the fact which religious sociology has since corroborated, that as the social level declined, positive commitment to a religious way of life became more difficult. In his eyes, the social level, and therefore the sin, was determined by poverty.

Ward, p.191

Booth therefore planned a system by which the poor could have their circumstances improved, and they could be trained to an industrious way of life, because he felt that this would increase the possibility of religious commitment.

Christine Ward says:

... the Salvationists failed to perceive the true synthesis existing between the preaching and the relief of suffering. In spite of their imaginative thinking and bold action, they remained confirmed in their belief that the only valid result for their efforts must be the salvation of the soul from sin.

Ward, p.184-5

In this respect, the early Salvationists may have been close to the views of Donald McGavran, the seminal thinker behind Church Growth (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.4 below).

William Booth, in the preface to *In Darkest England*, said:

My only hope for the permanent deliverance of mankind from misery, either in this world or the next, is the regeneration or remaking of the individual by the power of the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ. But in providing for the relief of temporal misery I reckon that I am only making it easy where it now is difficult, and possible where it is now all but impossible, for men and women to find their way to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Booth, 1890, *preface* p. iv

Booth's book consolidated a number of measures which were already taking place locally and informally. He took a wider view, and proposed the erection of social machinery to provide help for the needy and, in suitable cases, rehabilitation to lift the destitute to economic self-sufficiency – preferably overseas in the colonies and dominions, where (he believed) there was plenty of land to spare. Although the plan was never completely effective (largely because of lack of resources), it provided a public platform and a theological expression for the work of social salvation on which the Army had engaged.

The publication of this book coincided with the death of Catherine Booth, who had often been the partner with the more spiritual vision (for instance, she had been more prepared to abandon sacramental (symbolic) observance in favour of what she perceived as spiritual reality – see 1.3.1 above). Railton, her ally in such issues – Booth's first Chief of Staff – had lost his influential position to Bramwell Booth, and had been sent at his own request to Germany, where he was out of touch with headquarters developments. Watson says of Catherine's death that, 'In a sense this was the end for ... [William] ... too' (Watson 1970 p.107). The introduction of new avenues of work, including social and, later, commercial ventures, was seen as a necessity – but, according to Watson, it may have also been a distraction from Booth's real love, evangelism. Perhaps, if Catherine had lived a little longer, the Army's approach to social work would have been different.

It is clear that for Booth, the motivation for social service was as a means to evangelism. In a letter to Bramwell Booth in 1903, Booth hints at his disillusionment with the Darkest England scheme, insisting that while it was worthwhile as an improvement to the world (and should therefore be paid for by the world) it could become a distraction from the Army's spiritual work. Booth advised his son that no resources should be applied to the Darkest England scheme which could be applied to the spiritual (evangelistic) work of the Army (Begbie 1919, Vol. 2, pp. 181-182).

1.8.13 The Succession

William Booth died in 1912, and was succeeded by his nominee, his eldest son Bramwell, who had a reputation as a spiritual leader and administrator. It has been suggested that if William Booth was the architect of the Army, Bramwell was the clerk of works, ensuring that instructions were carried out and decisions effected (Wiggins 1968 p.274).

1.8.14 World War I

The outbreak of war came at a time when the Army appeared strong. Bramwell Booth was planning to send 1,000 missionaries from Britain to the Far East, and the intake for training was the largest ever. There were more than 16,000 officers working in about 60 countries, and the 1914 International Congress, held in London during June, had brought about a consolidation of the sense of tribal identity.

The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo occurred two days after the Army's Congress ended, and changed the future for the Army as well as the rest of the world. The Army prided itself on its internationalism, a great strength in peace time, but a source of strain and pain in war time, as Salvationists found themselves on opposite sides in the conflict (Coutts 1973 pp. 20-28). A new role emerged as a provider of help for people in need, both civilians and military personnel. This, incidentally, conferred on the Army a new image, as its ambulances and other services appeared in unexpected places, often close to the front line, to offer help to people in great need.

The Army continued to make advances during the war, with developments particularly in Burma and China. These were consolidated after 1918, although there have been major reverses since then (Cou tts 1973 pp. 31-37)³⁶. The Army had begun its work in Russia in 1913, but was threatened following the 1917 revolution and closed down by the government in 1922 (Cou tts 1973 pp. 42-46)³⁷.

Although the war was a disaster, it had given the Army many opportunities, which now bore their harvest. The soldiers who had received tea or doughnuts on the western front returned home to speak well of the 'Sallies', raising the profile of the Army and the expectations of the public. Salvationists who had been on active military service returned to their corps with strengthened experience; many became officers, and growth continued.

1.8.15 Constitutional Crisis

The Army's authoritarian constitution, particularly the nomination by a General of his or her own successor, had worried people in the past, and was the reason for the supplementary Deed Poll of 1904 (see 1.8.4 above). By the late 1920s it was causing concern within the ranks, and in 1927 the General (Bramwell Booth) was engaged in discussions with his younger sister Evangeline (the Commander in the USA) who was demanding changes. She argued that a General should be elected by the High Council, which already (as a result of the 1904 Deed Poll) had the power to remove an unfit General. Bramwell did not agree, and in 1929, the High Council was called for the first time by the Chief of Staff. The purposes for which this was done were essentially threefold:

- i) The removal of Bramwell from an office which he felt unable to resign despite continued ill-health;
- ii) A change in the constitution, so that no future General could nominate his or her own successor;
- iii) The prevention of any extension of the hereditary character of the office, which it was feared might pass from Bramwell to one of his children³⁸ if he were allowed to die in office (which seemed very probable without this step).

³⁶ Serious difficulties in China began with the Manchurian incident in 1931, continuing until 1952, when the People's Central Government (which came to power in 1949) banned the Army completely. Some Salvationists survived this period as individuals, but there has been no official involvement since that time.

³⁷ The advent of perestroika and the subsequent abandonment of Communism have now permitted the Army to return to Russia, where the new wave of pioneers has found a few survivors still alive and thrilled to see the new start.

³⁸ Commissioner Catherine Booth, the eldest daughter of Bramwell, attended the High Council in 1929 in her role as Leader of the Women's Social Work in the UK, dissenting from the Council's vote. She survived until 1987, aged 104, and had been nominated (unsuccessfully) for election by the High Councils of 1939 and 1946. If, as has been speculated, her name was in the General's sealed envelope, it would have been possible for her, as the third General, to have been in command for more than half a century.

The High Council decided (by 52 votes to 5) on February 13th 1929 that the General was 'unfit on the ground of ill-health' to continue in office. This having been done, the Council was then empowered to elect the successor, Edward Higgins (Coutts 1973 pp. 71-91). General Higgins immediately called a 'Commissioners' Conference' (a different body constitutionally to the High Council, although consisting of many of the same people) as a result of which the changes proposed at the High Council were effected through The Salvation Army Act 1931³⁹, by which Parliament empowered the High Council to elect a new General on the vacancy of the office and placed the assets of the Army into the custody of a Trustee Company rather than the person of the General.

An isolated statistical comparison⁴⁰ (Table 1) shows that virtually all measurable factors declined sharply in 1930, which may have been a response to these changes. Although attendance at the two main worship meetings was already declining, there is a striking loss of nearly 12,000 people from the evening meeting (focused on evangelism). The other factors were all still increasing until 1929, but took a significant dip following the events of 1929.

The British Territory 1926-1930 (excluding Ireland)					
	June 1926	June 1927	June 1928	June 1929	June 1930
Corps & Societies	1,383	1,405	1,415	1,437	1,420
Soldiers & Recruits	157,201	162,008	168,315	168,147	166,310
Morning Attendance	59,694	59,337	58,403	56,329	55,464
Evening Attendance	153,637	155,387	149,464	146,605	134,996
Total Income	£7183	£7644	£7882	£7751	£7455

Table 1: Key Indicators of Change in 1929

Bramwell Booth died in June 1929, which seems to indicate that the High Council had been correct in its judgement, and that it had been very timely in its action (Coutts 1973 pp. 93-101).

Evangeline Booth, the sister of Bramwell and one of the early proposers of the constitutional changes, was later elected as the fourth General in 1934, at the age of 69 (Coutts 1973 pp. 126-127).

³⁹ A private member's Act of Parliament.

⁴⁰ I am indebted to Major David Pickard, who recently discovered this data in the Army's storage files.

1.8.16 The Depression

The Wall Street crash of 1929 brought a period of severe world-wide recession, which seriously affected the Army as well as other organisations and individuals. Some parts of the Army's work were closed down or rationalised because of funding problems, but other work grew – particularly the relief of the destitute, a growing need throughout the world again. The Army continued to grow internationally (although specific figures for the UK are not available for this period), with the addition of more than 1,200 new corps and outposts during the leadership of General Higgins, which was almost contemporary with the Depression years (Coutts 1973 pp. 130-132).

The later 1930s were a period of instability for the world – in which the talented Evangeline Booth led the Army founded by her father into new expansions abroad (Coutts 1973 pp. 133-150), but which saw some retrenchment in the UK.

1.8.17 World War II

As far as the Salvation Army was concerned, the second World War began contemporaneously with the election of the fifth General, George Lyndon Carpenter, an Australian who was elected on August 24th and took office on November 1st 1939.

This war again caused disruption in the life of the Army; sections were separated from the centre and from one another by hostilities. In the UK, specifically, the Army was injured directly and indirectly as many of the more able young laymen volunteered or were conscripted for active service⁴¹, evacuation played havoc with children's work, a seven day working week and shift work disrupted church attendance, and the blackout reduced evening activities. Bombing prevented much routine work – and destroyed International Headquarters (which was also the headquarters for the Field work in the UK)⁴², and damaged or destroyed more than 530 other Salvation Army buildings (Coutts 1973 pp. 253-259).

There were, however, needs to meet and opportunities for service. Welfare centres were provided in military camps, buffets for troops were established and canteens were commissioned for front-line personnel, including the ill-fated British Expeditionary Force in 1939 (Coutts 1973 pp. 163-172).

Casualties occurred, as did financial losses when equipment supplied for military support was damaged or abandoned in the early stages of the war (Coutts 1973 p.241).

⁴¹ There were also some conscientious objectors, as revealed in an announcement of 25 November 1939: 'A number of Salvationists have sought and have been granted exemption from military service on conscientious grounds' (Coutts 1973 p.168).

⁴² It was the destruction of IHQ in 1941 which led to the unavailability of records for much of the pre-war periods.

Work in other parts of the world, especially Europe and the Far East, suffered even more greatly, since the Army was an organisation with a London headquarters, while much of the world was occupied by regimes which were at war with Britain (Coutts 1973 pp. 169-238). Since this study is concerned with the UK, this will not be explored further, except to point out that it forms part of the environment of the story of the Army in the UK.

Albert Orsborn, who was at the time the British Commissioner (a now defunct office which until 1990 had responsibility for the Field Service in the UK) and who was elected in 1946 as the sixth General, wrote:

... We fought a long rearguard action against the devil. There was no question of revival or advance. We were concerned to try to hold our force together ... Our musical sections had been decimated. Even our women soldiers, who are so faithful in all forms of voluntary service, were taken up with war-time activities in national undertakings. Interest among the public in spiritual things was at its lowest for many years ... One of our main misfortunes was the almost complete suspension of our week-night and Sunday night open-air meetings. The Army would slowly die were our open-air to cease ...

Orsborn 1958 p.148

1.8.18 The Aftermath of War

The open-air did not cease, and the Army has not died, but its fortunes had changed, in the UK particularly. The numbers of corps and of officers in the UK had apparently reached their peak in the 1930s (no accurate figures are available for the late 1930s and early 1940s) and there now began a long period when maintenance rather than expansion was the aim – and even that was unsuccessful, as the membership halved over a period of approximately 30 years (see Figure 16 below), while the numbers of officers reduced by even more, as shown in Figure 15⁴³.

⁴³ Much of the early data is missing, having been unpublished and lost in 1941. The gaps have been filled by estimates based on the trends of adjacent years. The only period when this is thought likely to be misleading is the 1930's, for which only figures for 1935 are available. If the 1935 records are inaccurate a slightly different picture might be presented.

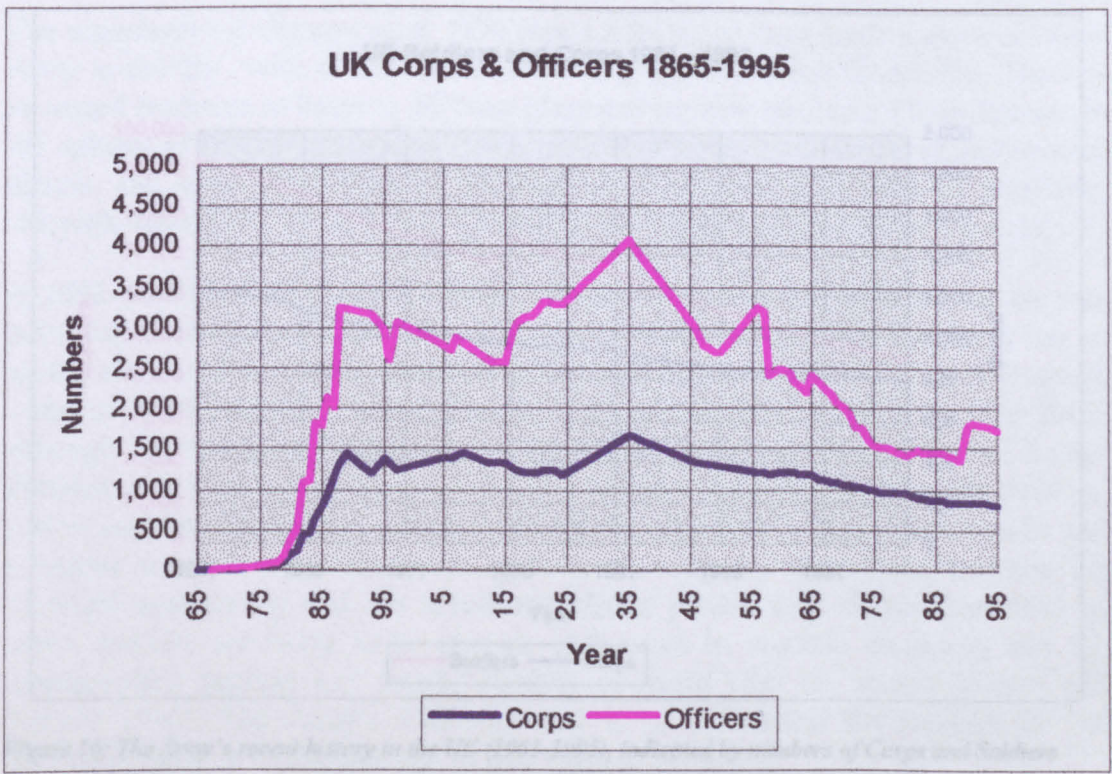


Figure 15: The Army's history in the UK, indicated by numbers of Corps and Officers⁴⁴

Figure 16 highlights more recent years (1961 – 1995) showing the number of corps and the number of soldiers⁴⁵ (details for which have been obtained from the statistics office of the Field Service, which has maintained accurate records since the 1950s, although earlier data is frequently missing).

1.8.19 The Current Picture 1995

The Army has been in decline in the west for most of the 20th Century, and especially so in the UK. This is not unique to the Army; membership of most Christian denominations in the UK has fallen during the period, although religious belief seems to have even when practice is abandoned, leading to 'believing without belonging' (see 1.8.15). However, the Army's presence in the UK (from a relatively small permanent population of about 100,000) is visible, drawing and

⁴⁴ The apparent increase in officers in 1990 is due to the administrative changes in that year, as a result of which officers working in the UK, but in departments which were previously semi-autonomous branches of IHQ, are now correctly recorded as part of the UK Territory's strength.

⁴⁵ The apparent increase in the number of soldiers in 1976 is due to a change in the methods of recording figures; essentially, the Scottish figures were updated at this point and included with those for the remainder of the UK.

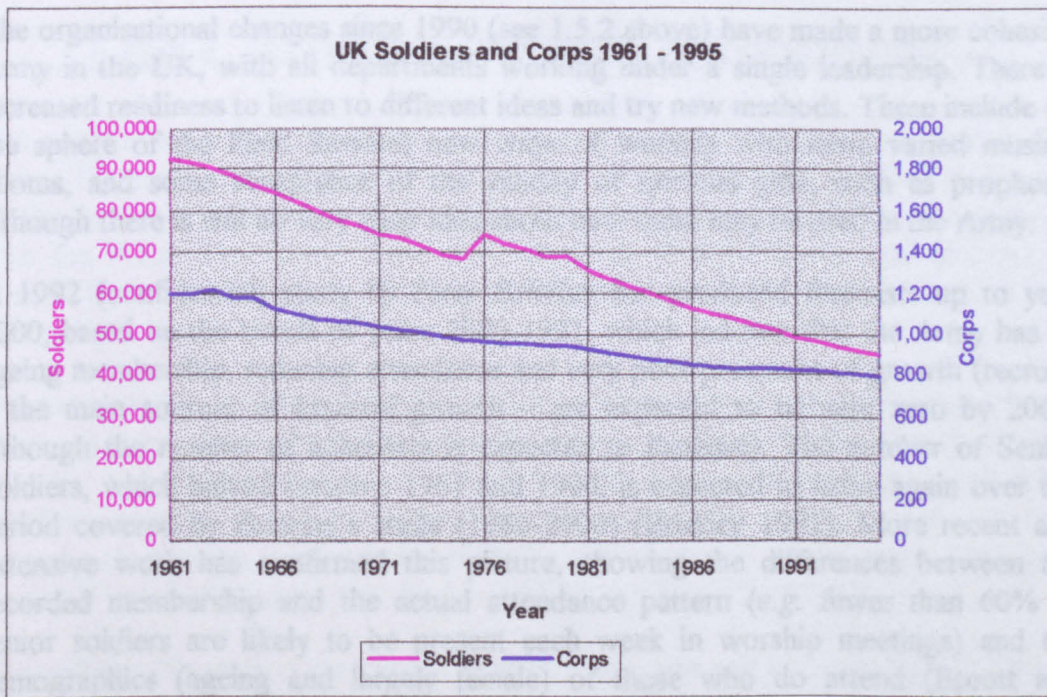


Figure 16: The Army's recent history in the UK (1961-1995), indicated by numbers of Corps and Soldiers

It can be seen from Figure 16 that not only has the number of corps been declining, but also the number of soldiers has been diminishing, and at a faster rate than the corps – with the result that those corps which survive are still, on average, reducing in size.

Internationally, too, the period of rapid growth had generally ended, although it has continued in some areas, particularly East Africa and Korea. However, there was rapid decline in northern and western Europe, while the Army was proscribed in much of eastern Europe during the Communist period, barely surviving as an underground church. In the south of Europe the Army had other problems; the countries which were predominantly Roman Catholic were not a natural home for the movement, and for many years (during the dictatorships) it had no place in Spain and Portugal, and has never been strong in Italy and France. Similarly, in the Republic of Ireland, the Army is highly esteemed officially, but has little strength as a church (only one corps, in Dublin, remains).

1.8.19 The Current Picture 1996

The Army has been in decline in the west for most of the 20th Century, and especially so in the UK. This is not unique to the Army: membership of most Christian denominations in the UK has fallen during the period, although religious belief seems to linger even when practice is abandoned, leading to 'believing without belonging' (Davie 1994, p.5). However, the Army's decline in the UK (from a relatively small estimated maximum of about 100,000 senior soldiers) is severe, disturbing and potentially fatal. The Army in western Europe has suffered a similar attrition, as – to a lesser extent – have the USA (with the exception of the Army's USA Western Territory), Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In most developing countries (except those which are Islamic, where legal restrictions make growth difficult) the Army has continued to grow, making substantial gains overall.

The organisational changes since 1990 (see 1.5.2 above) have made a more cohesive Army in the UK, with all departments working under a single leadership. There is increased readiness to listen to different ideas and try new methods. These include (in the sphere of the Field Service) new ways of worship with more varied musical idioms, and some acceptance of the validity of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy, although there is still no very clear idea about how these may be used in the Army.

A 1992 (confidential) study by Peter Brierley has produced forecasts up to year 2000, based on the trends of years 1980-1991, which indicate that the Army has an ageing membership, reducing attendance and very poor prospects of growth (recruits – the main sources of external growth – are expected to be near zero by 2000, although the number of adherents is expected to increase). The number of Senior Soldiers, which halved between 1961 and 1990, is expected to halve again over the period covered by Brierley's study (1980-2000) (Brierley 1992). More recent and extensive work has confirmed this picture, showing the differences between the recorded membership and the actual attendance pattern (*e.g.* fewer than 60% of senior soldiers are likely to be present each week in worship meetings) and the demographics (ageing and largely female) of those who do attend (Escott and Pickard 1996). The Army's challenge now is to understand the reasons for the relative severity of its decline, and to find ways to reverse it

One development since 1991 has been a commitment to Church Planting, as a result of which several new openings have been undertaken and many more are being planned. Results from this initiative are still pending.

2. The Church Growth Movement

This study as a whole is concerned with the experience of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom, in the light of the theories of 'Church Growth' outlined by Donald McGavran and developed by C Peter Wagner and others, especially those associated with the Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth in Pasadena, California. The influence of the Institute is discussed more fully below (in 2.2.1.1).

The methodology involves a detailed statistical study of a sample of Salvation Army corps, to determine whether the actuality can be explained by the Church Growth theories. The 'Seven Vital Signs' which Wagner claims will be found in churches which are growing (see 2.10 below) have been sought by various means, and their presence or absence, in correlation with the growth record of the corps, have been used as a test of the theory, the results of which will be outlined in Chapter 3.

Therefore in this section the Church Growth movement will be described in terms of its origins and development, and its approach to church life and evangelism will be considered critically. However, this will not be a full and detailed consideration, since the real evaluation is at the more practical level outlined in Chapter 3.

Others, such as Lesslie Newbigin, have provided appraisals of the Church Growth movement in the light of a solid background of theology and many years' experience in mission. Some of these people have expressed doubts about the theological validity of Church Growth or the extent to which Church Growth proponents have used responsibly the social sciences, and these doubts will be touched upon in this section.

However, I am not asking 'Is this true?' but 'Does it work?' Consequently, my evaluation of the Church Growth movement, though influenced by those who have approached the subject from other angles, is not dependent on the perspectives of social science or theology. Mine is, instead, a pragmatic approach which depends on the relationship which can be discerned between theory and results.

2.1 Church Growth Defined

The term 'Church Growth' was coined by Donald McGavran to encapsulate his approach to evangelism. Unfortunately it is an ambiguous term, since it describes both what most Christians see as a desirable outcome (the growth of the Church) and a particular methodology for achieving that outcome.

John H Yoder has distinguished four 'concentric circles' associated with the term (Yoder 1973, p.25), although thinking of it primarily at that time as a third word mission concept.

Firstly there is the widest circle, which includes all who are concerned with the growth of the church, using the best available methods to reach the greatest number of people. The second circle is concerned with the more specific focus upon 'people movements' or the group conversion of communities. The third circle of 'church growth' is the 'stream of research and publication, debate and study' intended to facilitate effective and efficient mission, directed towards numerical expansion of church membership. The fourth circle is defined by Yoder as concerned with the specific institutions and persons associated with Donald McGavran.

In this work I shall use the term Church Growth (with capitals) to mean the set of theories and methods which originated with McGavran (Yoder's fourth circle), but by extension also to include the third circle, where this is appropriate.

Several people have produced definitions of Church Growth, including those below.

All that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership.

Wagner 1984 p.15

... that science which investigates the planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28: 19,20). Church Growth strives to combine the eternal theological principles of God's Word concerning the expansion of the church with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural sciences, employing as its initial term of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran.

(Church Growth Academy definition,
cited by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981)

The Wagner definition is so broad as to be practically meaningless. It simply defines evangelism, without any reference to particular methods or approaches.

The Church Growth Academy definition is better, although it begs the question when it describes Church Growth as a 'science', since science is itself defined as 'systematic and formulated knowledge' (Concise Oxford Dictionary). However, it makes clear that the focus is jointly upon the life of churches and the fulfilment of the Great Commission. It also establishes that the approach is rooted in the work of Donald McGavran, although not confined to it, and seeks to combine theological principles (based on the Christian scriptures) with insights from social and behavioural sciences. The extent to which it is successful in this aim is debatable, since some Christians find some of the theology questionable (particularly Wagner's emphasis on homogeneous units, but also some other aspects of Church Growth, such as McGavran's ideas on 'people movements' rather than individual conversions). Similarly, it is not clear that social and behavioural sciences are used well: an informed evaluation of Church Growth which concentrated on this aspect rather than the theology would be a useful contribution to the literature.

The British Church Growth Association (BCGA) has a somewhat broader definition, which has been refined over the years to correct some of the weaknesses of those considered above.

The Association defines Church Growth as:

The investigation of the nature, function, structure, health and multiplication of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of Christ's commission: "Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples" (Matt. 28:19).

Church Growth seeks to combine the revealed truths of the Bible with the related insights from the contemporary social and behavioural sciences.

Although not linked to any one school of church growth it owes much to the foundational thinking of pioneer missiologist Dr Donald McGavran.

(BCGA, 1993)

Walker, through a critical analysis of the Church Growth Movement, describes it as having two unifying concerns:

- the doctrinal centrality of the Matthaean 'Great Commission';
- an emphasis on statistical evidence of a kind used within the social and behavioural sciences, for what multiplies churches.

He adds:

A third unifying principle, a corollary of the first two, is the emphasis on church planting as a pattern for mission and evangelism.

Walker 1993, p.19

While Walker's description is helpful as a reference point, it is not a definition, and describes what Church Growth is *about* rather than what it *is*.

In this study the earlier definitions will be used as a basis for the aspects of Church Growth which are investigated. The BCGA definition is perhaps an excellent description of the research aspects of Church Growth (taking the broader meaning of the term), but it is so all-encompassing that its use would give too broad a scope for this study. It might however be close to the truth to suggest that it describes also the approach attempted in this work.

2.2 Key People in the Development of Church Growth

In the development of Church Growth two people have been pivotal. Firstly the concepts were introduced by Donald McGavran. Secondly the ideas were developed and popularised by C Peter Wagner. Others have contributed to the Church Growth movement, and in the United Kingdom influential contributors have included Roy Pointer, Eddie Gibbs and David Holloway.

It can be confusing to try to identify the origins of aspects of Church Growth thinking, since each of the main writers on the subject has tended to recapitulate the ideas of others (sometimes without acknowledgement) and to re-present (or modify) their own earlier ideas in later books.

2.2.1 Donald McGavran

Donald McGavran (an American) originated the concepts of Church Growth in 1936 while working as a missionary in India, caring for lepers. He came to the conclusion that the goal of missionary work should be church planting and growth, rather than the variety of social, medical and other work which he observed taking place, although these elements should continue to be pursued where they served the primary aim of evangelism. He was concerned to understand and promote effective ways of planting and growing churches in new ground (Wagner 1984 p.15) in order to maximise the evangelistic return on investment. It was not until much later (1972) that he developed the application of his principles into American (and more generally Western) situations.

He published his first book on the subject, *The Bridges of God*⁴⁶, in 1955, followed by *How Churches Grow* in 1959. These first books were essentially aimed at workers in the third world, although the second book was applicable in part to the American scene, according to Wagner (Wagner 1984 p.13). Among other issues, McGavran was concerned to press the question:

How, in a manner true to the Bible, can a Christward movement be established in some class, caste, tribe or other segment of society which will, over a period of years, so bring groups of its related families to Christian faith that the whole people is Christianised in a few decades? It is of the utmost importance that the Church should understand how peoples, and not merely individuals, become Christian.

McGavran 1981 p.7

⁴⁶ *The Bridges of God* was first published in 1955, but references in this study are to the 1981 revised edition.

McGavran developed this idea in several ways, with references to New Testament records and church history to show that the conversion of 'peoples' (*ethne*) to Christianity, especially through family relationships, was as valid as the conversion of individuals. For instance, he cites the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons in around AD 600, which was brought to fruition by the influence of Augustine upon the Kentish king, Ethelbert (McGavran 1980, p. 397). More recent examples given by McGavran include the group conversions from 1958 to 1980 by communities of the West Dani people in India (McGavran 1980, pp. 342 & 398-399). McGavran's New Testament examples include the conversion of number of Berean Jews (Acts 17:10-14) with their Greek neighbours, though this is not thoroughly convincing, as the text does not seem to support a concurrent group conversion any more than a series of consecutive individual conversions (McGavran 1980, p.349). A key insight which McGavran developed from such observations, coupled with his own missionary experience, was that:

... [People] like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers.

McGavran 1980 p.198

In its original setting this was relevant to the caste / class system of India, but was also relevant to other societies where people groups of different types live together. McGavran believed that the apostles, and later missionaries, followed routes of kinship or other social groups so far as they could, in order to use the 'Bridges of God' – the ties of natural relationships. He observed that faith moves more easily between people who are related by blood or marriage than between others in the same society without such a relationship. Therefore he advocated the pragmatic use of cross-cultural missionary contacts to reach the first individuals in particular people groups, but said that further evangelism should be mainly the work of those who were members of those people groups (McGavran 1980 pp. 241-244).

McGavran used the terminology of Ralph Winter in describing types of evangelism with different relationships between cultures:

- **E-0** is evangelism which involves no crossing of cultural barriers at all – it is therefore internal growth, since the people involved are already familiar with the culture of the church, though it can include the re-evangelising of those who have become nominal Christians.
- **E-1** is expansion or extension evangelism of people in virtually the same culture as those undertaking the task, except that they are not part of the 'church' sub-culture; there are no *major* cultural gaps to be crossed.
- **E-2** is cross-cultural evangelism where the evangelists and those they hope to influence have related or similar cultures (*e.g.* both are western Europeans).
- **E-3** is cross-cultural evangelism where the cultures are very different (*e.g.* a Briton engaged in the evangelism of a society with a Hindu background).

In Britain, the church is usually engaged in E-0 and E-1 evangelism (although other types can take place) and it is relevant in this context that McGavran also adopted Hunter's elaboration of Winter's schema:

- **E-1-A** refers to communication of the gospel to close friends, family and other intimates.
- **E-1-B** describes communication with those who are culturally very like the Christian, but who are not his close friends *etc.*
- **E-1-C** describes evangelism among those who are of the same basic culture, but a different sub-culture (a different class, lifestyle *etc.*) – it involves a step across a cultural barrier, even if not a large one.
- **E-1-D** refers to evangelism among people who are of a different 'hyphenated sub-culture' (as McGavran called it); although this reference was specific to the American context, it is also appropriate to the British, since we too have hyphenated sub-cultures, such as Asian-British or Caribbean-British. It involves a distinct cultural leap, although not necessarily any geographical move at all.

Some problems of Christian missionary work were also identified by McGavran, including 'Redemption and Lift', which he saw in India as leading to a form of dependency in which converts to Christianity became estranged from their old way of life, gaining the benefits of education, medicine, employment *etc.*, but losing the opportunities to relate to – and evangelise – their former companions. This phenomenon is no less relevant in western society than in Asia: converts can easily become so enrapt in the life of the Christian community (especially as material benefits frequently follow the improved lifestyle) that they lose contact with their old life altogether, and are therefore unable to utilise the 'Bridges of God' which would otherwise have been open.

McGavran's question could, potentially, be answered in quantitative terms: what (scripturally acceptable) methods were most effective in bringing large numbers of people to Christian faith? He also suggested some answers.

Many churches and missions had collected information about their activities: McGavran suggested ways of *using* statistical information – particularly demographics – about the church or mission and about the surrounding community in ways which would help the church to manage its work (McGavran 1980 pp. 93 *ff.*).

He did not claim that everything about the church could be reduced to collections of numbers, asserting instead that:

... statistics, if they are to have any meaning, should be gathered by those who know the churches well and who are concerned that the statistics reveal the truth. They should be accompanied by a full description of the churches, their natural groupings, and their geographical, social and spiritual environment. Statistics are a summary of significant information and care should be taken that they convey true meanings.

McGavran 1959 pp. 27-28

McGavran saw church statistics as having two main benefits:

- provoking discomfort and avoiding complacency by making trends explicit
- providing tools for decision-making.

The expression 'Church Growth' was coined to represent evangelism which was effective in bringing new Christians into discipleship as church members. McGavran may have later regretted the invention of the term, which can be used to suggest an emphasis upon church membership *instead of* Christian faith (rather than as an essential part of the faith). This was not his intention, and before his death in 1990, he admitted that he had not used the term Church Growth for two years, suggesting instead that 'Effective Evangelism' would have been a less misleading name for the movement⁴⁷ – although it is probably too late to change now (Sidey 1991).

McGavran felt that churches had expected decline, whereas they should expect growth; he instead argued for a 'search theology' (McGavran 1980 pp. 5 *ff.*) or a 'theology of harvest' (McGavran 1980 pp. 26-40). Church Growth was, in its first formulations, his recipe for this optimistic approach (see 2.6 below).

One of the implications of this approach was that where resources (people, money, materials *etc.*) are limited, they should be concentrated where they will provide the greatest return. Fields which are (as indicated by their statistics) 'white unto harvest' (John 4:35) should be sent labourers, while fields which are barren or are not yet ripe should only receive enough resource (they should be 'held lightly') to enable the church to know when ripening occurs (McGavran 1980 p.262).

The main difficulty with this view, as identified by Roy Pointer, is that the failure of evangelism may be associated with the resistance of the people group in question ('emic'), or with the evangelists or their methods ('etic'), or with varying proportions of the two (Pointer 1984 pp. 186-187). If resources are to be allocated according to their perceived effectiveness in growing the church, then some means must be found for determining the extent to which the apparent success or failure is associated with the evangelists or with the society which they are trying to evangelise.

Some critics are happy with the expectation of growth, but uncomfortable with McGavran's emphases on quantifying and planning to maximise growth. This is largely because McGavran and his followers have tended to equate growth with numbers of church members, rather than with more qualitative factors, such as depth of spirituality, or effectiveness in improving society. McGavran argued (citing Matthew 6:33) that material and social benefits would arise naturally when the Church sought first the kingdom of God, but that they should not be the main objective (McGavran 1980 pp. 43-44). He seems to have said little about spiritual growth as an objective differing from numerical growth, except to assume that where the numbers of members are increasing, the overall level of spirituality will also rise.

⁴⁷ Though this too would have been subject to similar disadvantages: it describes the desired outcome as well as the methods which are used to produce that outcome.

McGavran's later writings included an extensive development of his theories called *Understanding Church Growth* (1970), a number of lesser works, and a series of revisions of earlier books, introducing illustrative material and some developments of theories in ways which were more relevant to American (and Western) settings.

2.2.1.1 The Institute of Church Growth

McGavran became known as an authority on church growth – although essentially as a missionary (*i.e.* third world) concept, and he founded the Institute of Church Growth at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon in 1961 to develop and teach the principles. The Institute outgrew its home and moved in 1965 to Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, becoming the Fuller School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth (Wagner 1986, p.25). The issue is somewhat clouded by the number of similar sounding corporate bodies which sprang up around McGavran and Wagner. Significant developments included the Institute for American Church Growth, founded by Win Arn (also in Pasadena) in the early 1970s (Wagner 1986, p.31) apparently as a marketing system for Church Growth resources, such as seminars, films, books *etc.* Similarly, and again in Pasadena, the Charles E Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth (also known as the Fuller Evangelistic Association or FEA) was founded by John Wimber (with Wagner) in 1975 to provide churches with consultancy aid. Carl George succeeded Wimber as the director of the FEA in 1978 (Wagner 1986, p.235).

The FEA ran into financial difficulties whilst under the direction of Carl George, laying off many staff in 1994. In November 1994 the financial director, Claude Florent, was dismissed, and subsequently in March 1995 Carl George resigned, leaving a liability of some \$1.5 million, according to Edward Gilbreath of *Christianity Today* magazine (Gilbreath, May 1995). It was reported in the June 1995 issue of *Christianity Today* that the organisation was ending its operations, and that Claude Florent had instigated litigation against the FEA and Carl George (*Fuller Evangelistic Association Folds*, June 1995). Although associated with the FEA, the Fuller Theological Seminary had remained legally distinct, and has not been affected by these events.

The Fuller School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth provided post-graduate degree courses for missionary candidates (Pointer 1984) and in-service training for others with responsibility for church leadership⁴⁸. It contributed to an expectation of growth, and encouraged church leaders to plan for growth.

Lesslie Newbigin, while critical of some aspects of the movement, admits:

The Institute of Church Growth ... has forced missionary agencies in many parts of the world to ask why churches do not grow and to plan deliberately for church growth and expect it as the normal experience of missions.

Newbigin 1978 p.136

⁴⁸ The present General of The Salvation Army (Paul Rader), elected in 1994, holds the degree of Doctor of Missiology from the associated Fuller Theological Seminary.

2.2.2 Peter Wagner

McGavran wrote:

The awaking of America to church growth owes a great deal to two men – Peter Wagner and Winfield Arn. In 1971 Professor Wagner, convinced that America needed church growth, enrolled prominent pastors and lay leaders living in and around Pasadena in a regular seminary course in church growth. He asked me [McGavran] to team teach it with him. We met in the Lake Avenue Congregational Church every Tuesday morning from seven to ten. Tuition was charged and seminary credit given.

McGavran 1980 pp. 423

Wagner was invited to write an article on Church Growth for *Eternity* magazine in 1972, and he produced a string of books on Church Growth through the 1970s and 80s, several of which have been used in this study. Sadly, despite the volume of production, these books present a limited range of approaches to the subject, tending to be rather repetitive.

Wagner's introduction of McGavran's thinking to the Fuller Seminary has been highly influential in the training of evangelical church leaders in the USA, Canada, Australia and other English speaking countries. Win Arn (one of the students at a pilot course in 1972) founded the Institute for American Church Growth. John Wimber was an early adopter of the approach, becoming in 1975 the founding director of the Fuller Institute of Evangelism and School of Church Growth. He subsequently left the Institute in order to found a new church, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, which now has several thousand members.

Wagner has popularised Church Growth through his books, particularly *Your Church Can Grow*⁴⁹ (1976) in which he published his list of the 'Seven Vital Signs' which he said would be found in a growing church (Wagner 1984 pp. 187-188). These 'signs' are examined in detail in Section 2.10 below.

Referring to the allocation of resources for effective evangelism (as discussed above in relation to McGavran), Wagner has suggested a number of ways of assessing the receptivity of people groups.

⁴⁹ Although the first edition was published in 1976, references in this work are to the 1984 edition.

Where churches are already growing

Wagner claims that where churches are growing there will usually be scope for other churches to join in their work by evangelising other members of the same people group in that location (Wagner 1987 pp. 78-81). He presents evidence from various cultures for this claim, although recognising that there are potential difficulties if those already working do not welcome the newcomers. Wagner's argument is that there will usually be more members of the given people group in that location than the existing churches could possibly cope with, and that the introduction of more churches will make possible the evangelisation of more people.

Though this seems to be the case in 'green field' sites, or the 'open market' of the USA, it may not apply in Britain, where (in England and Scotland at least) the respective established churches have distinct parishes, within which it is not structurally possible for an entrepreneurial leader (of the same denomination) to set up an additional church. A similar difficulty would apply within The Salvation Army, as each corps has a defined district, which is not only its spiritual parish, but is also its fund-raising resource.

Where people are changing

Wagner claims that, whether considered locally, regionally or nationally, major social changes can make people receptive to the gospel (Wagner 1987 pp. 81-84). He cites evidence from Latin America, especially Argentina after the Falklands/Malvinas adventure (1982), and elsewhere to support his claim, though he was writing ahead of the collapse of the 'Iron Curtain' which seems to have led to an apparent resurgence of Christianity (and other religions and cults) in many of the formerly Communist countries of eastern Europe.

Among the masses

Wagner follows McGavran in claiming that, in general, the masses (the common, working people and the poor) are more receptive to Christianity than are the classes (those comfortably situated in power) (Wagner 1987 pp. 84-86). However, he notes two significant differences: in the USA there seems to be no such divide, as receptivity cuts across class lines, while in England (*sic*) the divide seems to operate in reverse – the masses are resistant, at least to the way the gospel is currently presented to them. There may be other exceptions to this rule – and it is therefore not well supported. McGavran's own experience, and those he cites, suggests that it may be applicable in the third-world, but perhaps not in western, developed countries.

Since 1990, Wagner has been pursuing an interest in some spiritual aspects of Church Growth (which he regards as an addition to the 'technological aspects'). This has included consideration of 'signs and wonders' (with John Wimber) and prayer: four recent books are concerned with prayer as an aspect of spiritual warfare. Wagner claims that this does not mean he has abandoned Church Growth, but that he is developing a further dimension to the methodological principles (Wagner, 1994).

2.2.3 Other Writers

A number of other writers have been influential, including several Britons.

2.2.3.1 Roy Pointer

Roy Pointer was an early convert to Church Growth, accepting the responsibility for promoting Church Growth in Britain (after initial work by Tom Houston and Eddie Gibbs) sponsored by the Bible Society. His book, *How do Churches Grow?* (1984) became the standard work on the subject for the Bible Society courses in Church Growth.

Little of this book was original – but this is not really a criticism, since it took as its aim the interpretation for a British context of the work of McGavran and Wagner. However, he stressed particular aspects of Church Growth which, though derivative, clarify some of the issues and, perhaps, introduce his own emphases.

Because Pointers' work has been very influential through the Bible Society material (which he helped to create), and because his influence has been particularly strong on The Salvation Army, it is necessary to consider his concepts in some detail.

Pointer stresses the primacy of evangelism over all other aspects of Christian practice for seven reasons:

- The immensity of the task – the numbers of people with no allegiance to Jesus Christ;
- The nature of the Church – evangelism is its reason for existence;
- The example of Jesus – who recruited, trained and deployed his disciples to win more followers (Luke 4:12,13; 9:1-6; 10:1-16);
- The example of the apostles – who were commissioned to 'make disciples', and who (as described in the book of Acts) set out determinedly to do so;
- The prospect of Christ's return – which many evangelicals tend to take literally as a fixed (though unknown) point in time, by which every effort should be made to evangelise the greatest possible number of people;
- The cause of social liberation – because transformed individuals will transform society (as opposed to the Marxist approach, which – greatly simplified – suggests that a transformed society will transform individuals by changing structures and relations);
- The plight of humanity – since the individual's salvation is dependent on his or her response to Christ.

Pointer 1984 pp. 20-23

Pointer describes a church in this way:

... A local church must be in Markus Barth's phrase 'a functional outpost of the Kingdom'. This local fellowship of people under God's rule must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, heal the sick, destroy the works of the devil and manifest the King's presence. This is the kind of local church that grows as the Kingdom grows.

Pointer 1984 p.67

Pointer accepts that the growth of churches involves much more than 'numerical' growth, and that even growth in numbers can involve 'biological' or 'transfer' growth, rather than the fruits of evangelism ('restoration' or 'conversion' growth). Other dimensions of growth include 'conceptual' (depth of understanding), 'organic' (internal, church fellowship in a worshipping community) and 'incarnational' (extending the ministry of Christ to his world, through his church) (Pointer 1984, pp. 25-31). However, it is much harder to quantify growth in the other dimensions.

He says:

... a growing church should strive to grow in all four dimensions and to recognise that numerical growth is as valid as any other dimension of growth. *In fact, failure to grow in quantity usually indicates weakness in quality.*

Pointer 1984 p.30

The command to make disciples is understood as meaning the replication of church communities, as demonstrated in the book of Acts and apparent in many of the epistles. It is seen as the mandate for church planting and for the growth of existing churches.

Roy Pointer was particularly influential when The Salvation Army in the UK adopted Church Growth in 1988; his book *How churches grow* was distributed to all corps officers in the UK, with a companion volume by John Larsson (a Salvation Army officer) which was essentially an interpretation of Pointer's book in a specifically Salvation Army context. When The Salvation Army International Headquarters held a Church Growth Conference in London in 1989, Pointer was a guest speaker. He commented favourably on the Army's social and community work, saying ... 'The Salvation Army has earned the right to share its faith' (Pointer 1989).

However, sometimes Pointer seems not to have quite engaged the real world in his thinking; for instance, he says, 'The church that plans to grow, will' (Pointer 1984, p.150). If it were that easy, growing churches would be more often found. What Pointer knows (because he has said it in many ways in that book and other places) is that planning is only part of the answer, which also includes, even taking only elements of Church Growth teaching, other factors such as research, resources and commitment, as well as the activity of God. A plan which is not realistic or is not implemented, monitored and, where necessary, modified, will accomplish nothing, in churches as in any other endeavour. Conversely, sometimes churches will grow without a plan – the planners must catch up when they have space to breathe.

Pointer consolidated some of the work of McGavran and Wagner, identifying six groups of factors which affect the growth of churches (Pointer 1984 pp. 31-44).

Local Church Factors

Some of these are within the control of the church, although others will be inherited as part of its culture, or imposed by its environment. Pointer says that these provide signs of growth, the presence (or absence) of which can be used in diagnosis. He looks for

- Constant Prayer
- Respect for Biblical Authority
- Effective Leadership
- Mobilised Membership
- Eventful Worship
- Continuous Evangelism
- Community Life
- Compassionate Service
- Openness to Change
- Released Resources⁵⁰.

Pointer cites New Testament and contemporary examples of growing churches engaging in constant prayer – but seems to give inadequate consideration to churches which pray earnestly, but nevertheless do not grow.

He claims (as do others in the Church Growth movement *e.g.* Holloway 1989, p.133) that liberalism is directly associated with church decline. He tends towards suggesting, although without ever quite articulating it, that the *only* theology which respects biblical authority is evangelical, and that the best variety of evangelicalism is charismatic. Pointer does not indicate any awareness that not all charismatics are evangelical – there is, for instance, a significant number of charismatic (Roman) Catholics – and this somewhat blinkered view seems characteristic of Church Growth teaching in general.

Pointer associates effective leadership with a visionary leader, who ‘sees’ growth possibilities, ‘suits’ the church, ‘serves’ sacrificially, ‘shepherds’ the membership, ‘steers’ the church in the direction envisaged, ‘stays’ long enough to complete the task and ‘shares’ leadership responsibility with others. The alliteration of the list is impressive, but may have taken priority over other issues. For instance, he stresses both the pastoral role of the leader and the need to delegate this role to others – but does not make it clear how both are to happen together. This conflict, found in much Church Growth literature, is a source of tension in church leadership and warrants better consideration.

⁵⁰ Pointer’s list has been used in the Bible Society Church Growth training courses.

Mobilised membership means exercising the gifts of the Spirit (another hint of his charismatic emphasis), shared leadership, and opportunities and encouragement for members to become personally involved in the work of the church.

Pointer claims that eventful worship is exemplified by Pentecostal churches in South America (e.g. the *Brazil for Christ Church* in São Paulo), where the capacity is large (and generally occupied), the worship is noisy and active, the music and preaching are contemporary and relevant, and spiritual gifts, particularly tongues, are exercised (charismatic theology, again), and such worship is also accompanied by opportunities for social interaction. He recognises that the culture (and inherited structures) in Britain are different, but argues that there are lessons to be learnt from such churches, which may be applied in denominational or regional events, where individual churches are unable to provide such an experience.

Continuous evangelism includes all aspects of evangelism, as described by McGavran and Wagner, although Pointer stresses the opportunity of organic growth through relationships (the 'bridges of God', as identified by McGavran).

Community life is related to both worship (the need for social opportunity) and to evangelism (church growth through relationships). It is a manifestation of Christians loving one another.

Compassionate service is part of the role of the Christian (Ephesians 2:8-10), and is also associated with an active church. It includes service within the church community (loving one another) and service to people in the wider community (which links it with 'Presence evangelism', as discussed below in 2.5.1.1).

Pointer claims that openness to change is essential since while it may require change to bring about growth, when growth occurs, it inevitably brings change. For example, more contemporary and relevant types of worship and service may be introduced – and older forms abandoned. Experienced leaders may be augmented, or replaced, by newcomers with radically different ways of thinking.

The release of resources means the willingness of the church leaders and members to invest resources, such as money, time and abilities, in growth; it also means the exercise of God's resources (which Pointer identifies as the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22) and the gifts of the spirit, including, but not exclusively, the gift of evangelism). This again indicates Pointer's inclination towards a charismatic version of evangelical theology.

Some of Pointer's list is identical or nearly so to the items in Wagner's list (see 2.10 below). The remaining five groups of issues are largely outside the control of the local church, and are environmental factors (that is, they affect the church, but are not controlled by it, though they may be influenced by it).

Local Community Factors

The local church is affected by the community it serves; for instance, a church is unlikely to grow in an area where the population is declining. The culture (which may be very local, and need not be merely geographically based) affects the receptivity of the people, and therefore the growth prospects for the church.

Inter-Church Factors

The local church is a part of the universal Church. As such it has links both with the wider Christian community, including other churches in the area, and with other parts of its own denomination, as well as parachurch agencies like the Bible Society. The links between local churches have effects: rivalry, for instance, might bring about an earnest desire to be the best – but it might bring about a destructive desire to see the rival fail⁵¹. Denominational government has an influence at this level. For example, the Anglican church's decision to ordain women priests will certainly have effects – although their nature is as yet not fully known. Pointer refers to The Salvation Army's short-term deployment of officers as a factor in the decline of the Army – a decision, or series of decisions, taken at levels higher than that of the local church (Pointer 1984 p.39).

Inter-Community Factors

The social systems of nations or regions are important — Britain has experienced a church history which is different from that of the USA, for instance, and this affects the 'harvestability' of the field. One example might be the regulation of broadcasting. In the USA there is effectively no regulation, other than the laws (which vary from state to state) on obscenity, libel and so on. In Britain, broadcasting is strongly regulated, and terrestrial TV in particular is subject to strict rules on religious broadcasting – these effectively prevent any attempt at using TV for evangelism, since proselytism is forbidden⁵². Satellite TV may change this, since programmes can be made and transmitted from outside the control of the authorities; but these include pornographic broadcasts – freedom of expression is a two-edged sword.

Demonic Opposition

Pointer cites numerous scriptural references for Satan's opposition to Christ and his church, and declares that the task of the Church is that of engaging the enemy. Although already defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus, Satan is still active, attacking Christians and churches. Some Christians might see references to Satan and demons as belonging to a naive or superstitious world view, but Pointer claims that such activity is a real factor in the growth or decline of churches. It is a factor which can be completely outside the (physical or social) control of the church (although prayer, power and spiritual gifts may provide the necessary weapons); it is also a factor which might be introduced into churches by occult practices (ouija boards, for instance) which seem almost commonplace in many parts of British society. Pointer would presumably make similar claims today about 'New Age' influences in the church, since New Age mysticism is in many respects similar to old-fashioned occultism.

⁵¹ The work of Robin Gill (*Competing Convictions and The Myth of the Empty Church*) is particularly instructive on this point.

⁵² The launch of Premier Radio (Britain's first Christian radio station) in London in 1995 is a significant change so far as radio broadcasting is concerned, though it is still too early to determine any effects on the Christian and non-Christian communities.

Extraordinary Activity of God

According to Pointer (following McGavran), the Holy Spirit tends to spectacularly bring new life into churches in two ways: 'Revivals' and 'People Movements'. A revival is (as the term implies) something which happens within the church, reviving it to new life. A people movement is the term used to describe what happens when a people group (which may be defined ethnically, culturally or in other ways), acting as a group, decides to become Christian.

2.2.3.2 Eddie Gibbs

Eddie Gibbs was, with Tom Houston, one of the first in the UK to take Church Growth seriously. These two originated the Bible Society training courses in Church Growth (afterwards the responsibility of Roy Pointer). Eddie Gibbs later moved to California where he served as Associate Professor of Evangelism and Church Renewal at Fuller Theological Seminary, before accepting a post on the staff of All Saints Church, Beverly Hills.

He produced a number of relatively less significant books and publications, including *Ten Growing Churches* (1984), which he edited, but his major contribution to the subject is *I believe in Church Growth* (first published in 1981, but revised for later editions in 1985 and 1990).

Gibbs suggests that early Church Growth thinking may have over-stressed numerical growth, to the detriment of a qualitative growth in the commitment of churches and their members. This may have been a reaction to the previous climate of acceptance of non-growth, and by 1990 this misleading or incorrect emphasis had received some attention from Gibbs and others (Gibbs 1990 p.22). Like Pointer, he acknowledges that growth involves more than just counting members.

He also addresses the problem which was to some extent created by McGavran: the idea that the growth of the church is the totality of mission. He sees two origins for this idea: (i) some evangelicals viewed the world in an extremely negative way, and saw mission as a rescue operation to save people from the fate to which the whole world was doomed; (ii) others recognised the Christian responsibility to care for others, but said that this could best be done by evangelism – the success of which would provide a much greater likelihood of a positive transformation of society. Gibbs recognises that a transformed society does not necessarily follow from transformed individuals:

Church growth can result in decanting people from the world to seek an alternative sub-culture in isolation rather than equipping the saints to act as yeast, salt and light in the world.

Gibbs 1990, pp. 22-23

He attempts to correct the balance by recognising that the Bible speaks of God's concern for all creation (Ephesians 1:20-23, Colossians 1:19-20), although the Church is central in God's mission to the world. However, the Church is not an end in itself, but should point beyond itself to Christ and his Kingdom (here Gibbs seems to part company with McGavran, who apparently equated the Church with the Kingdom of God).

Gibbs has said, 'It is not sufficiently emphasised that the Church itself is in the process of becoming' (Gibbs 1990, p.45). This means that part of the mission of the Church (in which it is not consistently successful) is itself to *become* more closely like the Lord it serves. One example is the transformation of nominal church members into active, believing disciples – which may not directly produce a growth in membership, but will produce more healthy churches (Gibbs 1990, p.40). Gibbs has developed this idea in *Winning them Back* (1993), and has addressed a major Salvation Army conference on the subject (also called *Winning them Back*) held in Sunbury on Thames in November 1993.

Gibbs has written extensively on the problems which can be associated with churches with deep historical roots, which can tend to produce nominal Christians, and then absent Christians – before entering terminal decline. He has identified four stages in the life of a church, and argues that if events are allowed to take their natural course this pattern will be followed:

- The church will be *progressive* in its early stages, characterised by high conversion growth – although also suffering high losses;
- In its second phase the church will become *marginal*; it will have high biological growth, but a lessening appeal to non-members;
- In the third, *recessive*, phase the church will find that its external constituency declines (for instance, its members have fewer contacts outside the church from which recruits can be obtained) and biological growth also diminishes;
- The fourth, *residual*, phase is that in which the external constituency ceases to exist, and biological growth becomes very low, as the children of members cease to be interested (or the membership is old and childless).

Gibbs 1990, pp. 127-128 (abridged)

The phases can occur at different rates, according to culture and circumstance, but Gibbs suggests that this pattern will only be broken by constant spiritual renewal, and by the mobilisation of members to work in the external constituency.

Gibbs has analysed styles of leadership in churches (Gibbs 1990, Ch. 9), recognising that the kind of dynamic 'success-orientated' leadership of which Wagner writes approvingly (see 2.10 below) is not as attractive in all cultures (particularly European) as it is in the USA.

After a review of models of leadership he concludes that:

... there are a number of leadership models, and which model is appropriate at any given time will depend on a combination of factors. Furthermore, these models are not mutually exclusive, and the one which predominates will depend on the personality of the leader and the nature of the situation.

Gibbs 1990, p.258

However, although accepting that there can be a variety of effective leadership styles, he asserts that a number of qualities are essential:

- Strategic thinking – understanding priorities;
- Courage – being prepared to take the risks associated with leadership;
- Trust of others – secure in faith and in their vision, inspiring confidence;
- Influence over others – leaders are people who have followers;
- Relationship-building – establishing a working leadership team.

Finally, Gibbs, like others in the Church Growth movement, claims that there is a relationship between growth and the use of spiritual gifts. He says ‘the issue of gifts is crucial for church growth’ (Gibbs 1990, p.240), and sees the role of the clergy or professional church leadership as including helping others to discover and develop their gifts for service within the church. However, Wagner is careful to distinguish spiritual gifts from natural talent (Wagner 1985, pp. 86,87), claiming that the gifts are reserved for Christians – each of whom has at least one. Gibbs, conversely, says that a natural talent is *potentially* a spiritual gift, although it will not necessarily be converted into a spiritual gift. Moreover, he follows John Stott rather than Peter Wagner in accepting that spiritual gifts can be given to non-Christians, since God is at work not only in regeneration, but in *generation* (the creation of a person), citing the pre-Christian prophets as examples of this (Gibbs 1990, p.222).

2.2.3.3 David Holloway

David Holloway has not been as prolific as the other writers discussed in this section, but his book *Ready Steady Grow* (1989) has been influential.

Holloway argues that there is a cultural resistance to religion in Britain, which is the result of a view of religion as essentially private. It is only within relationships that are already deep that religion will be discussed as something about which personal convictions matter (Holloway 1989 p.36 *ff.*). Moreover, within churches there is a range of Christian sub-cultures, usually developed over a long history, which often mark the church as distinct from (and sometimes unwelcoming to) the community around it.

He writes:

It is very difficult to change the culture of a church that has been in existence for many years in such a way that the new culture is seen as genuine.

Holloway 1989 p.98

In other words, it is not easy to change old middle-class churches into new working-class churches. This may be an argument for planting new – relevant – churches, even in areas which are already well covered by churches if they do not adequately meet the needs of some parts of the community.

He is enthusiastic about change, largely it seems on the grounds that the present state of affairs in many churches is so bad that almost any change will bring improvement. Changing patterns of worship, with new music, the discovery and use of spiritual gifts *etc.*, and increased participation by members is seen as a positive indication of the probability of growth (see 2.2.3.1 above).

On worship, he writes:

Few churches grow when their public worship is dull, un-inspiring and badly led.

... New forms, styles and music are energising; change is in the air. All this is most encouraging: historically, when the Spirit of God works in the church, there has often been a revival in worship forms and music ... Something seems to be happening today, and renewed worship and church growth go together.

Holloway 1989 p.160 *ff.*

2.3 Church Growth and Theology

Church Growth is not a balanced and complete theology – but its leading writers have never suggested that it could be. It is intended to be treated as a ‘toolkit’ which can be used in the service of a range of theological positions.

McGavran defends this stance:

Do not attack church growth as theologically inadequate. Make it adequate according to the doctrines emphasised by your Branch of the Church. The test as to whether you have done this or not is whether your congregations are stimulated to vibrant grateful growth such as New Testament churches exemplified.

McGavran 1980 p. 8

It is difficult to agree with his suggested ‘test’, since it implies that any religious group which grows has an adequate theology – including the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientologists and other cults or marginally Christian sects. However, his point is clear – Church Growth is not a theology, it is an approach to mission which can, he claims, form part of a range of Christian theologies.

Despite this rather broad claim, Church Growth is not theologically neutral. Its basis is essentially evangelical, although its theorists have chosen (when writing *qua* Church Growth leaders) to restrict their field, and to leave to others the development of theology which has other concerns.

According to Yoder:

It is assumed that there is no need for attention to the issues concerning which theology classically has struggled. The movement takes for granted its location within free church missionary evangelicalism, but does not need to explain why that is the right denominational position. ... It is assumed that we have an adequate theology which we have received from the past. ... But we do not really need any *more* theological clarification. What we need now is efficiency.

Yoder 1973, p.27

Therefore, it would be an uneasy fit if the Church Growth approach were adopted by churches who do not share the evangelical position.

Moreover, as Robin Gill points out (Gill 1988 pp. 76-77) Church Growth is based on theological particularism, assuming that salvation is God's gift to those who are explicitly Christian – and McGavran in particular, though with others, has tended to equate 'being Christian' with church membership.

Wagner has varied this position slightly, by claiming that the issue is one of perspective. He uses the mathematical concepts of 'bounded sets' and 'centered sets' to illustrate the point. A bounded set is static, and is defined by its boundary; a centered set is dynamic, and is defined by its direction. Wagner claims that to Church Growth theorists, the issue of whether people are Christian should be approached as a centered set; a Christian is someone who sees his or her allegiance as being to Christ, and who is moving in a Christwards direction. This is why the early phases of discipling need not be rigorous in either doctrine or ethics; provided that the direction of the person's life becomes focused on Christ, these issues can be dealt with later (in the perfecting stages) (Wagner 1981, pp. 158-160). The problem Wagner himself identifies with this approach is that it is not measurable; by taking a centered set view of who is Christian, there must inevitably be people at some remove from the Church who are nevertheless in some sense moving towards Christ, as well as some within the Church who may be moving away from Christ. There is therefore no clear and externally measurable distinction between Christian and non-Christian.

Wagner says:

When people truly repent and become believers, their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. But since we do not have access to that volume, how can we tell if it has happened? The Church Growth Movement has chosen to use responsible church membership as the answer to that question.

Wagner 1981, p.161

However, although Wagner here makes it very clear that he is using church membership as an *indicator* of the growth of the kingdom, rather than a direct measurement, McGavran does not seem to have made the same distinction between the two.

Taber shows that McGavran's theological stance is at the root of some of the ethical positions and strategic approaches of Church Growth (Taber 1983, pp. 118 *ff.*).

A field in which church growth is not occurring rapidly is intrinsically less important than one where it is, and merits less attention; in order to maximise growth, one ought to try to convert not individuals but entire cohesive social groups; in order to maximise growth, evangelism and church planting ought to be done separately within the limits of each homogeneous unit rather than among heterogeneous populations; in order to maximise growth, only a bare minimum of simple moral demands ought to be placed on converts, and tougher biblical imperatives postponed to a later time of *perfecting* which is distinct from *discipling*.

Taber, 1983 p.118

Wagner claims that Church Growth developed out of experience and observation, rather than from philosophical principles, and that a theology which is more phenomenological than philosophical is the result (Wagner 1987 pp. 37-38).

He says:

Dynamic movements directly involved in Christian ministry rarely begin with theological formulations. They usually begin with activists who simply assume a set of theological premises and go to work to change the world. Systematised theological work usually is developed from a movement, not vice versa.

Wagner 1987 p.37

2.3.1 The Evangelical Tradition

Each of the main writers associated with the Church Growth movement holds a theology within the evangelical tradition, although there are slightly differing emphases.

The 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:19-20) is treated as the primary justification and imperative for mission (as is the case with many other aspects of Christian mission). Bosch however, following Newbigin rather than Stott, argues convincingly that the expression 'go and make disciples' is in the nature of a promise, rather than a command. The first disciples, and by extension all disciples, would 'make disciples' (the 'go' is an intensifier, rather than an instruction to relocate) because they *would* witness to their experience of their Lord, rather than because he had *told* them to do so (Bosch 1983, pp. 218-220, 229 & 243).

McGavran agreed that the main verbal clause is 'make disciples', although in his early writings he regarded 'discipling' as being the first stage of people becoming Christian, to be followed by 'perfecting'. Later he developed this into a theory of three phases of discipling: D1, the turning of a non-Christian society to Christ; D2, the turning of individuals from non-faith to faith and incorporation into church membership; D3, the spiritual growth of Christians (effectively what he had earlier called 'perfecting').

He concluded that 'the Church lives faithful to her Master when she disciples and perfects in a single continuous motion' (McGavran 1980, p.172). This phased approach to commitment is perhaps best matched to the Wesleyan tradition (shared by The Salvation Army) in which the call to sanctification is seen as a 'second blessing' following conversion. It could also find a home with the 'church in the community' exemplified by the Anglican parish, in which the whole community is deemed to belong to the church unless they have explicitly decided not to do so (this could be seen as D1); there are also those who are active members of the church (D2) who should be experiencing spiritual growth (D3). However, the D1 phase of discipling, at least, does not make a comfortable match with the concept of the 'Believer's Church', in which people are clearly either members or not⁵³ (Yoder 1973, p. 41).

McGavran argued for a narrow definition of mission, emphasising the growth of existing churches and the planting of new churches, rather than a broader, more socially-orientated approach. Shenk points out that as 'Jesus preached and healed ... The missionary witness to the kingdom of God must always include both the word preached and the word demonstrated' (Shenk, 1983 p.214). Gibbs, in 1990, suggested that the dichotomy which McGavran saw was becoming less pronounced, largely through developments in some non-western churches which are growing rapidly, and which are also socially and practically relevant to their situation.

Taber is sympathetic to Church Growth, and makes very constructive criticisms of its theology and methodologies (Taber 1983). He shows that Church Growth is strongly rooted in an evangelical model of missiology, which has an essentially individualistic view of salvation. He also identifies an ecumenical model of mission, which addresses social issues (the most thoroughgoing applications of this model would include Liberation Theology). According to Taber, Church Growth is based on the evangelical model, but influenced by the ecumenical (and some other factors) to take seriously concepts from social sciences, especially a structural-functional model of cultural anthropology. The dichotomy between the two base models creates a tension within Church Growth, since the structural-functional model of anthropology is essentially relativistic, seeing whatever *is* as being acceptable, while the evangelical background to Church Growth requires (eventually, if not immediately) some cultural transformations as people learn to follow biblical moral precepts.

Wagner accepts that 'The Church Growth Movement ... leans towards the functionalist camp, advocates minimal cultural change and concentrates on religious change' (Wagner 1981, p.155). He argues that cultural changes should be generated internally by the reaction of a society to Jesus Christ, rather than imposed (even with good intentions) by missionary agencies or other outsiders. Therefore, since (he insists) the evangelistic mandate has priority over the cultural mandate, evangelism should take precedence over cultural change, in the expectation that necessary change would follow the discipling process (Wagner 1981, p.157).

⁵³ The term 'Believer's Church' is used repeatedly in the various papers presented in *The Challenge of Church Growth* (ed. Wilbert R Shenk), which is a report from the Institute of Mennonite Studies. The Mennonite Church forms part of the Anabaptist tradition and, as such, is particularly uncomfortable with the concept of 'nominal Christians'.

Taber argues instead for a contextual (incarnational) model of missiology. This would enlarge some of the concepts of standard Church Growth theory, while aiming at the same objectives. Key features of Taber's model include:

- A recognition that demographic realities might mean that a church is unable to grow in a given area, but that an incarnational model of ministry might mean that nevertheless the church should be at work in that setting;
- A development of the agricultural metaphors of 'harvest theology' to recognise that important as the harvest is, it must be preceded by cultivation – the work of the kingdom involves more than reaping the results;
- A reflection of the challenges of Christianity to culture, including a revision of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in recognition that the ethical requirements of Christianity are not met by segregation within the church – although homogeneity is, of course, to be expected where the population is itself homogeneous;
- A deployment of missionaries according to both their nature, gifts *etc.*, and the contexts – Church Growth already addresses this issue but Taber asks for further development;
- Contextual use of communications and decision making, so as to be relevant to the communities – again, Church Growth addresses these issues already;
- Methodology should be appropriate to the context, which can create a conflict with Church Growth approaches, since the western, business-management, approach to mission supported by Church Growth may be inappropriate to some contexts (some Third World settings, or communities with perhaps New Age influences);
- Organic realism in the contextual model of missiology means that a church must discover for itself what its mission is and how it should fulfil that mission – this might include numerical growth (and should include organic, conceptual and Incarnational growth) but the church itself must determine its own life, in contrast to the Church Growth model which places numerical growth above all other aims.

Theological issues such as predestination seem to be addressed rarely, if ever, in Church Growth literature, because both Calvinists and Arminians can adopt Church Growth principles⁵⁴. McGavran's early mission work in India was with the Disciples of Christ (Mennonite), but Arthur Glasser has been able to identify specific Calvinist teaching within Church Growth (Walker 1993, p.13).

⁵⁴ Though there are shades of opinion within each school of thought, it is broadly true that Calvinists stress the sovereignty of God, while Arminians stress the free will of humanity, which allows people to make moral choices.

Liberal theology is viewed with deep suspicion, as exemplified by Pointer's triumphalism, when he says:

Evangelical and Bible colleges are full and flourishing and the vast majority of ministers now being trained have confidence in the Bible for preaching and teaching in the churches.

Pointer 1984 p.65

Catholic theology is barely considered at all, despite the existence of several groups of (Roman) Catholic charismatic Christians. However, since Peter Wagner says it is a 'theological nonnegotiable' that 'The Scriptures are the only normative authority for believers' (Wagner 1987, p.40), this would presumably mean that the movement would not easily accommodate to a view which gave similarly high authority to the tradition of the church. Yet Wagner himself seems to have moved beyond Scriptural teaching in his more recent works, dealing in concepts such as "territorial spirits", against which Christians should engage in "prayer warfare" (see p.91 below). This seems to be the erection of an imposing edifice over a quite insubstantial Scriptural foundation. (In several works, references are made to Daniel 10:20-21, although the meaning of this verse is obscure.)

Church Growth is not only evangelical in its range of doctrines, it is also evangelistic in its application of them, since an important aspect of the movement is the *expectation* of growth (see the discussion on McGavran in 2.2.1 above).

2.3.2 Charismatic Influence

The influence of Pentecostal / charismatic Christianity is strong. Many Christians, particularly in the reformed tradition, have held that the supernatural gifts (tongues, prophecy, healing etc.) were characteristic of apostolic times, but had been withdrawn thereafter. Western culture, strongly influenced by the 'Enlightenment Project', has been antipathetic to the supernatural aspects of Christianity, whether occurring in 'folk Catholicism' or in branches of the Pentecostal movements. The Church Growth movement has, conversely, embraced the 'signs and wonders' aspects of Christianity as demonstrations of God's power in the church.

As mentioned earlier, Gibbs says, 'The issue of gifts is crucial for church growth' (Gibbs 1990 p.240), while Pointer seems to suggest – never quite articulating it – that the only theology which respects Biblical authority is an evangelical theology, and that the best variety of evangelicalism is that which is charismatic. Wagner claims (in the second of his 'Vital Signs') that a growing church will be distinguished by 'a well-mobilised laity which has discovered, has developed and is using all the spiritual gifts for growth' (Wagner 1987, p.165). Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (see 2.11 below) found that the Baptist churches in England which were growing were those in which the leaders were conservative-charismatic evangelicals (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981 pp. 36-37), and the New Churches which have seen rapid recent growth (albeit much of it in transfers from other churches) tend to be both evangelical and charismatic (Brierley 1991 pp. 131-133).

The recent trend towards growth in the Scottish Episcopal Church (Brierley and MacDonald 1995, pp. 20, 34-35) seems to run counter to this trend, since the church is perhaps less evangelical than its larger sister church in England, with more of an influence from both the Catholic and Liberal wings. The church provided central funding over five years for community based mission in areas of urban deprivation as part of the recent 'Million for Mission' initiative, and this was largely a result of a wish to apply 'liberation theology' in a Scottish context. The synchronicity of the recent growth and the 'Million for Mission' programme can lead to an assumption that they are causally connected. However, interviews with Rev. Malcolm Richardson (the rector in Forfar) and Rev. Ian Barcroft of St Clement's Church, Mastrick, Aberdeen (part of the project), indicate that this is not necessarily so. Although the project has been successful in demonstrating a commitment to the poor (*Synod Papers* 1995, p.25) and the application of theology to life in the community, there has (as yet) been little growth in membership through this means. Ian Barcroft suggests that much of the growth may in fact be due to the few parishes where an evangelical/charismatic pattern of worship has developed (e.g. Alloa), although other factors include English immigrants choosing a familiar style of church and patterns of Scottish migration, leading people to choose a new church. A possibly significant feature may be a 'postmodern' tendency for people to sample worship experience, rather than to commit to doctrinal statements, and in this pattern of church selection the SEC may have special strengths, particularly as its style has become more relaxed. Thus it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from the SEC experience, since there is some evidence in support of the Church Growth claims, but other factors (including the application of liberation theology) are clearly also involved.

The SEC has now committed itself to work in association with the Alban Institute (see 2.4.4 below) in promoting all-member ministry, but this initiative is too recent (commencing 1996) for any results to have emerged.

Wagner and some others in the Church Growth literature have developed the Charismatic aspects of Church Growth into further areas, going beyond the works of McGavran in this respect. These developments include 'Warfare Prayer' (the title of one of Wagner's more recent books) against spiritual powers, and the approach of John Wimber (especially) which he calls 'power evangelism'.

Wimber says:

The explanation of the gospel comes with a demonstration of God's power through signs and wonders.

... While program evangelism is, to a limited degree, effectual, power evangelism has always been, and still is, the best means of church growth.

Wimber 1986, pp. 223-224

Wimber claims that the western church has cut itself off from the supernatural, and this inhibits evangelism in such societies compared to others such as Ethiopia, China and Korea, where (he claims, though without adducing detailed evidence) miracles occur regularly (Wimber 1986, pp. 215-224).

It may be that these developments of the Charismatic aspects of Church Growth could distance the movement from other evangelicals, since they are unlikely to be readily accepted by those who share an evangelical view of mission, but who are uncomfortable with supernatural gifts such as tongues, prophecy or miraculous events.

2.3.3 Church Growth and Liberalism

As mentioned above (2.3.1), McGavran and others have tended to see liberal theology as the voice of the enemy.

According to Pointer, one of the harmful aspects of recent religious history in Great Britain (as in Europe generally) has been the development of a 'negative' school of biblical criticism, which 'discredited the Bible' and 'ridiculed' traditional doctrines on the inspiration and authority of the Bible. He claims that this 'liberal' attitude has held sway for two generations in the majority of British universities and theological colleges, with a consequential weakening of the Church and every area of the Church's work and witness. He writes, 'The combined result has been an unremitting harvest of Church decline' (Pointer 1984 p.63). This does not, of course, follow. Church decline has undoubtedly occurred, whether measured in attendance or membership, but it is not satisfactory to claim that its synchronicity with liberalism means that the former is caused by the latter. There have been many other influences, including the structural ones identified by Robin Gill, such as church over-capacity (Gill 1993, pp. 72-89).

Holloway spells out what he means by 'liberalism' (rather than treating it merely as a term of abuse, as some seem to have been inclined to do). He says that liberalism doubts the supernatural and the doctrine of original sin, tends towards universalism and syncretism, and does not believe that people are lost without Christ. Therefore, there is no reason to disturb people in order to evangelise them (Holloway 1989, pp. 134-140). If Holloway's analysis (here much condensed) is correct it is apparent that there is little in common between Church Growth and liberal theology, since the one is concerned primarily with the salvation of people who would otherwise be lost, while the other sees no cause for exertion in this respect, since no-one is lost (and some would say that no-one is saved either).

Holloway cites research by Kelley (1977) which shows that, in the USA, conservative churches tend to grow while those with a liberal theology do not, and he claims that the situation is similar in the UK (Holloway 1989 p.133). Perhaps this is not surprising, if his description of the liberal attitude to evangelism is correct. Growth would seem unlikely in the absence of a sufficient motivator.

This leads to the conclusion that in Church Growth thinking, the only valid Christian theology is evangelical (preferably charismatic), and that other views (liberal or catholic, for example) are at best somewhat dubious, and should be discouraged.

If we view success (numerical growth through conversions *etc.*) as a sign of divine blessing, the view that 'blessing' is correlated with theology becomes understandable. However, it should not be forgotten that one of the reasons for the rise of liberalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the intellectual inadequacy of the previously conventional (often literalistic) belief, which was consequently in decline – if success were the only validation of theology, evangelicalism would, at that point, have been a failure⁵⁵. It would be unwise today to dismiss alternative views if we have found one which seems successful: that success may be short-lived.

2.3.4 The 'Social Gospel' and Social Service

Donald McGavran was a missionary, engaged in a programme of social concern (caring for lepers) in India, when he originally formulated the ideas which would develop into Church Growth. McGavran argued that mission should be more narrowly defined than was conventionally the case. Church planting and growth should be emphasised, rather than giving an equal priority to all elements of Christian work. This was based on his convictions that (i) people who do not believe in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour are lost, (ii) God wants lost people found (converted), and (iii) once found, those converts should become disciples, as responsible members of the Church (McGavran 1980 pp. 24 and others). The goal of Church Growth is therefore that of undertaking mission 'in such a way that maximum finding occurs' (McGavran 1980 p. 25).

Consequently, he argued, other kinds of Christian work (schools, medical care, social work *etc.*) should all be judged by the one criterion: do they add to the Church? Jesus said, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matthew 6:33 NIV); McGavran argued (apparently equating the Church and the kingdom) that although Jesus spoke specifically of food and clothing, the passage relates also to all material and social good – if the kingdom is sought, all other good things will be placed in the correct perspective (McGavran 1980 pp. 43–44). Yet he observed that in many cases resources were applied to all kinds of Christian service, regardless of the outcome in making disciples – or seeking the kingdom.

⁵⁵ One early 20th Century response to this issue, often under-rated, is that of the Liberal Evangelicals, who accepted that in the light of current scientific findings and theories (evolution on the one hand and higher and lower Biblical criticism on the other) it was necessary to revise some aspects of traditional theology. Their revisions included 'liberal' views on the Bible's inspiration and inerrancy, and a determined effort to interpret to their society the 'Mind of Christ'. They were therefore trying to make Christianity culturally relevant by taking seriously contemporary science, social science and philosophy. They remained evangelical by (*inter alia*) their continuing stress on the importance of the atonement, though they recognised that no single theory was adequate as an explanation.

To those in the Church Growth movement, evangelism (in fact, almost the whole of Christianity) is concerned with the command to 'Go ... to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples' (Matthew 28:19). Making disciples may *involve* social service or social action – but it is not primarily *about* these things. The physical and social needs may be addressed by Christians, and sometimes and in some places they may become the priority, because of the urgency of the need and the existence of means with which to help. Church Growth holds that this is exceptional: social service and social action should not, in the normal course of events, take priority over disciple-making (Pointer 1984 p.18-23).

Wagner takes the distinction between the evangelistic mandate and the cultural mandate, and says that while both are (as the word implies) mandatory on all Christians, the former takes priority (Wagner 1981, pp. 99-101). He says, 'It is doubtful that God would have become human and suffered on the cross if all that was wrong were social problems' (Wagner 1981, p. 100). Therefore, '... when a choice must be made on the basis of availability of resources or of value judgements, the biblical indication is that the evangelistic mandate must take priority. Nothing is or can be as important as saving souls from eternal damnation' (Wagner 1981, p.101). Thus the prime task of the Church is seen as making disciples – other bodies can administer humanitarian aid, but no other body can authoritatively preach the gospel.

This approach seems to overlook two points. Firstly, Jesus exemplified service and said, 'Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me' (Matthew 25:40 NEB), laying upon Christians a clear duty, no less authoritative than that of making disciples, to provide a caring service for those in need. Secondly (and pragmatically), if the church leaves humanitarian aid to other agencies, it also relinquishes its platform to those agencies, which might have an agenda which is quite different from that of the gospel (Marxism, for instance).

Conn has commented on the writing of both McGavran and Wagner on this issue, claiming from studies of the church in Taiwan that social service and social action are indissoluble parts of the Church's mission, and moreover that:

When churches are involved in evangelization, the churches which link evangelism with felt social needs tend to attract more new members than the ones specializing in only evangelism.

Conn, 1983, p.73

This discussion is developed by Wagner's consideration of the two mandates of the Christian mission: the cultural mandate and the evangelistic mandate (Wagner 1987 p. 99 *ff.*). The cultural mandate involves doing good to others, while the evangelistic mandate is concerned primarily with making disciples. Both are essential parts of mission, as declared in the Lausanne Covenant (for instance, SS. 4 & 5), but Wagner follows McGavran in insisting that, with rare and temporary exceptions, the priority is the evangelistic mandate.

The liberal ('ecumenical', according to Wagner (Wagner 1981, pp. 103-104)) attitude to mission which prevailed for much of the 20th Century was seen by McGavran and other evangelicals as emphasising social aspects of the gospel, rather than the spreading of the word and making disciples. On the other hand, liberals could accuse evangelicals of '... preaching a truncated gospel of personal salvation to the exclusion of social justice ...' (Gibbs 1990 p.21).

The two camps may now be coming closer together, helped by the rapid growth in non-western churches which proclaim a gospel which is relevant to their situation in both social and religious terms. McGavran claimed to have found 'a discernible change of climate like the end of an ice age' (McGavran 1959 p.2), warming towards the evangelical view, while evangelicals are once again accepting the claims of the social conscience which is their heritage, and 'getting their hands dirty' (Calver 1987 Ch. 4).

The Salvation Army has always had a foot in both camps, being well known for its work in social service, and sometimes in social action, while holding an essentially evangelical theology. Its role has always involved care for social needs, especially the poor and oppressed, though it has from time to time stressed the importance of the 'evangelical mandate' over the 'cultural mandate'. For instance, in 1981, the Army withdrew from the World Council of Churches because the WCC had become involved in a programme of action which the Army viewed as unacceptably political.

As General Arnold Brown explained in a letter to Dr Philip Potter, the General Secretary of the WCC at that time:

The Salvation Army's foundational belief is that the only real hope for the transformation of society is in personal salvation through faith in the redemptive grace of Christ.

Brown 1984 p.239

2.3.5 The Purpose of the Church

Perhaps the fundamental difference between Church Growth proponents and other Christians may be their view of the purpose of the Church. As might be assumed from its name, the Church Growth movement sees the purpose of the Church as being its own growth, in order to bring people to salvation and in obedience to the command of Jesus. This is to be accomplished through evangelism (in all its forms), and especially through the multiplication of churches (since this seems to be the most effective means of increasing the total number of Christians).

Taking Wagner's 'vital signs' (see 2.10 below) and their corollaries, the pathological symptoms of a 'sick' church (not considered here), Walker says:

... it is difficult to escape the view that activity not directly related to efficiency such as fellowship, reflection and introspection, have no part within the [Church Growth Movement] scheme of things.

Walker 1993, p.18

Others would have different priorities, perhaps seeing the Church as the body of Christ, with the objective not of growth but of service; in this model, the Church need not be large, or even growing, so long as it allows its light to shine through its works. A number of other models of the church are also possible, concentrating on other functions and objectives. Robin Gill sees corporate worship as the focus of the Church's activity, and identifies three phases which should be present in an Ecclesiology: 'the ways and means people are drawn into corporate worship' (evangelism), 'the quality and depth of that worship', and 'the challenges to social and moral action that arise from that worship' (Gill 1989, p.79).

Elsewhere he adds, 'If historically evangelicals have been stronger on mission, Catholics on worship, and liberals on social action, then perhaps it is time that each learned that an adequate model of the Church requires all three' (Gill 1993, p.286). The Church Growth view that the first of these emphases is pre-eminent would tend to produce a church model which differed from those built upon other foundations.

2.4 Alternative Views

As discussed above (Section 2.2.3) Church Growth is not a full and balanced theology. It is essentially a pragmatic methodology, claiming – if one accepts church membership as a measure of effectiveness – that its approach *works*, regardless of the extent to which it is a valid or full appreciation of the Gospel. Because of this claim it is considered fair in this study to assess Church Growth by its results, rather than by its theological or scientific soundness.

Church Growth is therefore a model of church life, seen from the *weltanschauung* of growth; from this perspective it may be appropriate to accept that the worship of the church (noisy, sociable *etc.*, as Pointer suggests), the theology (evangelical / charismatic), leadership (visionary and dynamic, yet inclusive) and involvement in the wider community (seen as Presence evangelism), are all contributors to the objective of growing the church.

Others, though sharing the commitment to evangelistic mission⁵⁶, have different models of the church, or different theological emphases, as a result of which they have developed a different range of reactions to the issues addressed by Church Growth. Few reject Church Growth entirely, although they have doubts about some aspects.

⁵⁶ No account is here considered which takes a completely different view of the Church and/or its mission or its faith. It is considered that little would be served by such an extension of this study, which would thereby become irrelevant to The Salvation Army.

2.4.1 Roland Allen

Roland Allen did not react to the Church Growth movement, since he wrote (indeed, completed his life) before Donald McGavran had published anything of significance. However, there are parallels in thought, and it might perhaps be better to see Allen as a precursor of the movement. Allen (1868-1947) was a 'High Church' Anglican who worked as a missionary in North China from 1895 to 1903. For most of his working life (from 1907 to his retirement in 1932) he held no official office, largely because his views became increasingly at variance with the legal obligations of a parish priest (by the end of his life he saw almost no role, not even sacramental, for a professional ordained priesthood). He worked mainly on research and writing, particularly through the periodical *World Dominion*, to spread his views on mission. Allen's concern was primarily for missionary work – as was McGavran's original concern – and his most influential work was *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (1912)⁵⁷.

Allen claimed that the missionary methods illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles were valid as examples for all times, but that modern (early 20th Century) methods neglected these examples. His analysis rose from the premise that St Paul established a number of viable churches in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia over some ten years (AD 47 - 57) in such a way that those churches would survive without constant support and guidance (later disasters were the result of extrinsic events, not any failure in the original methods of foundation), and that the methods used in those foundations provide examples for the conduct of mission today (Allen 1912, Introduction).

The methods which Allen identified concentrated on local responsibility for the church. Teaching should be relevant and capable of application; church organisation (structures) should be natural, simple and permanent – not imposed by some external body; financial management should be locally based, without subsidy to or from a foreign body; each member of the community is responsible – individually and corporately – for one another, both in pastoral care and in the administration of the offices and discipline of the church; the exercise of spiritual gifts is a right which should be acknowledged. Much of this thought implies some of the later developments through McGavran and others. For instance, Allen argues that the provision of Christian teaching which is relevant and applicable, coupled with the local responsibility for church discipline, can mean that some Christian ethical rules (on marriage, for example) may not be accepted, or may be delayed for some time after a community becomes Christian (Allen 1912, Ch. 13). McGavran would see this as part of the 'disciplining' process, in which a community moving gradually from being non-Christian to being Christian, makes an initial commitment to Christ, but continues its progress towards 'perfection' as the implications of Christianity become better understood.

⁵⁷ In this study the references will be to the extracts from Allen's work in *The Compulsion of the Spirit: A Roland Allen Reader* (1983), edited by David Paton and Charles H Long.

Allen (in the *Epilogue to Missionary Methods*) contrasts two situations. In the first, the missionary is ultimately responsible for the life of the church, and local responsibility is severely limited. In the second, the missionary provides teaching and support for the church, but refers all decisions (including discipline and charitable works) to the whole church. Allen commends the second approach, which he sees as leading to the foundation of a native church. This seems very like the Church Growth principles of shared leadership and mobilised membership.

Allen predicted that interest in his ideas would begin around 1960 (McGavran published *The Bridges of God* in 1955 and *How Churches Grow* in 1959), and it is certainly true that many of his ideas have been influential in the second half of the twentieth century. Particular developments, in addition to those mentioned above in relation to Church Growth concepts, have included the increased use of lay ministry and non-stipendiary ministry in the Anglican church (see Gill 1988 p.99 ff.).

2.4.2 Lesslie Newbigin

Lesslie Newbigin, who – like McGavran – has worked as a missionary in India, shares much of the evangelical theology of the Church Growth movement, but disagrees strongly with its conclusions.

Newbigin draws attention to the limited New Testament emphasis on numerical growth, and the contrasting explicit joy over the *individual* lost sheep which is found (Luke 15:3-7). He claims that the Gospels and Epistles are more concerned with faithfulness than with growth:

There is a deep concern for the integrity of the Christian witness, but there is no anxiety about or enthusiasm for rapid numerical growth. In no sense does the triumph of God's reign seem to depend on the growth of the church.

Newbigin 1978 p.140

He argues that the Pauline epistles are concerned with sound doctrine, and with ethical behaviour; they sometimes touch upon worship, either through advice on its conduct or through lyrical passages in which the writer expresses his worship; but they say little to suggest that the numbers of people are of the first importance.

However, Newbigin's strongest objections are on ethical rather than theological grounds.

As has been mentioned above, McGavran seems to have been somewhat confused about the difference between the Church and the Kingdom of God.

Shenk is one among a number who have identified this confusion, saying:

... Scripture does not equate church and kingdom. They are intimately related but two distinct realities.

... Kingdom and church often exist in a tension one with the other. ... In the present age the church never fully expresses the reality of God's reign.

... The church is ... the people of the kingdom; but some individuals may find their way into the church who are not committed to the kingdom; they may be baptized in infancy or join the church out of impure or immature motives. Committing oneself to the kingdom indeed involves participating in the life of the church, but participation in the church is no guarantee that an individual is living under God's rule.

Shenk, 1983 p.211

McGavran believed, with many evangelicals, that salvation is given only to Christians, and he further identified being a Christian with being a member of a church. He also, mainly through his convictions about the validity of 'people movements' argued that an initial acceptance of Jesus as Lord, followed by incorporation into church membership, was sufficient to make people into Christians.

Newbigin rightly points out that an acceptance of this argument would provide a logical justification for such actions as those of the missionaries who accompanied the *conquistadores*, forcing baptism onto peoples as they were subjugated. Moral repugnance at such behaviour, with his interpretation of the lack of evidence for numerical emphasis in the New Testament, is sufficient for Newbigin to condemn the Church Growth movement (Newbigin 1978 p.141).

However, while Newbigin is critical of aspects of the movement, he says:

The Institute of Church Growth ... has forced missionary agencies in many parts of the world to ask why churches do not grow and to plan deliberately for church growth and expect it as the normal experience of missions.

Newbigin 1978 p.136

He is, therefore, not opposed to the principle that churches should grow, and even make growth an aim. His objection is to 'growth by any means' becoming the dominant aim of the churches, and he fears that the Church Growth movement leans in that direction.

2.4.3 Robin Gill

Robin Gill, a theologian and sociologist, has been responsible for some of the most thorough research into trends in churchgoing in the United Kingdom published in recent years. In *Beyond Decline* (1988) he considers the 'seductive' Church Growth approach of McGavran, coming to broadly sympathetic conclusions, although remaining cautious about some elements of the approach (Gill 1988, pp. 72 *ff.*).

Gill correctly identifies the primacy which McGavran gave to numerical growth, and the business-oriented focus on measurement which derives from this (Gill 1988, pp. 74-75). He reviews and develops the theological and moral objections of Lesslie Newbigin, showing that the essential point of difference is not only of practice but of theology. McGavran's pragmatic approach is a logical outcome of a theological position which sees salvation as God's gift only to those who are explicitly Christian (which, as mentioned above, McGavran tended to equate with church membership); if only Christians are saved, and if Christians are – by definition – church members, then it is necessary – by all acceptable means possible – to make as many people as possible into members of churches (Gill 1988 p.76).

Gill's own theological understanding (based on a dynamic relationship to God in Christ) is rather different (Gill 1988, Ch. 6), and he sees the concept of 'being Christian' as much more fluid, so that formal membership of a church may *indicate* the extent of Christian commitment, as may church attendance (Gill's preferred measure), but it cannot be complete. There may be members or attenders who have little or no faith (attending for other – perhaps social – reasons), while there may be people who have faith in varying degrees who for various reasons rarely attend church. In this he does not disagree with Wagner, who through the concept of the 'centered set' recognises that Christian commitment is a dynamic, rather than static issue, and that church membership is not a measurement of Christianity, but an indicator of it (Wagner 1981, pp. 158-160).

Gill agrees with McGavran that, 'it should not be a matter of complete indifference to churchpeople whether the churches themselves decline or increase' (Gill 1988, p.79). However, he agrees also with Newbigin that church growth may not have been a primary aim of New Testament writers, and he points out that strong churches (such as the mediaeval Catholic Church or the Victorian churches in Britain) have often provided poor examples of Christianity in action. He therefore denies Church Growth, as a movement, the centrality claimed by McGavran and his followers, especially if numerical growth is interpreted as the primary indicator of a successful ministry.

Nonetheless, growth is seen as preferable to decline, and some of the methods suggested by McGavran are commended. It is perhaps hardly surprising that a sociologist recognises potential uses for accurate and functional statistics of membership and population, or for the use of socially aware techniques, such as flexibility of strategy in the context of specific church situations and populations.

2.4.4 The Alban Institute

The Church Growth school (McGavran, Wagner *et al*) is not the only group of people committed to the growth of the Church, although they seem to have appropriated the term. Another group with a similar commitment is the Alban Institute, based in Washington DC, which is primarily concerned with 'equipping the people of God to minister in the church and the world' (Stevens and Collins, 1993, *Invitation to Membership*). In Wagner's terms this would be an emphasis on the 'well-mobilised laity' (Wagner 1976, p.187), though possibly to the relative neglect of other areas. One example of the output from the Alban Institute is *The Equipping Pastor*, by R Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, which takes what they term a 'systems approach to congregational leadership'⁵⁸.

There is much in this work which is similar in content to Church Growth material (though the term is, in general, carefully avoided), while using a rather different vocabulary. For instance, they give a great deal of attention to leadership (as do McGavran and Wagner *et al*), but see the 'professional' leader's role as essentially adaptive, selecting from a range of leadership styles according to the context of the church system (which is also adaptive, and of which the pastor is a part) at the time in question. They say, 'All of us have a preferred leadership style and back-up styles to which we turn when our preferred style is not working' (Stevens and Collins, 1993, p.69). This is rather different from Wagner's 'dynamic' leader. They see the church leader as the leader of processes rather than of people (*ibid.* p.129), with a repertoire of means through which to effect that leadership.

A further difference is concerned with the issue of spiritual gifts. The Church Growth school says, 'The issue of gifts is crucial for church growth', and seems biased towards a Pentecostal/charismatic understanding of spiritual gifts. Wagner's second vital sign, for instance, speaks of a 'well-mobilised laity which has discovered, has developed, and is using all the spiritual gifts for growth' (Wagner 1976, p.187). He makes it clear that he is using the term 'spiritual gift' in a somewhat exclusive manner, based on New Testament lists such as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, to mean specific identifiable gifts (prophecy, evangelism, teaching *etc.*) which God has given to the church through individual members who may have one or more such gifts (Wagner 1976, Chapter 5).

⁵⁸ The 'systems approach' they use, though based on the general systems theory of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, is more directly related to the development of a systems approach in family therapy (*i.e.* a branch of psychology). It would have been possible to use a wide range of alternative 'systems approaches', from both hard and soft systems methodologies, in a 'systems analysis' of churches.

Stevens and Collins, conversely, claim 'that the gift movement has been co-opted by the granular individualism of Western culture and is used as one more way to achieve personal fulfilment' (Stevens and Collins, 1993, p.35). They therefore argue that spiritual gifts should be understood systemically, as arising within relationships, rather than being the possession of individuals; for instance, 'A gift of teaching ... only "happens" in a learning relationship' (*ibid.*). While this does not suggest that spiritual gifts are not necessary in a church, their view would seem to prevent the 'tick-list' approach which Wagner's view appears to favour (in exaggeration, we might present a church with a shopping list which could include one apostle, one or more prophets, a few teachers – and a membership including about 10% evangelists).

Stevens and Collins do not directly take issue with the Church Growth school, but seem to have almost ignored it, despite covering much of the same, or associated, subject areas.

2.4.5 Christian A Schwarz

Schwarz writes from the German-based Institute for Church Development, but claims his research and writings have international relevance and 'explain church growth in the United States better than many of the popular models' (Schwarz 1996, Introduction).

Schwarz makes a number of feints towards the Church Growth movement, which he describes as, 'a technocratic endeavour through and through, even in those cases where the spiritual aspect is emphasised' (Schwarz 1996, p.6). However, he never gives references, nor attributions for anecdotes or quotations, and the strength of his argument is weakened by this.

It appears that Schwarz in fact offers little which is different, although the illustrations and parallels he uses do add a fresh perspective, without changing much of the argument. He sees the 'technocratic' approach as being mechanical, and polarised against the 'spiritualistic' approach of those who want to rely on God alone for growth in their churches, without making much of a contributory effort. Schwarz offers in their place what he calls the 'biotic' paradigm, taken from plant biology ('consider the lilies of the field, how they grow', is used to illustrate the principles of church growth as well as botanical growth). From this paradigm, it is argued that the criterion should not actually be *growth* but *health*, as measured qualitatively rather than quantitatively. A healthy plant will both grow and reproduce itself, and Schwarz claims that churches should exhibit similar characteristics, and he offers the following checklist of 'quality characteristics' by which health can be measured:

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-oriented ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Functional structures
- Inspiring worship service
- Holistic small groups

- Need-oriented evangelism
- Loving relationships

Of these characteristics, several (though differing slightly in emphasis) can be seen to be similar to the lists provided by Wagner and by Pointer (see 2.2.3.1 and 2.10 in this study). The major omissions are the homogeneity principle, and (in part) Wagner's reference to 'Biblical Priorities', though a similar area is covered as 'passionate spirituality'. An interesting, and potentially useful addition is Schwarz's final characteristic, 'Loving relationships', which he claims is measurable through actual practice (e.g. the frequency of 'laughter in church' or of invitations between church members for a meal or coffee (Schwarz 1996, pp. 36 and 108)). Responding to queries about the methodology used, Christoph Schalk (of the German Church Research Institute) explains that the characteristics derive from a wide range of results, grouped by the statistical technique of factor analysis (Schalk 1996). If this is so, then their broad similarity to the Wagner 'signs' should perhaps be interpreted as a confirmation, rather than a challenge.

Schwarz has received considerable support from the British Church Growth Association, and has published several articles in its journal, *Church Growth Digest* (e.g. *Quality Principles No. 3, Passionate Spirituality*, in Year 17, Issue 3, Spring 1996). His book *Natural Church Development* is currently being promoted (pre-publication) by the BCGA.

Schwarz's argument is flawed by three factors. Firstly, he seems on several occasions (exemplified above) to be making attacks on the Church Growth movement, and claiming to have a better explanatory model for growth. However, he also uses the concepts developed within the movement, without attribution and without many significant additions. Secondly, he makes many claims which he bases on the evidence collected by his survey of over 1,000 churches in many different countries, but he does not actually produce the evidence: his claims are worth little unless we are able to evaluate his evidence and methodology. Thirdly, the final section of his book makes several references to workbooks, computer software and consultancy services which he offers to churches. No indication of costs are given, and the impression is that one objective of the book is as a marketing strategy for these other items.

2.4.6 Other Critics and Sceptics

In 1981 J Randall Petersen wrote in *Christianity Today* to question the movement's emphasis on numbers, its use of social science and its goals for the church (Petersen 1981). In 1991, the same journal reported Peterson's involvement in the planting of a new church – Hope United Methodist Church, in Voorhees, New Jersey – built upon Church Growth concepts, including novel methods such as telemarketing. Peterson still feels uneasy about some Church Growth ideas, but admits the approach works, and has therefore accepted it on pragmatic grounds (Sidey 1991). Sidey claims that 'outright critics are now hard to find', as the movement's principles have become accepted as 'givens' in most churches.

Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in Church Growth, and perhaps especially in its key writers such as McGavran and Wagner.

As David Roozen says:

Given the avalanche of “church-growth-how-to” books, newsletters and leadership seminars appearing in recent years, it is puzzling that there has not been a similar outpouring of published empirical research on the subject.

Roozen 1993 p.18

Roozen, with C Kirk Hadaway, is the editor of a book (*Church and Denominational Growth*, 1993) which addresses this deficiency across a range of denominations in the USA, although the issue has yet to be addressed in the UK.

Roozen continues, saying of Church Growth literature that:

... some of it is quite superficial, and much of it is more motivational than programmatic,

ibid.

This will be apparent in this study, in which it has been necessary to evade, so far as possible, the motivational elements of the texts, in order to concentrate on the underlying teachings. It would also be true to say that while the literature tends to be more motivational than programmatic, it nevertheless remains more programmatic than analytic.

Canon Robert Warren is the National Officer for Evangelism in the Church of England, and argues for a redefinition of churches as missionary congregations which engage with the community in which they exist. He argues that, although becoming a missionary congregation ‘will in all probability lead to growth’, his thinking is quite different to that of the Church Growth movement. He is quoted as saying, ‘One of the fundamental flaws of church growth philosophy is that really it is saying, “Do these five things and the Church will grow”, which actually makes God redundant’ (Martin, 1996).

There is some truth in this accusation, as was noted above (2.3) when considering McGavran’s defence of the ‘inadequacy’ of Church Growth theology, in which he seemed to be suggesting that theological adequacy could be identified with numerical growth. However, the accusation is not wholly fair. Church Growth writers from McGavran onwards have acknowledged the sovereign works of God, especially through revivals and people movements, as outlined above when discussing Pointer’s work (2.2.3.1). Moreover, there is general agreement on the need for prayer (communion / communication with God) and on the use of spiritual gifts (provided by God). This seems to indicate that God is not redundant when the Church Growth ‘philosophy’ is employed.

Furthermore, Warren claims (*ibid.*) that there are five marks of a missionary congregation, which:

- Has a clear statement of mission and purpose that grows from bottom-up, not top down;
- Offers a distinctive spirituality ...

- Has a clear understanding of Christian initiation. It sees conversion as a lifestyle: not just a moment when you begin the Christian life but how you continue to live it.
- Is a learning community ... where members are committed to continuous learning about their faith and how to live it out.
- Is based on a cell structure. ... [such churches] link cells to a congregation and regularly engage in large-scale celebrations.

There are some strong similarities here to Church Growth teaching, the most obvious of which is the stress on cells, congregations and celebrations. However, the idea of conversion as a lifestyle, rather than only a moment's decision is very similar to McGavran's claims about the stages of discipling and perfecting (discussed in 2.3.1 above). Similarly, that idea and that of the church as a community in which members learn about their faith and how to live it out can both be understood as similar concepts to Wagner's second 'vital sign', the 'mobilisation of the membership' (see 2.10.2 below). Warren's first two points are somewhat different, but the last three seem closely related to Church Growth teaching. Perhaps his thinking is not so different as he thinks!

2.5 Evangelism: The Church's Priority

As mentioned above in the discussion on theology, Church Growth starts from an evangelical theology and tends to be particularist in its understanding of salvation. Therefore, evangelism becomes the priority, since it is of vital importance that the maximum number of people are saved (which is equated with active church membership).

A number of methods and tools are recommended for evangelism, but always with the proviso that one should use *effective* methods – which means that no restrictive list could be possible, since a given method might be ineffective in a situation, and other, more effective, methods might emerge.

2.5.1 The Stages of Evangelism

Wagner has presented a definition of the phases of evangelism (Wagner 1987 pp. 117-123) which has been widely adopted, identified by 3 Ps: *Presence, Proclamation* and *Persuasion*⁵⁹.

2.5.1.1 *Presence evangelism*

Presence evangelism is the activity of the church (including individual Christians) as the body of Christ in the world. It *may* involve 'signs and wonders', but *will* include social service and social action. It is a necessary part of Christianity arising from the example and teaching of Jesus (e.g. Matthew 25: 31-46). Earl McInnes says, '...there can be no sincere Christian Stewardship without social action' (McInnes 1989), and quotes John Stott as saying:

A religion concerned only with saving the soul forgets that God did not create souls, but 'body-souls' called human beings. As a body-soul, man has his material and social needs which must be addressed along with and sometimes even before, the communication of the Gospel.

This is not, however, the whole of evangelism.

2.5.1.2 *Proclamation Evangelism*

Proclamation evangelism is the presentation of Christ – through preaching, witnessing or other means – in ways which are intended to make the message of salvation known to and understood by those who hear it.

Wagner and others say that, through its action in 'presence evangelism', the church may earn its right to be heard in proclamation. While the message must be the gospel itself, and is therefore unchanging (though it may be understood differently according to culture), the method of proclamation should be selected for effectiveness.

2.5.1.3 *Persuasion Evangelism*

Some evangelicals (JI Packer and John Stott among them) have argued that proclamation is, in itself, the main task of evangelism: the effect of proclamation is not the evangelist's concern. Wagner asserts, citing the 'Archbishops' definition' of 1918, that the task is goal-directed – evangelism has not taken place until the gospel has been accepted and the convert has become a responsible member of the church.

⁵⁹ This is a development of an earlier model introduced by Engel and Norton (1975) which saw 'Proclamation' as all evangelistic efforts directed at bringing people towards a point where they were able to make an informed 'valid life commitment to Jesus Christ'. This would therefore include those activities which Wagner sees as 'Presence evangelism'. 'Persuasion', as with Wagner, is the specialised form of communication designed to bring about such a commitment. In the model produced by Engel and Norton, there is little point in attempting 'Persuasion', unless 'Proclamation' has been successfully carried out, so that attitudes have changed to become sufficiently receptive. Engel and Norton also make the point that the actual 'Regeneration' which is the result of faith is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, while evangelism requires continued efforts in 'Cultivation', in order to ensure that the new Christian is incorporated into the church, taking root there and showing the fruit which indicates Christian maturity.

Persuasion evangelism therefore follows Proclamation as the third step – taking those who have heard and understood the gospel, and persuading them to accept it and to become disciples of Jesus and responsible members of His Church.

2.6 A Quantitative Approach

Church Growth takes a quantitative approach to church life, starting from the premise that a numerical increase in membership is desirable in order to maximise the number of people in the Kingdom of God.

2.6.1 An Expectation of Growth

An important aspect of the Church Growth movement is the expectation of growth. McGavran said that western churches, including their missionary agencies, had become so used to decline (or at best maintenance) that they were blinded to the possibilities for growth, and therefore did not commit resources to reap the harvest. He argued that the primary reason for a concentration on Church Growth (rather than other kinds of mission) is that God desires it. The shepherd not only searches for the lost sheep, but will not go home without it (Luke 15:4-7). The purpose of the exercise is not the search, but the *finding* – a search theology which emphasises good works but never comes home with any results is insufficient (McGavran 1980 pp. 5 ff.). The parable of the mustard seed (Luke 13:18-19) and other biblical teaching indicate that God actually intends the Church to grow, and the Church Growth movement exists to encourage such growth.

2.6.2 A Theology of Harvest

McGavran proposed instead a theology of harvest, concerned with the finding and bringing home of the lost, or (to use the better analogy) with concentrating on those fields which are white for harvest so as to bring in the best crop possible (McGavran 1980 pp. 26-40). He also commented that the call to Simon and Andrew (Matthew 4:18-20), with the promise that they would become fishers of men, was not a reference, in that context, to fly-fishing, but to trawling. These fishermen were interested in the quantity of the harvest – the quality is not discussed in this context.

Wagner, originally from a farming background, stresses the point. The harvest is the farmer's payoff, and the aim is to maximise the yield (Wagner 1987 p.59). He argues that this is one of the most valuable of McGavran's insights, and that the evaluation of Christian mission by the effect on the harvest should lead to change in order to produce a better crop (Wagner 1987 pp. 59-60). Concentration on ripe crops, rather than equal distribution of resources across all areas of work, will produce a greater harvest, despite the inequity of resource allocation. The Church Growth principle of working with the receptive, while 'holding lightly' the unreceptive arises from this insight (see 2.7.2 below for further discussion of this point).

2.6.3 The Measurements Used

In general, two kinds of statistics are used in the Church Growth approach: population measurements, such as the demographics of a community, and measurements of the church or churches.

2.6.3.1 The Community

A church is unlikely to make much headway without knowing the people it is working amongst, since it is (or could be) made up from that community. However, there is also a tendency for churches to grow away from their roots. This is partly connected with the 'Redemption and Lift' phenomenon, since people often become more affluent through the benefits of a Christian life and associations and become 'upwardly mobile'. Churches may become separated from their community through other means – long-established Christians tend to have fewer contacts in depth with people outside the church, and can easily lose touch with the realities of life for other people. These factors together mean that churches may, over time, cease to have an intimate knowledge of the community around them.

Churches may therefore take a survey of the district in which they operate, to find out the demographic profile of the population, the needs which are felt in the area, the attitudes to the church and the Gospel, the activities of other churches and religious groups (including, perhaps, sects and non-Christian religions). Where church planting or radical changes to the life of a local church are being considered, other statistical information can also be used, including psycho-profiling or lifestyle analysis, to determine the needs of an area, and to plan for a church which is relevant to those needs.

Engel and Norton argue that analysing the environment can include details of people's attitudes to both Christianity and the Church (indeed, the local church). Thus, a church might find that its community includes, for example, 47% who have attended a church at least once in the past year – which can prompt the goal of raising that percentage to 70%⁶⁰ (Engel and Norton 1975, p.91). In this way, Engel and Norton claim that attitudinal measurements of the community can help in setting direction for the church.

⁶⁰ Note that these figures were quoted in an American context in 1975; the figures would probably be very different in most British communities in the 1990s, but the principle might still be applicable.

2.6.3.2 The Church

A church may be measured in many different ways, revealing different aspects of church life. Examples include the following:

- Counts of members, although this is somewhat complicated when membership can be construed in a number of ways, or when (as with the Church of England) there is an assumption that almost everyone in the community may be a member – even if they never attend. A longitudinal study of membership in ‘gathered churches’ may be a valid indicator of the health trend of the church, while a membership survey in demographic terms (age, gender *etc.*) can be used in comparison with the community, or to predict the likelihood of future growth or decline through natural causes.
- Counts of attendance (perhaps by category) may be different to those of membership, and may give an indication of those who are sufficiently committed to make an appearance at public worship. There may be more attenders than members – which could suggest a healthy church engaged in outreach, or might provoke questions about reluctance to enter into membership. A difficulty with counting attendance in some churches, including The Salvation Army, is the number of people who attend more than one service on Sundays. It is quite possible for a highly committed Salvationist to be counted six or seven times attending different events on a Sunday – but he or she is still only one attender.
- A Family Analysis, showing the demographics of the church and those immediately connected with it. McGavran’s suggestion is that families which are not in their entirety committed to the church are more prone to erosion as members (McGavran 1980 pp. 103-104). Whole families are likely to be stable components of the church, whereas half families (where only one partner is a Christian) and singles are more at risk. He suggests too that a family analysis can reveal the webs of relationships along which the church has the greatest possibilities for growth.
- Gains and Losses can be measured by category (while the individuals are given appropriate care). McGavran identified three kinds of gain which can occur: ‘biological’ (children of church members coming to commitment), ‘transfer’ from other churches, and ‘conversion’. Gibbs adds ‘restoration’ of people whose church membership had lapsed over some years, suggesting that this might be a significant category in areas where the church has been in decline (Gibbs 1990 p.118). Losses can be similarly categorised as: ‘deaths’, ‘transfer’ to other churches, and ‘reversion’ (where faith, commitment and/or membership is lost)⁶¹.

⁶¹ In The Salvation Army, it has been the practice to also count as a loss to the local corps those who have been commissioned as officers and given responsibilities and appointments beyond the local level. This can distort the picture slightly, though as the present figures are less than 60 per year this distortion will not be large.

Only *conversions* (and possibly restorations as a special case of conversion) are real growth from outside the existing community of faith. Transfer losses deserve careful attention – a ‘Transfer Out’ ought to be balanced by a ‘Transfer In’ elsewhere; if not, there is a net loss which may be due to a poor follow-up or to a lack of welcome at the receiving church. Losses by reversion indicate a leaky church. There will always be some losses of this kind; even Jesus couldn’t keep all twelve disciples safe – it is one of the risks entailed in human free will. But *too many reversions indicate that something is wrong with a church which consistently loses people.*

Gibbs says (and this may be applicable to both transfer and reversion) that if people who have left the church:

... were spiritually hungry and drifted off because they became bored and disillusioned, their loss is a tragic indictment on the church. If people come for bread and are offered a stone, we should not be surprised if they drift off in search of other bakeries or decide to produce their own loaves.

Gibbs 1979 p.15

The identification of gains and losses may be one of the most important aspects of data-gathering, since it will show the numbers joining the church and leaving it, by their categories.

2.6.3.3 *Other Statistics*

Several other statistics can be used within the Church Growth approach, including information on the homogeneity of the church, and the record (in terms of evangelistic productivity) of each worker. The decision as to which types of measurement are useful must be made within the context of the specific situation.

2.6.3.4 *The Value of Measurement*

Church Growth claims that two main values are to be gained from statistical measurement.

Firstly, it makes explicit the numerical strength or weakness of the church, with the underlying trends and the profile of the type of membership (age, gender, socio-economic class *etc.*). This will make it impossible for leaders to be blinded (or to blind themselves) to the true situation, and will reveal any causes for concern.

Secondly, statistical measurement is a tool for decision-making. We have seen that a church which grows through transfers may not be successful in evangelism (although it may be in other ways); making this explicit will demonstrate to the church leadership that there could be reason to change the church’s approach to evangelism. Similarly a church which is still strong and viable, but which is in slow and unremitting decline, might be challenged by statistics to introduce changes in structure or programme so as to change that trend.

If the study of the church and the area survey reveal mis-matches, this should stimulate decisions. Should the church move to an area where it matches the population? Should it try to change to be more like (and hopefully more attractive to) the people of the area? Should it deliberately target those who are most nearly like its own profile, and leave other churches to work with the other groups of people? There may be many courses of action which are open – the important issue here is that the quantified data makes clearer the need for and the implications of those decisions (Pointer 1984 pp. 106-112).

McGavran said:

... statistics, if they are to have any meaning, should be gathered by those who know the churches well and who are concerned that the statistics reveal the truth. They should be accompanied by a full description of the churches, their natural groupings, and their geographical, social and spiritual environment. Statistics are a summary of significant information and care should be taken that they convey true meanings.

McGavran 1959, pp. 27-28

Where this is done, the statistical information is a summary of the life of the church. It simplifies (and in so doing loses some detail), but nevertheless reflects the reality. However, if the statistics are interpreted by someone who is not familiar with the church in question, faulty conclusions can be drawn⁶². Statistics can provide indicators of the qualitative life of the church, but they should not be considered as the only important kind of information, and there is no implication that this is so in the Church Growth approach.

2.7 A Goal Oriented Approach

It will be apparent that since:

- Church Growth sees evangelism as the most important part of the Church's mission;
- the number of church members is seen as an important indicator of the success of evangelism;
- the church and its community are measured statistically.

⁶² For instance, Brierley (1992) has interpreted Salvation Army statistics, and while much of his work is clearly valid there are some erroneous assumptions (the Torchbearer roll is taken as a youth roll, but is in fact a youth *club* roll; the Home League Fellowship is taken as a social gathering for the members of the Home League, whereas it is a distinct entity with its own roll and meetings).

a church which has adopted the Church Growth approach will have a definite direction to its work. This will appear in two ways: the church will plan to achieve growth, and it will allocate its resources where it expects the return on investment (numerical growth) to be maximised.

2.7.1 Planning for Growth

Church Growth encourages planning (see Wagner 1987 Ch. 1), although with the understanding that human plans are subject to God, who may speak through the planning process, but who may also choose to override human plans for his own purposes. Wagner cites several scriptural evidences for a church's engagement in planning, rather than simply carrying out the ecclesiastical cycle. Essentially this amounts to a belief in an active God, who plans his own activities, and who plans for his people, through both a general providence and also the special providence of salvation in Jesus Christ. As God plans his actions, his church should also be planning for its future, since we have been given reason and responsibility for decision-making. Christians are co-workers with God, not trained performing animals, and are responsible for the use of the assets with which they are entrusted.

However, before planning, the church needs to face the facts which can emerge from an analysis of the church and the community. For example, as mentioned above (2.6.3), the church can use statistical information (with other kinds of information) in the process of planning for growth, to determine the extent to which its demographic profile matches that of the surrounding community.

In churches, as in business, planning is concerned with goals and objectives, and with the allocation of resources to achieve those purposes. The terms 'goal' and 'objective' are semantically so similar that they are often used interchangeably. The Church Growth movement has adopted the usage that an *objective* is a general statement of purpose, while a *goal* is a specific result with a date by which it is to be achieved. A goal is therefore specific and quantifiable.

An important part of the planning process for the church is the establishment of objectives (a Mission Statement⁶³ might include these), which will change little over a number of years. At more frequent intervals, the church will set goals, with interim goals where appropriate, so that the extent of success or failure becomes measurable. Realistic goals are relevant, measurable, achievable, challenging and personal (that is, they must be owned by the members of the church, and not only the leaders).

⁶³ During the late 1980's and 1990's, many Salvation Army corps have adopted Mission Statements which make explicit the role which they see for themselves. The Mission Statement for the UK Territory reads as follows:

- The Salvation Army is an integral part of the universal Christian Church.
- Its message is based on the Bible; its motivation is the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- Its mission is to proclaim his gospel, to persuade people of all ages to become his disciples and to engage in a programme of practical concern for the needs of humanity.
- Its ministry is offered to all, regardless of race, creed, colour, age or sex.

Win Arn says:

Goals to be effective must be 'owned' by all involved ... Unfortunately what often happens ... is the congregation will give verbal agreement to the goals, but will not involve themselves in their accomplishment. Why should they? They have not bought them. They do not 'own' them.

McGavran and Arn 1973 p.156-157

Setting goals is the only way of knowing what progress is being made, in order to take action to correct either the trends or the goals (if, for instance, they are found to be based on faulty assumptions).

Wagner follows Robert Schuller in accepting goal-setting as based on biblical precedent – it is a kind of faith (so that the terms 'faith goals' or 'faith projections' are sometimes used), which he describes as 'possibility thinking faith' (from Schuller's book *Moving Ahead with Possibility Thinking*), as described by the writer to the Hebrews: 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (Hebrews 11:1). Wagner frankly admits that, although he doesn't fully understand the theology, he believes that the exercise of such faith seems to tap into a source of divine power which is not ordinarily released in other ways (Wagner 1987 p.156-157).

Once objectives and goals are established (by whatever means are used) they must be shared with the wider church, so that all members can own them, and feel committed to work and pray for them, according to the plans (the routes to the goals, including resource allocation).

'When all is said and done, a great deal more is said than done', warns Gibbs (Gibbs 1990 p.294). It is vitally important that the planning is not seen as the important work – it is the necessary preliminary to the real work. Planning must be done, and should be done well, but it should not be done instead of the implementation.

In any major plan there should be points along the way at which an evaluation can be conducted. If the plan is badly awry a re-consideration might be necessary – throw resources at it, change the goal, amend the target date, abandon the plan before too much effort is wasted. It may be that other events have intervened and that the original plan should no longer have the priority it was initially given (it may be raised or lowered). Only by building in evaluation points can this kind of information be known and used.

2.7.2 Resource Allocation

With the goals set, and the routes determined, the particular tasks can be allocated, and appropriate resources provided. The budget for the particular project (the route to the goal) needs to be found within the overall church budget, and other resources (mostly human) identified and obtained (or planned for as a sub-project – or prayed for!).

At a local level, but still more so where national or international decisions are made about resources, it may be necessary to decide how resources should be shared between areas or types of work which are more or less productive in terms of new disciples. It is a Church Growth principle (as it is a general principle of business management) that resources should be applied where they will produce the best return (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.4 above). McGavran therefore suggested that although unreceptive peoples should not be by-passed with the Gospel, they should be 'held lightly' (*i.e.* contact should be maintained, but little resource applied to evangelisation) until they become receptive (or until the church learns how to communicate with them); meanwhile, the big battalions should be directed where people are responsive (McGavran 1980 p.262). Wagner takes the issue of 'holding lightly' the unreceptive, and clarifies it by explaining that it involves witnessing and watching for the 'signs of the times' which indicate that the harvest is ripening: it takes fewer workers to watch the fields than to bring in the harvest (Wagner 1987 p.89).

Rick Warren individualises the issue of receptivity, using Matthew 10:14 as a text, quoting: 'If a home or town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, *leave that place and shake its dust off your feet*' (Warren's italics). This seems a good rationale, except that the quotation is from the NCV, and is different in meaning to the translations given by most other versions (*e.g.* 'If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town' (NIV)). Warren stresses the *instruction* to leave the unreceptive, but almost all translators render the words as if they referred to the *inevitable* leaving of the unreceptive, and the manner in which this should be done⁶⁴.

2.8 *The Use of the Behavioural Sciences*

The definition of Church Growth used by the Church Growth Academy says that it

... strives to combine the eternal principles of God's Word ... with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural sciences ...

This, of course, begs the question, since the *best* insights are, by this definition, those which the Church Growth movement uses.

⁶⁴ It would be inappropriate at this point to consider in detail this instruction from Jesus to the twelve disciples sent as preachers, healers and deliverers (*i.e.* exorcists) 'to the lost sheep of Israel'. Such a consideration would become an exercise in exegesis, which is beyond the scope of this study.

In summarising research into growth and decline in American churches, Inskeep says:

There is considerable apprehension about the church growth movement among social scientists. More than a small part of this apprehension is due to differences in perspective and levels of methodological sophistication. There is little doubt that McGavran ... was primarily interested in church growth, not for scientific reasons, but because he sought converts to the Christian faith. Methodologically, church growth proponents typically embrace anecdotal case examples rather than larger, theoretically based empirical surveys of groups of congregations.

Inskeep 1993, p.142

It seems that there is little evidence of a systematic use of the social and behavioural sciences, but this may be for several reasons:

- research which confirms the Church Growth approach may have been done, but not published;
- insufficient research may have been done, possibly because suitably skilled people are not motivated to enquire into Church Growth;
- research which disputes the underlying theories may have taken place, but is – for that reason – not published or referred to by those who are committed to Church Growth, and is of insufficient interest to gain the attention of others.

The third suggestion would, of course, be unethical, but is not (for that reason alone) incredible.

Therefore, in the absence of a body of hard evidence, it seems that the theoretical commitment to the use of social and behavioural sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology *etc.*, in practice seems mostly to take the form of references to existing and favourable work in those fields, rather than to specific research by people who are interested in what Church Growth has to say.

2.8.1 Anthropology and Sociology

Church Growth claims to have a basis in anthropology but, as shown by Robert L Ramseyer, this claim is not strong.

Ramseyer explains:

For Dr McGavran, ... missiology is a coherent academic discipline in its own right. Missiology uses other disciplines, including anthropology, but as an independent discipline it is presumably free to develop its own criteria for such use. Thus, although church growth publications make frequent reference to anthropology and advocate the study of anthropology, there is no apparent wrestling with basic anthropological theory for an understanding of the nature of man, culture and society. It seems to be assumed that a missiologist may use specific conclusions of anthropology without reference to the assumptions about the nature of reality on which those conclusions are based.

Ramseyer 1973, p.66

He continues:

For church growth theory anthropology is a toolbox containing tools which are not intrinsically related to each other. The worker can pick and choose among these tools freely to work at church growth problems. The theoretical assumptions on which the tool is based and the set of which it forms an integral part are not the concern of church growth theory.

ibid.

Accepting that this eclectic approach will be found within the Church Growth school, it is necessary to show how this occurs, and this will be done here with particular reference to McGavran's contentious Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP).

In the context of cross-cultural missionary work, the value of cultural anthropology, which is concerned with understanding the differences in culture between human societies, is evident. It is also, however, relevant in understanding that a presentation of the gospel which is appropriate to a middle-class church may not be appropriate to a working-class society. Although they may appear to belong to the same British culture, their sub-cultures (ways of thinking, viewing the world, expressing themselves *etc.*) may be subtly, or not so subtly, different (Gibbs, 1990 pp. 70-72).

Pointer says (Pointer, 1984 pp. 181-183) that culture can be seen in terms of three interlocking, constantly changing spheres:

- Ideological – *e.g.* belief system, religions, traditions
- Technological – *e.g.* tools, clothes, media, transport
- Sociological – *e.g.* relationships, government, courtship & marriage, accepted norms of behaviour

Church Growth has touched upon some of these issues. For instance, Gibbs has considered the ideological sphere in chapters on, respectively, *The influence of secularisation* and *The challenge of religious pluralism* (Gibbs 1993, Chs. 6 & 7). The technical sphere has been little considered, other than so far as it provides tools for evangelism (the printed word, music and dance, broadcasting *etc.*). The sociological sphere of culture is the one which has had most impact on the development of the movement's thought. McGavran claimed that faith spread most easily through the relationships which were part of the culture (family, tribe *etc.*). He did not suggest that anyone *would* become a Christian simply because they could do so without crossing social barriers, but insisted that the gospel spreads more easily along the web of intimate relationships, which he described as the bridges of God (McGavran, 1980 p.395).

A somewhat contentious corollary of this observation is the 'Homogeneous Unit Principle', the controversial nature of which means it should be considered in some depth. This principle of the Church Growth movement is based partly on observation, and partly on a particular reading of the Bible.

McGavran said '... [People] like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers' (McGavran 1980 p.198), and this concept lies behind the Homogeneous Unit Principle of Church Growth (the fifth of Wagner's Vital Signs). This implies that those aspects of culture which are compatible with Christianity should not be disturbed in order to artificially integrate people from disparate backgrounds. This view has not always been that of the Church, members of which have sometimes seen cultural change ('decent' clothing, for example) as being a necessary component of Christianity. When McGavran first made this observation, it was primarily concerned with major social barriers, such as race or caste. The idea was later developed, showing that it can also be relevant to sub-cultures within apparently homogeneous populations.

A number of Christians remain uncomfortable with this approach, which seems to lead to segregation, if not apartheid, between and within churches.

McGavran and others have made frequent reference to the scope of the 'Great Commission' as *'παντα τα εθνε'*, which they interpret as 'the classes, tribes, lineages and peoples of earth' (McGavran 1980, p.22). Wagner especially seems to see homogeneity as a filter through which to understand the New Testament (e.g. Wagner 1979, pp. 118-119), arguing that Jesus was actually instructing his followers to disciple the peoples of the world *ethnic unit by ethnic unit*. Conversely, Norris in a comprehensive study of the evidence for the social composition of the New Testament church, says:

The emerging consensus among specialists on the social world of early Christianity is that Christian groups were never composed exclusively of the urban poor or the working proletariat. The presence of those from the lower levels of society is always quite clear. ... But with the possible exception of the first few months of Jesus' ministry, believers in him came from all levels of society from the highest available, that is, the local aristocracy, to the poorest of the poor.

... combining the obvious evidence for the poor and oppressed with these assembled materials concerning the rich and well-placed, these same specialists now claim that early Christianity did not occur in homogeneous units. In fact, when compared with contemporary associations and groups within the Roman Empire, Christianity can be viewed as being more heterogeneous in the social status of its members than other communities.

Norris, 1983 p.271

Norris recognises much of strength in Church Growth thinking, especially the emphasis on the importance of evangelism, but comments that, '... if the research cited here is correct, then Church Growth is too much a twentieth-century, pragmatic, sociological phenomenon which has too little connection with New Testament or early Christian history' (Norris 1983, p.272).

Bosch, in a very detailed exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20, shows that Matthew's meaning was probably completely unrestricted, referring to all people, regardless of any groups to which they may belong (Bosch 1983, pp. 235-237), although he concedes the possibility that there may have been some distinction between Jews and gentiles, simply because only the former were the subject of the Old Covenant, while the New Covenant (he claims) is applicable to everyone. Bosch suggests too that similar ideas to that of the Homogenous Unit Principle developed in nineteenth century Germany, which eventually led to a view that the church was inseparable from the *Volk*, as exemplified by Warneck in particular (Bosch 1983, pp. 238-240). This was part of the background of the development of *apartheid* in South Africa, and leads to the clear danger of multitudes of homogenous churches, rather than a church demonstrating that 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:9).

Saayman has shown the effects of the HUP (prior to its formulation as a Church Growth principle) in South Africa. Writing in 1983, before the abolition of apartheid in both churches and the state, he shows that in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) segregated congregations had their origin in pragmatic approaches to mission (Saayman, 1983). The early churches in the Cape were mixed, as 'Hottentot' and 'Coloured' converts joined the Dutch congregations. As mission was directed towards the African population, the Cape Town Presbytery considered in 1828 whether communion should be administered simultaneously to black and white members of the congregation, and concluded that it was 'compulsory, according to the teachings of Scripture and the spirit of Christianity' to do so. This decision was confirmed by the DRC Synod in 1834 as 'an unalterable axiom founded on the infallible Word of God'. Later, in 1857, a concession was made – because of the 'weakness of some' (*i.e.* prejudiced whites) – that in some circumstances separate places of worship should be used. This was done in order to further 'the progress of the Kingdom of Christ among the heathen', which means that it has similarities to the Church Growth HUP. By 1949, partially segregated churches⁶⁵ had become normal, and Synod declared that this was in accordance with 'the Spirit of Christ and Holy Scripture'. In 1974, this policy was formulated in terms very similar to those of the HUP:

The existence of separate Dutch Reformed Church affiliations for the various population groups is recognized as being in accordance with the plurality of church affiliations described in the Bible. These enable each individual to hear and preach the great deeds of God in the context of his own language, culture and national affiliation.

DRC, 1976 p.82

It is clear from Saayman's analysis that there the HUP is a risky approach to mission. Although there may be some pragmatic justifications for it, the HUP can result in the dilution of Christian ethics and community in favour of existing ethno-cultural divisions, leading to a corruption of theology to support the practice.

⁶⁵ White churches excluded black members, while younger (black) churches had open membership, so that there were some white members in these churches.

Yoder takes the discussion into possibly deeper water by arguing that integration, or 'reconciliation' between ethnic (and other) groups is at the heart of the gospel. It is not simply a matter of ethics (as McGavran believed) which can be learnt and adopted as believers are 'perfected', but the 'preferred social shape' of the gospel, which is 'communicated most integrally where the reconciliation of different kinds of people can be directly experienced by the very generation of those who first hear the message' (Yoder 1983, p. 281-283). If this is so, then the Church Growth view comes dangerously close to presenting a different gospel to that of the New Testament.

As Padilla says:

It may be true that "men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers", but that is irrelevant. Membership in the body of Christ is not a question of likes or dislikes, but a question of incorporation into a new humanity under the Lordship of Christ. Whether a person likes it or not, the same act that reconciles one to God *simultaneously* introduces the person into a community where people find their identity in Jesus Christ rather than in their race, culture, social class, or sex, and are consequently reconciled to one another.

Padilla 1983, p.287

The HUP has been one of the main stumbling blocks to the wider adoption of Church Growth methods. Bruce Greer quotes Elliott, a leader of the American Baptist Church as saying:

... the "danger" with the homogeneous unit principle is that it works. By focusing on homogeneity, growing churches replicate modern society by fostering an enclave mentality, whereby people associate only with their own kind (Elliott 1982:56).

Greer, 1993 p. 92

Conn has suggested that the HUP would be better replaced with a 'Covenant Solidarity Principle', which states: 'All people want to affirm and reject God-given authentic community without losing social and ethnic identity'. He claims that this formulation corrects McGavran's by recognising the ambivalence of culture, as well as the desirability of being in community with other Christians (Conn 1983b, p.86). Conn therefore reinforces the need for Christians to see themselves as part of the wider Christian community, even though, as Kraft expressed it: '... human beings show an overwhelming predisposition to band together with their own kind (Kraft 1978, p.121). Conn suggests that, in Church Growth, ethnicity might have become so central to strategy that it is seen as 'ultimately and solely beneficial'; he argues that while accepting a pragmatic need for targeting peoples by their homogeneity, the Church must also stress that, in becoming Christian, people are adopted into a new peoplehood in Christ (Conn 1983b, pp. 89-91).

Conn's arguments seem sound, but their implications are much less easy to grasp than those of the HUP: McGavran's phrasing has the benefit of simplicity. However, this simplicity can lead to (or seem to justify) abuses. If each church concentrates its evangelism on those of its own social group (however defined), it can appear to be exclusive, and some therefore believe that new Christians should become part of an integrated church from the beginning. This might mean middle-class and working-class worshipping together (which could create some slight tension), but it might mean tribal converts being asked to join an educated urban church in South America, or a converted Brahmin being asked to join a congregation of low (or no) caste in an Indian setting – a much more difficult proposition. McGavran's answer is that while it is certainly true that in Christ the barriers are broken, *one has to be in Christ first* before it can happen: Jews and Gentiles – or other classes and races who have little respect for one another – must be disciplined before they can be made one (McGavran 1980 p.239). It is unrealistic to expect the highest Christian standards – often unattained in societies which have been under Christian influence for centuries – from new converts before they can be admitted as members of the Church.

McGavran wrote:

One of the mistakes churchmen make who desire moral purity in Christians is to demand that seekers out of paganism, before they receive the Holy Spirit or are baptised, demonstrate conduct which millions of good Christians in Eurica⁶⁶ do not demonstrate after twenty generations in the Church. It is no mistake to desire moral purity. There can scarcely be too much of it. And the Holy Spirit *will bring purity when He indwells God's people. The mistake is in demanding fruits the Spirit has given in old Christian communities as prerequisites to becoming disciples.*

McGavran 1980 p.352

The argument applies to the integration of social groups, just as it does to other ethical questions. McGavran's assertion is that conversion to Christianity *brings* higher standards (perhaps over long periods of time); it is not preceded by them.

McGavran therefore affirmed that rather than breaking down the barriers of Homogeneous Units (HUs), the pragmatic approach is to use them in God's service, spreading the gospel through the network of relationships within the HU, while developing cross-cultural missionary work into other peoples – which can, perhaps, then be further evangelised as another HU (McGavran 1980 p.241-244).

⁶⁶ *Eurica* is McGavran's jargon for Europe and North America, contrasted with *Afericasia*, by which he means Africa, South America and Asia (Australasia seems to have been overlooked).

Bosch warns that:

Undoubtedly there is validity in the Church Growth movement's honoring of the homogeneous unit principle as a communications guideline. We may, however, not take a communications principle and make it an ecclesiological norm by reasoning that (1) homogeneous churches grow more rapidly than others; (2) all churches should grow rapidly; and (3) therefore all churches should be culturally and socially homogeneous. This reasoning cannot but lead to a wrong view of the church.

Bosch 1983, p.239.

Bosch's comment that the homogeneous unit principle is a 'communications guideline' recognises the correct area of strength of the HUP. It may not be valid theologically to seek churches which are composed of homogeneous units, for all the reasons cited above. However, socially it is true that people not only like to flock together with those with whom they have things in common, but also that they tend to understand one another. In brief, the HUP seems to describe the need to be culturally relevant, regardless of whether the culture is one which is based on race, class, caste, age or any other factor.

This issue illustrates the Church Growth approach to the social sciences. McGavran observed a set of social phenomena from which he constructed a theory (in this case the homogeneity principle). The theory seems to be supported by wider observations, and has become widely accepted within the movement, although Gibbs does provide a warning that the negative effects of homogeneity can lead to making the gospel subservient to a particular culture (Gibbs 1993, pp. 152-153). There is, however, little comment from McGavran, Wagner and the other leaders of the movement to indicate that contrary evidence and argument has been taken seriously. Although Wagner insists that Church Growth has a 'scientific aspect' (Wagner 1984, p.43), there is little evidence of the use of the scientific method⁶⁷.

Within the Church Growth movement, only Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p.47) seem to have reported research which does not support the homogeneity principle, and this finding has received scant acknowledgement (Wagner 1984, pp. 12-13).

⁶⁷ In summary, the scientific method involves four steps: (1) from observations form a hypothesis; (2) test the hypothesis by attempting to refute it; (3) if it fails the test, then discard it – if it passes the test, treat it as a working assumption; (4) in either case, modify the hypothesis, and continue to test. On this basis, except for rules of logic, there can be no 'scientific facts', only working assumptions, which may well change after the next test of a hypothesis. For example, Newton's discovery of gravity was a sufficient explanation for observed phenomena (and remains satisfactory for many purposes), until Einstein produced a better theory.

Beasley-Murray concedes that in the USA the HUP might be effective, but he says:

... it is far from clear – indeed in our view impossible – to argue on Biblical grounds that God wills such human diversity. ... McGavran and Wagner make much of Acts 6, interpreting this passage as the Early Church deliberately splitting into two homogeneous units – Hebrews and Hellenists! In our opinion the Church Growth School is here involved in eisegesis rather than exegesis.

It seem to us that a pragmatic approach to the life of the Church is valid in itself, without the need to resort to dubious theologising. If a method is effective in adding men and women to the Church of God, then it should be utilised, provided it is not in opposition to the Word of God.

Beasley-Murray 1980

Others, such as Kraft (1974 and 1979) and Conn (1983b) have taken issue not simply with McGavran's approach to homogenous ethnic groups, but also to what Conn has called the 'simplicity' of McGavran's thoughts on matters of anthropology. Kraft similarly has said that McGavran was 'not taking seriously ... contemporary anthropological understandings' (Kraft 1979, p. 50). Conn expresses sympathy (perhaps rather condescendingly) with McGavran's lack of expertise in this area (Conn 1983b, pp. 83-85), but nevertheless shows very clearly the cavalier approach of both McGavran and Wagner to cultural anthropology. He shows that the view of the balance between Christianity and culture outlined by McGavran (1974, pp. 8-9) is in fact not sound either anthropologically or theologically. McGavran seems to have believed that a culture-free core of Christianity could be discerned and could be slotted into a variety of existing cultures, which could then make adaptations in order to produce an indigenous version of Christianity for each society. Conn cites Kraft (1979, p.79) with approval, in his argument that a supracultural version of Christianity is not observable, other than within and interpreted by specific cultures.

These observations illustrate the difficulties in which Church Growth finds itself when considered from the standpoint of the social sciences. Church Growth leaders have made grandiose claims about their use of behavioural and social sciences, which cannot be substantiated when judged in their own terms. A little more modesty in this area would perhaps be becoming.

2.8.2 Psychology

Psychology is concerned with the human mind (or soul, as Pointer says). This includes such factors as the ways in which people respond to change. Pointer cites the work of E M Rogers and F F Shoemaker (*The Communication of Innovations*, 1971) to illustrate both how decisions are made in communities such as churches, and also the use which can be made of psychology in understanding church life and growth. The key figures in psychology, including Freud, Jung, Skinner *etc.* and the schools of thought deriving from them, are rarely if ever mentioned in Church Growth literature, which suggests that this social science is not taken seriously on its own ground. Perhaps the value lies in the willingness of Church Growth thinkers to use material from the social sciences, even where the use is not perfect. Nevertheless, it emphasises the point made above, that Church Growth use of the social sciences is largely derivative (and highly selective).

2.8.3 Other Social Sciences

Church Growth definitions and assertions make great claims about using 'the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural sciences'. They are, however, very selective about the social sciences which are used, as well as about the concepts which are cited from those sciences (as noted above).

For example, it is hard to find any extensive use of insights from economics, despite the potential which exists. With little background in the subject, I have been able to find concepts in the work of Schumpeter which have potential implications for Church Growth, and which could certainly be explored and developed in some depth.

Schumpeter outlined in 1943 his view that innovation is a result of a process of 'Creative Destruction'. Producers are compelled to develop new products because of the effects of competition, since any who are trading in an outmoded product when a new one has become available are likely to lose business. This pressure to innovate may lead to the destruction of old products, and sometimes of old producers, but overall it leads to improvements in the range of available products and in the cost efficiency of the products which are marketed (Schumpeter, 1976 pp. 82-3). Large firms are important in this process, since they have the resources to fund research into new products and methods, as well as gaining from economies of scale.

From this (very condensed) outline, it can be argued that faiths (including a faith in no religion) are in competition, and that there is pressure to innovate. Where a monopoly exists (*e.g.* in Islamic societies) this is less so, but a free market in religion, as in the USA and perhaps to a lesser extent in other western countries, leads to similar competitive pressures to those which affect commercial producers. If we accept this premise, we can develop a concept to explain the new styles of worship and of church management which have arisen since the 1960s, with a stress on relationships rather than structures and on charismatic experience rather than liturgy. The argument could be developed further with reference to the New Age complex of faiths, therapies and behaviours.

Since I am not actually concerned with an analysis of the implications of Schumpeter's economics for churches, I shall leave the issue at this point. However, at first sight there seem to be some useful insights to be found in economics: this could repay further exploration, and it is surprising that Church Growth, with its claims about the use of the social sciences, has not developed this area.

2.8.4 Church Growth and Social Science

There seems to be some cause for concern over the use of the social sciences by the Church Growth movement. The major issue is that of the derivative, selective approach. Church Growth writers generally affirm the value of the social sciences, but little scientific work seems to be offered in support of the overall approach, while the philosophies which inform the social scientists seem to have received scant notice. A piecemeal, highly selective, use of unrelated insights is offered. No doubt some of these are valuable: for instance the HUP seems to contain much that is true, although it needs rigorous scientific testing and clarification, since it also claims much for which there is little evidence.

There is no overall sense that the social science disciplines are accepted on their own terms: the founding fathers of sociology, for instance (Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, *etc.*) are rarely, if ever, mentioned, despite the claim that social science insights are used in support of Church Growth. The methodologies of social science, including action research, advanced use of statistics and other approaches to knowledge, seem to be little used. There seems to be little integration of the social sciences with the branches of religious study (theology, Ecclesiology, Christology *etc.*); instead, insights from the various social sciences are cited where they lend support to the Church Growth theories. The method of selection suggests that the 'best insights' of the social sciences are those which agree with Church Growth; if Shakespeare, Dickens or even Barbara Cartland could provide appropriate quotations to support Church Growth, then perhaps the Church Growth Academy definition would have referred to 'the best insights of English literature' as being part of the definition of Church Growth. The commitment of the movement is clearly to the theories and methods of McGavran (as modified and developed by Wagner, Gibbs *et al*), and the social sciences are used selectively only so far as they support those theories and methods.

However, it is perhaps not surprising that this difficulty should exist. According to David Coates:

Enlightenment writers held the view that human beings could advance in this life without religion. ... The social sciences, influenced by three of the traditions whose roots lie most centrally in the Enlightenment – Liberalism, Social Reformism and Marxism – have tended to underplay the role of religion in human societies.

Coates 1991, p.101

There is then a conflict between the social sciences and religion, and perhaps especially Christianity, since it was against the background of European Christianity that the Enlightenment project began.

Coates continues, however:

From the nineteenth century, the assumption that religion would decline or disappear altogether ... has been challenged. Some social scientists (who may have broken with Enlightenment views and values ...), hold that one, or all, of the major world religions have remained important philosophically ...

ibid.

Finally, he says:

Secular world-views, based on the claim that God is dead, or that there is no God, or there are no gods, are no more scientific, it can be argued ... than older religious world-views. Some social scientists now take this position. ... With the questioning of the Enlightenment project's faith in progress through the application of reason and science ... some social scientists and philosophers have concluded that a sense of humanity's dependency and humility is badly needed. They find these values in one or other of the world religions.

ibid.

Coates's comments are cited here not for their direct relevance to Church Growth but because they illustrate from within the area of the social sciences the internal conflict which exists in relation to religion in general. The social sciences originate within the Enlightenment world-view, but some social scientists now reject (at least in part) this humanistic view.

Elaine Storkey, who is well-known as a Christian feminist, as well as a social scientist and theologian, and is now the director of the Institute for Contemporary Christianity (founded by John Stott), says:

At the heart of most religious belief systems would be a questioning of the central tenet of Enlightenment humanism: the assumption of autonomous human freedom. ... For basic to most religions is the acknowledgement that there is a God who has some responsibility for the world, and with whom human beings are in relationship.

... So Christianity and other religious positions ultimately stand as alternative world-views, although often in dialogue and undeniably influenced by the Traditions [of the social sciences], whose own 'religious' roots lie in the Enlightenment.

Storkey, pp. 119-120

Church Growth, with its background in evangelical, Charismatic, Christianity, would have little in common with a world-view which more or less automatically rejects the supernatural and divine as propositions for which there is no need. Consequently, it may follow that Church Growth has found little of use within the 'classical' approaches to social science, such as Weber, Marx, Durkheim and Freud. However, by accepting only those elements (however few) which provide little challenge, Church Growth may be fairly accused of misusing an important body of theory and knowledge. If Church Growth is to maintain Wagner's claim to use the 'best insights of social and behavioural sciences', its theorists could certainly explore more deeply the implications of these sciences.

Similarly, Church Growth needs to give serious attention to other social and philosophical issues, such as feminism and postmodernism. While not themselves (directly) aspects of the social sciences, they present perspectives from which society can be viewed, and which can make major changes to the understanding of that society. The feminist perspective can provide a valuable critique of church structures, which may have implications for Church Growth (this issue will not be developed here, but is noted). Postmodernism is a complex of ideas and issues, but because it is in some ways linked with New Age thinking, and may indicate the beginnings of a major paradigm shift in culture, thought and behaviour, there is a need for consideration of this complex from a Church Growth perspective, or – for all the claims about cultural sensitivity – a large group of people who are spiritually aware may be unreachable by what the Church (with or without Church Growth) can offer.

However, it remains possible that the Church Growth definition of the ‘best insights’ means ‘those insights which agree with our opinions’. This is perhaps a tenable position, but it is unlikely to encourage workers in the social sciences to take Church Growth seriously. Furthermore, such a definition would also weaken Church Growth as a school of missiology, because it would automatically deny to its practitioners any benefit that might arise from social science insights which the ‘founding fathers’ (essentially McGavran and Wagner) did not find acceptable.

2.9 Church Planting – A Brief Discussion

Church planting is an outcome of the observations of Donald McGavran, although this shouldn’t be over-stated – it can sometimes seem that some Church Growth writers have forgotten that churches were planted in the period between the New Testament events and McGavran’s writings. However, if Christianity spreads best through networks of relationships, and if churches tend to be based upon homogeneous units, then it is reasonable to conclude that distinct communities should be served by distinctive churches. Wagner spells this out: ‘Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven’ (Wagner 1987, pp. 168-169).

A great deal of attention has been given to church planting since the mid-1980s, although most of the literature is either written within the American culture, or (if published in the UK) has an Anglican bias.

Martin Robinson, who is currently the Bible Society’s Consultant in Mission Theology, has with Stuart Christine, written *Planting Tomorrow’s Churches Today* (1992) from practical experience of church planting in the UK, and from a broader background in academic and church life in several other countries. The Salvation Army has used this work, and training courses led by Robinson, as a basis for its planting programme, and it is therefore the focus of this discussion.

Robinson and Christine take some of the issues which seem to have been confused by McGavran, such as the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God, and they provide an interpretation which sees the Church (both universal and local) as *part* of the gospel message – outposts of the Kingdom, intended to announce its imminent arrival, but not identical with the Kingdom (Robinson & Christine 1992 p.26). From this perspective, the church has an ‘Incarnational’ presence, and should therefore be an incarnation of Christ for every community – which may be defined to a very fine degree (for example, everyone living on a particular housing estate, from a specific ethnic background and aged between 20 and 40). There should, it is claimed, be a ‘church down their street’ for every community (Robinson & Christine 1992 p.41).

Robinson and Christine discuss in some depth the background (both theological and social) of church planting, showing its value in terms of both spreading the gospel (newer churches are, generally speaking, more effective evangelistically) and of renewing the church (through the introduction of fresh thinking). They cover the missionary period of early British Church history (up to the Synod of Whitby, 664), and the different strategies of the Celtic and Roman missionaries, up to that point and in the period of slower growth which followed. Since the nineteenth century much church planting has taken place, but often either as a consequence of European imperialism or as a result of denominational fragility and schism. Today there is a perceived need for *strategic* planting, both within and across denominations. Perhaps the most ambitious aspect of this development is the formation of Challenge 2000, inspired by the DAWN 2000 strategy of Jim Montgomery in the Philippines. Challenge 2000, supported by the Bible Society, the Evangelical Alliance and March for Jesus, with leaders from nearly twenty denominations (including The Salvation Army) has adopted the aim of creating a church for every 1000 people in the population by the year 2000 (Robinson & Christine 1992, pp. 59-81). It is still too soon to assess the effectiveness of this initiative, although the scope of its ambition is certainly impressive.

The biggest difficulty with the approach of Robinson and Christine is its unrelenting positive outlook. This is understandable, given the market for which it is written, but it overlooks the other side of the coin, which is that some churches are failing, both in economic terms (they cannot pay their way) and in functional terms (they are not operating as incarnational outposts of the Kingdom of God in the community where they are placed).

Robin Gill (in *Competing Convictions* and *The Myth of the Empty Church*) has shown that in the UK denominational rivalries were major factors in the church extension of the nineteenth century, and that one result of this was that where the number of local churches increased, the size of congregations decreased. There may have been more churchgoers overall (for a time), but in the local church the impression was that there were fewer.

In some settings (such as York) this was partly because one church grew at the expense of others. In other places, a part of an existing congregation was formally hived off to form a new church. An effect of both practices was that one or more churches had congregations which were smaller than was previously the case. Smaller congregations tend to be unattractive (as is agreed by the Church Growth movement) and few new people would begin to attend. As fewer new people attended, the existing congregation became increasingly elderly (and fewer in number), becoming still less attractive to new or casual attenders. The result is that many churches have become sparsely attended (particularly in relation to their capacity), are unattractive demographically, have difficulty paying for their own maintenance and for pastoral care and management, and have little orientation towards mission. Because such churches are not viable economically or functionally, they tend towards a process of closure, amalgamation or of multiple charges for the clergy; these factors are all associated with church decline, and the problems are exacerbated rather than resolved (Gill 1989, pp. 105-106).

Gill's argument is that, contrary to the Challenge 2000 view, there are probably *too many* existing churches in Britain today (as a result of the church extension drives of the past), and that the nature and location of those churches is actually contributing to further decline. The existing congregations often do not (because of their age, numbers, social nature or other characteristics) serve the needs of the communities in which they are placed (Gill 1988, p.108). Moreover, the churches which are unsuccessful are subsidised at the expense of those which are viable (Gill 1994, pp. 84-89), while the subsidy prevents any sense of ownership or responsibility among the membership. However, he agrees with McGavran (and also with the authors of *Faith in the City* and liberation theologians) that new churches should be built afresh, especially in urban areas, through what he calls 'worshipping communities'⁶⁸ developing upwards from the local population, regardless of existing parish, denominational or other boundaries.

Gill concludes that church planting is necessary, but that pruning is also required for effective numerical growth across denominations. He says:

... there is beginning to be a recognition that judicious pruning and planting should go hand in hand. Initially most of the evidence was gathered to show that strategies of church planting – which have radically changed over the last two decades – were effective in producing an increase in churchgoing. Unfortunately this evidence was usually collated congregation by congregation without any attempt to assess the effect of planting on churchgoing rates in a whole area. In the process, two obvious problems ... were ignored. The (transfer) growth of one congregation might well serve to weaken surrounding congregations. And secondly, city-centre or (more rarely) rural church planting raise obvious questions about their relationship to an existing plethora of empty churches.

Gill 1993, pp. 292-293

⁶⁸ The term 'worshipping communities' is intended to include church plants (McGavran), neighbourhood-based worship centres (*Faith in the City*) and base communities (liberation theology).

Gill argues not only for planting and pruning *per se*, but for structural reform. Elsewhere he writes:

The British churches in the middle of the last century did have vision and courage to effect new structures. Unfortunately churches today have been slow to recognise that their structures should not be our structures. The rural parish with its own full-time, stipendiary clergyman and the urban parish with its array of church related buildings served their function once. Today they have become an encumbrance promoting not renewal but decline. It is time to change.

Gill 1988, p.119

While changing the management structure of churches (denominations) is important, Gill also argues that the financial structure should be overhauled, so that local churches (or small groups of churches) become the owners of their own finance, and can make management decisions (such as hiring a minister) on their own responsibility. Subsidy may still be necessary, but needs to have a time limit, to be controlled, and to be justified. Gill advises British churches to 'subsidise mission not maintenance', as the subsidy of maintenance tends to stifle initiative, prompting recipients to play safe (Gill 1994, pp. 88-89).

2.10 Wagner's Seven Vital Signs

C Peter Wagner introduced in 1976 a set of seven 'vital signs' which he said could be used diagnostically, in a manner analogous to the clinical use of vital signs in a human patient. The 1984 edition of this work claims that the signs have been tested, and have held up well, although the only tests published were those of Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson in *Turning the Tide* (see 2.11 below), which supported most of the claims, but lacked sufficient data to test those about the size of church and the homogeneous unit principle (Wagner 1984, pp. 12-13).

The 'signs' themselves are listed below.

- i) A pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyse the entire church into action for growth.
- ii) A well-mobilised laity which has discovered, has developed, and is using all the spiritual gifts for growth.
- iii) A church big enough to provide the range of services that meet the needs and expectations of its members.
- iv) The proper balance of the dynamic relationship between celebration, congregation, and cell.
- v) A membership drawn primarily from one homogeneous unit.
- vi) Evangelistic methods that have been proved to make disciples.

vii) Priorities arranged in biblical order.

Wagner does not claim that these signs are a set of levers which, if pulled in the right order, will automatically produce growth. His claim is not that the imposition of these factors will *produce* growth, but rather that a growing church *will also tend to produce these signs*. He says that 'church growth is complex' (Wagner 1984, p.31) and cannot be reduced to a simple formula, but that, if we accept the biblical claim (whether as metaphor or metaphysics) that the Church is the body of Christ (1st Corinthians 12:27), then there is 'justification in taking a clinical approach to analysing the health of a church' (Wagner 1984, p.34).

Some of Wagner's claims do not translate easily from the American to the UK context, and the illustrations he offers seem unrealistic when viewed from the UK (a decadal growth rate of 50% is considered 'not really healthy' but 'not too bad'), but that does not – of itself – invalidate them: it merely makes it necessary to interpret them contextually.

2.10.1 Dynamic Leadership

The first 'sign' provides an example of the cultural issues mentioned above, since it is concerned with the dynamic leadership of the pastor. In the American culture, which is success-oriented, this appears a relatively normal requirement – just as in imported American trading practices (such as *Tupperware* or *Amway*) attention is focused on success stories, while other franchisees are encouraged to set their ambitions high in terms of turnover or profit. In the UK, many church leaders seem to be more comfortable with a self-effacing approach, and may consider that to be described as 'dynamic' carries a hint of criticism, with the suggestion that the leader has too high a profile (Wagner 1984, Ch. 4).

However, Wagner spells out his meaning: the pastor will spend many years (in some cases a lifetime) with a particular church, and should have a recognised authority in the church (not merely something that is part of the job description), which involves personal leadership, rather than committee-based organisation. When reduced to these components, rather than the culture-laden grand statements, the 'sign' is not unreasonable, and can, to some extent, be tested.

2.10.2 Mobilised Membership

The second sign is concerned with the church membership. Wagner claims that a growing church will have a lay membership which is mobilised to participate in the work of the church. He claims that a pastor may be able to do all the work in churches of up to 200 members, but that growth beyond that point is not possible without additional ministry (Wagner 1984, Ch. 5). Therefore, in churches of all sizes, the membership must be motivated and mobilised to participate in the work of the church in various ways according to their abilities and gifts.

2.10.3 Church Size

The third sign is concerned with the size of the church, but Wagner is at pains to make it clear that he does not wish to specify a particular size as optimum; instead he is concerned that the church should be of the right size to meet the needs of its people (Wagner 1984, Ch. 6). He therefore claims that there are places for both large and small churches, but that all churches should be growing. The implication of this is that small churches will become large churches, and that new small churches will therefore be required to meet the needs of those for whom a small church is appropriate.

However, despite his disclaimer, Wagner seems generally to prefer the larger churches because they have the resources (financial and human) to provide a programme which meets the needs of their people (existing and prospective), and to engage in substantial lay ministry. As an aside (p.99) he also comments that while growing churches tend to have long-term leadership, large churches tend to offer better remuneration to their leaders, and this is related to their length of stay. Wagner makes several approving references to Robert Schuller, whose church (the *Crystal Cathedral*) in Los Angeles had in 1984 over 7,000 members, and to other large churches in the USA and elsewhere, but acknowledges that half the churches in the USA have an attendance of 75 or less on Sunday mornings.

Wagner summarises his view as follows:

A growing church can consider itself big enough when it is effectively winning lost people to Christ, when it provides the range of services that meet the needs of its members, and when it is reproducing itself by planting new churches.

Wagner 1984, p.109

2.10.4 Church Structures

Wagner's fourth 'vital sign' is concerned with the structure of the church (Wagner 1984, Ch. 7). He argues that a healthy growing church will have three elements to its structure: the 'celebration', the 'congregation' and the 'cell'.

- The 'celebration' is the occasion on which the whole church comes together for worship – a festive occasion which brings large numbers of people together to enjoy an experience of God. There is no optimum size for the 'celebration', other than *big*.
- The 'congregation', which may be activity-orientated or created for other purposes, provides an occasion in which people can meet in groups with others who share an interest. The individual will be noticed and appreciated, but the fellowship will not be especially deep. The optimum size for the 'congregation' is (according to the 1984 edition) between 30 and 80, and each 'congregation' should have a clear measure of self-government.
- The 'cell' is the smallest unit, comprising about 8 to 12 people who meet together at frequent intervals for intimate fellowship, pastoral care and Christian development (which may include prayer and bible study).

Wagner claims that each aspect of structure is important, although he lays the strongest emphasis on the congregation (participation in which, he argues, should be a condition of church membership), and provides several exceptions for people who are uncomfortable with either the celebration or the cell.

Wagner's concept is therefore different to that of the 'home church', which sees the church in the home as the main experience of church, where all aspects, including fellowship, nurture, celebration, evangelism and service, take place within the relatively small group (Banks and Banks 1986). From the perspective of the 'home church', it can be said that, 'the church growth movement treats the church as an instrument, without value in itself' (Banks and Banks 1986, p.238). The home church may well be the New Testament model, and should therefore be taken seriously as embodying the basic concept of what church should be. However, that may have been largely because of the circumstances (no suitable large buildings, most churches were small groups *etc.*) as well as the need for intimacy. The New Testament model of footwear is the sandal, but that doesn't make shoes unacceptable. Wagner's approach includes some of the benefits of the home church in the cell, but also provides other experiences of church.

2.10.5 One Kind of People

The fifth sign is the most contentious, although as discussed above (2.8.1) it is a direct corollary of McGavran's observations and theories. Wagner claims that a healthy growing church will be composed of basically one kind of people – a homogeneous unit (Wagner 1984, Ch. 8).

He claims that this is a consistent observation world-wide (p.126), and that despite some reservations about the desirability of integration, the existence of pluralism in society should be recognised and used as a tool in church growth. Therefore, although Christians of all cultures should love one another in Christ, it is unsurprising that they generally prefer to belong to a church where the other members are people of their own kind (Hispanic, black, white, middle-class, working class *etc.*). The exceptions that he recognises are where people are marginal (rather than nuclear) members of a specific culture, and who are therefore willing and able to be adopted into, or to form a hybrid with, the culture which exists in a particular church. For example, a black middle-class family may have more in common with a white middle-class church than with one where the membership is black but mainly working class.

From this principle Wagner deduces two guidelines. Firstly, the local congregation should reflect the socio-cultural composition of the community in which it exists. Secondly, in structures over and above that of the congregation, Christians should demonstrate publicly their love and concern for people beyond their immediate homogeneous unit. One way of working within these guidelines is for the congregations within a church to be composed of homogeneous groups, but for the whole church (which meets in celebration) to be diverse.

Wagner claims (Ch. 9) that churches which serve a social group which is not that of the community in which they exist will eventually die of 'ethnikitis': their members are commuters who are not equipped to minister to the local population. Similarly, although to a lesser extent, 'people blindness' (an inability to recognise cultural diversity) means that a church will not realise that a population around it needs a ministry which is different to that needed by other populations.

2.10.6 Effective Methods of Evangelism

The sixth 'vital sign' is concerned with methods of evangelism (Wagner 1984, Ch. 10). Wagner claims that growing churches will use evangelistic methods which are known to work. This, of course, means that there must be specific goals (maximising the number of new disciples, for instance) against which the success rate of different evangelistic methods can be compared. There can be no particular method which is right in all circumstances, since different neighbourhoods (or homogeneous units) have different needs. The Church Growth approach is pragmatic: if it works, and is not contrary to the Bible, use it. The recommended test is the effectiveness of the method in bringing people to commit themselves to church membership. One warning is issued from this; where evangelism is undertaken as an ecumenical effort, it makes it less easy to link people with the church through which they have become Christians. Ecumenism has its strengths, but it blurs the focus on the local church.

2.10.7 Biblical Priorities

The seventh 'vital sign' is that healthy, growing churches have 'biblical priorities' (Wagner 1984, Ch. 11). Wagner claims that churches may perform other functions (and doesn't deny that they should do so), but he claims that the church is unique in that it is the community in which people can be saved. He therefore claims that this is the prime function of the church, and that where other functions (social reform, medical care, education *etc.*) take this prime place, the church's potential for growth is reduced. Wagner cites the research of Dean Kelley as indicating that this is a key explanation of why conservative churches (in the USA) grow, while liberal churches do not. The liberal churches offer programmes in which they compete (successfully or otherwise) with other institutions; conservative churches (allowing for exceptions where other factors intervene) are more likely to grow, since they major on the area of their strength – salvation in God through Jesus Christ. Churches *should* serve their community, but should *not* make this their priority.

Wagner quotes approvingly Raymond Ortlund as saying that the biblical priorities are:

- i) commitment to Christ
- ii) commitment to the Body of Christ
- iii) commitment to the work of Christ in the world.

This means that the third priority includes both *kerygma* and *diakonia*, soul-winning preaching and social involvement. Wagner says, quoting the Lausanne Covenant, that 'evangelisation is primary' (Article 6). He then claims that within social involvement there are two types of work: social service and social action. Of these he argues that social service is positive, showing the church in action to relieve immediate need (in fact it becomes a form of evangelism through presence). Social action, he claims, is less desirable, involving divisive politics and risking disharmony in the church unless it is unanimously agreed by the membership.

2.11 'Turning the Tide'

Wagner claims that his 'vital signs' have been subjected to several tests, but that (by 1984) only one set of tests has been published (Wagner 1984, p.12). No significant publications on this subject have emerged since that date. It is therefore important to consider seriously the results of that set of tests, which were conducted by Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson in 1978 (published by the Bible Society in 1981). Beasley-Murray was the pastor of Altrincham Baptist Church at that time, and Wilkinson was a member of the church. They undertook the study out of concern to understand the patterns of growth which affected their church, since after a period of rapid growth it was, as it approached 200 members, slowing down (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 6-8).

Their approach was through a postal questionnaire, designed around Wagner's 'vital signs', although deliberately obscuring this by asking some irrelevant questions, sent to a sample consisting of half those Baptist churches in England which had more than 50 members (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 21-22). They had a response rate of almost two thirds (327), which was remarkably high for this kind of survey. They analysed the returns statistically, looking for growth over periods of 10 years, 5 years and 2 years, and comparing the growth records with the data provided on the factors which Wagner had claimed would be associated with growth. In general, their findings supported Wagner's hypotheses, but it is necessary to consider these in more detail.

2.11.1 Dynamic Leadership

In considering the leadership of churches, Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that the age of the pastor was important, with those aged 30-39 being most likely to be associated with growth, those aged 40-49 being almost neutral, and all others being associated with decline. They conclude that 'Energy rather than experience may be the premium' (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.32). Similarly, the length of service in the ministry suggests that a pastor who has served 5-10 years will have the strongest probability of growth, while those serving less than 2 years or more than 25 years will be associated with decline and all others are largely neutral (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, fig. 8). The length of service in the present church has two modes: from 5 to 15 years (two data groups combined) and over 25 years; other groups tended towards decline.

About two thirds of the sample operated a 'one man ministry', with only 46 having full or part time pastoral assistance⁶⁹. However there was a significant 'bias towards growth' in those churches which had a multiple ministry, although it is not clear whether this is because the ministry led to the growth or the growth led to the ministry (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 34-35).

Wagner stresses positive leadership, with vision and leadership coupled with skills in management seen as more important than preaching or pastoral care. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that this was the case in their sample: although gifts in all areas were valued, growth was associated more strongly with those gifts identified by Wagner. Wagner's view of 'biblical priorities' indicates his opinion that a conservative evangelical theology is associated with growth, and his constant emphasis on spiritual gifts suggests that the preferred version of evangelicalism is charismatic. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that, although it was not easy to categorise the clergy in their sample by theology, there was a very strong distinction between those who were conservative, evangelical and charismatic, with a large bias towards growth and those who were 'radical' (not defined as a term) who had an almost equally large bias towards decline. Those who were described as 'middle of the road' also tended towards decline, though less strongly, while all others were broadly neutral (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, pp. 36-37).

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson assessed the clergy attitude towards shared leadership by considering the pastoral care in the church, on the reasoning that shared pastoral responsibility meant a delegating leadership, and found that there was a bias towards growth when this responsibility was shared with elders or deacons, but that the bias towards growth was greatest when the work was undertaken by a specific pastoral care team. The extent of shared participation in leadership of worship was also related to growth, as was the frequency of evangelistic appeals and outreach services (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 37-38). The use of technological aids and secretarial assistance was found to be related to growth, which Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson took as an indication of the extent to which the minister was committed to concentrating on communicating and on fulfilling his leadership role, rather than on the 'housekeeping' work of the church (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.38).

In general, therefore, the study by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson supports the first 'vital sign': the pastor's attitudes, views and gifts are all related to growth, as also are his age, time in the ministry and period at the church in question.

⁶⁹ There is no indication in the material as to the number of female pastors who were responsible for churches which were included in the sample. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson use the masculine pronouns throughout, which may be misleading. In this review I have adopted their usage for simplicity, but do not intend this to imply that only male pastors were considered.

2.11.2 Mobilised Membership

Wagner's second sign is concerned with a mobilised membership. As seen above, Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that this was supported in relation to pastoral care and to participation in public worship. They also found that there was a relationship between the number of prayer groups and growth, with anything more than 2 groups tending towards growth, but churches with 5 groups having a strong bias towards growth (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.39). Cell groups with the purpose of evangelism were also strongly associated with growth, although the existence of *any* kind of cell group, other than purely social, improved the likelihood of growth in a church (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.40). Lay involvement in nurture, as indicated by visiting newcomers, or in pastoral care, was found to be strongly associated with growth (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 40-41).

Again, in general, Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that their data supported Wagner's claim that growth was to be associated with a mobilised membership.

2.11.3 Church Size

Wagner's third 'sign' is concerned with the size of the church which, he claims, should be big enough to cater for the needs of its membership, and should – whatever its current size – be growing, since small churches (which some people need) can be offshoots of once small churches which have grown into larger churches.

The approach of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson was not really suitable for testing this sign, since they had deliberately chosen their sample from churches which had more than 50 members. They therefore did not consider it from the point of view of the number of members but of the number of activities which were perceived as having an evangelistic purpose, since this would indicate how well the church catered for the needs of its present and prospective members (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 41-42). They found a 'staggering ... volume of activities' – but no relationship with growth. Social or community services, in particular, were singled out as involving a great deal of effort, yet they led to almost no conversions over a five year period. They therefore warn that church resources should not be dissipated for social purposes, especially when those resources are people whose gifts could be deployed to spiritual ends.

2.11.4 Church Structures

Wagner's fourth 'vital sign' concerns the structure of the church. He claims that a growing church will have three aspects to its life, described as 'celebration', 'congregation' and 'cell'.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson recognised that the terms do not readily transfer to a British setting, though they made valiant efforts to interpret them. They took the celebration as equalling the Sunday congregations at the churches in their sample; congregations (which Wagner sees as a broad fellowship group) were considered to include all regular church-based meetings, such as Sunday School or Women's Fellowship; cells (a closer fellowship, or *spiritual kinship group*) were seen as including all small groups which met regularly with a spiritual purpose (e.g. house groups, fellowship groups, Bible study and prayer groups) (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.43).

In fact, they had no way of telling whether attendance at a Sunday service matched Wagner's criteria for a celebration experience, although one potentially fruitful approach was that of considering the kind of music used in the services. They found that churches which used only piano or organ accompaniment tended towards decline, while those with a less conservative practice had a bias towards growth (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, p.44).

Similarly, it was not possible clearly to identify activities which should be understood as congregations.

However, they found a very clear relationship between growth and the proportion of activity spent in cell groups (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 45-46).

Although they say that this finding supports Wagner's 'sign' (and it does to some extent), there is a difference in emphasis. As shown above (2.10.4), Wagner claimed that while all three structural elements were important, the congregation was the priority, even suggesting that participation in a congregation should be a condition of church membership. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson claim instead that a proper balance of the three structures means a high proportion of cell activity. On their data it is hard to disagree with this, since the relationship between such activity and growth is very strong. However, the research was somewhat flawed where celebration and congregation were concerned, and the inability to identify them clearly means that nothing definite can be said about them. Certainly, from their sample, the cell activity is associated with growth – but this doesn't mean that there is (or is not) any similar association where the celebration and congregation are concerned.

Perhaps the best verdict here is *not proven*.

2.11.5 One Kind of People

Homogeneity, as understood by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, refers to ethnic groups, as well as to social class, defined by, for example, housing or occupation. Beasley-Murray was uncomfortable that this seemed to be the way in which the congregation in Altrincham was developing. Their survey was acknowledged to be unreliable in this respect since few respondents were in areas which were highly mixed racially, or had more than a small number of members from new commonwealth ethnic backgrounds. However, where their survey could produce data on housing, employment and education, this showed a tendency for growing churches to reflect the *variety* in their neighbourhood, rather than a particular homogeneous grouping (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 46-47).

2.11.6 Effective Methods of Evangelism

Wagner's sixth 'sign' refers to the use of methods of evangelism which are known to be effective. The primary finding by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson in this area was that there was a clear relationship between growth and the number of activities which were perceived as evangelistic. The involvement of an 'outreach committee' was also a positive indicator, as was the use of a specific evangelism programme, especially 'Evangelism Explosion'. Most forms of evangelism (with the exception of shoppers' coffee mornings) seemed to have some association with growth, although individually they were weak (up to 5% bias towards growth). The employment of a full-time youth worker had a strong association with growth (+33% bias towards growth), but Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson rightly warn that this may indicate that growing churches can afford a youth worker, rather than meaning that the work of a youth worker produces growth. Finally, the number of converts during the previous 5 years was analysed according to the channel through which the conversion had occurred: it was found that the strongest association was with normal pastoral care, rather than special evangelistic efforts. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson suggest that this may have been because the pastoral work reaps from the sowing which takes place through other activities; they are, in other words, suggesting that there is a systemic relationship between growth (as measured by conversions), pastoral care and evangelistic effort (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 48-50).

In general, the survey by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson supports the claim by Wagner – effective methods are used by those churches which grow. There does seem to be a kind of tautology here, however, since by definition those churches which grow will be those which use effective methods of evangelism (the only real alternative explanations being that they might choose not to use birth control, maximising 'biological growth', or are engaged in determined 'sheep-stealing' exercises to maximise 'transfer growth'). There is no clear description of the extent to which methods which are known to be 'effective' are deployed in churches which are not growing. Perhaps no clear test is possible, but it would be misleading to overstate the strength of the evidence in this case.

2.11.7 Biblical Priorities

Wagner stresses in his seventh 'vital sign' that the church has primarily a 'religious' function, although it may also be involved in social care or social action. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found, through asking about the priority which the church gave to outreach⁷⁰, nurture and community service, that churches which gave priority to outreach had a strong bias towards growth, while those which gave the top priority to community service had a bias towards non-growth, or decline (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 50-51).

⁷⁰ In the context of the work of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, 'outreach' is equated with evangelism.

2.11.8 Conclusions

Although broadly supportive of the 'vital signs', with the exception of homogeneity (which seemed not to be supported) and the size of church (on which the data was inappropriate for a thorough test), this survey did not suggest that there was any guarantee of growth, even for churches which were displaying all the 'signs'. However, the probabilities of growth were found to be higher when the 'vital signs' showed positive.

Two factors not considered in depth by Wagner were also found to be important.

Firstly, transfers were important in the growth of churches (a lively church attracted defectors from other churches, as well as being a focus for people moving to the area). This means that new people who want to be involved in a church with an active ministry can sometimes be found, but that their move may be damaging to other churches. The work of Robin Gill (cited above in 2.4.3 and 2.9) is relevant here, showing that 'successful' churches have often grown at the expense of their neighbours.

Secondly, there were two sizes of church which seemed relatively likely to grow: those with a membership between 100 and 150, and those exceeding 300 members. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson suggest that this is because there is a real limit of about 150 members (David Wasdell, an Anglican, in 1974 suggested 175) above which the pastor could not single-handedly provide an adequate ministry (Wasdell 1974). Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson further suggest that when the membership exceeds 300, the inadequacy (or the unfair expectation) will be so apparent that the church recognises that a team ministry of some kind is required, either through additional clergy or through trained lay ministry. The appointment of additional workers releases the brakes, and growth can continue (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 53-59). Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson therefore suggest that this bottleneck should be avoided by recognising at a much earlier stage the need for a joint ministry. Beasley-Murray felt he had reached his limitations as the church approached 150 members; it seems reasonable to suppose that additional help should be available before those pastoral limits are in sight, to prevent the approach of this psychological barrier.

This idea is surely related to the two concepts of shared leadership and mobilised membership – Wagner's first two 'vital signs'. If the pastoral work is more widely shared it will be less of a burden to the main church leader – the 'professional' pastor; it will therefore avoid the problems which Beasley-Murray described.

2.12 Further Developments

Ken Sidey, writing in *Christianity Today* refers to Carl George, at the time the director of the Charles E Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth. George has produced a rich development of Wagner's concepts in terms of church structures and patterns of behaviour, which he claims is applicable to churches of all sizes. In his systems model of a church – the 'Meta-Church' – the congregation (or sub-congregation, to use his preferred term) becomes optional: 'It's helpful to have ... so long as it contributes toward some larger purpose, such as feeding people into cell groups or attracting people to the church' (George 1991, p.77). The model revolves around two events: the meeting of small groups, or 'cells'; and corporate worship, or 'celebration'. Any number of cells (of approximately ten people) can constitute a church, meeting in plenary session for worship occasions at the celebration event. The cells, under lay leadership, become the primary source for mutual pastoral care, nurture and teaching – though some may also be task-oriented. The lay pastors (group leaders) have pastors (or coaches) of their own, with professional staff supporting them, and the senior pastor acting as Chief Executive Officer, providing the vision and facilitating the activities of the whole church.

Sidey quotes George as saying:

... clergy are no longer the primary care givers ... except to fellow staff and to a group of key lay 'coaches'. What propels a meta-church is the work of the Holy Spirit through home discipleship centres. They are affinity based, spiritual-gift dependent, lay shepherded, supervised, evangelistic, and self-reproducing. Virtually all ministry is decentralised to these groups. ... The key factor is now 10 [the size of a typical cell group], not hundreds. With that as its basis, a church's growth is virtually unlimited, yet it can maintain high-quality spiritual and emotional care for each individual.

Sidey 1991

Sidey states that this is the pattern of Seoul's Full Gospel Church (180,000 attenders) and Willow Creek Community Church, Chicago (12,000 attenders). According to George, the Full Gospel Church in Seoul had in 1990 more than 600,000 members (George 1992, p.52); the discrepancy perhaps is unimportant – at either figure it is large!

George's argument is full of exciting possibilities. However, it is not explored in this study, since it would require a programme of action research to determine whether, and how, it could work in The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom, and facilities for such a programme are not currently available.

2.13 Church Growth and The Salvation Army

Though initial exploration of Church Growth in relation to The Salvation Army was undertaken by the Canada and Bermuda Territory from 1976, it was in 1986 that General Jarl Wahlström commended the Church Growth approach to The Salvation Army world-wide, and later that year his successor, General Eva Burrows, advised all senior leaders to adopt Church Growth methods for the Army's evangelistic programme. This has been implemented by the creation of posts for facilitators on the headquarters of many territories, including that of the United Kingdom. A small headquarters department was created in the UK to provide training and resources for Church Growth, while also serving to keep the subject on the agenda of other departments. Part of the initial work in implementing the policy was the publication in 1988 of a book called *How your corps can grow* by John Larsson (later promoted to Commissioner). This book was not (nor was it intended to be) original thought: it was essentially a translation into Salvation Army concepts and terminology of work by others, principally Roy Pointer's *How do churches grow?* Pointer in his turn had built on the foundations laid by McGavran and Wagner.

The Salvation Army had, in a sense, discovered Church Growth a little late. It had been a discussion topic in some other British churches since the mid-1970's and had perhaps by 1988 ceased to be a fashionable subject. However, in August 1989, the Army convened an International Conference on Church Growth, for which Salvation Army delegates from many territories and commands assembled in London.

Captain Terry Camsey (originally a Briton, though a naturalised US citizen, at that time serving as the officer responsible for Church Growth in the USA Western Territory), presented a paper analysing world-wide changes over the period 1977-1987. He reported that Carl F George of the Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, and C Peter Wagner (who had by that time moved to the Fuller Theological Seminary) had presented major Church Growth seminars to many groups of Salvationists in Canada, the USA, Australia and elsewhere (Camsey 1989). A number of other papers were presented, and recommendations were submitted from the conference to the international leadership. Some, though not all, of those recommendations have been implemented (up to 1996). Regrettably, the papers from this conference are not widely available, and are generally restricted to the delegates and to some of the international leaders, although copies have been made available for this study.

The Army in the UK has increased its commitment to Church Growth and from 1992 has begun to turn its focus onto church planting. However, the theory has not, so far, been tested objectively in this context and this study is intended in part to rectify that omission, by a detailed examination of a sample of individual corps during the period 1982-91.

2.13.1 Points of Contact

There are a number of similarities between The Salvation Army and the Church Growth movement. Both were originally conceived as approaches to evangelism which could be adopted by people from several different Christian traditions, although the Army has since become a denomination. With this background, it is not surprising that both can be accused of lacking theological strength. As Earl Robinson, a Salvation Army officer, says:

... it would appear that we have been somewhat lacking in a formulated statement concerning evangelism and church growth. Perhaps the reason for this is not unlike that which Wagner suggests as a rationale for the theological position of the Church Growth Movement itself still being in a state of emergence ... [2.3 above]. In other words, we may have been 'doing' evangelism and church growth throughout our history but just without taking time carefully to think through the theological foundations for our activity.

Robinson 1989

The original motivation for both movements is the same – preaching Christ and making disciples. However, The Salvation Army has given more emphasis to social service than Church Growth theory seems to support, and this may lead either to a divergence of direction at some point or to a change in Salvation Army practice if the Church Growth theory is fully adopted.

In its early period, The Salvation Army was practising Church Growth in many ways. It gave opportunities for a mobilised membership to be involved in running their churches and in evangelism. It used ordinary people, soon after their conversion, to witness to their new faith in the language of their own culture, though others such as Booth-Tucker were involved in cross-cultural mission (see 1.8.6). The Army used the popular media and imagery of the day, introducing a military style and language to the affairs of the Kingdom of God. New corps (churches) were planted very rapidly in the period from 1878 to 1890, and although this rapid expansion may have been unwise, according to Gill, it is illustrative of the enthusiasm and determination with which the early Salvationists attempted to 'win the world for Jesus'.

2.13.2 Points of Difference

Despite the formal adoption of Church Growth principles, there are several issues on which Salvation Army practice is at variance with them. Some of these will be explored as a result of the data presented in Chapter 3 of this study, but some can be mentioned at this stage, as they are already apparent from the material presented in Chapters 1 and 2.

Perhaps the major issue is the existence of a distinctive 'Salvation Army' culture, which is reinforced by the uniform and the military terminology and paraphernalia. The distinctive, and until very recently centrally controlled, music used in Salvation Army worship may have also contributed to, or echoed, this 'culture gap'. People who are more comfortable with rock music than with either the classics or military music may find a diet of brass bands somewhat difficult to stomach – or even contemplate. There is therefore a cultural barrier between Salvation Army membership and the unchurched in addition both to those barriers which are intrinsic to the gospel itself and to those which are implied by being members of *any* church. In Ralph Winter's terms (referred to in Section 2.2.1) it makes E-1 evangelism rather more difficult than it would otherwise be, although perhaps affecting E-2 and E-3 rather less.

The 'redemption and lift' phenomenon (see 2.2.1) was very significant in the early years of the Army, as people were introduced to a way of life which, as well as bringing spiritual benefits, introduced material improvements.

Ward says:

The Salvation Army insisted upon a moral transformation, but this was also seen in cultural terms, the turning away from the more obvious vices of the lower classes towards the appropriate virtues of the middle classes.

... Conversion and the establishment of religious practice had social repercussions which often meant an eventual rise in social status.

Ward 1970, p.86, 87

Even with one individual, this phenomenon brings about a separation from old ways and old contacts, making evangelism difficult. Over a number of years, Salvation Army corps have often tended to raise their living standards relative to those around them, so that they can become an island of middle-class people, worshipping in a sea of working-class neighbours.

Church Growth theory says that resources should be applied where they bring maximum results. Salvation Army practice has often meant subsidising small corps which rarely produce a new disciple, at the expense of more productive corps. There has been little evidence of a policy of resourcing the harvest, or even of assessing the harvest, rather than applying limited resources as widely as possible.

The Salvation Army record of presence evangelism through social and community service is impressive, and as Pointer says, it gives the Army the right to be heard (see 2.2.3.1 above). However, it is not clear that the service is motivated by the desire to make disciples, rather than the desire to improve the quality of (temporal) life for the recipients (see 1.6.1 above). There is very little attempt to measure the effectiveness of social service by its success in making disciples. This may be because of a fear that to do so could lead to the closure of 'successful' social service ventures, because their success is in respect of other targets.

McGavran argued that all kinds of Christian work should be judged according to whether they added to the church (McGavran 1980, pp. 43-44). He claimed that among reasons for church decline there was a 'fog' which obscured the facts and prevented people from making administrative decisions which would maximise the growth of the Church. One element in this fog was the belief that all Christian work is of equal importance, leading to a focus on that which is successful or highly regarded. In The Salvation Army this might be exemplified by a direction of attention (through the Public Relations profile, at least) towards the Social Service, rather than more obviously 'church' aspects of the Army. This may be because such work is more readily attractive for public donations, but it could lead to evangelistically unproductive work receiving the resources which are needed for the advance of more productive church growth. Salvation Army practice has often seemed to consider social service as having in its own right value equal to that of evangelism.

Terry Camsey quotes William Booth, speaking on his 81st birthday:

All the social activity of the Army is the outcome of the spiritual life of its members. All social service must be based on the spiritual, or else it will amount to little in the end.

Camsey 1989

Camsey questions whether this statement still reflects Salvation Army policy, since in many areas the social service involves few Salvationists as church members, rather than as paid professionals.

Wagner claims (Section 2.2.2) that new churches should be planted where existing churches are already growing. Salvation Army practice has generally been to respect the boundaries of existing corps, even when the geographical dispersal is very wide. There is no evidence for the evaluation of proposed Salvation Army plants on the basis of the growth of churches belonging to other denominations, but plants are often set up in an area in which there is no other Salvation Army corps, rather than where there are growing corps. (The Peterborough area, in which several 'daughters' have been recently planted by one 'mother' corps, is one notable exception to this generalisation.)

A recurring theme in the work of Church Growth writers is the exercise of spiritual gifts. Gibbs says, 'The issue of gifts is crucial for church growth', and Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that growing Baptist churches tended to be led by pastors with conservative-charismatic theological views. Peter Cotterell says:

Churches which will not allow the gifts of the Spirit to be exercised are necessarily self-limiting churches. Not all that the Spirit *might* do is being done, because the tools that he has distributed to his workforce are never put to work. And it is sadly true that if the minister does not see this and if he will not allow the spiritual gifts to be used then the Spirit cannot get to work. Unbelief is more than intellectual dissent; it is disobedience to teaching received. Ministers, above all others, ought to know the importance of mobilising all their congregation.

Cotterell 1981 p.48

Over a long period, some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit seem to have been consistently turned aside in The Salvation Army (see 1.3.2), which stressed the fruit of the Spirit, but apparently neglected the gifts. This attitude may be changing now (though this is not yet clear), but the old position remains very influential.

Although the Army is formally evangelical in its doctrines, and is a member church of the Evangelical Alliance, in the UK it has been much influenced by a 'liberal woolly tendency', through the education syllabus of the Training College. This has been a pervading influence, according to Captain John Read, who was until June 1996 a senior tutor at the college and whose father (Commissioner Harry Read) held several Training College appointments in the 1960s and 70s, including that of principal. John Read has been involved in a radical revision of the syllabus, which is now more recognisably evangelical, without some of the liberal trimmings⁷¹. If the Church Growth view (as demonstrated by McGavran, Wagner, Pointer *etc.*) is correct in identifying liberal theology as a cause of decline, this may indicate one reason for Salvation Army decline, and the changed syllabus may be a positive indicator for the future – but those now being trained may not hold positions of major influence for 20 or more years⁷².

The Salvation Army seems to have a highly mobilised membership, since many are involved in musical and other activities. However, few are directly involved in evangelism, since most aspects of the typical corps programme are concerned with maintenance rather than evangelistic outreach. Moreover, Salvationists may be so committed to their programme that they have insufficient opportunity to act in the role of witness when in contact with non-Christians, especially their friends and families, when they could be 'the bridges of God'.

Wagner's vital signs include the use of effective means of evangelism. The Salvation Army tends to be involved in many types of evangelistic work, but these are often apparently ineffective (such as literature distribution or open-air meetings). There is a tendency to pursue a familiar programme, rather than to measure its effectiveness and use only what is effective. Certainly the predicted decline from 98,000 to 35,000 in 40 years from 1960 (Brierley 1992 p.32) suggests that something is badly wrong.

The Army is very involved in proclamation, especially through its street meetings and literature distribution, but is perhaps weak on persuasion. Although the number of seekers (converts) has fallen in recent years, the number of recruits (prospective members) has declined even more rapidly, and fewer still progress to become soldiers (Brierley 1992, p.38).

⁷¹ This information has been obtained through an interview with Captain John Read of the William Booth Memorial Training College.

⁷² Though they may have their *strongest* influence as leaders of corps, this will be with limited numbers, since most corps are small; their influence will only reach larger numbers when they achieve positions of some seniority.

Although it may happen in practice (and this will be explored to some extent in Chapter 3 of this study), there is no formal policy of encouraging homogeneous units in churches. Most corps seem to have little appeal to ethnic minorities in the UK, and non-white faces are something of a rarity, except perhaps in children's activities in a few inner-city areas. Perhaps it would be worthwhile considering planting (or relocating) corps with the aim of forming distinctive Asian, Black or other worshipping communities.

Pointer, who knows the Army well, has pointed to the discrepancy between the Church Growth principle that church leaders should stay many years with their church, and Salvation Army practice which until recently made 2 to 3 years the normal length of stay. Even now, five years is regarded as a long stay, whereas the Church Growth writers (e.g. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson) consider that period to be a minimum effective term.

Wagner's concept of the celebration, congregation and cell structure for churches seems to be difficult for most Salvation Army corps. Figure 10 in Chapter 1 of this study shows how few corps have more than 150 soldiers. The celebration experience is hard to achieve without large numbers, and this may need attention, especially if the 'meta-church' concept of Carl George is taken seriously. Most Salvation Army corps are effectively in the size range for Wagner's congregations, although they may themselves consist of a number of activity-orientated groups. A substantial number are only at cell size, but many of these may be trying to function as full-size churches. In addition to the problems of size, many Salvationists are so busy with their programme that they find it hard to keep in contact with their family. Such people are unlikely to welcome additional cell activities which seem to demand even more of their time. Indeed, they are likely to resist additional encroachments into their time, because of their full programme – even though that programme may be ineffective.

At a more technical level, the attendance record for Salvation Army meetings or other events at present counts every time someone crosses the threshold – even if it is the same person attending several different events in the course of one day. As a single exercise to address this problem, the Army has recently conducted a census of everyone who attended worship meetings on November 5th 1995, which has revealed a wealth of hitherto unknown information about the demographics and attendance patterns of Salvationists (Escott and Pickard 1996). There is, at present, no general machinery for conducting a Family Analysis, although individual corps can devise their own. The Planned Giving programme adopted by a handful of (generally larger) corps does, however, include a family roll, which could be used as the basis for such an exercise⁷³. There is little indication of the use of statistical measurement for decision-making, although figures are available from a wide range of measurements. There is considerable scope for more imaginative use of this data in responding to trends and deciding on programmes to be adopted.

⁷³ At the end of 1995 there were about 50 corps which had adopted the Planned Giving programme, which operates under the sponsorship of the Church Growth Department. The programme encourages members to 'give until it feels good', with a tithe as a biblical standard.

2.13.3 The Salvation Army Approach

The Salvation Army liaison with Church Growth has been fruitful in some areas of the world. Parts of the USA, especially the Western and Southern Territories have successfully implemented many of the recommendations. Canada and Australia have successfully used several of the techniques and methods of Church Growth. In Korea the Army (with the Christian Church in general) has enjoyed phenomenal growth, with an annual growth rate of 7.3%, which the then Territorial Commander, Kim Joon-Chul, linked with the use of cell groups, of which more than 2,000 were meeting weekly (Kim Joon-Chul, 1989).

In the UK the effectiveness of Church Growth has been less clear, partly because it has not been measured. Church leaders (local, regional and national) have learnt about the theories but, as shown above, there are several differences between Church Growth theory and Salvation Army practice, which have to be taken seriously.

As discussed above (2.4.2) Lesslie Newbigin is unhappy with several parts of the Church Growth agenda, claiming particularly that there is no evidence for growth as a primary concern of the early church (although there is evidence for joy over the growth which occurred).

Newbigin seems to find distasteful the business-like approach to church management which is found in the Church Growth movement, writing:

When numerical growth is taken as the criteria of judgement on the church, we are transported with alarming ease into the world of the military campaign or the commercial sales drive.

Newbigin 1978, p.142

This statement may be correct, although the choice of words reflects Newbigin's values rather than an objective judgement, but it is irrelevant to a discussion on the validity of Church Growth as an approach to mission. In the context of The Salvation Army it is actually an argument *for* Church Growth, since the Army sees itself as being continuously on active service in 'the world of the military campaign'.

2.14 Church Growth – An Evaluation

This section summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the Church Growth movement, as discussed in this chapter. The focus here is inevitably on theory, although a more practical consideration follows in Chapter 3.

2.14.1 Strengths

The observation that people ‘like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers’ was one of McGavran’s key insights, affecting cross-cultural missionary work, as well as evangelism across sub-cultures within a major cultural grouping (such as the UK). It led to the recognition of the ‘bridges of God’ – evangelisation of individuals and peoples by those with whom they have natural affinity – as well as to the more questionable homogeneous unit principle.

The Church Growth approach is single-minded, claiming that ‘Seek first the Kingdom of God’ means that multiplying disciples is the primary mandate for the church, and that all other Christian activities (social service, political action *etc.*) should be judged by the extent to which they promote the primary aim.

The use of statistics for decision-making is normal practice in business, but has been an innovation in many churches. Identifying the sources of growth is an example of this strength. Conversion and restoration growth is real growth of the church, whereas transfer growth is merely movement; biological growth is somewhere between the two – it may include a conversion experience, but may be growth into Christianity without any awareness of a change taking place.

Allocating resources where they will produce a good return is again normal business practice, although it calls into question the work of some Christian churches and agencies (including The Salvation Army) which have long-standing policies of subsidising work which is unproductive in terms of the growth of the church.

Wagner lays great stress on the efficacy of church planting, and this may be supported by the evidence at this stage, although the caution from Robin Gill should be heeded. If church planting results in more churches, but with smaller individual congregations, they are likely to decline and die over the long term. A policy of continuous planting and pruning, with a new and higher value for the small church, may be useful.

The emphasis on a mobilised membership has the potential to make churches stronger and more cohesive than could be the case where a minister is employed to ‘be’ the church on behalf of its members. The exercise of spiritual gifts is associated with this emphasis, and there seems to be evidence that churches which encourage the use of a wide range of spiritual gifts are more likely to grow than those which do not.

McGavran argued for a theology of harvest, claiming that churches should expect to grow. There may be some doubts about whether the claim is valid in all times and places, but this optimistic approach is less likely to lead to decline than an approach which expects failure. Even those who are uncomfortable with many aspects of Church Growth, such as Lesslie Newbigin, recognise that it has often brought about a change in expectations, so that churches and missions now expect that they should grow, and look for explanations and rectification when they are not growing.

2.14.2 Weaknesses

Church Growth perhaps claims too much by describing itself as a 'science', and in so doing weakens itself. Even when one accepts that science is not restricted to the physical sciences, the use of social science by Church Growth seems to be weak and subjective. There is something of the old politician's trick of claiming to speak for 'all the right-thinking people of the town', in the Church Growth claim to 'use all the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural science'. If one disagrees with the politician, one is not among the right-thinking; if one disagrees with an aspect of Church Growth, one is rejecting the 'best insights' in favour of something of less value.

Church Growth writers themselves (*e.g.* Eddie Gibbs) have shown their sensitivity to the charge that numerical growth was overstressed by the early writings within the movement, and have therefore provided a more balanced view. However, the charge can still not be dismissed, since people's impressions count as much as objective facts, and many people have the impression that Church Growth is all about numbers: Schultz, for instance, describes Church Growth as a 'technocratic' approach. Newbigin, particularly, argues that the New Testament does not lay stress on numerical growth.

Newbigin's strongest objection is, however, to the apparent willingness of the Church Growth movement to use *any* means to bring new people(s) to Christ. His fear is that methods might be used which are not ethically supportable. For instance, the homogeneous unit principle seems to work in some cases (although Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson did not find supporting evidence in the Baptist churches of England). However, it is not clear that it is an ethical approach to forming a church, coming dangerously near to a form of apartheid.

The concentration on evangelism in preference to other kinds of Christian activity in the world may lead to the undervaluing of some work which is valid both in its own right (it provides a needed humanitarian service) and as an expression of the mind of Jesus. For instance, if the hungry are fed because they need food and because Jesus said his followers should feed the hungry, is it necessary also that his followers should be aiming to proselytise among those fed?

Church Growth claims to be adaptable to a range of theologies. However, it is clear that it only really fits well into the evangelical family of theologies, and matches best the branch within that family which is conservative and charismatic. However, within this branch, Church Growth has been endorsed by people who are Calvinist and by others who are Arminian, as it does not concern itself with those issues on which these theologies differ. As Robin Gill has made clear, McGavran in particular was apparently prone to confuse the Kingdom of God with church membership, leading to a particularist view of salvation. Liberal theology is thus suspect within the Church Growth movement, while Catholic views are rarely discussed, except where they support a point which is being made.

The weight given to the exercise of spiritual gifts may be valid theologically, and it may be justified pragmatically. It is, however, divisive. The Salvation Army in particular (because that is the focus of this study) has a long history of avoiding spiritual gifts, while stressing holiness. Many Salvationists find it difficult to accept that this may have been wrong – if in fact it was.

Wagner's preference for large churches can be demotivating. A church of 50 or so members could find it hard to see itself as big enough to provide a range of services which is attractive to existing and new members. Similarly, the recommended structures are difficult to implement. A small church would not be able to provide the celebration experience which Wagner claims is needed in a church. It may be able to function as a congregation (though some would have difficulty) and the members may be so fully stretched with trying to keep their church active that they cannot give time to commit themselves to cell groups.

Wagner claims that new churches should be planted where existing churches are growing. This may be effective where there is an open market, although even then it may cause an unhealthy rivalry which could cause some dilution in the 'brotherly love' between members of different churches. However, the existence of relatively rigid parish (or corps) boundaries makes this a difficult policy in the UK, as there may not be unclaimed land on which to start a new operation.

Robin Gill identifies three dimensions to the church: mission, worship and social action. Church Growth is primarily concerned only with the first of these, seeing social action (or service) as presence evangelism, and barely concerning itself with worship at all, except insofar as the experience of worship in celebration contributes to the attractiveness of church membership.

2.14.3 Reflections

Although it may seem that there are more weaknesses than strengths, this would be an illusion. The strengths of the movement, including its optimism, its use of management techniques and its awareness of social factors in evangelism, should be taken very seriously. All that is lacking for many of these is an objective measurement of their efficacy. The weaknesses, as identified here, are also serious – but many of them carry less weight than the strengths. However, the casual use of the social sciences and the danger of 'growth by any means' are probably those which are most important.

3. The Survey

A questionnaire survey was conducted in the autumn of 1992, following the pattern established by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson in 1979 (discussed in 2.11 above). However, whereas they had studied larger Baptist churches in England, the study reported here was of a cross-section of Salvation Army corps throughout the UK.

A sample of up to 63 respondents (varying slightly from one question to another) was used. This sample was selected by dividing the whole population of Salvation Army corps in the UK (approximately 800, excluding societies and outposts) into three unequal strata, depending on their growth index. The growth index was devised as a unit of measurement by which the number of senior soldiers for 1982 was compared with that for 1991, according to the following formula.

$$100 \times \frac{\text{Soldiers (1991)}}{\text{Soldiers (1982)}}$$

Church Growth writers such as McGavran have generally used a decadel growth rate, but the use of the index had two advantages. It always produces a positive figure (if the two year totals are identical, the index is 100; if the corps has declined the index is between 0 and 100; if it has grown the index exceeds 100). This makes statistical work more straightforward, as no allowance need be made for the effect of negative growth rates. In addition, the fact that a positive result is invariably the outcome makes communication of results much easier psychologically in an environment such as The Salvation Army where decline has been unremitting for many years.

The mean index for the territory over the decade was approximately 78⁷⁴. High Index corps had an index of over 103 (*i.e.* the mean + 1 standard deviation); Low Index corps had an index of under 53 (*i.e.* mean - 1 standard deviation). Medium Index corps - the great majority - fell between those two bands; they clustered around the mean index for the UK territory as a whole by being close to the mean index of 78 and for many purposes, despite the actual decline, they could be taken to be relatively stable, since they were not markedly different from the overall pattern. The actual distribution of corps (excluding Scotland) by strata is shown in Table 2.

Stratum	Low	Medium	High	Total
Number	98	527	75	100
%	14.00	75.29	10.71	100.00

Table 2: UK Corps Distribution by Strata

From each stratum a random sample of 50 corps (a total of 150) was chosen (using a computerised random number generator) and a somewhat lengthy questionnaire about corps life (see Appendix D) was sent to the person in charge of that corps, with a request for its completion and return.

⁷⁴ It is not possible to be more precise, because the calculations omitted Scottish corps, figures for 1982 being unavailable. Moreover, the index for the UK (excluding Scotland) was approximately 78 for those corps which continued in existence. Closed corps were not included, and the real index would therefore have been a little lower, though it is not possible to say by how much.

Approximately 60 responses (40%) were received⁷⁵, after two reminders. At that point it was assumed that no further responses were likely. The responses received were carefully monitored to ensure that they were representative of their strata (and therefore of the whole), in terms of the growth index and of the size of the corps. The distribution of responses by growth index is shown in Figure 17.

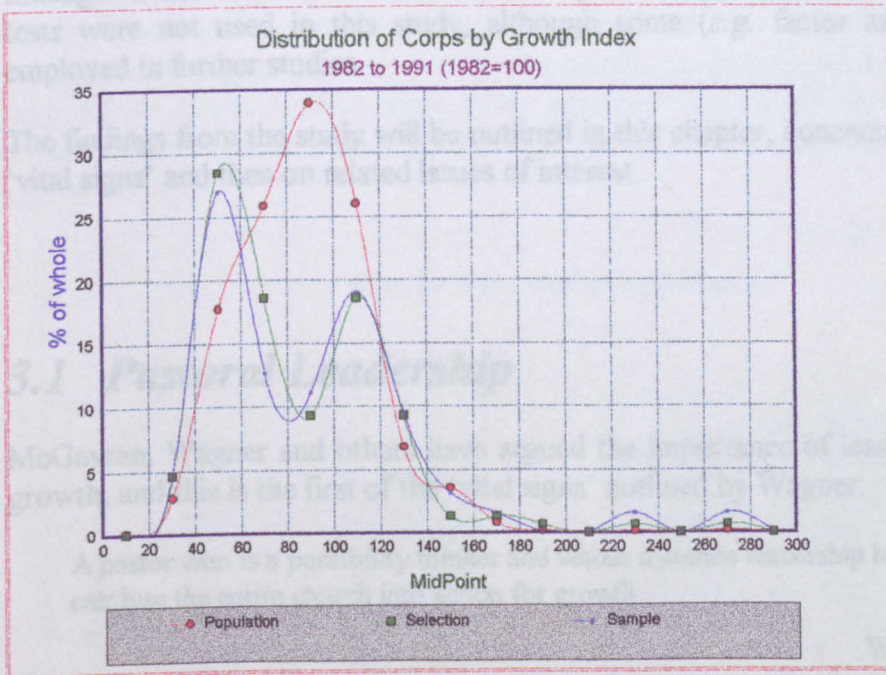


Figure 17: Sample Distribution by Growth Index

The stratified sample had the (deliberate) effect of counteracting the peak of corps near the mean index, in order to include a substantial number of corps with high and low indices in the sample. Nevertheless, to a quite astonishing extent, it transpired that the responses were very representative of the sample strata, making the combined sample a good representation of the population. If the objective had been to sample the whole population of corps, a random selection could have been made without using strata. In this case, the objective was to investigate differences between growing corps and others, and therefore the sampling process was designed to sample each stratum accurately. Without this technique, it would have been necessary to have taken a much larger sample (exceeding 200 of the 800 corps) to adequately represent the High Index stratum.

The sample responses were then used to investigate a series of questions and issues, based on the seven 'vital signs' claimed by Wagner (see 2.10 above), although some other areas were also considered. The questionnaire, while modelled on that of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, incorporated some modifications to make it suitable for a slightly different use. Some questions were included as 'red herrings', to make it less transparent that the focus was mainly on Wagner's 'signs'; such questions obviously will not be addressed here in detail.

⁷⁵ The number of replies varied slightly as some respondents did not answer all questions; for most questions the total was approximately 60 out of the 150 who were approached, though for a few questions the number of respondents reached 63.

The methodology adopted consisted of testing responses, by categories linked with Wagner's 'vital signs', for correlation with growth, as measured by the growth index.

The main statistical tests used were analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson's correlation (r), using in both cases a significance level of 0.05 as indicating positive findings. Other tests were used occasionally when appropriate. More sophisticated tests were not used in this study, although some (e.g. factor analysis) could be employed in further studies.

The findings from the study will be outlined in this chapter, concentrating first on the 'vital signs' and then on related issues of interest.

3.1 Pastoral Leadership

McGavran, Wagner and others have argued the importance of leadership in church growth, and this is the first of the 'vital signs' outlined by Wagner:

A pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyse the entire church into action for growth.

Wagner, 1984, p.187

Roy Pointer in particular has spelled out a number of leadership conditions (see 2.2.3.1 above), claiming that these conditions must be met for growth to occur. The conditions include a vision for growth ('Church Growth vision'), the compatibility of the leader and the church (in terms of gifts and personality), the willingness to serve the church sacrificially, pastoral caring (but devolved in order to widen the scope of care), direction and administration, long-term appointments and a willingness to share leadership with others.

This present study has addressed most of these issues (with the exception of sacrificial service, for which no measure could be found) in considering the leadership of corps and their growth over ten years. Several related questions have also been introduced, which may suggest other factors which have bearings on growth or decline.

Would the *presence* of a leader be significantly correlated with growth in the sample? Would it make any difference what rank (if any) was held by that leader? Is the growth tendency any different where more than one leader is present? Is growth associated with the age, sex or marital status of the leader? Is academic attainment important for growth? Is there any relationship between growth and the leader's years of service, or with the length of time in the appointment in question?

Appendix Table 1 (Appendix C) shows the information about leaders which was used in trying to find answers to these questions.

3.1.1 The Presence and Status of a Leader

The possible relationship between growth and officers holding various ranks, and of corps with no officer in post, was considered. Firstly, it should be said that, as with all such questions, no cause and effect relationship can be implied for any of these questions; it would be no more meaningful, on the data obtained, to ask (for instance) whether corps grow when they have Majors appointed to them, or whether Majors are appointed to growing corps. Any relationship would be more complex, and both suppositions might contain some truth. However, Figure 18 illustrates the mean growth index which is to be found for each rank of officers (including "none" where appropriate).

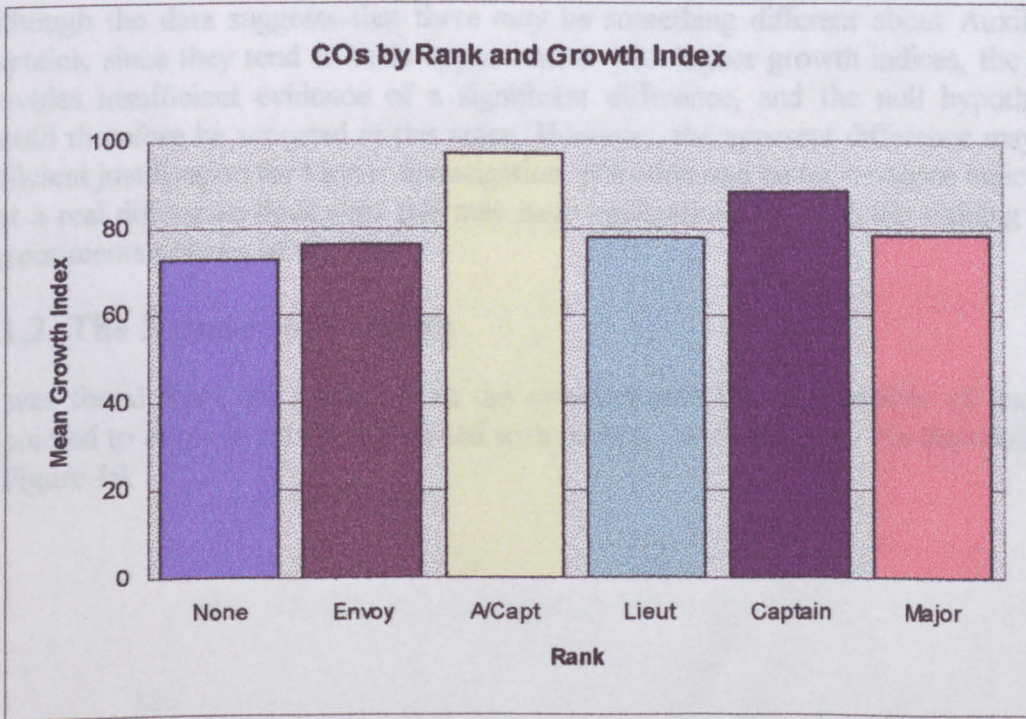


Figure 18: The relationship between CO's rank and growth.

The lowest growth indices occur where there is no leader, though most envoys (full or part-time leaders without training or formal rank as officers) are in corps which are in severe decline. Lieutenants are linked mainly with declining corps – but there are striking exceptions; Majors are most strongly associated with stable corps (*i.e.* those in the Middle Index group); Captains and Auxiliary Captains both tend to be associated with corps which have an index which is higher than the UK mean.

However, the combined sample demonstrates the tendency towards decline, even though the sampling procedure was deliberately biased to secure a sufficiently high representation of High Index corps to enable analysis to take place.

On subjecting this data to an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)⁷⁶ it was found that there are no significant differences in the variances at the 0.05 level.

Due to	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Frequency	Mean Square	F-stat	Significance
Rank	7,366.86	5	4,173.37	0.66	0.65
Error	117,841.18	53	2,223.42		
Total	125,208.04	58	2,158.76		

Table 3: ANOVA⁷⁷ of Officer Ranks and Growth Index

Although the data suggests that there *may* be something different about Auxiliary Captains, since they tend to be in appointments with higher growth indices, the test provides insufficient evidence of a significant difference, and the null hypothesis should therefore be accepted at this stage. However, the apparent difference may be sufficient justification for further investigation. If further and better evidence indicates that a real difference does exist this may have implications for both the training and appointments policies of the Army.

3.1.2 The Number of Leaders

It was found from the responses to the questionnaire that the number of leaders appointed to corps is closely associated with growth, as shown from the distributions in Figure 19.

⁷⁶ ANOVA is a standard statistical technique for calculating differences in variance between categories; it can also be used in the calculation of other differences, particularly by means of a statistical comparison to test hypotheses. Some caution is needed in extrapolating data from a sample to a population, but it is generally considered reasonable to assume that sample results *indicate* population data, even if, for instance, where the sample was too small or not completely random, the results cannot be used to *accurately* forecast the population proportions. The technique produces calculations which can be used in further analysis, but is mainly used for its production of the *F* ratio, indicating the ratio of variance within and between groups.

⁷⁷ The ANOVA results are shown here in full, in order to make clear the technique being used. Future references will generally show only the *F* and significance (*p*) statistics.

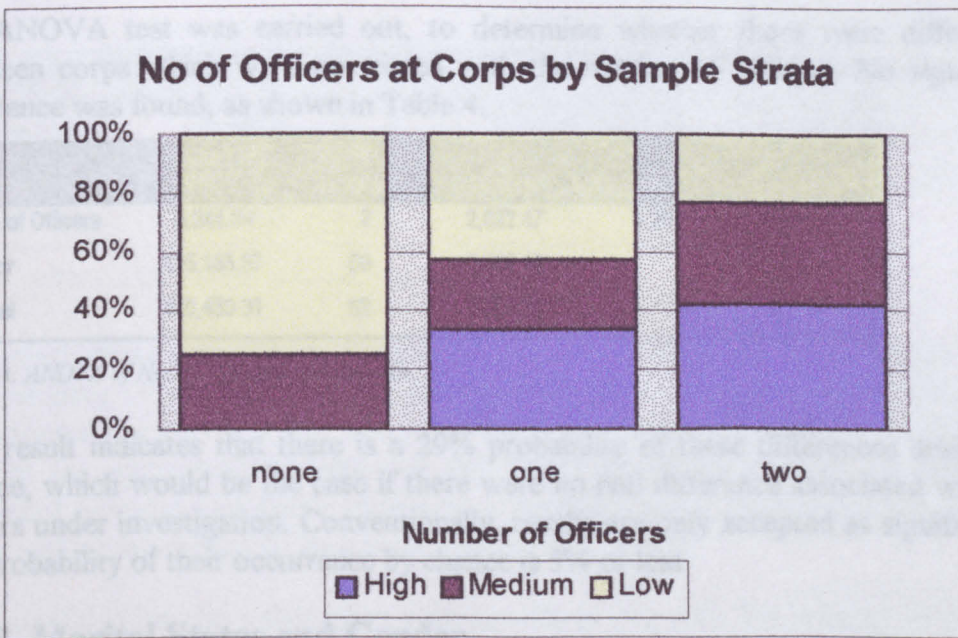


Figure 19: Distribution by No. of Officers and Index Groups

The High Index group included no corps without an officer, and almost three quarters of the group had two officers. The proportions change with the groups, so that the Low index group has only 43% with two officers, the same proportion with one officer, and 14% with none. This relationship also appears in Figure 20, which compares the mean Index for corps with no officer, one officer and two officers (none of the sample had more than 2).

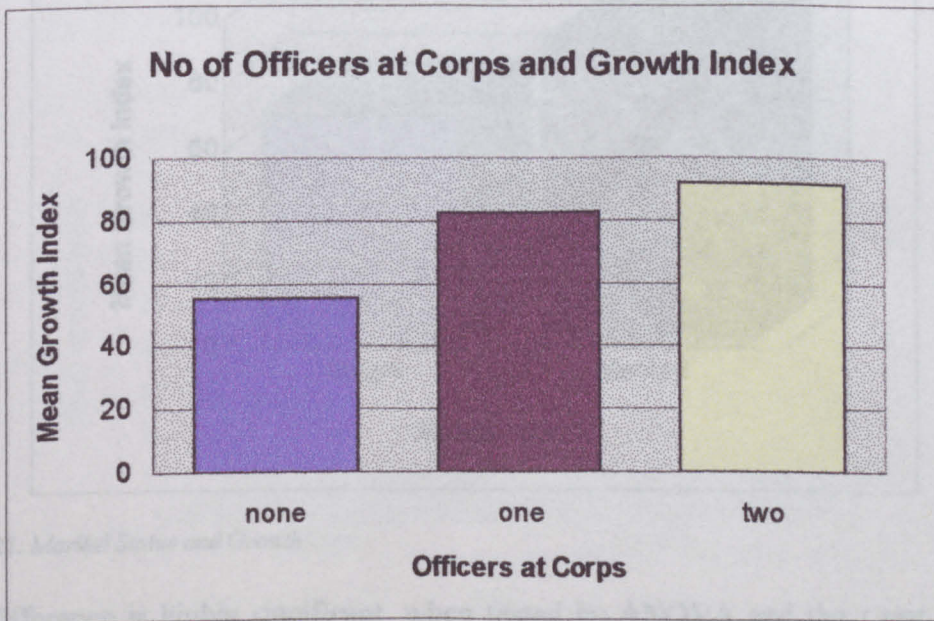


Figure 20: Mean Growth Index and Number of Officers

Corps with no officer were discussed above (3.1.1) and these results confirm those of the previous section. That is, there seems to be a difference in growth which, while not significant, suggests that corps with no officer are more likely to be in decline than those with *any* officer, regardless of status or other qualities.

An ANOVA test was carried out, to determine whether there were differences between corps which were associated with the number of officers. No significant difference was found, as shown in Table 4.

Due to	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Frequency	Mean Square	F-stat	Significance
No. of Officers	5,244.94	2	2,622.47	1.26	0.29
Error	125,185.37	60	2,086.42		
Total	130,430.31	62	2,103.72		

Table 4: ANOVA of No. of Officers and Growth

This result indicates that there is a 29% probability of these differences arising by chance, which would be the case if there were no real difference associated with the factors under investigation. Conventionally, results are only accepted as significant if the probability of their occurrence by chance is 5% or less.

3.1.3 Marital Status and Gender

Given Salvation Army policy on the marriage of officers (see 1.4.2 above), it is worth also considering the distribution of growth by the marital status⁷⁸ of the Commanding Officer (CO). Figure 21 shows that, taking only those corps which have officers, there is a difference in the mean growth index.

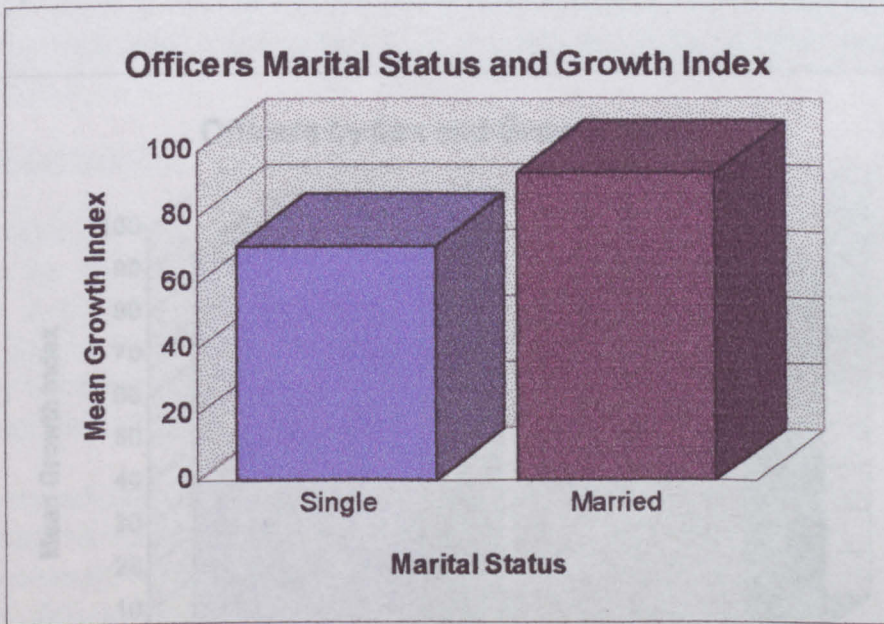


Figure 21: Marital Status and Growth

This difference is highly significant, when tested by ANOVA and the *t* test, with a probability (given a null hypothesis) of much less than 1%, as shown in Table 5 (which extends to only 2 decimal places).

Figure 22 shows that there are differences between male and female COs, and as marital status. That is, male COs are more likely to be associated with growth than

⁷⁸ Only married or single officers are included in this table, since the numbers of respondents who were either widowed or divorced (one of each) were insufficient for any generalisation.

Due to	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Frequency	Mean Square	F-stat	Significance
Marital Status	30,229.23	3	10,076.41	5.84	0.00
Error	94,978.81	55	1,726.89		
Total	125,208.04	58	2,158.76		

Table 5: ANOVA of CO Marital Status and Growth Index

This table shows that there is a close association between the marital status of the Commanding Officer and the growth index of the corps. However, it should be remembered that this does not mean that married officers *cause* growth, since it may be that the appointments policy of the Army results in married officers being appointed to corps with better prospects of growth. There may also be other causal factors which are related to both marital status and growth.

It is possible that the relationship with growth is not with the number of officers (exceeding zero), as determined earlier in this study, nor with the marital status, but with the sex of the CO. It has been shown that there is a strong relationship between marital status and growth; given the Army's policy on joint appointments with the husband as CO, it may be that it is the male CO which is important for growth. There are, however, a number of corps which have a single male CO, and therefore an analysis by sex was done, to try to isolate differences associated with the sex of the CO.

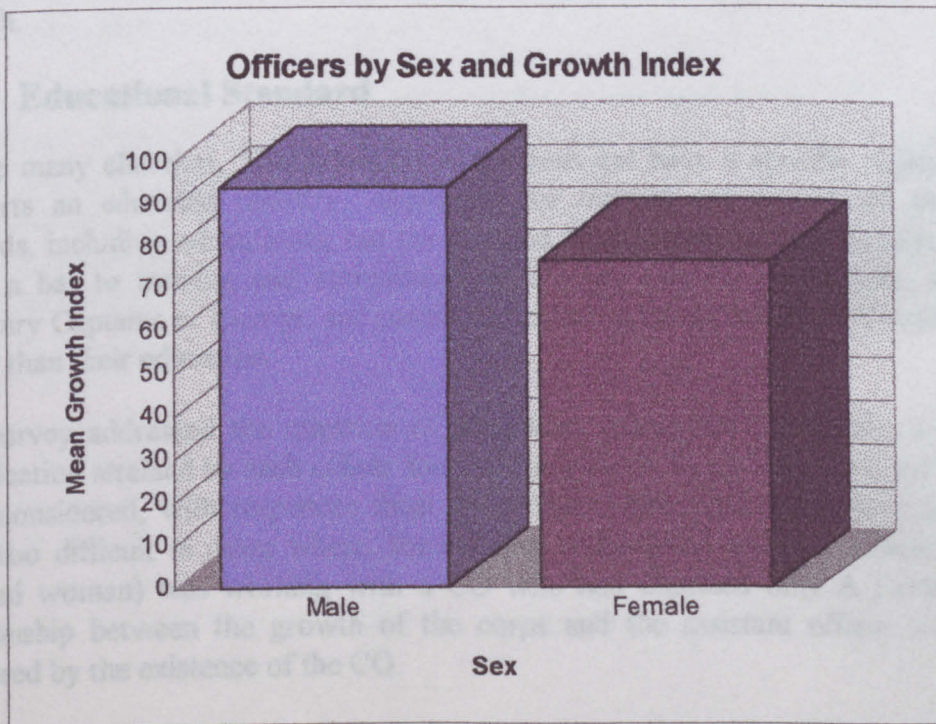


Figure 22: COs by Sex and Growth

Figure 22 shows that there are differences between male and female COs, and an examination of these differences shows that they are almost parallel with those for marital status. That is, male COs *are* more likely to be associated with growth than female COs, in almost the same proportions as are married COs compared to single COs.

Since almost all married COs are male (the sample included one exception), it may be there is a factor beyond both sex and marital status which is related to growth. Such a factor could be a leadership which is balanced between male and female. An ANOVA of sex, as shown in Table 6, indicates that although this may be important, it is not statistically significant at the 5% level, and this hypothesis should therefore be rejected at this stage.

Due to	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Frequency	Mean Square	F-stat	Significance
Sex of Officer	4,042.40	1	4,042.40	1.90	0.17
Error	121,165.64	57	2,125.71		
Total	125,208.04	58	2,158.76		

Table 6: ANOVA of CO Sex and Growth

More research is needed in this area, since the Army's policies differ strongly from major Christian churches. The all-male Roman Catholic clergy is (with very few exceptions) celibate; many free churches and others, including now the Church of England, ordain men and women, regardless of marital status. The concept of a joint, balanced, ministry is not built into the structure of these churches as it is in the Army. On the basis of these findings, it seems possible that further research may indicate the value of the Army's policy. However, a purely statistical study would still not be able to reveal whether growth was *produced* by a male/married CO, or whether there was a tendency to appoint male/married COs to corps which had a better potential for growth.

3.1.4 Educational Standard

Unlike many churches, The Salvation Army does not have a specific policy which supports an educated ministry. Applicants for training are considered on many grounds, including educational, but the absence of academic qualifications is not, in itself, a bar to training and commissioning. Mature entrants particularly, whether Auxiliary Captains or Envoys, are considered mainly on the basis of their experience, rather than their education.

The survey addressed the question of education, asking for the highest academic qualification attained by each officer forming the sample. In analysis, only the CO has been considered, with responses from 46 of them, since comparisons would have been too difficult in cases where, for instance, a graduate assistant officer (*e.g.* a married woman) was working with a CO who had obtained only A Levels. Any relationship between the growth of the corps and the assistant officer would be obscured by the existence of the CO.

Figure 23 illustrates the distribution by educational attainment, revealing apparent differences between the three sample strata.

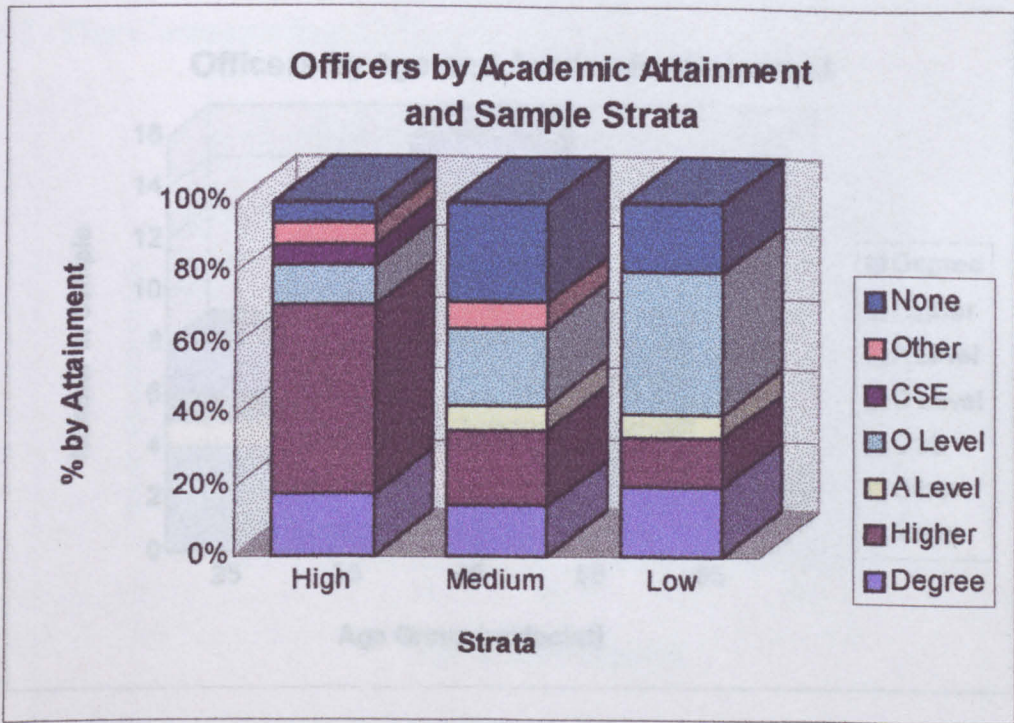


Figure 23: Distribution of COs by Academic Attainment

As in the above cases, a statistical analysis was undertaken, using the ANOVA test and a number of comparisons. There was no significant difference between the groups, but this finding may be misleading, because the effects of education might be obscured by other factors.

One such variable may be that of age (which is considered below). Over time the educational expectations for officers have become more rigorous, although not mandatory; this means that younger officers are more likely to hold higher qualifications. The phenomenon of 'Redemption and Lift' (see 2.2.1 and 2.13.3 above) is also relevant, as many younger officers are second or subsequent generation Salvationists. The relationship between education and age is shown in Figure 24.

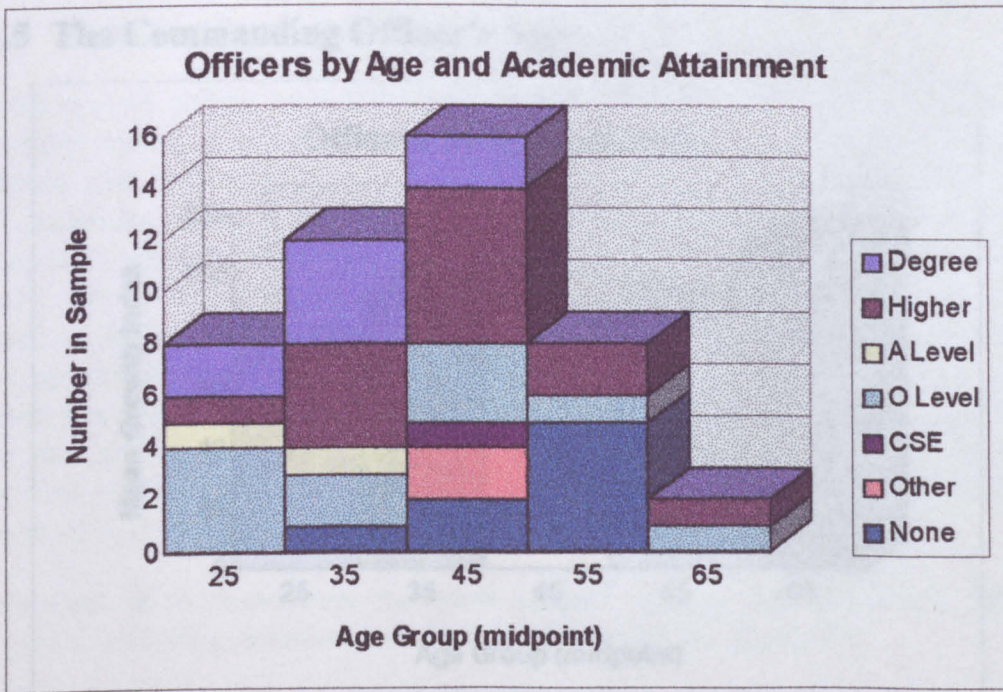


Figure 24: The distribution of COs by Age and Educational Attainment

Younger and less experienced officers tend to receive appointments to smaller corps, and often for shorter terms, and it may be that smaller corps have other factors which predispose them towards decline, regardless of the officer in charge. If this is so, then the two factors (education and appointment) will to some extent cancel each other out, obscuring any positive effect which might be associated with the education of the officer.

From Figure 24 it can be seen that the youngest intake of sampled officers (those aged 20-29) have all attained at least O Levels or equivalents. There is an increasing tendency for younger officers to be graduates, but there is also a high proportion of officers, especially in their middle years, who have received a higher education⁷⁹ other than degree-level. Although this has not been explored in depth, it is supposed, from the ages of these officers, that this will include non-graduate qualifications in such professions as nursing and teaching, as well as other diplomas and certificates. This may be important since, as shown in Figure 24, this group has a disproportionate strength in the High Index sample strata. This could be connected to some extent with age, rather than education, and will be considered below. A number of officers (including myself) have taken degrees as mature students, and this may affect the proportions shown in the chart which should be understood as including both graduate entry and subsequent study.

⁷⁹ Note: the term 'higher' here means 'higher education other than degree-level'; it does not mean Scottish highers, which are considered as equivalent to A-levels.

3.1.5 The Commanding Officer's Age

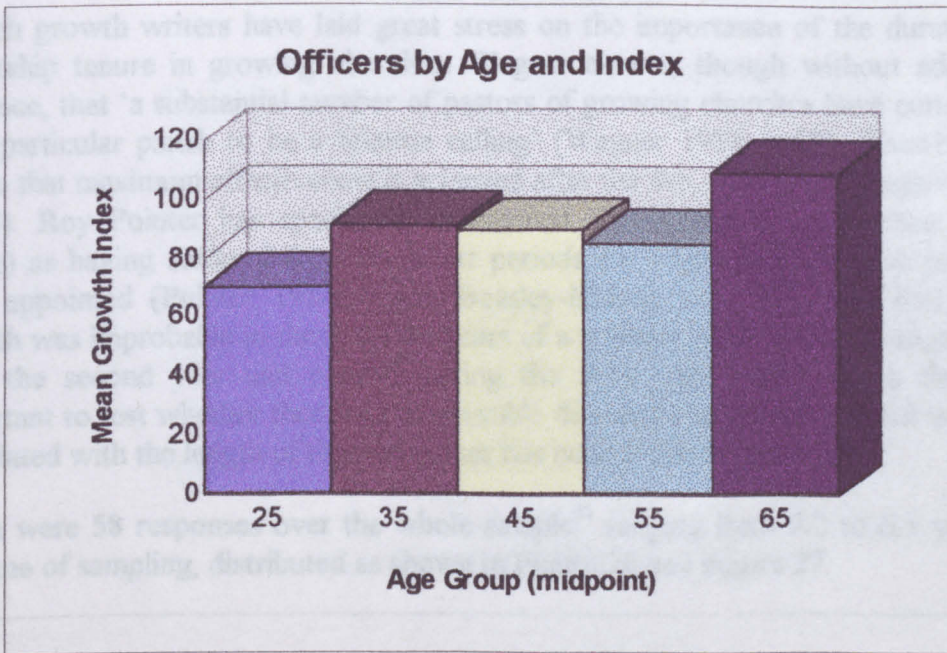


Figure 25: The Relationship between Age and Growth Index

Figure 25 is simplified, since it takes the mid-points for the five age groups considered over the whole sample (*i.e.* not separated into constituent strata), and this is almost certainly unrealistic⁸⁰ in some respects; the high age group is particularly unreliable, since it consisted of only 2 respondents, but is nonetheless interesting, and would perhaps repay a more extended study. With this exception, however, it seems that growth is more likely where the CO is aged around 35, the tendency having increased prior to that age band, and slowly decreasing thereafter (with the possible but uncertain leap, mentioned above, when the CO is over 60).

The data was tested by ANOVA, which revealed no significant difference between the age groups. It is therefore not possible to draw any firm conclusion as to an association between the CO's age and growth. However, there may be a more complex relationship, such as one linking age, education and growth, or possibly those three elements, plus tenure or experience.

⁸⁰ Since the minimum age for entry to the training college is 18, and the course lasts two years, there may have been some (but could not have been many) under 25; there were only two out of the whole sample in the over 60 age group – consequently, the choice of 65 as the mid-point is unrealistic.

3.1.6 Tenure of Leadership

Church growth writers have laid great stress on the importance of the duration of leadership tenure in growing churches. Wagner asserts, though without adducing evidence, that ‘a substantial number of pastors of growing churches have considered their particular parish to be a lifetime calling’ (Wagner 1984, p.67). Elsewhere he claims that maximum effectiveness is achieved after the 4th – 6th year (Wagner 1985, p.163). Roy Pointer has specifically mentioned The Salvation Army (see 2.13.3 above) as having suffered from the short periods for which officers have normally been appointed (Pointer 1984, p.82). Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that growth was improbable in the first two years of a minister’s stay, became more likely after the second year and peaked during the 5-10 year period. It is therefore important to test whether there is a measurable difference in growth pattern which is associated with the length of time an officer has been at the corps.

There were 58 responses over the whole sample⁸¹ ranging from 0.2 to 6.5 years at the time of sampling, distributed as shown in Figure 26 and Figure 27.

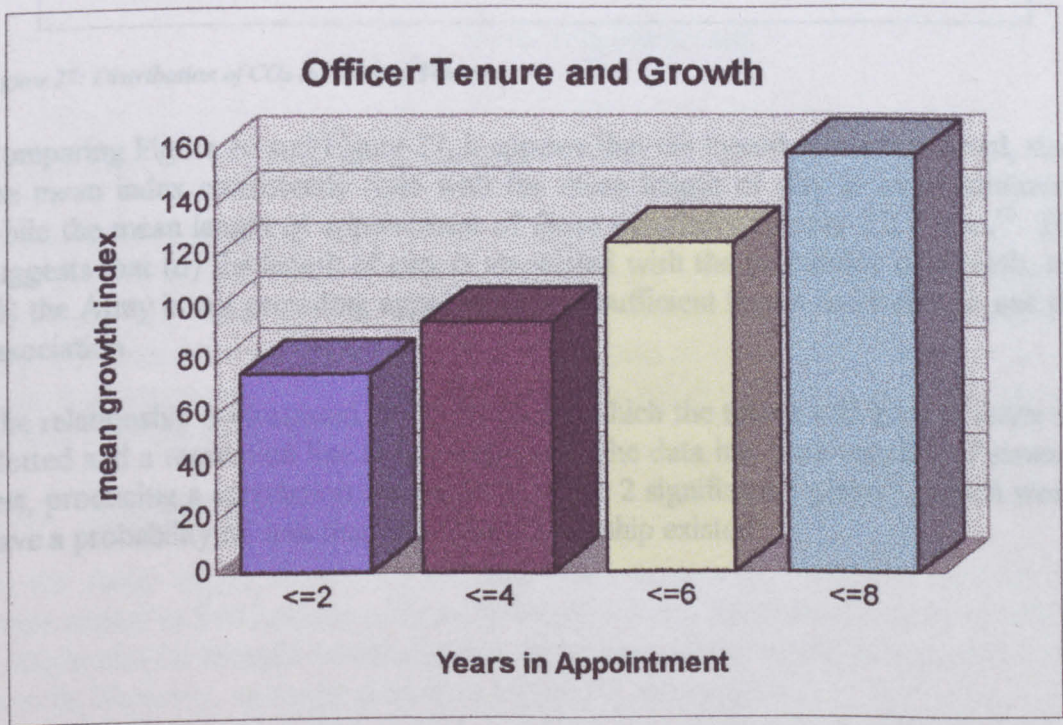


Figure 26: COs by Years of Tenure and Growth Index

⁸¹ One respondent had been at his appointment for 20 years, and this is known to be so atypical of the whole population of corps officers that this response is disregarded, since it would be impossible to generalise from such an extreme and isolated example.

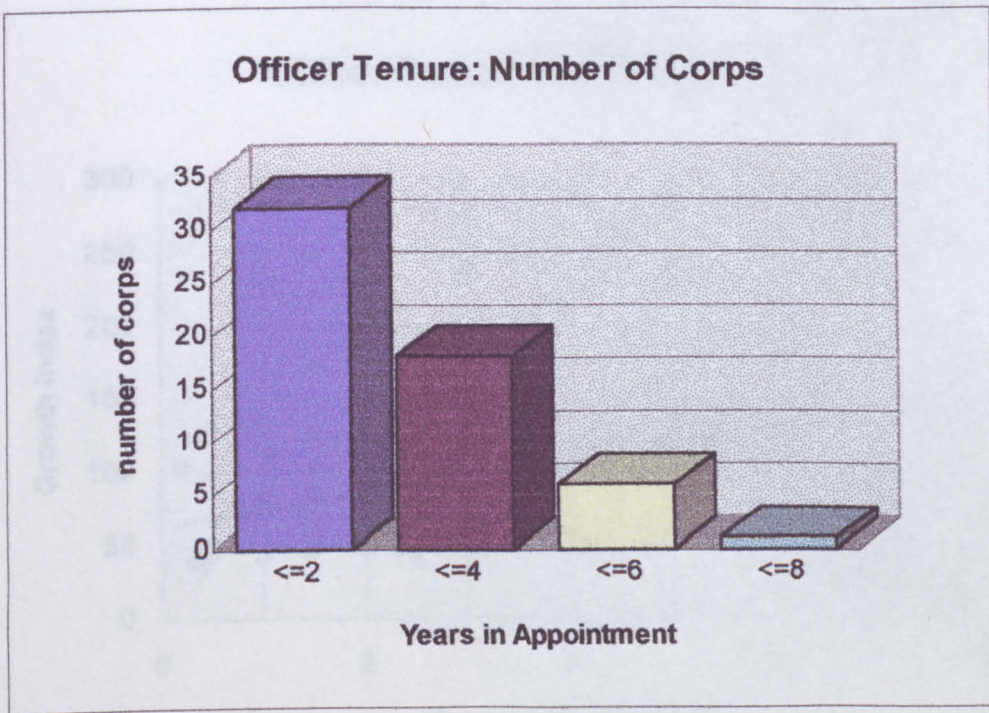


Figure 27: Distribution of COs by Years of Tenure

Comparing Figure 26 and Figure 27, it appears that the hypothesis is supported, since the mean index consistently rises with the mean length of stay in an appointment, while the mean length of appointment of those sampled was only 2.23 years⁸². This suggests that (a) the length of stay is associated with the probability of growth, and (b) the Army is not providing appointments of sufficient length to be able to use this association.

The relationship is illustrated in Figure 28, on which the tenure and growth index are plotted and a regression line is superimposed. The data has been tested by Pearson's test, producing a correlation statistic of 0.35 (to 2 significant figures)⁸³, which would have a probability of less than 1% if no relationship existed.

As the Army values its officers, it might expect to find a relationship between growth and tenure. It might also be expected that the longer an officer stays in an appointment, the more growth he would have. However, as can be seen from Figure 27, the number of corps decreases as the length of appointment increases. There is a negative correlation of approximately -0.35 between the actual correlation of 0.35, which is a predictive value for growth.

⁸² Note: this was the length of time from taking up the appointment to the completion of the questionnaire, and not to the end of the appointment. It would be misleading to take the figures as an indication of appointment lengths, although the pattern is probably correct.

⁸³ There are several possible indicators of relationships. Pearson's is one of the simplest: an exact correlation (where the size of one score is a precise predictor of the size of the other) is indicated by 1.00; the absence of a correlation by 0.00; and a negative correlation by -1.00. The closer the figure approaches either 1.00 or -1.00, the stronger the correlation.

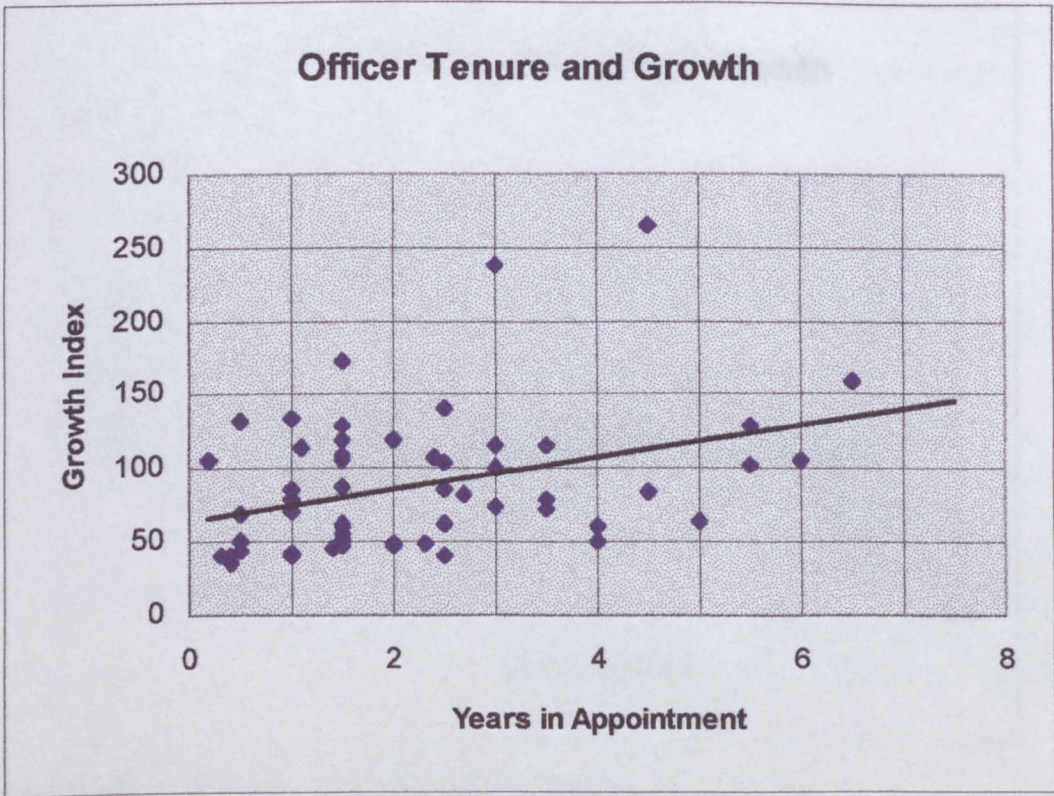


Figure 28: Regression Graph of Tenure and Growth

Although the relationship is not strong (which shows that other factors are associated with growth), it seems that growth can be *expected* only where the officer stays for more than two years, and that the probability of growth increases with the length of stay, although there are exceptions, since the spread of scores is very wide. Pointer's suggested optimum of 5-7 years was reached by too few of the corps in the sample for this to be specifically tested.

3.1.7 Years of Service

As the Army values its officers for their years of service⁸⁴ (see 1.4.2 above) one might expect to find a relationship between growth and the years served by an officer. It might also be thought intuitively that experience gained would be associated with growth. However, as can be seen from Figure 29, this is not so.

There is practically no relationship between years served and growth. A Pearson's correlation of zero would indicate that there was no relationship whatsoever – the actual correlation is -0.08, which is so close to zero that length of service can have no predictive value for growth.

⁸⁴ Promotion as far as major is on the basis of years served, and the service of officers completing 25 years service is recognised by admission to a Long Service Order.

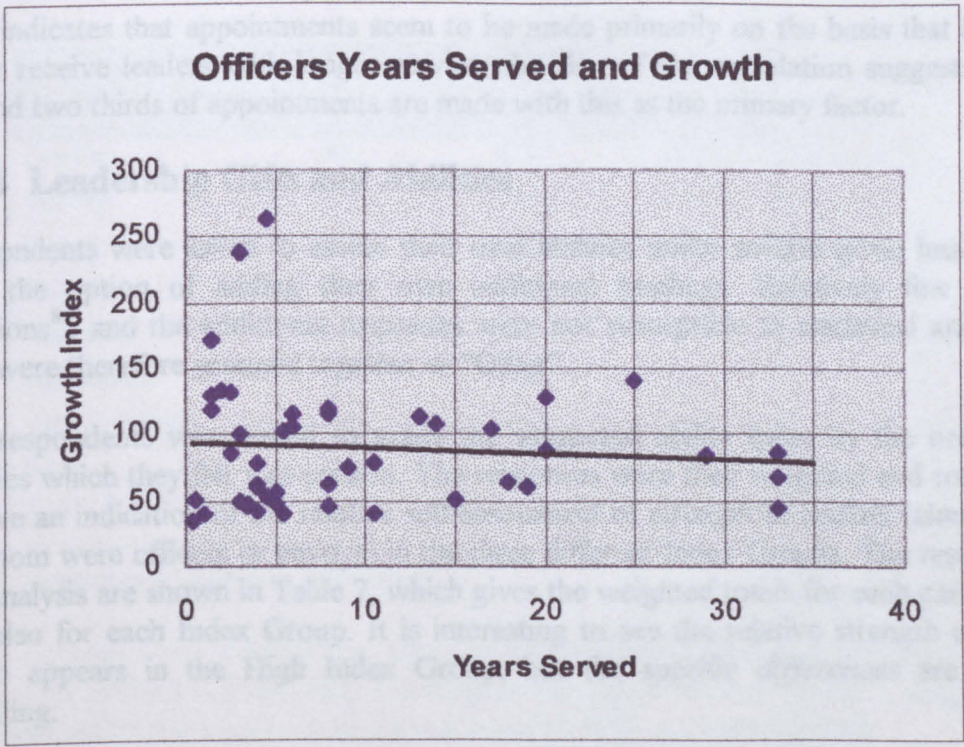


Figure 29: The Correlation between Growth and Years Served

There is, however, a very strong correlation ($r = 0.66, p = 0.0000^{85}$) between years served and the number of soldiers in the corps, as shown in Figure 30, where it is contrasted with the lack of correlation for growth.

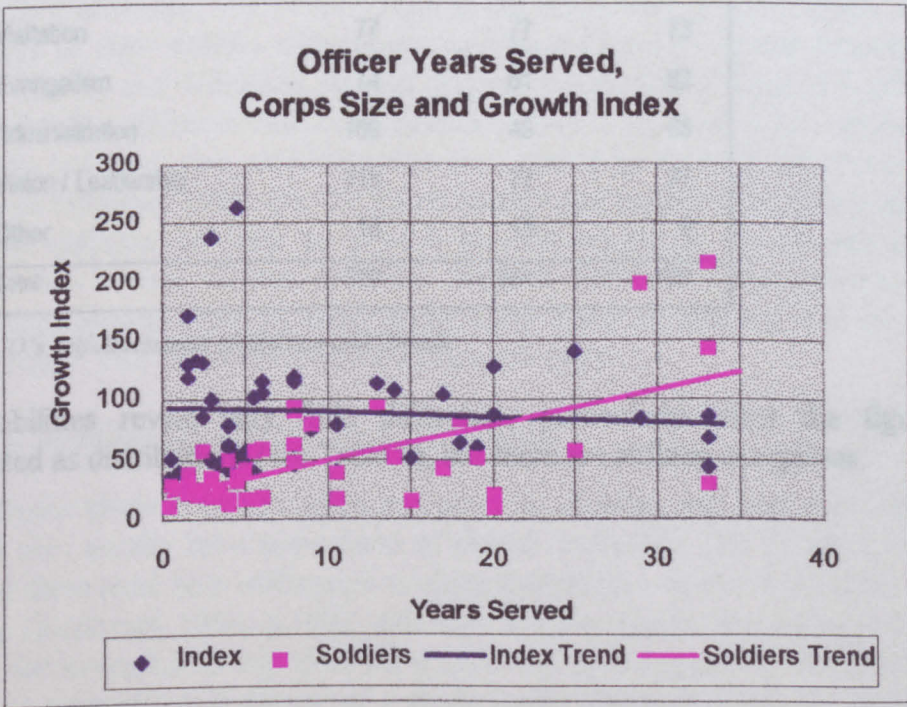


Figure 30: Officer's Years of Service, with Corps Size and Growth

⁸⁵ Probability (p) is given to only four decimal places, indicating that the probability of this result is extremely low, unless there were a real relationship between the two measures.

This indicates that appointments seem to be made primarily on the basis that larger corps receive leaders with longer service; the size of the correlation suggests that around two thirds of appointments are made with this as the primary factor.

3.1.8 Leadership Gifts and Abilities

Respondents were asked to assess their own abilities under several given headings, with the option of adding their own additional headings. Relatively few made additions⁸⁶, and the additional responses were not susceptible to statistical analysis; they were therefore grouped together as "Other".

The respondents were asked to grade the suggested ability types by the order of abilities which they felt was present. The responses were then weighted and totalled, to give an indication of the relative self-assessment of strength of leaders (almost all of whom were officers or envoys) in the three different Index Groups. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 7, which gives the weighted totals for each category, and also for each Index Group. It is interesting to see the relative strength overall which appears in the High Index Group, but the specific *differences* are quite revealing.

COs by Ability and Index Group			
Abilities	High Index	Medium Index	Low Index
Preaching	124	94	101
Teaching	114	76	98
Pastoral Care	104	102	105
Visitation	77	77	73
Evangelism	74	61	62
Administration	109	49	68
Vision / Leadership	119	72	77
Other	18	13	8
Total	739	544	592

Table 7: CO's Self-Assessment of Abilities and Growth

Some abilities reveal very little difference, particularly when the figures are interpreted as distributions (see Table 8), but there are striking exceptions.

⁸⁶ The additional items were Youth Work, Prayer, Worship Leading, Counselling, Community Service, Fund Raising and (unspecified) Other.

COs by Ability and Index Group (Distribution)			
Abilities	High Index	Medium Index	Low Index
Preaching	0.17	0.17	0.17
Teaching	0.15	0.14	0.16
Pastoral Care	0.14	0.19	0.18
Visitation	0.10	0.14	0.12
Evangelism	0.10	0.11	0.10
Administration	0.15	0.09	0.11
Vision / Leadership	0.16	0.13	0.13
Other	0.02	0.02	0.02
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00

Table 8: Distribution of Abilities by Index Groups

It can be seen from Table 8 that there is little difference between the three Index Groups for abilities in Preaching, Teaching and Evangelism (and “Other”), suggesting that these abilities are unlikely to provide estimators for potential growth.

However, there are two groups of abilities where there is a pronounced difference. Pastoral Care and Visitation (which may be related to each other) have a similar pattern: the COs of the High Index corps tend to score *lower* in their weighted assessments of these abilities than do the COs in the other two Index Groups. It seems therefore that the pastoral gifts cannot be used as indicators of the likelihood of growth. Conversely, the COs of High Index corps have given a *higher* weighted assessment of their abilities with respect to Vision / Leadership and Administration. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson support Wagner’s claim that the pastor’s gift mix for growth should emphasise vision and leadership (see 2.10.1 and 2.11.1 above), while other gifts (pastoral care, administration etc.) should be found in other members of the church (Wagner 1985, Ch. 5). These results also support this claim, suggesting that these abilities *can* help to provide positive estimators for growth potential. Although the nature of this data has made it difficult to test statistically, the relationships which seem to exist could have value in training and in planning appointments. This should be explored in greater depth.

3.1.9 A Willingness to Share Leadership

Most Church Growth writers agree that growing churches will have clear leadership, but will also usually have some form of shared leadership. For instance, Holloway says that there must be a willingness to share leadership – neither a dictatorship nor a plurality (Holloway 1989, p.168), although Wagner seems less convinced of this, arguing for strong leadership from the pastor, and even suggesting the dissolution of governing committees in favour of a single leader (Wagner 1984, pp. 68-74). This seems to be a question of balance between a single leadership for the whole church but an empowered devolved leadership for sections within the church. A set of questions was included in the survey to measure this factor in the sample.

3.1.9.1 Decision Making

Respondents were asked in what setting policy matters were discussed. The usual forums for discussion were the Census Board⁸⁷ or the Corps Council. In a few cases (4 out of 62) there was no discussion or it took place in some format other than those mentioned. It was expected intuitively that those who discussed policy with the Corps Council⁸⁸ would be more likely to be associated with growth than those who used the Census Board, and that both would be more likely to be associated with growth than those who used some other, or no, discussion forum.

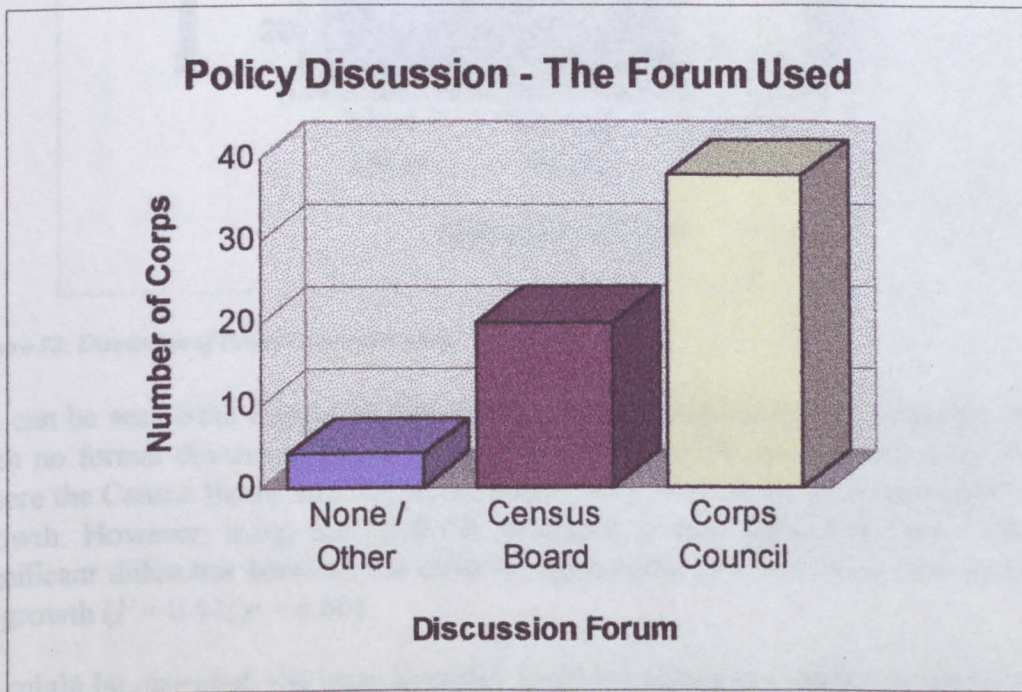


Figure 31: Discussion of Policy Issues; The Forum Used

Figure 31 shows the distribution of respondents by their discussion forum. Figure 32 shows the respondents by their mean Growth Index.

⁸⁷ Officially, the Census Board is concerned with the review of the corps rolls, and therefore with pastoral care. However, in many corps, especially where there is no effective Corps Council, the Census Board also acts as a forum for discussion.

⁸⁸ Where both Census Board and Corps Council exist, the latter is the larger and more representative body.

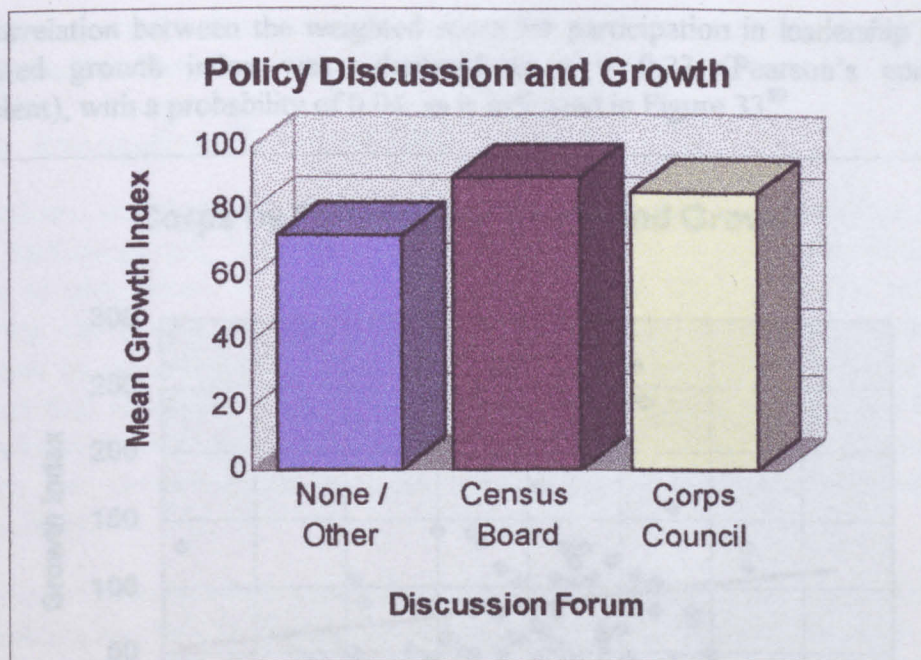


Figure 32: Discussion of Policy Issues and mean Growth Index

As can be seen from Figure 32, the findings seemed slightly counter-intuitive; those with no formal discussion forum were least likely to grow (as expected), but those where the Census Board was the policy forum were more likely to be associated with growth. However, using the ANOVA technique, it was found that there was no significant difference between the different approaches to policy discussion in terms of growth ($F = 0.51, p = 0.60$).

As might be expected, the issue of policy decisions followed a similar pattern to that of policy discussion, and was similarly not found to be a significant factor in association with growth ($F = 1.05, p = 0.36$).

There was therefore little support either for the hypothesis that shared leadership was associated with growth or for an association between single leadership and growth.

3.1.9.2 Leadership of Worship

The extent of shared leadership of worship was explored by asking respondents to identify forms of participation with an indication of frequency ("Never", "Sometimes" or "Frequently"). It was expected that the frequency of participation would be related to the Growth Index.

Sixty three respondents replied to this question, and their responses were graded by giving 2 points to answers of "Frequently", 1 point to "Sometimes" and -1 point to "Never". No distinction was made at this stage between the kinds of participation.

The correlation between the weighted score for participation in leadership and the calculated growth index was calculated as $r = 0.23$ (Pearson's correlation coefficient), with a probability of 0.04, as is indicated in Figure 33⁸⁹.

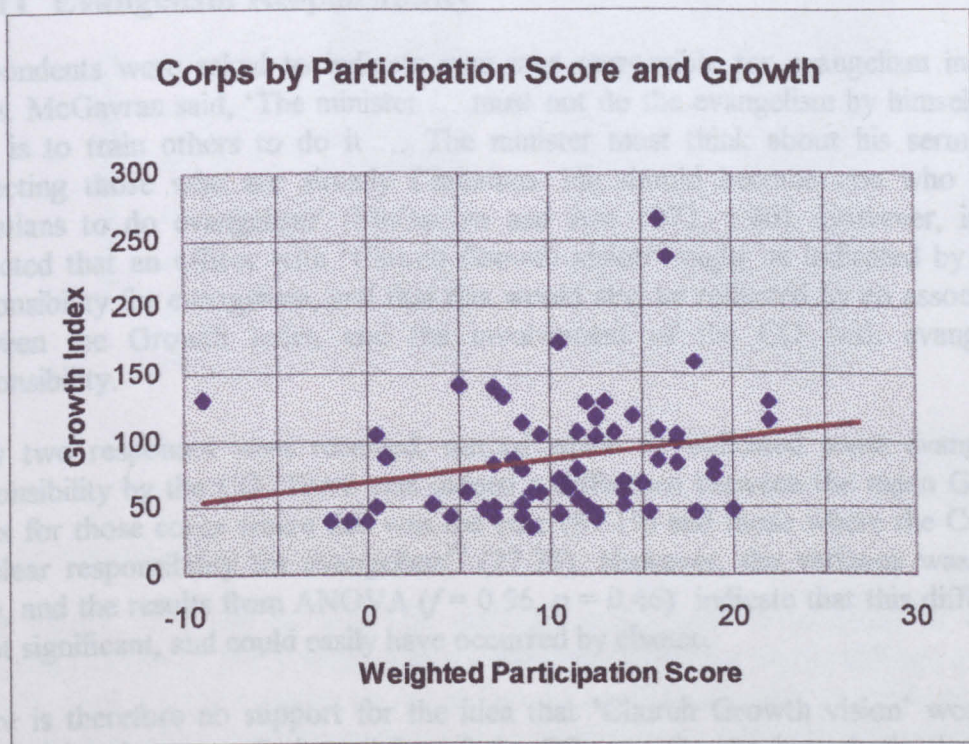


Figure 33: Worship Leadership Participation and Growth

This is a significant result, demonstrating a relationship between shared worship leadership and growth. It would in this case be safe to exclude the implied null hypothesis, and to accept in its place the hypothesis that there is an association between this factor and growth. This topic will be considered again as an aspect of lay mobilisation in 3.2.5 below.

It can therefore be concluded that there is no evidence for an association between growth and widely shared leadership on policy issues (although a non-consultative leadership seems to be least associated with growth), but that shared leadership of worship is an important factor.

3.1.10 Special Ministries

A question on special ministries (tape fellowship, telephone counselling *etc.*) was included in the study (following Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson), in the expectation that such ministries would be likely to occur where there was inspirational leadership, and that this would be correlated with growth.

In fact, only 8 corps out of 62 had any such ministry, some of them only occasionally, and there was virtually no difference between the Growth Indices for those corps and those for the others.

⁸⁹ The number of "Frequently" responses is particularly highly correlated, with a probability of less than 0.001.

In this instance the null hypothesis was accepted; there is apparently no relationship between such ministries and the growth of corps.

3.1.11 Evangelism Responsibility

Respondents were asked to indicate who was responsible for evangelism in their corps. McGavran said, 'The minister ... must not do the evangelism by himself. His duty is to train others to do it ... The minister must think about his sermon as perfecting those who are already Christians. He should become one who trains Christians to do evangelism' (McGavran and Arn 1973, p.86). However, it was expected that an officer with 'Church Growth vision' might be indicated by *some* responsibility for evangelism, and that this would also be reflected by an association between the Growth Index and the involvement of the CO with evangelism responsibility.

Sixty two responses were received, out of which 51 indicated some evangelism responsibility by the CO. There was indeed a difference between the mean Growth Index for those corps where this was the case (89.19) and those where the CO had no clear responsibility for evangelism⁹⁰ (77.73). However, the variance was quite wide, and the results from ANOVA ($f = 0.56, p = 0.46$) indicate that this difference is not significant, and could easily have occurred by chance.

There is therefore no support for the idea that 'Church Growth vision' would be revealed by the evangelistic activity of the CO, nor for the hypothesis that such 'vision' (as measured here) would be associated with growth.

3.1.12 Frequency of Outreach Meetings

Respondents were asked how frequently their corps held meetings which were *specifically* planned to attract people outside the current fellowship.

Fifty nine responses were received, and the relative frequencies are shown in Figure 34⁹¹. It was expected that the frequency of outreach meetings would be associated with growth, and would indicate a corps officer with 'Church Growth vision'.

⁹⁰ These corps would have included some corps with no CO.

⁹¹ There was also one response for "Other" (which could not be included in an analysis) and three which selected "Special Events" in addition to either "Occasionally"(2) or "Monthly"(1).

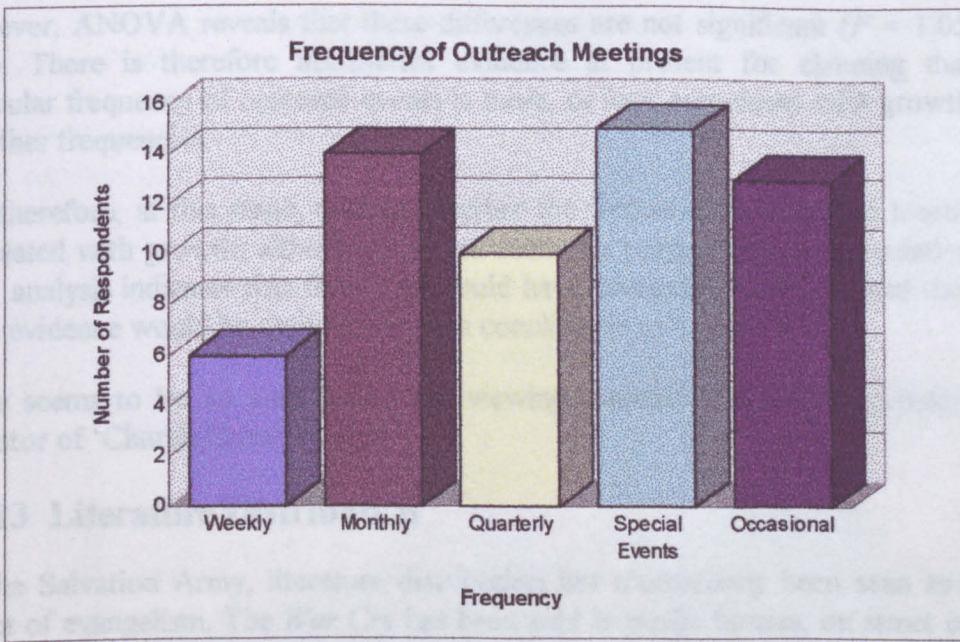


Figure 34: Frequency of Outreach Meetings

From Figure 34 it can be seen that although every corps is expected to hold a "Salvation Meeting" every week (Orders and Regulations for Corps Officers (1976), Ch. VII, Sect. 1), the majority do not in fact do so, although they probably continue to use the title which is traditionally given to the Sunday evening worship meeting.

This is not the 'dereliction of duty', it might at first appear, but is probably an intelligent response to experience, since weekly outreach meetings seem to be generally ineffective, as shown in Figure 35.

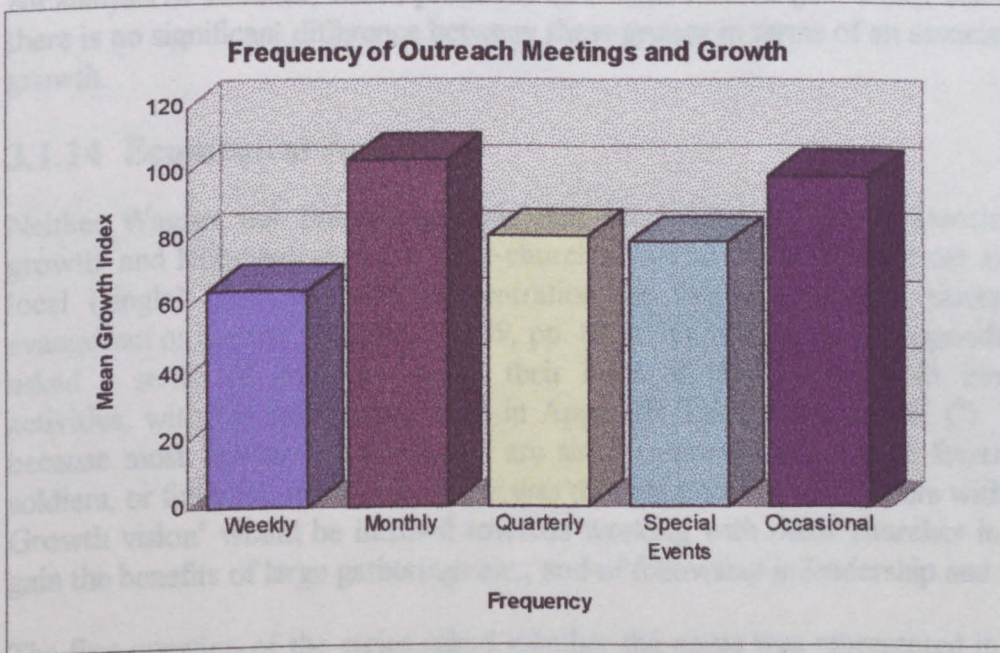


Figure 35: Frequency of Outreach Meetings and Mean Growth Index

It can be seen from Figure 35 that the two frequencies which are most associated with growth are "Monthly" and "Occasional", while "Weekly" is least associated with growth.

However, ANOVA reveals that these differences are not significant ($F = 1.05$, $p = 0.39$). There is therefore insufficient evidence at present for claiming that any particular frequency of outreach events is more, or less, associated with growth than are other frequencies.

It is therefore, at this stage, unclear whether the frequency of outreach meetings is associated with growth; although the data seems to suggest that an association may exist, analysis indicates that this result could have occurred by chance, and therefore more evidence would be required for firm conclusions to be drawn.

There seems to be no justification for viewing outreach meeting frequency as an indicator of 'Church Growth vision'.

3.1.13 Literature Distribution

In The Salvation Army, literature distribution has traditionally been seen as a key aspect of evangelism. The *War Cry* has been sold in public houses, on street corners and from door to door for many years. It was therefore considered that in this context the commitment to literature distribution might be an indicator of 'Church Growth vision' on the part of the CO.

Respondents were asked to say whether literature distribution took place at their corps and, if so, whether it was Salvation Army literature, other literature or both.

Of 61 replies, three had no literature distribution programme, 50 used only Salvation Army material, seven used Salvation Army and other material, and one corps used non-Salvation Army material only.

An analysis of variance, which produced an F ratio of 0.72 ($p = 0.55$), indicates that there is no significant difference between these groups in terms of an association with growth.

3.1.14 Ecumenical Activity

Neither Wagner nor Pointer suggests that ecumenical activity is associated with growth, and Holloway says that inter-church activities can take resources away from local (single) churches, into concentration on 'lateral exercises' instead of on evangelism or nurture (Holloway 1989, pp. 89 & 90) Nevertheless, respondents were asked a series of questions about their level of involvement with inter-church activities, with the responses shown in Appendix Table 2 (Appendix C). This was because most Salvation Army corps are small (more than half have fewer than 50 soldiers, or full adult members), and it was thought possible that leaders with 'Church Growth vision' would be inclined towards working with other churches in order to gain the benefits of large gatherings *etc.*, and of fellowship in leadership and activity.

The first question of the series asked whether the corps was represented in the local "Churches Together" or "Council of Churches". Sixty one replies were received, only 12 of which were negative. From ANOVA, it seems that there may be a weak relationship with growth, although the evidence was insufficient to form such a conclusion with any confidence ($F = 2.00$, $p = 0.16$).

The mean Growth Index for those with representation was 91.94, and that for those without was 71.09.

Respondents were asked how frequently their corps took part with other churches in united services. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 36, showing that there seems to be a relationship between growth and frequency of participation in such services.

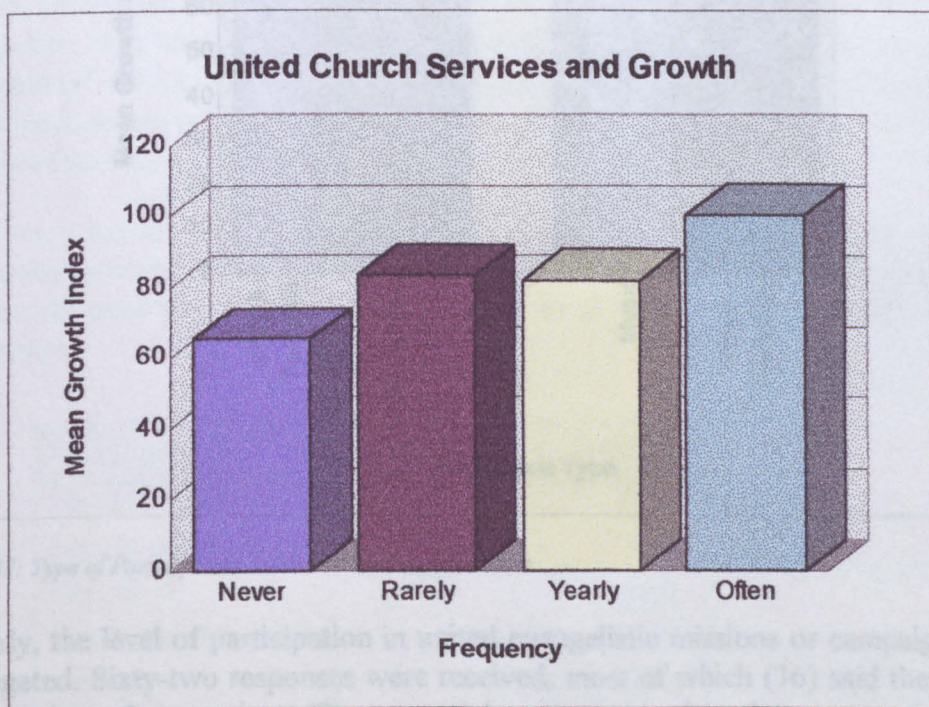


Figure 36: United Church Services and Growth

However, this was tested by the usual statistical techniques, and ANOVA suggests that there is no significant difference between these groups in terms of association with growth ($F = 0.61, p = 0.52$).

The *type* of participation⁹² in United Churches services was also considered. Fifty respondents gave replies to this question, with the results shown in Figure 37. From this chart it can be seen that the provision of music for special events, and the exchange of pulpits (or platforms) seem to be slightly more associated with growth than are the other categories of participation. However, when subjected to statistical analysis, the differences are not significant at the 5% level ($t = 1.07, p = 0.14$). This may be because there is insufficient data, and possibly more research may produce a clearer outcome. At present no firm conclusion can be drawn from this evidence.

⁹² Respondents were asked to reply in their own words. The responses were then categorised as Church Festivals (Easter, Christmas, March for Jesus etc.), Congregational amalgamations (part or whole), United Churches leadership, Music for events or Pulpit Exchanges. Where two or three responses were given, one was selected arbitrarily, while preserving the balance overall between categories.

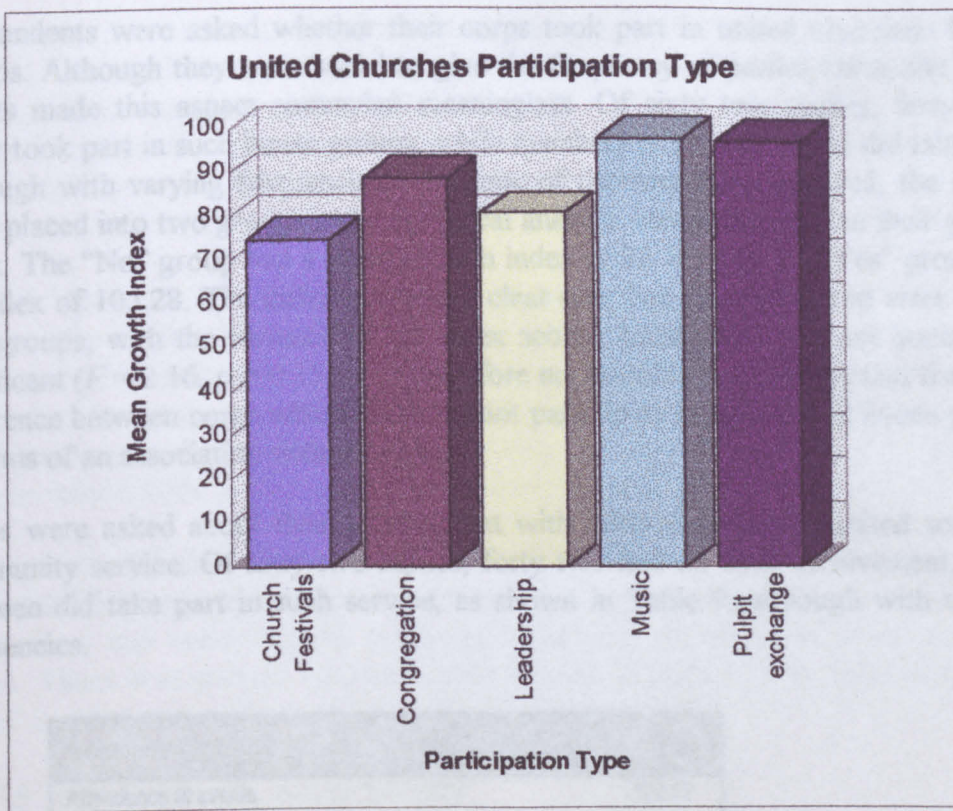


Figure 37: Type of Participation in United Churches Services

Similarly, the level of participation in united evangelistic missions or campaigns was investigated. Sixty-two responses were received, most of which (36) said they *never* took part in such campaigns. Eleven participated rarely – less than once a year, and fifteen were regular participants on an annual basis. The mean index for the three categories is very similar (85.55, 89.20 and 89.50 respectively) and no significant difference could be found between the groups. In fact the probability was 0.98 that any differences were the result of chance rather than a difference in kind.

Those respondents who did participate in united evangelistic campaigns were asked to describe the nature of their participation. Of the 19 who replied, 14 corps participated through the provision of music (usually the band), while 5 participated in other ways (visitation, counselling, literature). There was an apparent difference between the mean Growth Indices of these two categories, but it didn't quite reach significance at the 5% level ($t = 1.43, p = 0.09$). This may have been because of the small amount of data available on this factor, which could both have prevented the difference reaching a significant level, and have distorted the results from those which would have been produced by better sampling.

Again, it is possible that there is an association between the type of participation in evangelistic missions and growth index, with musical participation being less effective than other types, but it is not possible to make this assertion with confidence on the basis of this evidence.

Respondents were asked whether their corps took part in united churches' house-groups. Although they were asked to give the frequency of participation, the actual results made this aspect somewhat meaningless. Of sixty two replies, forty eight never took part in such house groups, while members of thirteen corps did take part, although with varying frequencies⁹³. In view of the responses received, the replies were placed into two groups and a statistical analysis was performed on their growth index. The "No" group had a mean growth index of 83.16, and the "Yes" group had an index of 105.28. The difference was a clear one, but the unbalanced sizes of the two groups, with the variance of the index scores, means that it is not statistically significant ($F = 2.16, p = 0.15$). It is therefore not possible to conclude that there is a difference between corps which do or do not participate in ecumenical house-groups in terms of an association with growth.

Corps were asked about their involvement with other churches in united social or community service. Of sixty two replies, forty two had no such involvement, while nineteen did take part in such service, as shown in Table 9, although with varying frequencies.

United Community Service Participation	Mean Index
Attendance at events	172.22
Band / Songsters & CO	63.85
Band plays etc.	158.49
Carol Service - Coffee mornings	78.00
Christmas Aid	47.06
Congregational	87.50
Helping Hand team	128.57
Hunger Lunches, Lent studies etc.	141.18
Participation in meetings	118.75
Nightly soup run rota	85.12
Other churches join SA activity	74.53
Participation in events	129.41
Soup run	113.25
Coffee morning stall	52.00
Visitation	82.61
Volunteer emergency support	68.57

Table 9: Participation in United Churches Community Service

⁹³ Most were involved in annual participation in united churches' housegroups, and although the question was not asked, it is probably fair to assume that this is most often in connection with the Lent bible study.

There was a different mean index for the two groups, with "No" = 83.69, and "Yes" = 97.14, but ANOVA again indicates that the overall variance and that between the groups is such that they overlap considerably ($F = 0.34$, $p = 0.56$). For instance, it can be seen from the table that there is considerable variation in the indices of those corps which *are* involved with other churches in social or community service, and it may be that, the nature of the service is more important than simply its occurrence.

On the whole, it seems that most corps have a near passive involvement in ecumenical activities; the majority are *connected with* their local Churches Together or Council of Churches, but take little active part. This may be because little activity takes place in which it is possible to become involved, or because the Army corps members are already as fully committed as they can be in their corps programme, or because there is little willingness to work with others, or for other reasons.

Although few of the results were statistically significant, they suggest a positive relationship between ecumenical involvement and growth. However, the relationship is not clear, and more research is needed before any definite conclusions could be drawn. There is at present no justification for the hypothesis that 'Church Growth vision' is associated with ecumenical activity.

3.1.15 Theological Compatibility

Wagner and Pointer, among others, claim strongly that the match between the leader and the church is important for growth (see 2.2.3.1 above).

Respondents (mainly corps officers) were asked to briefly describe their own theological position and that of the corps as a whole. This question was intended to discover both the extent of theological agreement between the leader and the corps and any relationship between those views and the growth index of the corps. An explicit assumption was made that the theology would be broadly evangelical⁹⁴, with shades of flavour within this tradition. In retrospect this assumption may have been misguided, and a broader response might have been more appropriately anticipated.

Fifty one respondents replied to both questions, and of this number thirty three perceived themselves as being in theological agreement with their corps, while eighteen were (to some extent) in disagreement. Most of those who perceived a disagreement described the corps as conservative, while the officer was liberal (only two had these positions reversed). There were differences between the mean growth indices for the two groups ("Agree" = 92.84, "Disagree" = 80.47), but while these suggest a difference between the groups, the tests used reveal that they are a long way short of statistical significance ($t = -0.66$, $p = 0.36$). It is therefore not possible to assert with confidence that where growth occurs the officer and the corps will be in agreement on their theological outlook.

⁹⁴ The Army as a whole subscribes to the basis of faith of the Evangelical Alliance. The assumption was stated that all would be broadly evangelical in their theology, but with varying shades of opinion. No respondent disagreed with this assumption.

The replies were in the respondents' own words, and were categorised into groups according to the key words used (charismatic, conservative, liberal – or combinations of these), as shown in Figure 38.

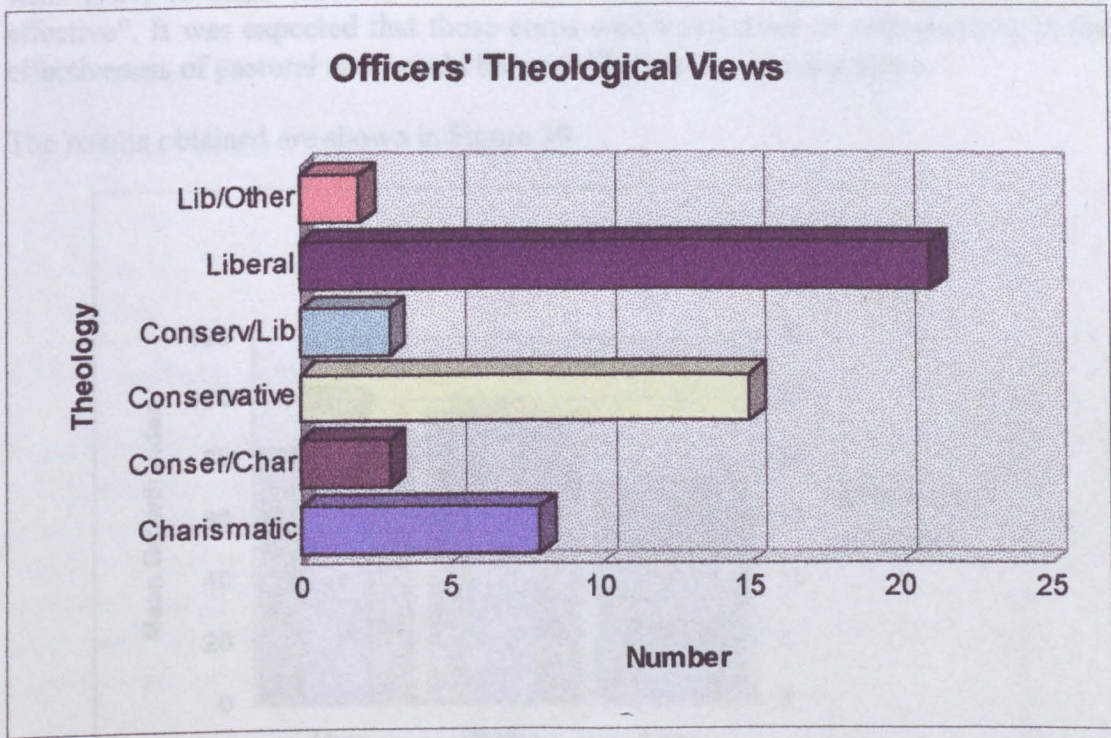


Figure 38: Distribution of officers by theological views

The groups were then further reduced to 2 larger groups, consisting of “Conservative/Charismatic” and “Liberal” (any which had included the word “Liberal” in their descriptions), and the growth indices were tested. McGavran, Wagner, Pointer *etc.* have all stated (see 2.3.3 above) that liberalism is connected with the decline of the church, and that growth tends to be associated with churches which are led by conservative or charismatic evangelicals. Holloway specifically asserts that liberalism does not lead to growth, because it doubts the supernatural and original sin, leads to universalism and syncretism, and does not believe that people are lost without Christ. It therefore sees no need to disturb people in order to save them (Holloway 1989, pp. 134-140).

It was found that while there was a difference in mean index between the groups (Conservative/Charismatic = 92.15, Liberals = 84.95), the difference was not statistically significant, and could have occurred by chance ($t = 0.53, p = 0.60$).

There is therefore insufficient evidence to suggest that growth is associated with either a match between the officer and the corps, or the appointment of an officer with conservative / charismatic theological views. However, in both cases the data suggests a tendency in the predicted direction, and more study may be justified.

A further issue which should be addressed is the appropriateness of the terminology used. It may be that, in a Salvation Army context, some respondents replied “Conservative” when they meant “conventional”, while some may have used the word “Liberal” to mean something other than its usual theological meaning – perhaps “easy-going” or “democratic” for instance.

3.1.16 Pastoral Care

Respondents were asked about the pastoral care⁹⁵ of the corps in 1992, compared with 1987, to state whether it was “more effective”, “about the same” or “less effective”. It was expected that those corps which perceived an improvement in the effectiveness of pastoral care would be more likely to be growing corps.

The results obtained are shown in Figure 39.

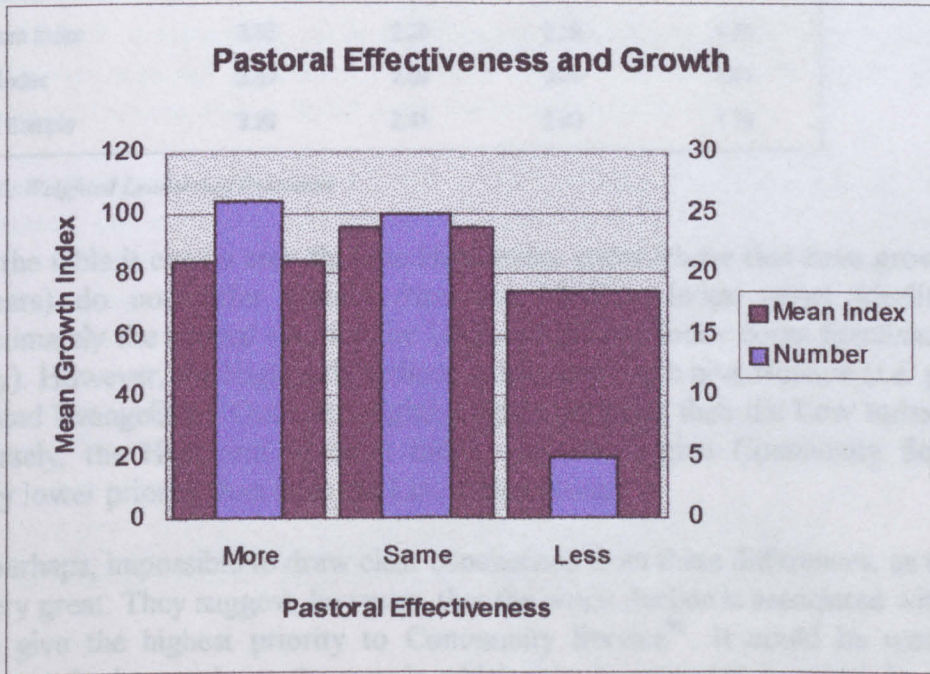


Figure 39: Pastoral Effectiveness and Growth

Surprisingly, it appeared that a perceived improvement in the effectiveness of pastoral care was not related to growth, although a continuity of the level of care may be. The highest mean growth index was obtained by the group with “about the same” effectiveness of pastoral care, but on calculating the statistics, there was found to be no significant difference between the groups ($F = 0.63, p = 0.54$). The differences were such that they could very easily have occurred by chance.

3.1.17 Leadership Priorities

Wagner cites the Lausanne Covenant (Article 6) declaring that, ‘In the Church’s mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary’ (Wagner 1984 p.184). Respondents were asked to grade four facets of corps work according to the priority they actually received (in terms of time and effort) rather than the priority the respondent felt they ought to receive. It was expected that the officers of growing corps, rather than other corps, would allocate a higher priority to evangelism / outreach.

⁹⁵ This was inevitably subjective, since many of the respondents were dealing with hearsay about a period in which they were not involved in that corps. Moreover, since most respondents were corps officers, they could, perhaps, be expected to assume that pastoral care had improved since they took office.

The grades were given a value, from 1 to 4, and the mean grade for each emphasis was calculated. The weighted grades were then separated into the three different sample strata, in order to compare the different priorities, with the results shown in Table 10.

Weighted Priority Grades by Sample Strata				
Index Group	Nurture	Admin.	Community Service	Evangelism / Outreach
High Index	3.26	2.42	2.58	1.74
Medium Index	3.65	2.29	2.29	1.76
Low Index	2.89	2.50	3.00	1.61
Total Sample	3.26	2.41	2.63	1.70

Table 10: Weighted Leadership Priorities

From the table it can be seen that the High Index corps (those that have grown over 10 years) do not differ greatly from the Medium Index corps (declining at approximately the normal rate for the UK) or the Low Index corps (declining more rapidly). However, the High and Medium Index corps both give Nurture (*i.e.* pastoral care) and Evangelism / Outreach slightly higher priorities than the Low Index corps; conversely, the High and Medium Index corps both give Community Service a slightly lower priority than does the Low Index group.

It is, perhaps, impossible to draw clear conclusions from these differences, as they are not very great. They suggest, however, that the worst decline is associated with corps which give the highest priority to Community Service⁹⁶. It could be worthwhile devising a further study on the way in which time is expended in corps, in order to measure the effectiveness of different activities.

3.1.18 Church Growth Vision

Pointer particularly stresses the importance of 'Church Growth vision' (see 2.2.3.1 above) in the pastor (Pointer 1984, pp. 68 *ff.*), and Wagner places importance both on seeing possibilities for growth and on planning for growth (Wagner 1984 pp. 51-52), a combination described by Robert Schuller as 'possibility thinking' (Wagner 1984 pp. 58-59).

⁹⁶ It may, of course, be that areas which are in greatest need of community service are also the type of area in which corps are more likely to decline rapidly. In such a case it is not the Community Service which is associated with decline, but the type of environment which is associated with both decline and Community Service.

Respondents were therefore asked to *define* growth in the context of their corps. They were allowed to express this definition in their own words, and the expressions used were distilled into up to three key phrases (any who used more than three were curtailed). If any of those three phrases referred to more converts, increased attendance, new people etc., that respondent was regarded as displaying 'Church Growth vision'⁹⁷. The expectation was that corps officers with 'Church Growth vision' would be associated with corps which had a higher growth index.

This turned out to be the case, as those who met the criteria stated above had a mean index of 95.08, compared to 90.06 for those who did not meet the criteria. However, the difference was not significant ($t = -0.30$, $p = 0.77$) as it is so small, given the divergence of scores, that it could easily have happened by chance.

Respondents were also asked to *identify growth prospects* in their corps for 1993-94. For present purposes the number of prospects identified (1 to 3) is taken as an indicator of the extent of 'Church Growth vision'. It was expected that those with 'Church Growth vision' would see the highest number of prospects, and that the number of prospects identified would be related to the Growth Index.

In fact, almost the reverse was true, as shown in Table 11; most (25 out of 53) identified only one prospect and their mean Growth Index was higher than either of the other two groups.

Growth Prospects Identified	One	Two	Three	Total
Number	25	18	10	53
Mean Growth Index	98.70	77.53	83.73	88.68

Table 11: Growth Prospects

For statistical calculation the two smaller groups were amalgamated, and compared with the larger group. The variance between the three groups was not significant ($F = 1.44$, $p = 0.33$), and the effect of combining the two smaller groups only changed the result to a probability of 0.14, which is insufficient for significance at the 5% level. This means that either this variable is not suitable for measuring 'Church Growth vision', or that such vision is not related to growth.

3.1.19 Conclusion

The series of issues discussed in this section were concerned firstly with assessing the claims of Wagner for his first 'vital sign' (including developments and clarifications by others), and then with trying to find features of the CO which were measurable and which have predictive value for growth.

⁹⁷ This is somewhat arbitrary, but the focus of this study is numerical, and a quantitative approach is thought appropriate both for this study and for a review of Church Growth in its own terms.

Several aspects of Wagner's first 'Vital Sign' were addressed, including the vision for growth ('Church Growth vision'), theology, the leadership style, the effectiveness of pastoral care, the length of tenure in the appointment and the priorities which were practised.

A number of attempts were made to assess 'Church Growth vision'. Unfortunately, none were successful, and on this issue it is necessary to concede defeat. There may be tests which could usefully assess the vision of the CO, but this study has not found any on which it would be reasonable to rely.

Two issues were considered in relation to theology: the position of the CO, and the match between that and the position of the corps as a whole. Church Growth writers have argued that liberalism tends towards decline, and that a conservative / charismatic mixture in the evangelical tradition tends towards growth (this is supported by the census data collected by Peter Brierley). This was the finding of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson in English Baptist churches, but is not replicated in this study. While there was a tendency for growth to be more likely where the CO took a conservative / charismatic theological stance, the difference was too slight to be significant. However, the fact that there was a difference at all might justify further study to clarify the extent to which it could be a factor in growth or decline.

A slightly stronger association appeared between growth and the perceived level of theological agreement between the CO and the corps, but again it did not achieve statistical significance. Therefore no claims can be justified on this evidence, but a case might be made for further and better research into an area which seems to hold possibilities for explaining and predicting events.

Several questions were included as measures of the style of leadership, which according to Church Growth writers should be strong, authoritative, but also to some extent shared with members of the church.

There was an apparent relationship between growth and two specific types of leadership ability. Growth seemed to be most closely associated with leaders who assessed highly their own ability in vision / leadership and in administration, and was least associated with those who saw their strengths as pastoral care and visitation. This supports Wagner's claim that growth is linked with an authoritative visionary leadership. Although the nature of this data was not susceptible to the available battery of statistical tests, the pattern seems strong enough to justify the conclusion that, if growth is a target, such leadership is more desirable than a focus on pastoral care.

The extent to which the CO shared leadership in the corps was assessed in two ways: (i) the decision-making procedure on policy issues, and (ii) the degree of participation in leading worship. There was little association between growth and the type of policy discussion, except that those which were 'one-man bands' were less likely to be growing corps than those in which *some* form of consultation took place. However, the extent of shared leadership in worship proved an important factor, reinforcing the finding by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson that there was a bias towards growth in churches which included frequent lay participation in services (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p.37).

In brief, there is evidence to support Wagner's claims that growth is associated with a leadership combination which is visionary and – to some extent – authoritative, but which is also willing to share the leadership responsibilities, particularly for worship.

Wagner, Pointer and others have argued that long-term leadership is a key factor in growth. In this study it was found that there was a distinct tendency for the probability of growth to increase with the length of an officer's tenure at a corps (although only terms of up to seven years were considered). There is therefore evidence to support this aspect of Wagner's claims.

Pointer stresses the importance of the pastoral role of the leader, which should be shared with others, and this was investigated. It was found that there was no significant difference associated with the perceived effectiveness of pastoral care. If anything, the corps in which the effectiveness of pastoral care remained unchanged over that period had a slightly higher growth rate than those which claimed an improvement. However, this was not sufficiently different to permit conclusions to be drawn.

Wagner claims that a vital sign of growth is 'biblical priorities' (prioritising evangelism over other aspects of Christian life, particularly the social mandate). While this seems to make some sense (in that people are unlikely to be evangelised unless someone is doing the evangelism), there was very little difference in the priority given to evangelism across all three of the sample strata. However, there was a difference in the priority given to Community Service: the low index corps (those in rapid decline) tend to give a higher priority to such service than do the other corps. There is insufficient evidence to draw firm conclusions, but it seems that a high priority for Community Service is not associated with growth.

b Other Issues

A number of factors associated with the type of officer (if any) were investigated. Corps with at least one officer were found to be less likely to decline than those without, though the difference was not significant. There was no significant association between growth and the rank of the CO, though there is a tantalising possibility that Auxiliary Captains might be more likely than others to be found in growing corps. There was no significant association between growth and the number of officers, though there was an apparent tendency (falling short of significance) for this to be so.

The Salvation Army has officers who are male or female, married or single, but it has special rules governing the marriage of officers. This complex of factors was investigated and it was found that growth is more likely in corps with married officers, and also (though to a slightly lesser extent) with male officers. Most male officers are married, and most married officers involve a male CO (the wife normally works in an assistant capacity), so the two results may be measuring the same underlying factor, which it is conjectured may be a balanced ministry involving both male and female leadership. It is not clear, however, whether there is a causal relationship between this factor and growth, nor (if there is) in which direction it may lie. There is certainly sufficient evidence to justify further study in this area.

No clear association could be found between growth and the academic attainment of the CO, but this seems to be an artificial result, affected by a number of other factors, particularly the age of the CO and the locality of the corps to which he or she is appointed. Officers under 50 tend to have higher academic qualifications, but those with least experience tend to be appointed to small corps with low growth prospects. As the officer intake now has a higher mean age than some years ago, less experienced officers are found in the 25-45 age groups, which means that any association between growth and education will be obscured by the effects of age and of other factors which are more associated with the corps than with the CO.

The CO's age is not, in itself, significantly related to growth, although there is a small peak where the CO is aged around 35. This supports the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (see 2.11.1 above), who suggested that 'energy rather than experience is the premium' (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p.32). Possibly the relationship would have been stronger if it were not for the appointments policy which is based largely on experience (see 3.1.7 above).

No relationship was found between growth and the length of service of the CO.

Geoffrey Walker, looking back over the period 1970-1990 in the Anglican parish of Chester le Street, suggests that the evidence of the periods of growth and decline in church plants within the parish indicates an association between growth and 'the popularity of the clergy person in-charge' (Walker 1993, p.43). The question of the officer's popularity was not considered in this study, but may nevertheless have been a key element, though possibly associated with several other factors, such as age, experience, education, *etc.*

3.1.20 Summary

It was not possible to assess the Church Growth vision of the leader from the material available. The theological and practical questions were inconclusive.

- there may be a pattern linking decline with liberalism and growth with a conservative / evangelical / charismatic stance, but the relationship is too weak to justify the Church Growth claims in this area.
- The assessment of pastoral effectiveness suggests this factor may not be associated with growth, despite Pointer's claims.

- Growth was associated with leaders who see themselves as possessing abilities in vision / leadership and in administration, and was clearly less evident in those who saw their strengths in the pastoral aspects of their work.
- The extent of shared leadership on policy seemed of little importance, provided it extended beyond the CO, though the extent of shared leadership of worship was very important.
- The tenure of the CO was found to be a key factor, as predicted by the Church Growth theorists, with growth only becoming probable after the second year.

From this section, it was found that very few measures of the CO's approach, status and ability have value for predicting growth.

- The rank and years of service of the CO have no relationship with growth, but the age (optimal around 35) does, and the academic attainment may, if other factors could be screened.
- Marital status certainly is related to growth, but this may equally be because married officers are appointed to corps with good prospects as because growth occurs where married officers are stationed; further study is needed on this subject.
- A similar, though weaker effect occurs when comparing male with female COs, and this too may be related more to the appointments policy than to the effects of the CO on the corps; again, further study is needed.

3.2 Mobilised Membership

The importance of mobilised membership is stressed by all the Church Growth writers, and is the second of Wagner's 'Vital Signs' (see 2.10.2 above).

He says:

If the first sign of a growing church is a pastor who is using God-given gifts to lead the church into growth, the second is a well-mobilized laity.

Wagner 1984, p.77

Many ways were essayed through the survey to assess the extent of 'lay' mobilisation. A clear picture could not be provided by any one of these approaches, but the composite impression is helpful.

As Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found (Beasley-Murray & Wilkinson 1981, pp. 38-39), some aspects of this question were also considered in relation to leadership, since mobilisation is reflected in leadership as well as in members' activities.

3.2.1 Corps Activities

It is generally considered to be a feature of Salvation Army life that it is activist in nature, rather than, for example, contemplative. William Booth is said to have observed men sleeping under a Thames bridge late in 1887, and to have told his son Bramwell, on meeting him the next day, to, 'Go and do something!' (Sandall 1955, pp. 67-68). Salvationists generally want to 'do something', and a great many activities may take place within the life of a corps.

3.2.1.1 External Activities

The number of external activities⁹⁸ was compared with the growth index, to find out if there was a relationship between the two. Pearson's correlation (r) was 0.07⁹⁹, which is not significant ($p = 0.30$), indicating that there is no evidence for a relationship (see also 3.3.3.1 below).

⁹⁸ External activities here means those activities in which the corps is involved, but which are not part of its worship, nurture or (direct) evangelistic programme. Suggestions for the type of activity are found in Section B of the Questionnaire (Appendix D) – no-one added anything as 'other'.

⁹⁹ Generally speaking, statistics in this study are given to two decimal places, except where there is a special reason for extending them (e.g. to show significant figures).

3.2.1.2 Internal Activities

Corps were assessed by the number of internal activities¹⁰⁰ which formed part of their programme, to determine whether there was any relationship between this aspect of the corps programme and the growth index. A clear relationship was found to exist, with a Pearson's correlation (r) of 0.35 ($p = 0.003$), as shown in Figure 40 (see also 3.3.3.2 below).

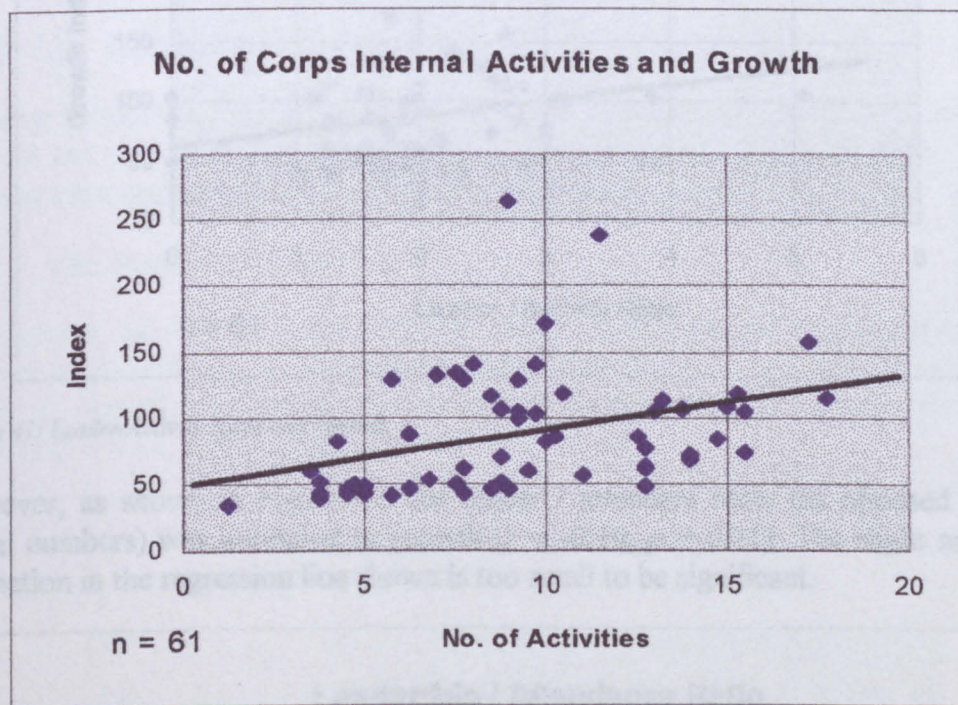


Figure 40: Corps Internal Activities and Growth

A similar result was found (i) for the correlation between the growth index and the number of leaders involved in the activities ($r = 0.31$, $p = 0.01$), and (ii) for the correlation between the growth index and the weighted attendance, allowing for relative frequency ($r = 0.32$, $p = 0.06$ ¹⁰¹). This seems to provide evidence for the hypothesis that growth is accompanied by a mobilised membership.

This relationship was pursued further by testing for correlation between the growth index and the ratio of the number of leaders to the number of activities; the result ($r = 0.25$, $p = 0.03$) again supports the hypothesis that the proportion of active members (represented in this case by leaders of activities) is related to growth. Most corps have between 1 and 3 leaders for each activity, but those with a high growth index tend to have 2 or more, as shown in Figure 41.

¹⁰⁰ Internal activities here means activities (such as meetings, practices, clubs etc.) which are part of the organisational programme of the corps – generally something which is recognised by headquarters as an official activity on which statistical data is kept – based on the replies to question C1 in the questionnaire. A weighted score was given to each activity recorded, depending only to its frequency.

¹⁰¹ Although this statistic does not reach the conventional significance level of 0.05, it is close enough to warrant being taken seriously.

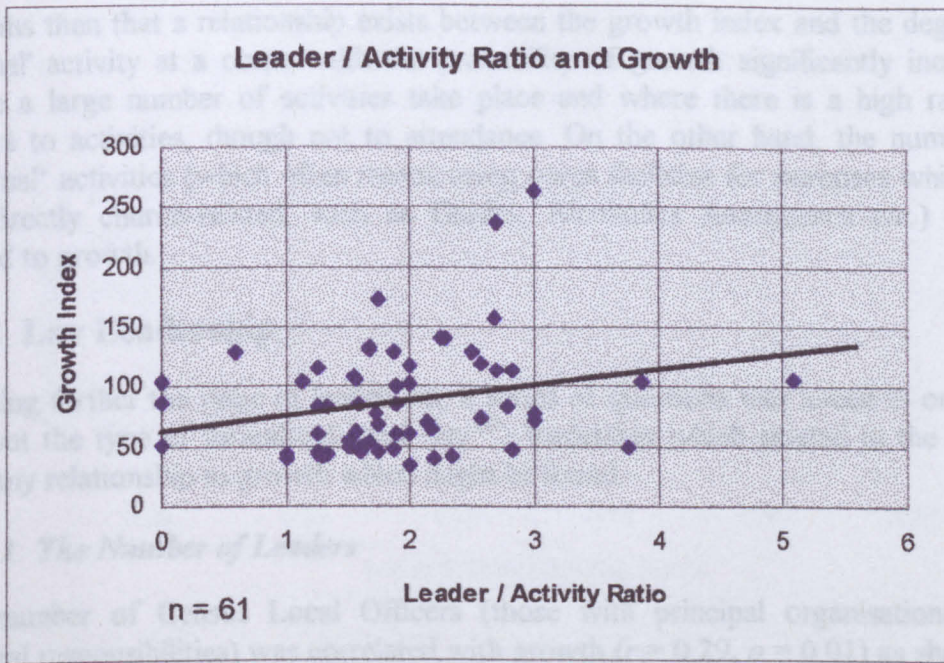


Figure 41: Leader/Activity Ratio and Growth

However, as shown in Figure 42, the leader / attenders ratio (as opposed to the actual numbers) was unrelated to growth ($r = -0.10, p = 0.21$). The slight negative inclination in the regression line shown is too small to be significant.

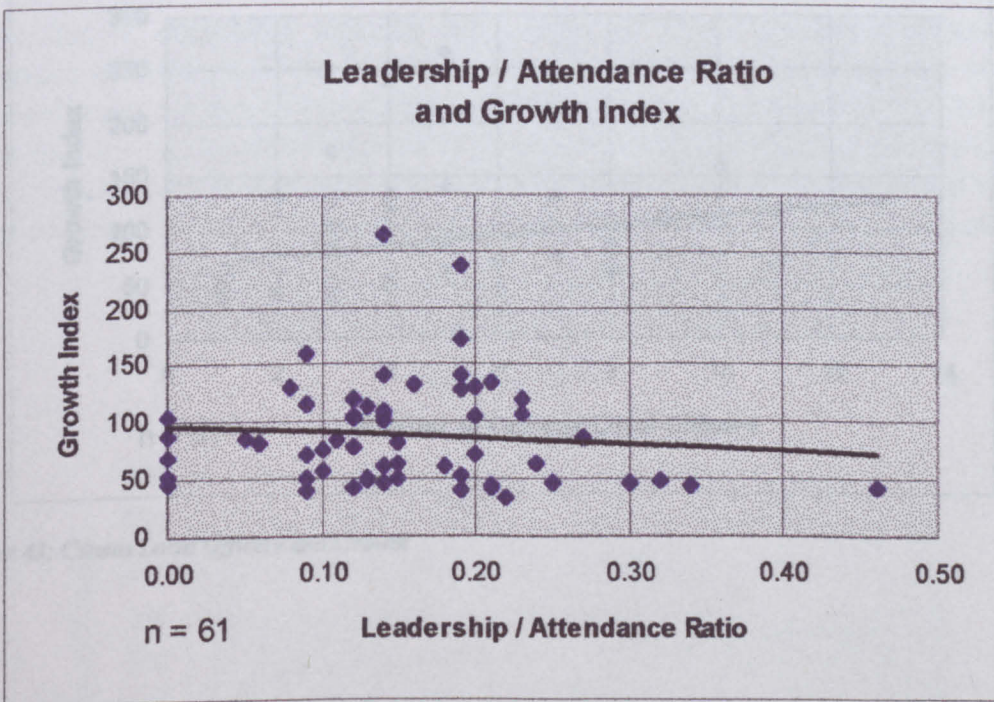


Figure 42: The ratio of Leaders to Attenders, related to Growth Index

It seems then that a relationship exists between the growth index and the degree of 'internal' activity at a corps, with the probability of growth significantly increased where a large number of activities take place and where there is a high ratio of leaders to activities, though not to attendance. On the other hand, the number of 'external' activities (which often means using corps facilities for purposes which are not directly church-related, such as Guides, Alcoholics Anonymous *etc.*) is not related to growth.

3.2.2 Lay Leadership

Pursuing further the issue of leadership, a series of questions was asked in order to find out the type of formalised local (lay¹⁰²) leadership which existed in the corps, with any relationship to growth which might be found.

3.2.2.1 The Number of Leaders

The number of Census Local Officers (those with principal organisational and pastoral responsibilities) was correlated with growth ($r = 0.29, p = 0.01$) as shown in Figure 43, but this was not also a function of the ratio of Census Local Officers to Soldiers ($r = 0.14, p = 0.14$) as indicated in Figure 44.

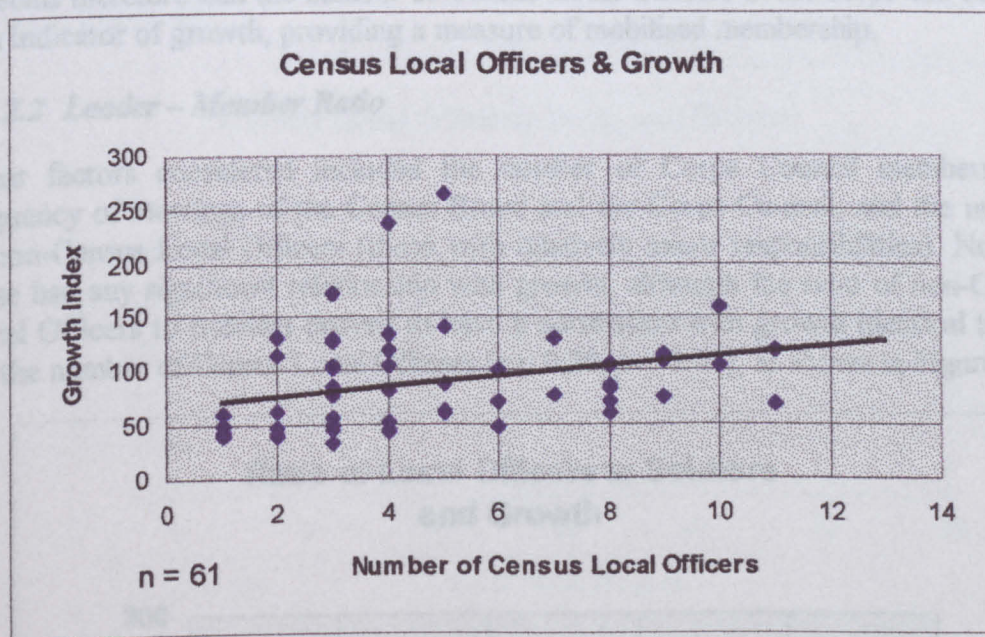


Figure 43: Census Local Officers and Growth

¹⁰² The term 'lay' is unsatisfactory, as it seems to imply a distinction between those who are ordained and other members of the church, which would be at variance with the doctrine of 'the priesthood of all believers'. The word is used here as shorthand to distinguish non-officer members who serve as voluntary leaders.

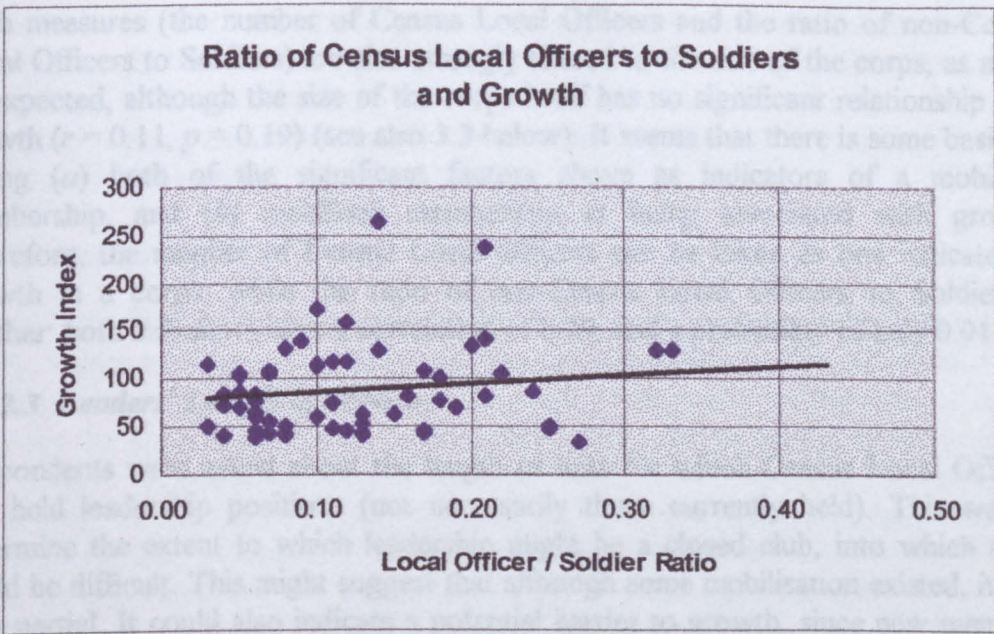


Figure 44: Ratio of Census Local Officers to Soldiers and Growth

It seems therefore that the number of Census Local Officers in the corps can be used as an indicator of growth, providing a measure of mobilised membership.

3.2.2.2 Leader – Member Ratio

Other factors considered included the number of Corps Council members, the frequency of meetings of the Census Board and the Corps Council, and the number of non-Census Local Officers (those with relatively minor responsibilities). None of these had any significant relationship with growth, although the ratio of non-Census Local Officers to Soldiers proved to have a correlation with growth identical to that for the number of Census Local Officers ($r = 0.29, p = 0.01$), as shown in Figure 45.

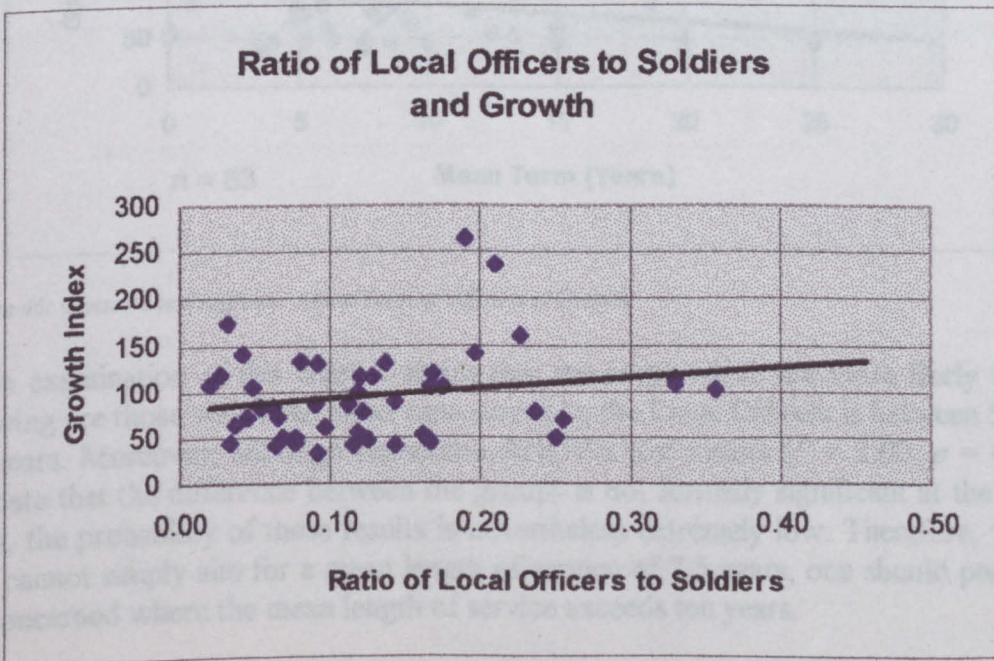


Figure 45: Ratio of Local Officers and Growth Index

Both measures (the number of Census Local Officers and the ratio of non-Census Local Officers to Soldiers) are also strongly related to the size of the corps, as might be expected, although the size of the corps itself has no significant relationship with growth ($r = 0.11, p = 0.19$) (see also 3.3 below). It seems that there is some basis for seeing (a) both of the significant factors above as indicators of a mobilised membership, and (b) mobilised membership as being associated with growth. Therefore, the number of Census Local Officers can be taken as one indicator of growth in a corps, while the ratio of non-Census Local Officers to Soldiers is another: both indicators have a correlation of 0.29, and a probability of only 0.01.

3.2.2.3 Leaders' Length of Service

Respondents were asked about the length of time for which Census Local Officers had held leadership positions (not necessarily those currently held). This was to determine the extent to which leadership might be a closed club, into which entry could be difficult. This might suggest that although some mobilisation existed, it was only partial. It could also indicate a potential barrier to growth, since new members could not be said to be fully incorporated until a significant number had developed into leadership. A significant negative correlation ($r = -0.25, p = 0.02$) was found to exist between growth and the mean length of time served by the Local Officers, as shown in Figure 46.

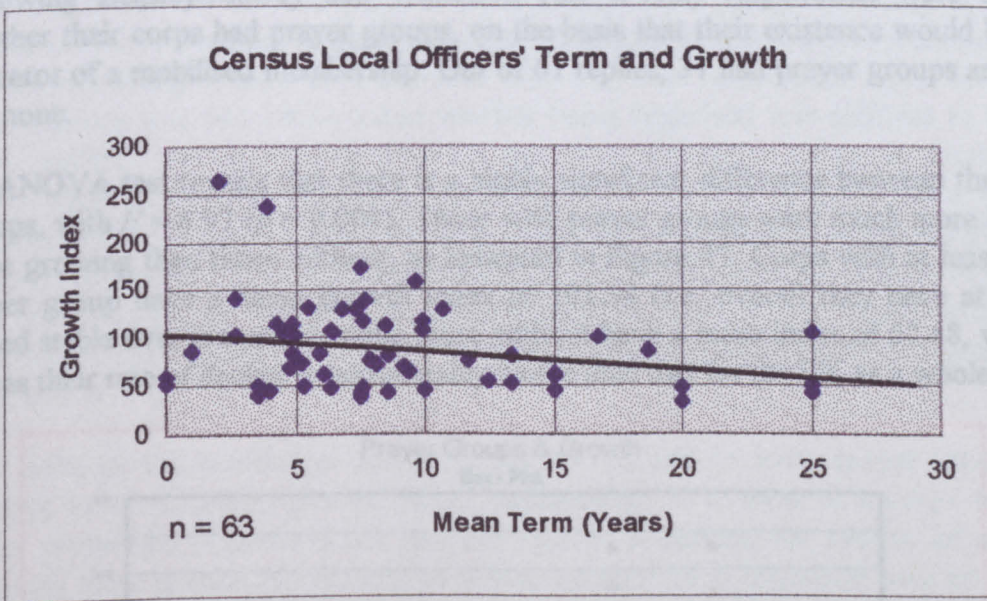


Figure 46: Census Local Officers' Mean Term of Office and Growth

From examination of this chart it seems that the corps which are more likely to be growing are those where the mean time served by the Local Officers is between 5 and 10 years. Moreover, although regression ANOVA test results ($F = 2.00, p = 0.06$) indicate that the difference between the groups is not formally significant at the 0.05 level, the probability of these results is nevertheless extremely low. Therefore, while one cannot simply aim for a mean length of service of 7.5 years, one should perhaps be concerned where the mean length of service exceeds ten years.

Again, however, it is necessary to give the caution that it is not possible to determine from these tests whether the type of local leadership *produces* growth or decline, or *is produced by it* (for instance, a growing corps may, as it recruits more members, also recruit among them more people with leadership potential). It is clear, however, that an association exists.

3.2.3 Testimony

A possible measure of membership mobilisation is the willingness/opportunity to testify. Public testimony is a traditional form of expression in The Salvation Army, and it is normal in worship meetings (although perhaps less so than was once the case) for the floor to be thrown open to those who wish to testify, or for prepared testimonies to be requested in advance. Respondents were asked how often members of the corps testified, both voluntarily and by invitation. There *was* a slight tendency for more frequent testimony (both voluntary and invited) to be associated with a higher growth index, but this was not significant in either case (voluntary $F = 1.45$, $p = 0.24$; invited $F = 0.47$, $p = 0.63$). There is therefore no evidence to link testimony with growth, and this cannot be used as a measure of a mobilised membership.

3.2.4 Prayer Groups

Following Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (see 2.11.2) respondents were asked whether their corps had prayer groups, on the basis that their existence would be an indicator of a mobilised membership. Out of 61 replies, 37 had prayer groups and 24 had none.

An ANOVA test reveals that there is a highly significant difference between the two groups, with $F = 8.97$ ($p = 0.004$). Those with prayer groups were much more likely to be growing than those without, as indicated in Figure 47. Corps with at least one prayer group have a mean growth index of 101.34 (*i.e.* overall they have at least stayed stable over ten years), while those without have a mean index of 67.48, which means their rate of decline is considerably worse than that for the UK as a whole.

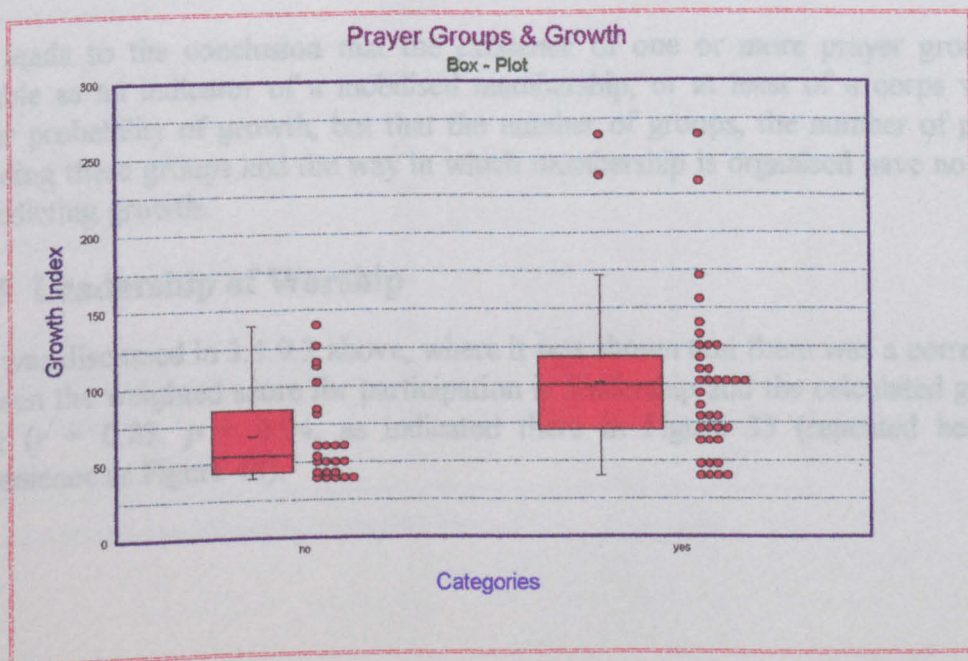


Figure 47: Box-Whisker Plot of Prayer Groups and Growth

3.2.4.1 The Number of Prayer Groups

The question was developed by considering the importance of the number of such groups. Respondents were asked how many groups there were in their corps. Of the 37 with prayer groups, 36 provided a number: 25 had one group, 7 had two, and 4 had three groups. These responses were tested by ANOVA, with $F = 1.51$ ($p = 0.23$) indicating that there was no significant difference associated with the number of prayer groups. This contrasted with the finding (above) that the *existence* of groups had a highly significant association with growth.

3.2.4.2 People involved in Prayer Groups

A further development was attempted by asking how many people were involved in the prayer groups. This could be considered both as a raw number and as a proportion of the membership (considering only senior soldiers). However, there was no correlation between either of these figures and growth. There was a very small negative correlation for the proportion of members ($r = -0.07$), but this was nowhere near statistical significance ($p = 0.34$).

3.2.4.3 Membership organisation of Prayer Groups

Finally, those with prayer groups were asked to identify the way(s) in which they were organised. Of 37 who replied, 32 described their groups as being open to anyone (*i.e.* they were not organised by age, geography or any special arrangements) and the remaining 5 were each different. The only test which made sense in these circumstances was one which tested whether being organised was different to being open, and this was done as an ANOVA test. This seemed to return an interesting result which approached statistical significance ($r = 3.42$, $p = 0.07$), but a closer examination of the data revealed that one of the five corps with an organised pattern of prayer groups had an exceptional index of 237.5, which, since the number of corps with organised groups was so small, had distorted the result. If that corps is excluded the results for the two groups still differ slightly, but the difference does not approach significance.

This leads to the conclusion that the *existence* of one or more prayer groups is valuable as an indicator of a mobilised membership, or at least of a corps with a higher probability of growth, but that the number of groups, the number of people attending these groups and the way in which membership is organised have no value in predicting growth.

3.2.5 Leadership of Worship

This was discussed in 3.1.9.2 above, where it was shown that there was a correlation between the weighted score for participation in leadership and the calculated growth index ($r = 0.23$, $p = 0.04$, as indicated there in Figure 33 (repeated here for convenience as Figure 48).

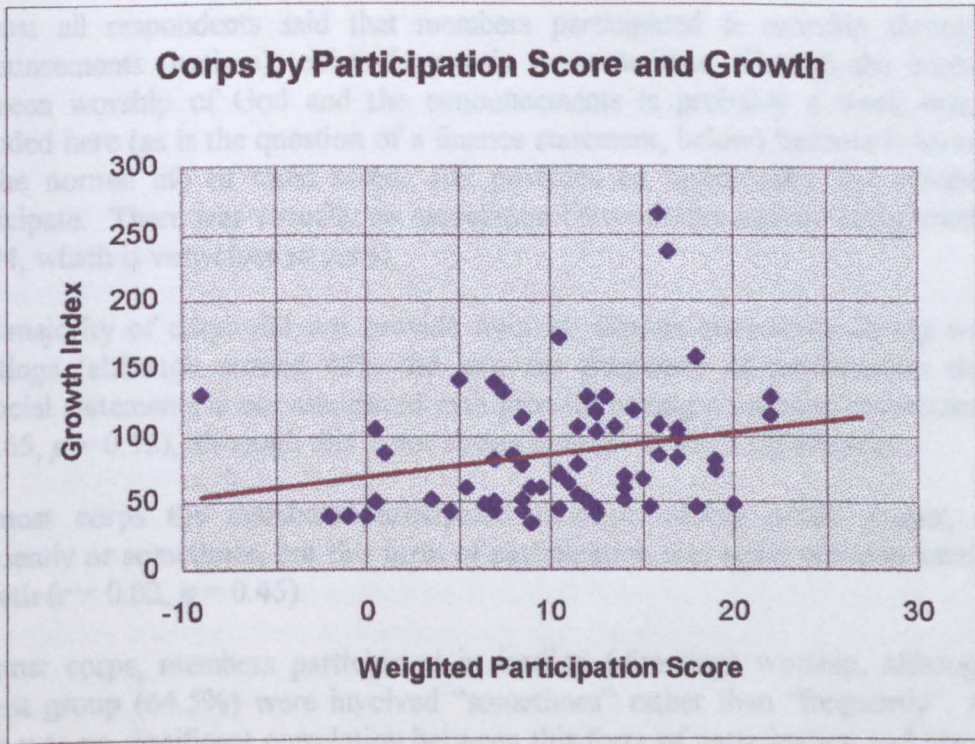


Figure 48: Participation in Worship Leading and Growth

It is concluded that there is a relationship between growth and participation by the membership as leaders in worship.

3.2.5.1 Types of Worship Leadership

When the given categories were analysed (three corps had added the category of drama, but no other additional categories were added), a number of differences were found. The responses are summarised in Table 12 below.

Activity	Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Total
Announcements	3	10	46	59
Finance Statements	30	10	12	52
Leading Prayer	3	25	30	58
Leading Worship	8	40	14	62
Preaching	11	42	7	60
Children's Story	17	28	9	54
Leading Singing	12	33	13	58
Bible Reading	0	32	29	61
Testimony	0	23	38	61
Greeting / Welcome	5	14	40	59
Musical Items	8	25	24	57
Drama	0	2	1	3

Table 12: Distribution of Worship-Leading Activities

Almost all respondents said that members participated in worship through the announcements (notices), either frequently or sometimes. Though the connection between worship of God and the announcements is probably a weak one, it is included here (as is the question of a finance statement, below) because it forms part of the normal life of most corps, and provides an opportunity for members to participate. There was virtually no association between this activity and growth ($r = 0.004$, which is very close to zero).

The majority of corps did not provide frequent finance statements during worship meetings (although around 42% did so); the frequency of participation through financial statements is not associated with growth, having a negative correlation ($r = -0.165$, $p = 0.12$), although this is not strong enough to reach significance.

In most corps the members participated through leading public prayer, either frequently or sometimes, but this form of participation was again not associated with growth ($r = 0.02$, $p = 0.45$).

In most corps, members participated in leading (directing) worship, although the largest group (64.5%) were involved "sometimes" rather than "frequently". Again, there was no significant correlation between this form of participation and growth ($r = 0.07$, $p = 0.30$).

Most respondents reported members participating in worship by preaching, although few (11.7%) did so frequently. This may be because there is a tendency for preaching to be a task reserved for the corps officer, although members of the corps will deputise when the officer is absent (*e.g.* sick, on holiday or preaching and leading worship elsewhere). Again there was no significant correlation ($r = 0.16$, $p = 0.11$) between this factor and growth, although the probability of 0.11 is low, and might merit further investigation.

The majority of corps had membership participation through a children's story (which may have been rather more imaginatively interpreted as a children's section of the worship – the question should perhaps have been asked in such terms), although a substantial minority (31.5%) did not. This, perhaps surprisingly, proved to be a significant factor ($r = 0.26$, $p = 0.03$). Does this suggest that an emphasis on children in worship is important in growth?

Rather more corps had membership participation through leading congregational singing (only 20.7% had none), but this was found to have no significant correlation with growth ($r = 0.09$, $p = 0.26$).

Every corps in the sample had members participating through public Bible reading, with an almost equal division between responses of "frequently" and "sometimes". Again surprisingly, this was found to have quite a strong correlation with growth ($r = 0.26$, $p = 0.02$): those corps where such participation was frequent were clearly more likely to be growing than those where it was occasional.

Again, all corps in the sample had members participating through testimony, the great majority (62.3%) doing so frequently. However, no significant correlation was found between these frequencies and growth ($r = 0.05$, $p = 0.36$) (see also 3.2.3 above).

The great majority of corps had some participation through a member giving a greeting or welcome to visitors in connection with worship events (only 8.5% had no such participation), but there was no significant association between this factor and growth ($r = 0.08$, $p = 0.27$).

Most corps had members participating in worship through personal involvement in musical items (solos, groups *etc.*). Only eight (14%) had no such participation, while the remainder were almost equally divided between the “frequently” and “sometimes” responses. This factor emerged as the single strongest element of this question with a highly significant correlation ($r = 0.32$, $p = 0.01$), indicating that corps with a higher frequency of personal musical participation are more likely also to be growing corps.

Only three respondents added any activity to their responses in this section, but all three added “drama”, which therefore seems potentially important. However, since only three responses were available for this category, it is not possible to generalise from it (it might have been otherwise if it had been included as an option for all respondents). Nevertheless, it is interesting that three corps out of the sample have such an activity, and that two out of the three have a high growth index. This perhaps deserves further study.

Participation in leading worship activities was earlier demonstrated to be related to growth. It has been shown above that of all the identified specific activities, only the “children’s story”, “Bible reading” and “musical items” were found to have significant associations with growth. These are all relatively undemanding spiritually (although they clearly call on certain gifts and abilities), and it is perhaps surprising that more challenging activities such as preaching, leading worship and leading prayer were not found to be associated with growth.

3.2.6 Finance

The basis for the questions about finance is a hypothesis that a mobilised membership will be active in providing a sound financial footing for their corps, by their own giving and by fund-raising activities where necessary.

3.2.6.1 Self-supporting Corps

Respondents were asked whether their corps was self-supporting. This is perhaps not quite the simple question it might appear, since although a self-supporting corps is able to finance its own activities, including the living allowance for its officers (and their dependants), this may not necessarily be through the giving of its own membership: the corps might raise money through public donations, charity shops, special events (*e.g.* sales of work *etc.*). A corps which is not self-supporting is funded by grants from central accounts, provided from pooled finances, including returns on investments and financial remittances from the whole territory. Every corps is required to pay a tithe (one tenth) of its income to the division of which forms part, and this principle continues up the structural chain to fund the Army’s administration and to provide a surplus for those corps which require grant aid.

Out of 62 responses, twenty five corps were self supporting, and thirty eight corps were not. This factor was found, when tested by ANOVA, to be not significantly related to the growth index ($F = 2.29$, $p = 0.14$).

3.2.6.2 Personal Tithing

Respondents were asked whether tithing was taught¹⁰³ in their corps (by the Commanding Officer and the local leaders). This was expected to indicate the commitment of the leadership to inspiring the members towards ownership of their enterprise. Out of 63 cases, 49 said that tithing was taught, but this factor also was found to have no significant association with growth ($F = 1.35, p = 0.25$).

3.2.6.3 Fund-Raising

Respondents were specifically asked whether their corps held general fund-raising activities such as sales of work or coffee mornings. All but one of the 63 responses said that they did so. It is therefore not possible to draw any distinctions on this basis.

3.2.6.4 Charity Shops

Largely because of the special nature of The Salvation Army as both a social charity and a Christian church, a number of corps have Charity Shops which contribute to their income. In principle, the income from this source is used a resource for the community service of the corps; in practice, it is sometimes difficult to disentangle social (community) work from church work. Though this can cause administrative headaches, perhaps it is sound theologically, since the social service of a corps or a church should be an expression of the mind of Christ in that part of his body.

Respondents were asked whether their corps had a Charity Shop, because running such a business involves workers (usually volunteer) which could be an indicator of mobilised membership. Out of 63 responses 22 said that they had such a shop while 41 had not. However, there was practically no relationship between this factor and the growth index ($F = 0.01, p = 0.92$).

3.2.6.5 Voluntary Giving to Other causes

As described above, all corps are required to contribute to Salvation Army central funds; respondents were asked what additional proportion of the corps income was *voluntarily* used for Christian causes beyond their corps. Only 20 replies were given, and from those there seems to be no relationship with growth ($F = 0.57, p = 0.72$). However, it may be correct to assume that those who gave no reply actually intended to indicate that they gave *no* proportion of their income to such causes (as 63 respondents had consistently replied to the previous questions). A further calculation was made on this assumption, and this was found to have still less significance ($F = 0.26, p = 0.96$), indicating that there was no difference between the growth indices of the sampled corps which was associated with the level of their voluntary giving to Christian causes.

¹⁰³ Respondents were not asked about the extent to which tithing was *practised* in their corps, since it was felt that detailed knowledge of the finances of corps members would not, in most cases, be available.

3.2.7 Pastoral Care

Respondents were asked several questions about pastoral care in the corps, some of which are concerned with the extent of mobilisation among the membership.

3.2.7.1 Follow up of New Attenders

Making the (possibly somewhat rash) assumption that new people attended corps meetings, respondents were asked how such people were followed up. Sixty responses were received, and these were divided into corps which included in their programme follow up visits by members (22) and those which did not (38). Although there was a difference between the mean growth indices for the two groups (96.35 and 82.59), the use of ANOVA revealed that the difference did not approach significance ($F = 1.24, p = 0.27$).

3.2.7.2 Nurture of New arrivals

Respondents were asked about the nurture into the corps, and/or into the Christian life, of new arrivals. Several types of nurture programme were suggested, of which the 'mentor' approach is considered most typical of a mobilised membership, with study, fellowship and nurture groups also tending to indicate mobilisation, in contrast with corps which had no specific programme or simply ran recruits' classes (which are required by regulation, and in many corps are led by the corps officer). Of sixty replies, 28 included those categories taken to indicate a mobilised membership, while 32 did not. The mean growth index for the two groups was different, and when checked by ANOVA this difference was found to have a low probability ($F = 2.26, p = 0.14$), although it did not breach the 5% barrier. When only those which included the 'mentor' approach (18 of them) were compared with all others the difference was found to be less significant ($F = 1.14, p = 0.29$). This suggests that the combination of four factors indicates the extent of membership mobilisation in this respect, and that the isolation of the 'mentor' approach is not as helpful as was expected. However, since the test did not produce a significant result, further study is necessary before firm conclusions can be drawn.

3.2.7.3 Pastoral Carers

Respondents were asked who, from a selection of options, was responsible for direct pastoral care in their corps. They were allowed up to three responses, although most (39 out of 61) gave only one. All but five included their CO as a primary carer (as might be expected). Testing the responses by the number of carers (or care groups) identified by ANOVA, it was found that the result closely approached statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($F = 3.02, p = 0.06$). Since the significance level is arbitrary, this an interesting result, suggesting that there is a real difference in growth associated with the number of people or groups of people involved in pastoral care. This is confirmed by testing for Pearson's correlation ($r = 0.29, p = 0.01$), which indicates that this factor is indeed associated with growth. The individual replies were also tested by ANOVA ($F = 1.77, p = 0.13$) which, however, indicated that there was no significant association¹⁰⁴. Therefore it seems that it is not the *specific* pastoral care-giver(s) which are important, but the number of care-givers overall.

3.2.7.4 The Number of Carers

Respondents were asked how many members of the corps saw their responsibility as including pastoral care of other members. Forty nine replies were received, and the number given was matched to the number of soldiers to give an approximation¹⁰⁵ of the ratio of pastoral carers to the whole corps members. When this ratio was tested against the growth index, the Pearson's correlation was almost zero ($r = 0.04$), which indicates that there is practically no relationship. In fact the simple numbers of both carers and soldiers were more strongly correlated with growth (0.18 and 0.15 respectively) than was the ratio, although none of these correlations was significant.

3.2.7.5 Pastoral Visiting

Respondents were asked who, by category, undertook pastoral visiting in their corps, with the responses indicated in Table 13 below. Sixty two responses were received, but many of these included more than one reply.

Pastoral Visitors by Category	CO	Other Officer	Census LO	Other LO	Team	No one	Other
number	56	8	25	16	7	1	7
mean index	88.02	99.88	95.68	107.78	128.07	82.61	76.85

Table 13: Pastoral visiting and growth

¹⁰⁴ The probability of 0.13 is not thought important in this case since (a) it is not within, or very close to, the conventional significance level of 0.05, and (b) the actual data included some responses which seem freakish. For instance there were only two which added an 'other' response, and these both had a high growth index – one of them being 264.29. It would therefore be unwise to take too much note of this issue.

¹⁰⁵ A more full calculation would have included other categories of membership, possibly considering children in membership as well as adults. This was considered unnecessary since the measurement sought was the comparative proportion between corps, rather than an accurate report on an individual corps.

This data was tested by ANOVA (and a subsequent series of comparisons) and it was found that there was a significant association between the growth index and whether pastoral visiting was undertaken by non-Census Board Local Officers ($F = 4.96, p = 0.03$). Similarly, there was an association between growth and visiting by a specialised team ($F = 7.10, p = 0.01$). These two categories are those which actually or potentially have the widest pool of visitors, suggesting that pastoral visiting in these forms indicates a mobilised membership and, moreover, that this is associated with growth. The number of "yes" replies in each response were also compared for correlation with the growth index, using Pearson's correlation, and this indicated that the number of categories of people involved in visiting was also strongly associated with the growth index ($r = 0.32, p = 0.005$). These two results indicate that broadly based pastoral visiting seems to be a key indicator of a mobilised membership and that this is, as Wagner claims, associated with growth.

3.2.8 Small Group Fellowship (Cell Groups)

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found (see 2.11.2 and 2.11.4 above) that the presence of cell groups in churches was an indicator of mobilised membership, and was associated with growth, particularly when the purpose of the group was prayer (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981 pp. 39-40). This issue was addressed in this survey too, with a similar result. Sixty one responses were received, out of which 30 had small groups, while 31 had not¹⁰⁶. It was found, by ANOVA, that the difference approached significance at the 0.05 level ($F = 3.65, p = 0.06$). This suggests that there may be a real difference in growth pattern between corps with and those without small groups, but that further research should take place before this can be confidently asserted.

3.2.8.1 Cell groups in Pastoral Care

Respondents were asked to what extent the small groups played a part in the pastoral care of the corps members. Only thirty replies were received (the others had no cell groups), of which 15 had selected the (rather noncommittal) response of "some part" being played by the groups. Of the others, only 4 had a major part in pastoral care, while 7 had a minor part and 4 played no part. Although there were differences in growth index, which followed the trend that was expected (*i.e.* more involvement is associated with higher growth indices), these were not significant when tested for correlation¹⁰⁷ ($r = 0.05, p = 0.40$).

3.2.8.2 Frequency of Meeting

Respondents from corps which had small groups (30) were asked the frequency with which the small groups met. Twenty nine replies were received, eighteen of which had weekly meetings of their small groups. There was, however, very little difference in the mean growth index associated with frequency, when tested for correlation ($r = 0.10, p = 0.31$).

¹⁰⁶ It should be born in mind, however, that Salvation Army corps tend to be smaller than the Baptist churches surveyed by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson. It may that several of these corps would each constitute a small group (a cell) on their own.

¹⁰⁷ Responses were coded: major = 3; some = 2; minor = 1; none = 0.

3.2.8.3 Purpose of Cell Groups

As mentioned above, Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson had found that prayer groups were important in the churches they studied. Respondents in this study were asked the purpose of their groups, and 29 replies were received. Although the question specifically asked them to choose the one answer that was closest to their situation, several respondents gave more than one reply. This throws some doubt on the result, since it is not possible either to guess which one reply should have been chosen by those who gave multiple replies or to guess what other replies might have been given by those who followed the instruction. All responses were collated together, with no weighting for priority, and compared, as shown in Table 14 below.

Small Group Purpose	Bible Study	Discussion	Evangelism	Mixed	Nurture	Prayer	Social
Size	21	5	2	2	9	14	3
Mean Index	95.27	106.00	60.42	116.78	80.70	84.78	85.40

Table 14: Small Groups by Size, Purpose and Index

There was no significant difference between the groups, in terms of the growth index, when tested by ANOVA ($F = 0.80$, $p = 0.57$), which clearly differs from the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (see 2.11.2 above). It seems that, in The Salvation Army, either small groups with a function of prayer do not indicate a mobilised membership, or that – if they do – the mobilisation of the membership is not associated with growth. However, the caution outlined above may mean that this result should be discounted, particularly since this result also conflicts with that above (3.2.4.3) which indicated that the existence of at least one prayer group seemed to be associated with growing corps.

3.2.8.4 The number and size of cell groups

The respondents were asked how many small group fellowships (of any kind) operated in their corps, and how many people were involved. Twenty nine replies were received, and from these it emerged that there is no correlation between the number of groups and the growth index ($r = 0.10$, $p = 0.30$), nor (directly) between the number of participants and growth ($r = 0.08$, $p = 0.34$). Both factors were also tested as proportions of the number of soldiers, giving a ratio of membership involvement in small group fellowships: neither were significantly related to growth ($r = 0.24$, $p = 0.10$; $r = 0.28$, $p = 0.07$ respectively), although the correlation of the ratio of small group membership to corps size and growth approaches significance. This may merit further study. Only the ratio of small group attenders to soldiers seems to have an association with the growth index, even though it falls just short of significance at the 0.05 level ($r = 0.28$, $p = 0.07$) which means it would not be safe to draw conclusions from this evidence.

3.2.8.5 Cell group ages

Respondents were asked how long the small group fellowships had operated in their corps. Twenty two responses were received, all but two of which indicated that the fellowships had operated for five years or less (the two exceptions were 10 and 20 years, respectively). The ages of the groups (not of the membership) were tested for correlation with the growth index, but no relationship was found ($r = 0.04$, $p = 0.44$).

3.2.8.6 Membership organisation of cell groups

As with groups which were concerned specifically with prayer, there was no significant difference in growth index associated with the form of organisation. Although a difference in mean index was found between those who had some form of self-determination and those which were managed (101.14 & 93.42 respectively), this difference was not significant according to any of the range of tests used.

3.2.9 Special Ministries

3.2.9.1 Youth workers or Leaders

Respondents were asked whether their corps had a full-time youth worker or youth leader. Sixty two replies were received, only two of which were affirmative. There was a difference between the groups with and without youth leaders (mean growth index of 75.91 and 87.53 respectively), but with such a wide disparity of size of group it would not be possible to generalise from such a small difference. It is therefore not possible to say whether the presence of a youth leader may be an indication of a mobilised membership, or whether it could indicate a tendency to growth.

3.2.9.2 Other ministries

Corps were asked about any special ministries they provided, such a tape fellowship or telephone counselling service. Sixty two replies were received, fifty four of which were negative. There was practically no difference in mean growth index between those with (87.43) and without (87.12) such ministries. It therefore seems safe to assume that no relationship exists between this factor and growth. The one corps which provided a counselling service had a relatively high growth index (116) but it would be unsafe to generalise from only one example. The nature of the counselling service, and the qualifications of those engaged in this work were not considered. If the membership of a corps is mobilised in such ways this may be valid for other reasons, but on the basis of this evidence it should not be expected to contribute to growth.

3.2.10 Mobilisation for Evangelism

3.2.10.1 Evangelism responsibility

Respondents were asked to indicate those people (by role) and groups of people who had a significant responsibility for evangelism in their corps. Their replies were converted into numerical form by allocating a value to each response based on the assumed relative number of people (or constituencies) which would normally be involved in that response, as shown in Table 14 below.

Response	Value
No-one	0
CO	1
Officer / Worker	2
RS / CSM	3
Census Board	4
Corps Council	5
Outreach Committee	6
Other	7

Table 15: Weighted values used in calculating mobilisation in evangelism

From these values, a correlation was sought between the involvement in evangelism and the growth index, and a significant statistic was found ($r = 0.25, p = 0.03$). It seems that growth is unlikely unless the total value is over 8, as shown in Figure 49 below.

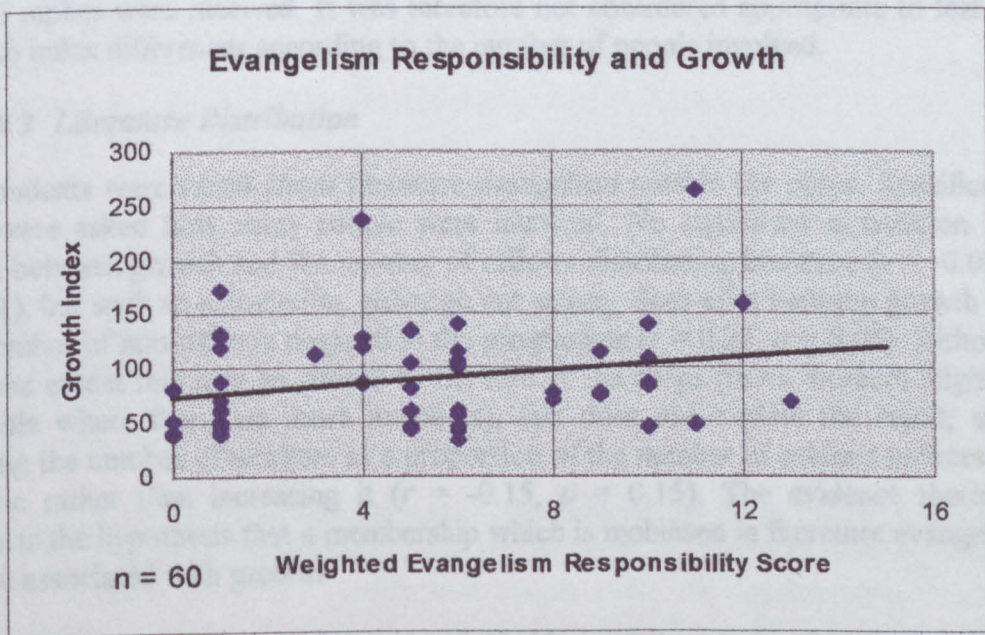


Figure 49: Evangelism Responsibility and Growth Index

Since values over 8 can only be obtained by sharing responsibility amongst two or more groups and individuals, this supports the hypothesis that a membership mobilised for evangelism will be associated with growth.

3.2.10.2 Evangelism Programmes

Respondents were asked whether their corps used a published programme of evangelism¹⁰⁸. Sixty two replies were received, nine of which were positive, but the differences in mean growth index (tested by ANOVA) were not significant between those corps using a scheme and those not doing so ($F = 2.16, p = 0.14$).

Of those corps which did use a scheme, 6 used 'Person to Person', one (clearly an error of some kind) used a scheme of their own devising (not a published scheme as requested), and two did not say which scheme they used. Those using 'Person to Person' had growth indices which were markedly different to those of other corps (a mean of 116.24, compared to 84.04), and when tested by the Point Biserial Correlation method, this produced a significant result ($t = -1.64, p = 0.05$). While, in view of the small size of the group using 'Person to Person', this result cannot be reliable, it seems to suggest that there may be valuable information to be discovered which may repay further study.

Respondents were also asked how many people were involved in the scheme, but only 6 replies were received. It was therefore not considered appropriate to test the growth index differences according to the number of people involved.

3.2.10.3 Literature Distribution

Respondents were asked about literature evangelism outside the corps. Specifically, they were asked how many people were involved. No significant association was found between growth and the number of officers distributing literature ($r = -0.03, p = 0.41$), but such an association, although not strong, does exist between growth and the number of non-officers engaged in the programme ($r = 0.23, p = 0.05$). Although to some extent this may be related to the size of the corps (more workers might be available where there are more members), this does not explain the result, since viewing the number of workers as a proportion of the number of soldiers reduces the statistic rather than increasing it ($r = -0.15, p = 0.15$). The evidence therefore supports the hypothesis that a membership which is mobilised in literature evangelism will be associated with growth.

3.2.11 Members' Attendance and Uniform Wearing

Traditionally in The Salvation Army it has been assumed that activists will wear uniform. While this begs several questions, some of which are considered later (in 3.8.5), it may be a good point to consider, and respondents were therefore asked to give information about the number of people on their Senior Soldiers Roll who attended regularly and/or wore uniform, categorised by age group and sex, with the results shown in Table 15 below.

¹⁰⁸ Since the survey a growing number of corps have adopted the ALPHA course method of evangelism, devised and popularised by Nicky Gumbel of Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. It was not possible to include this in the survey, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is proving successful.

Soldiers Age Group	Male			Female			All		
	On Roll	Attend	Uniform	On Roll	Attend	Uniform	On Roll	Attend	Uniform
≤ 15	2.14	1.86	1.65	2.63	2.14	1.89	4.77	4.00	3.54
16 - 35	8.46	6.35	6.04	10.11	7.54	6.95	18.56	13.89	12.98
36 - 55	11.19	9.19	8.25	16.84	14.56	12.63	28.04	23.75	20.88
≥ 56	15.12	12.28	9.79	33.51	25.40	18.32	48.63	37.68	28.11
Total	36.91	29.68	25.72	63.09	49.65	39.79	100.00	79.33	65.51

Table 16: Percentages of Senior Soldiers on Roll, Attending and in Uniform, categorised by age and sex (percentages relate to whole sample, not individual categories).

Approximately two thirds of all Senior Soldiers in the sample wear uniform, and almost 80% are regular attenders.

Fifty six responses were received, indicating that attendance rates varied from 33.33% (presumably one response of 0.00% was an error) to 100% (generally in very small corps). There was a significant correlation between the growth index and the percentage of soldiers regularly attending ($r = 0.27$, $p = 0.02$). The number of soldiers wearing uniform ranged from 21.74% to 100%; this however was not significantly correlated with the growth index ($r = 0.14$, $p = 0.15$). There is therefore insufficient evidence for the hypothesis that growth is linked with the proportion of soldiers who wear uniform, though there is evidence for a link between growth and the proportion of soldiers who regularly attend meetings.

3.2.12 Conclusions

Wagner's second 'vital sign' indicates that a growing church will demonstrate a mobilised membership. The issues investigated in this section were concerned with the extent to which the membership of the corps could be seen as 'mobilised', and also the extent to which this was associated with growth.

The difficulty with this approach, as with so much of this study, is that it has not been possible to conduct an independent validation of the tests used to ensure that they *do* measure mobilisation. This means that much rests on assumptions, however reasonable they may be. However, the counter to this is that using a broad battery of tests reduces the impact that any single error will have made.

a The Vital Sign

Several methods were used in looking for mobilisation, including considerations of the programme of activities, the lay leadership of the corps, pastoral care, evangelism and other aspects of corps life.

The programme of Corps activities was considered in two ways. The number of external activities (those, mainly youth or social service, not considered part of the main programme of worship, nurture and evangelism) was found to have no relationship with growth. The number of internal activities (directly or indirectly part of the main programme) was found to have a highly significant relationship with growth. This means that corps with more internal activities tend also to have a higher growth index.

Similarly, there is a significant correlation between the number of leaders active in the corps programme and growth. Furthermore, the higher the ratio of leaders to activities, the more likely the corps is to be growing (2 or more leaders per activity is preferable). However, there is no correlation between the ratio of leaders to attenders and growth.

Therefore, while there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that the number of external activities is associated with growth, there is strong evidence that the number of internal activities has such an association, as has the number of leaders per activity.

Lay leadership was considered in several different ways. It was hypothesised that, since the key local leadership is composed of members of the Census Board, there would be some relationships between these Local Officers and the growth index of the corps. However, because the Census Board consists of a limited number of named positions, the next tier of local leadership was also considered, as it is in this tier that leadership is broadened out to include more people.

There may only be up to about 14 Census Local Officers (regulations have changed during the course of this study), and almost all corps have at least two, to take responsibility for finance. Most have others too, and it was found that there is a significant correlation between the number of Census Local Officers (though not the ratio of Census Local Officers to the number of Soldiers) and the growth index. The frequency of Census Meetings and Corps Council Meetings, the number of Corps Council members and the number of (non-Census) Local Officers all had no significant relationship with growth. However, the ratio of non-Census Local Officers to the number of soldiers was found to have a significant correlation with growth. Since the size of the corps was found to have no direct correlation with growth, it is therefore a reasonable deduction that the number of Census Local Officers and the ratio of non-Census Local Officers to Soldiers can be used as indications of mobilisation.

Two contradictory issues were addressed concerning the length of service of Census Local Officers. Firstly, mobilisation means that leadership should be widely shared, and that new members should have opportunity to develop leadership gifts and skills, implying short terms of office. Secondly, it is arguable that if, as Church Growth writers suggest, the church leader (pastor) should stay for long periods, then perhaps the lay leaders should also have long terms of office; this would provide great stability, and would use gifted people consistently.

A significant correlation was found between the mean term of office for Census Local Officers in a corps and the growth index of that corps. The relationship, however, was negative, suggesting that long-term lay leadership is actually counter-productive. Corps in which the mean term of office exceeded 10 years were found to be very unlikely to be growing. This supports the first hypothesis suggested above, rather than the second, and may indicate that a mobilised membership will generate a more rapid turnover of lay leadership, perhaps as new members with leadership gifts are discovered. The evidence seems to suggest that Census Local Officers should have a mean tenure in office of about 7 years – which allows for some ‘elder statesmen’ (or women, of course), but also for more people to enter into leadership by preventing the log-jam which can occur when leaders do not (or will not) relinquish their office.

The use of public testimony was considered as a possible indicator of mobilisation. No significant relationship with growth was found, which suggests that, if the use of testimony were valid as a measure of mobilisation then a mobilised membership is not associated with growth. The use of testimony is not therefore considered suitable as an indicator of growth, despite its early and traditional use in Salvation Army practice. However, this may be because it is often inappropriate. From personal observation, public testimony can sometimes be a full (and very detailed) autobiography, sometimes a recollection of times past, sometimes a sequence of religious clichés and sometimes an expression of 'personal philosophy'; only rarely is a testimony – voluntary or invited – an up to date witness to the activity of God. Perhaps therefore the absence of a link between testimony and growth is a reflection on the nature of the testimony, and better education and training in this activity would produce a different result.

Following the work of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, the existence of prayer groups within a corps membership was expected to be an indicator of a mobilised membership. Sixty one per cent of the sample had prayer groups operating, and there was indeed a highly significant difference in growth index between these and the corps which had no such groups. Almost all the corps without prayer groups were declining, and most of them were declining much more rapidly than the territory as a whole. There was no significant relationship between growth and the number of prayer groups operating, the number of people involved or the way in which groups were organised. The sole distinguishing factor seems to be the existence of one or more prayer groups, making this apparently a very good indicator of mobilisation (or at least of the likelihood of growth). It is therefore concluded that a membership which is mobilised in prayer – even if only through a specialised group – is a key factor in growing corps. This seems to indicate that there is value in prayer, on the purely pragmatic grounds that it works, regardless of the spiritual benefits or theological issues.

Another way in which the membership could be mobilised is through involvement in leading aspects of public worship. There was a significant relationship between this form of leadership and growth, although surprisingly this relationship was stronger for participation through children's stories, Bible reading and musical performance than it was for apparently more spiritually or theologically demanding activities such as preaching, leading worship and leading prayer. This may be because the first group of activities, by their undemanding nature, provide opportunities for a wider sharing of leadership. Overall, almost all types of activity had a positive relationship with growth, though most of those considered fell short of statistical significance. This suggests that participation in the leading of public worship is a good indicator of a mobilised membership, and that this is in turn associated with growth. Perhaps further and broader research would be able to identify reasons for the somewhat surprising results for the stronger relationships. At present, it seems safe to say that almost all forms of participation in leadership are associated with growth, and that those which seem to have the strongest association can, at worst, do no harm, and may in fact be worth pursuing. It is somewhat surprising that the individual activities which apparently have the strongest association with growth are those which are relatively undemanding spiritually or theologically. Perhaps Salvationists are not well equipped for the more demanding tasks, and as with testimony, this may indicate a need for improved education and training.

The financial position of corps, including the ways in which they raise and give money, was expected to offer a measurement of mobilisation. However, no significant difference was found. There is therefore no evidence to support the hypothesis that mobilisation (if associated with growth) was associated with the financial position of the corps.

Pastoral care as an indication of mobilisation was considered in several ways. Visiting new attenders (by corps members other than the officer) was thought to be a potential measure of mobilisation in pastoral care, but turned out to have no significant association. The approach to nurture was similarly not significantly correlated with growth, although there is a hint from the tests that a form of nurture which includes the 'mentor' type of care may be more likely to be associated with growth than other approaches. However, this was not significant, and further study would be advisable. Respondents were asked to indicate which people (or groups) were involved in pastoral care, and the tests indicate that a wider involvement is associated with growth, although the identity of the specific people or groups engaged in pastoral care was not significant. However, this is not a matter of simple arithmetic, since neither the number of carers nor the ratio of carers to soldiers had a significant association with growth. The significance seems to lie in having multiple routes, so that there are several types of carer available to corps members. A similar, though stronger, result was found for involvement in pastoral visiting. Most (> 90%) corps officers were engaged in pastoral visiting, but the extent to which the task was shared with one or more teams was found to have a highly significant correlation with growth. This would support the hypothesis that growth is associated with a membership which is mobilised in pastoral care. The pastoral skills of Salvationists need to be improved in order to enable this relationship to be used to the best effect.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson had found in their study that the existence of cell (small fellowship) groups was an indicator of mobilisation and of growth. While not quite attaining statistical significance at the 0.05 level, there was evidence to indicate that this was also so in The Salvation Army, although further study is needed in this area. No other tested factors associated with cell groups were found to have significant associations with the growth index, although the ratio of attenders to the number of soldiers came close and may repay further study. The difference between this result and that of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson may lie in the sample selection. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson selected a sample of larger Baptist churches, whereas the sample used for the current study was representative of the whole population, which includes very small corps, many of which could probably constitute a cell group on their own. This is one factor which should be considered in a further study, since it may be that such small corps are in fact cell groups, but fail to recognise it in their ways of working.

No conclusion could be formed about mobilisation in specialised ministries (youth or other) and growth, since the data was too limited to allow generalisation.

Mobilisation in evangelism was expected to be related to growth, and the extent to which responsibility for evangelism was shared was indeed found to be an important indicator. As with pastoral care, a wide sharing of responsibility for evangelism seems to be desirable, and this again may indicate that there is a need for training and education in this area, so that Salvationists are better fitted for these responsibilities. There was some suggestion that the use of an evangelism programme, especially 'Person to Person', was associated with growth, although the numbers involved were too small to justify generalisation. Literature evangelism is an important part of Salvation Army tradition, and it was found that there was a significant correlation between the number of lay people (though not officers) mobilised in this activity and the growth index of the corps.

Since The Salvation Army is a quasi-military uniformed organisation, it seemed reasonable to consider as evidence of mobilisation not only the extent to which soldiers were actually attending meetings, but also the proportion of soldiers wearing uniform. There was a significant association between the proportion of soldiers regularly attending meetings and growth, as might be expected. However, there was no such relationship associating uniform-wearing with growth. This indicates that there is no proven value, in terms of the growth of corps, in the extent of uniform-wearing, although this may have other values (indicating availability for service, department of musical groups *etc.*).

b Other Issues

Salvation Army corps are often involved in community service of various kinds, including youth work (which may be staffed by corps members) and the provision of facilities for Alcoholics Anonymous, Gingerbread and similar groups (which generally have little Salvation Army input, merely using the buildings *etc.*). There was no evidence to suggest that the *number* of such activities, of either kind, was related to the growth index, although this may indicate the extent of mobilisation. This result may cast some doubt on the value of mobilisation as a 'vital sign', but it might be better interpreted as indicating that corps membership needs to be mobilised in some particular and identifiable ways, rather than in other less productive ways.

Conversely, the number of the more 'church-related' internal activities, with the number of leaders *etc.* was clearly related to growth.

3.2.13 Summary

There is evidence to support the hypothesis that mobilisation is associated with growth. This is particularly so where the members are mobilised in ways which involve them in:

- activity leadership
- worship leading
- pastoral care, and
- evangelism.

The existence of at least one prayer group was also very important in its association with growth.

Conversely, the extent of mobilisation through external activities (youth, community, social *etc.*) was not found to be associated with growth, although they may be valid expressions of life in the body of Christ on other grounds. Several other aspects of mobilisation, such as testimony, uniform-wearing *etc.*, also had no relationship with growth, although some of these should be the subjects of further study, since the test results suggest that there may be additional information to be gleaned.

Turning now to specifically Salvation Army issues, the general extent of involvement in external activities should be reviewed, since no relationship with growth could be discerned.

The relationships between numbers of lay leaders and growth were individually generally weak, although clear. However, the combined effects of the various relationships indicate that leadership (including pastoral care and evangelism) should be widely shared, with people who are trained and equipped for these roles. However, the negative correlation between the mean term in office and the growth index suggests that lay leadership should change at fairly frequent intervals, where suitable alternative leaders are available. This might be accomplished by a system which has fixed terms of office of, say, up to five years, with a maximum of two successive periods in the same post without reference to higher authority (such as the Divisional Commander).

For several issues, there were results which were surprising, border-line, or contrary to historical evidence. This suggests that these areas might repay further study, but also that there may be a need for the provision of more education and training for lay people in such skills as worship leading, preaching, testimony, pastoral care and evangelism.

Finally, there was insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the extent of uniform-wearing was associated with growth. This is an important result, which indicates that the Salvation Army uniform may not be as beneficial in evangelistic work as, according to history or myth, was once the case.

3.3 Corps Size and Range of Activities

Wagner is particularly vague about the optimum size of a church.

He says:

The third vital sign characteristic of growing churches in America is that they are big enough.

Wagner 1984, p. 95

But he does not spell out clearly what he means by this, saying instead that 'small churches are big enough to meet some people's needs, but other people require large churches to meet their needs' (Wagner 1984, p.96).

However, although Wagner devotes one and a half pages to small churches, he argues that it is the larger of the small churches (150-200 members) which produce the best growth record. The remainder of his chapter on churches that are 'big enough' concentrates mainly on very large churches (or 'megachurches'), such as Lake Avenue (3,500 members), the Crystal Cathedral (> 7,000 attenders), First Baptist, Hammond, Indiana (74,500 members) *etc.*

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson addressed only larger Baptist churches (more than 50 members) in their sample, but found little support from their data for a relationship between the size of the church (as measured mainly by the number of activities and specifically those with an evangelistic purpose) and growth.

The sample for this present study is composed of a cross-section of Salvation Army corps, including representative proportions of small, medium and larger corps, although Salvation Army corps tend to be smaller, rather than larger – only one corps in the UK had more than 400 soldiers, and only a handful had more than 300.

The distribution for the population of corps in the UK is shown in Figure 50, and that for the whole sample (including non-respondents¹⁰⁹) in Figure 51.

¹⁰⁹ For most questions there are approximately 61 respondents, but for some issues it has been possible to use centrally kept statistical data without the direct involvement of respondents.

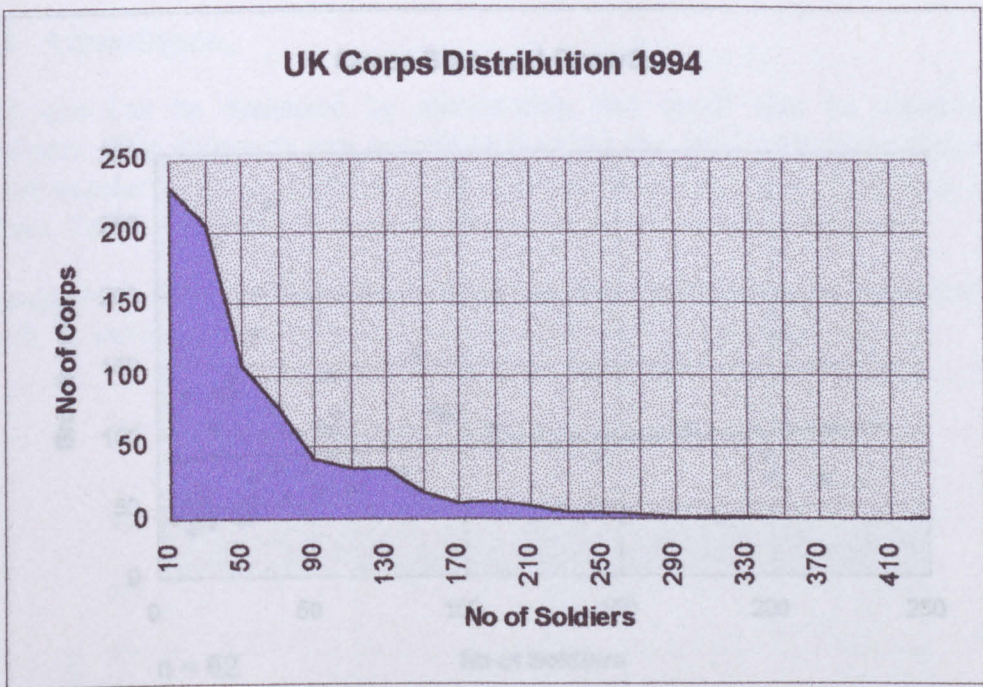


Figure 50: The Population Distribution of Corps by Size

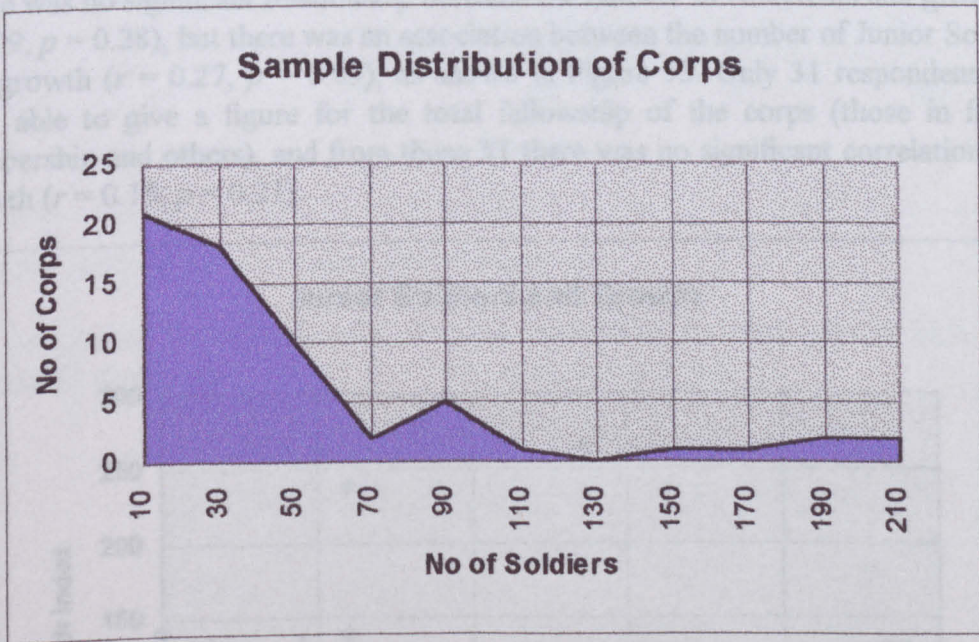


Figure 51: The Sample Distribution of Corps by Size

While there is a sampling discrepancy, in that the sample included no corps with more than 300 soldiers, there were only 4 such corps in the UK, and it would be difficult to generalise from any results which emerged as a result of sampling corps of that size.

3.3.1 The number of corps members

As Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found, there is little evidence for a relationship between the number of members and growth. Though there is a small correlation, as shown in Figure 52, it is not significant ($r = 0.11, p = 0.19$).

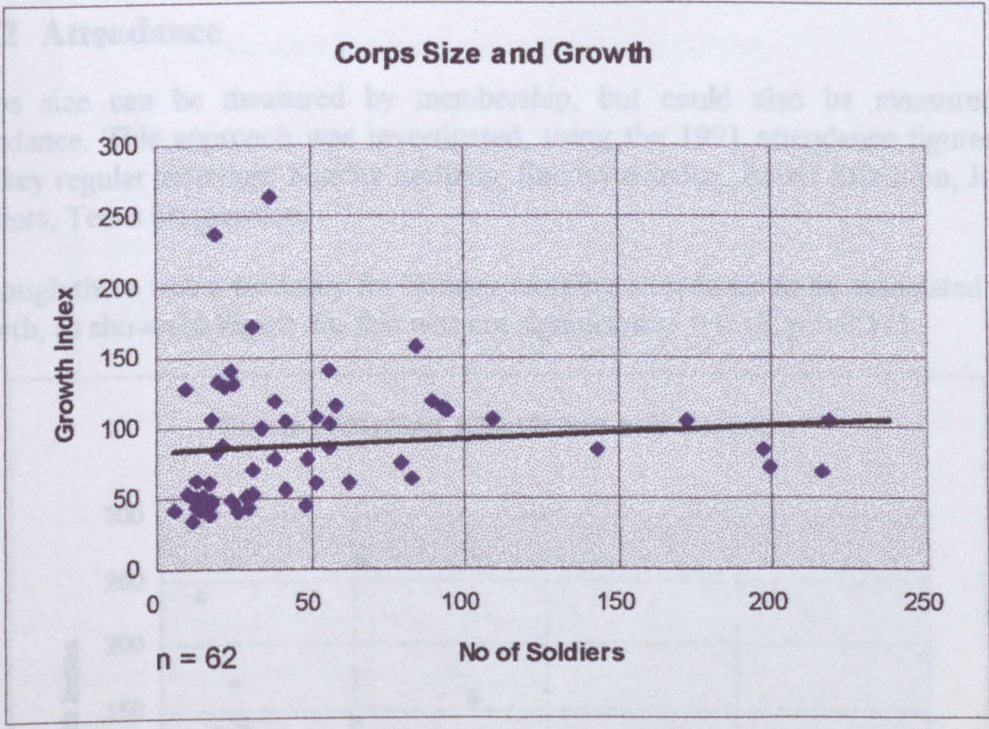


Figure 52: Correlation of Corps Size and Growth

There was no significant relationship between the number of Adherents and growth ($r = 0.09, p = 0.28$), but there was an association between the number of Junior Soldiers and growth ($r = 0.27, p = 0.03$), as shown in Figure 53. Only 31 respondents had been able to give a figure for the total fellowship of the corps (those in formal membership and others), and from those 31 there was no significant correlation with growth ($r = 0.15, p = 0.21$).

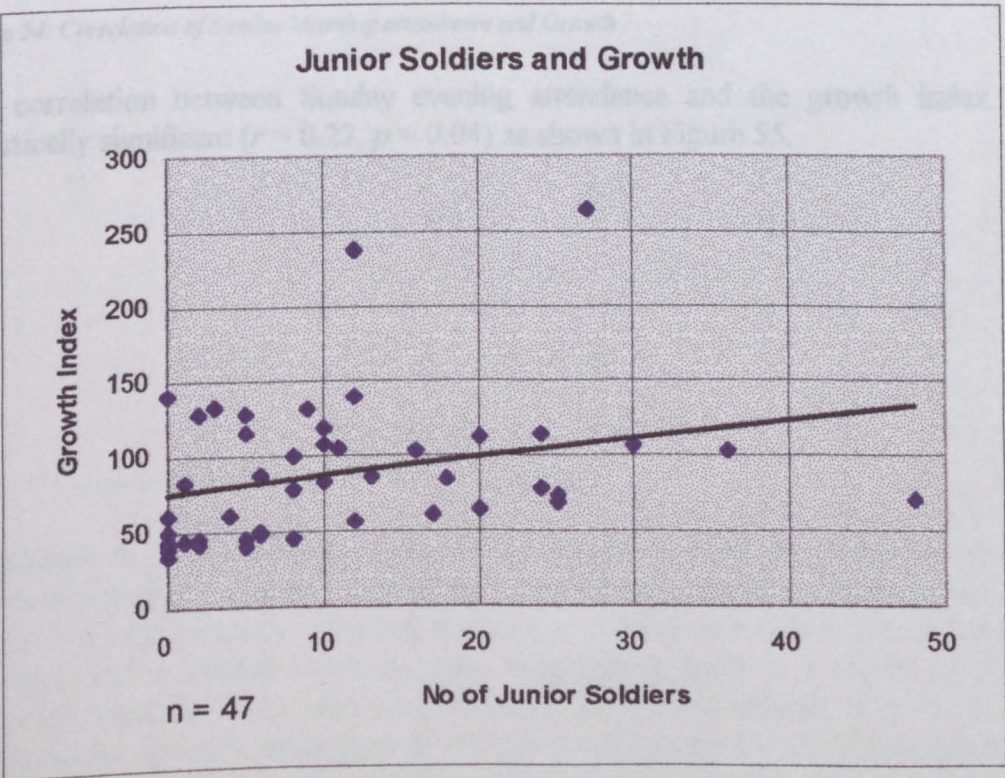


Figure 53: Correlation of Junior Soldiers and Growth

3.3.2 Attendance

Corps size can be measured by membership, but could also be measured by attendance. This approach was investigated, using the 1991 attendance figures for five key regular meetings: Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Junior Salvation, Junior Soldiers, Teens programme.

Although there was a tendency for Sunday morning attendance to be associated with growth, as shown in Figure 54, this was not significant ($r = 0.15, p = 0.11$).

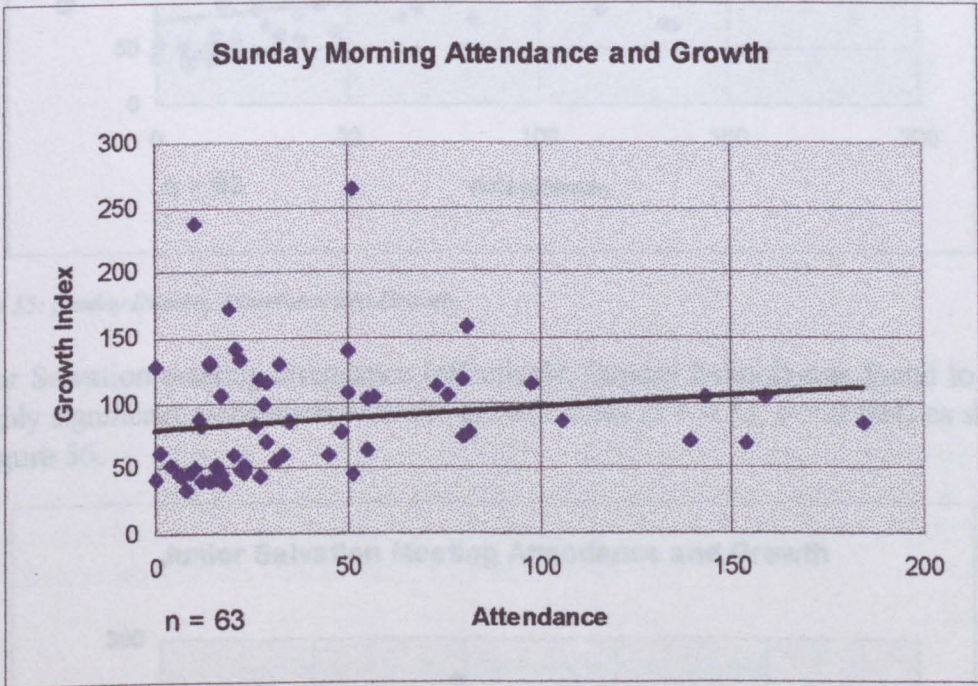


Figure 54: Correlation of Sunday Morning attendance and Growth

The correlation between Sunday evening attendance and the growth index was statistically significant ($r = 0.22, p = 0.04$) as shown in Figure 55.

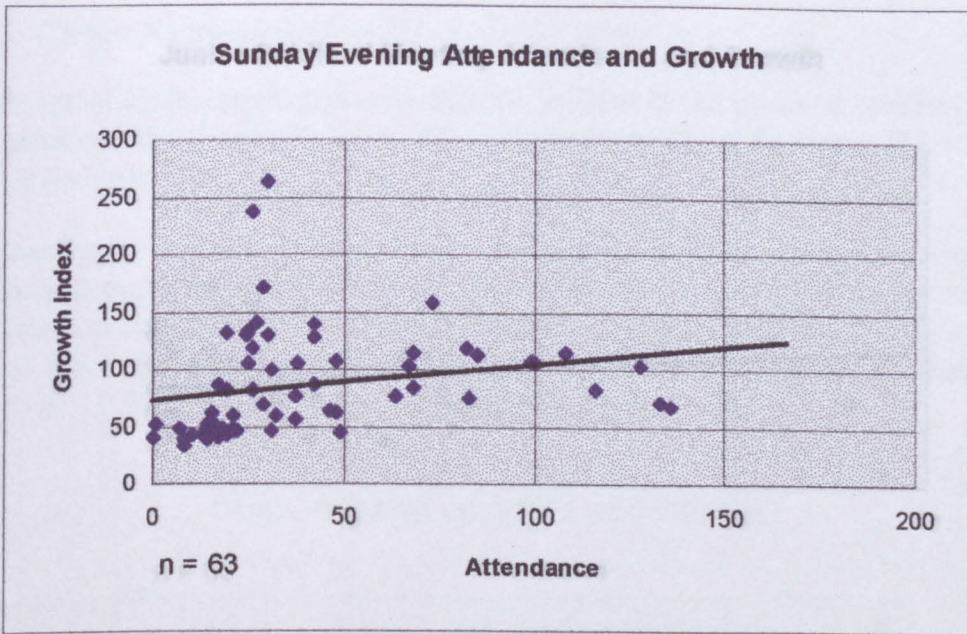


Figure 55: Sunday Evening Attendance and Growth

Junior Salvation meeting attendance (effectively, Sunday School) was found to have a highly significant association with the growth index ($r = 0.33, p = 0.004$) as shown in Figure 56.

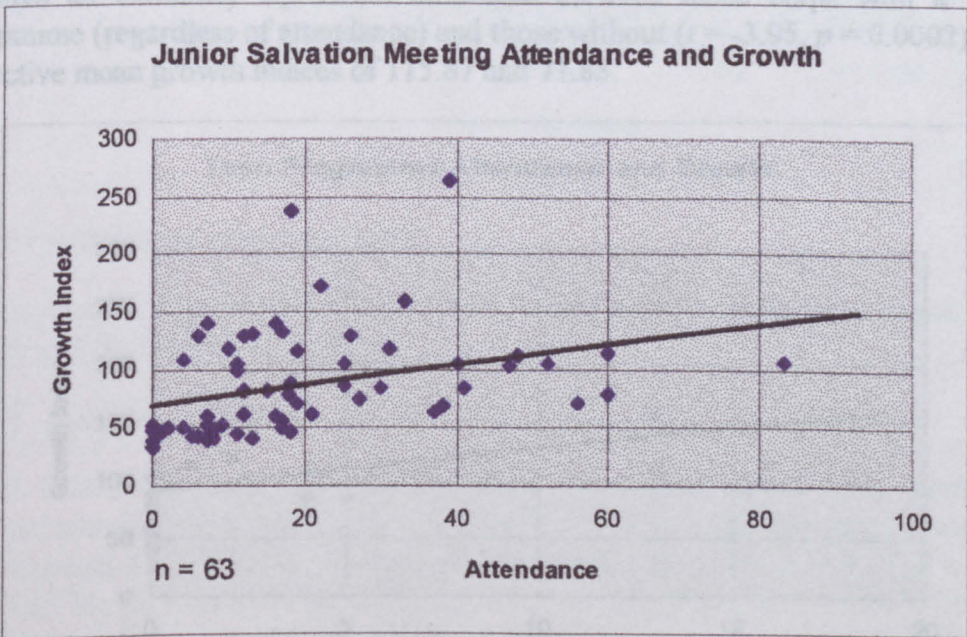


Figure 56: Junior Salvation Meeting Attendance and Growth

Attendance at Junior Soldiers' meetings (a discipling class for young Christians), shown in Figure 57, was not, at first sight, significantly correlated with growth ($r = 0.16, p = 0.11$). However, only half the sample (32 out of 63) held Junior Soldiers' meetings, and a Pooled Variance t-test reveals that there is a highly significant difference between those with such meetings and those without ($t = -3.15, p = 0.003$), with respective mean growth indices of 103.38 and 69.30. This suggests that it is not the attendance at the meetings which is important, but whether meetings of this kind take place.

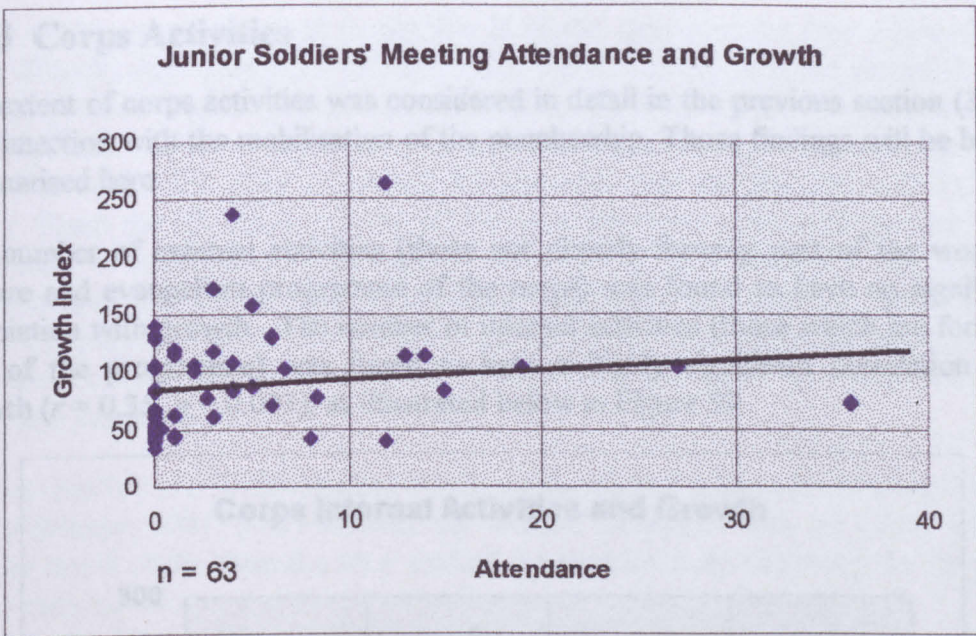


Figure 57: Junior Soldiers' Meeting Attendance and Growth

A high proportion of the sample (66%) had no Teen programme, although attendance at this function¹¹⁰, as shown in Figure 58, was found to have a highly significant association with growth ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.004$). The use of a pooled variance t-test indicates an extremely significant difference between those corps with a Teens programme (regardless of attendance) and those without ($t = -3.95$, $p = 0.0002$), with respective mean growth indices of 115.87 and 71.83.

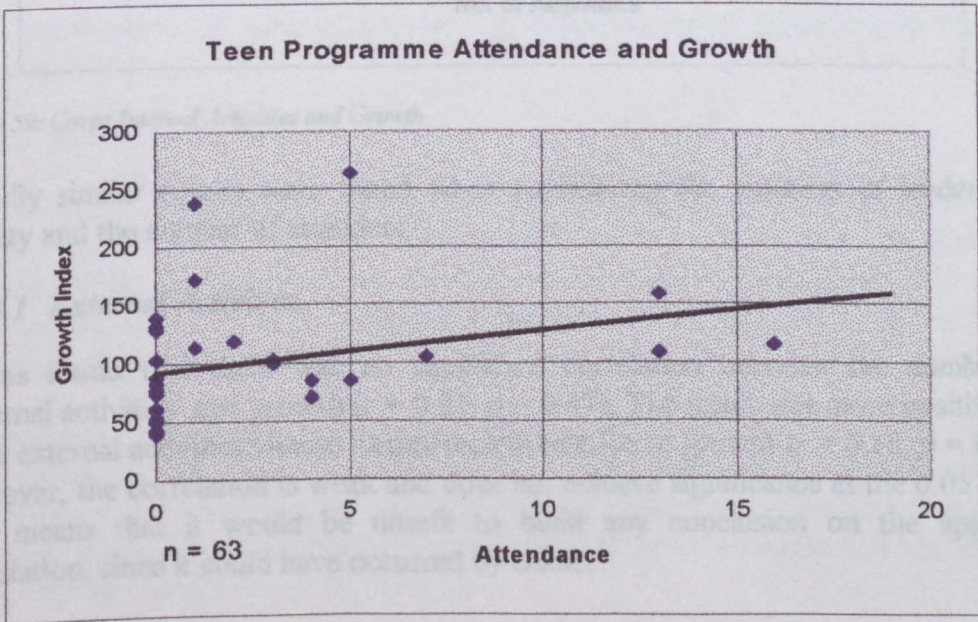


Figure 58: Teen Programme Attendance and Growth

¹¹⁰ Strictly speaking, the Teen programme is probably not 'attended' but is 'participated in', and there may be several different weekly or other events included in this category. However, since so many corps have no Teen programme, and reported attendance is so low, all participation has been summarised as attendance.

3.3.3 Corps Activities

The extent of corps activities was considered in detail in the previous section (3.2.1) in connection with the mobilisation of the membership. Those findings will be briefly summarised here.

The number of external activities (those not directly forming part of the worship, nurture and evangelism programme of the corps) was found to have no significant association with growth. The number of internal activities (those which are formally part of the programme) was found to have a highly significant correlation with growth ($r = 0.35, p = 0.003$), as illustrated below in Figure 59.

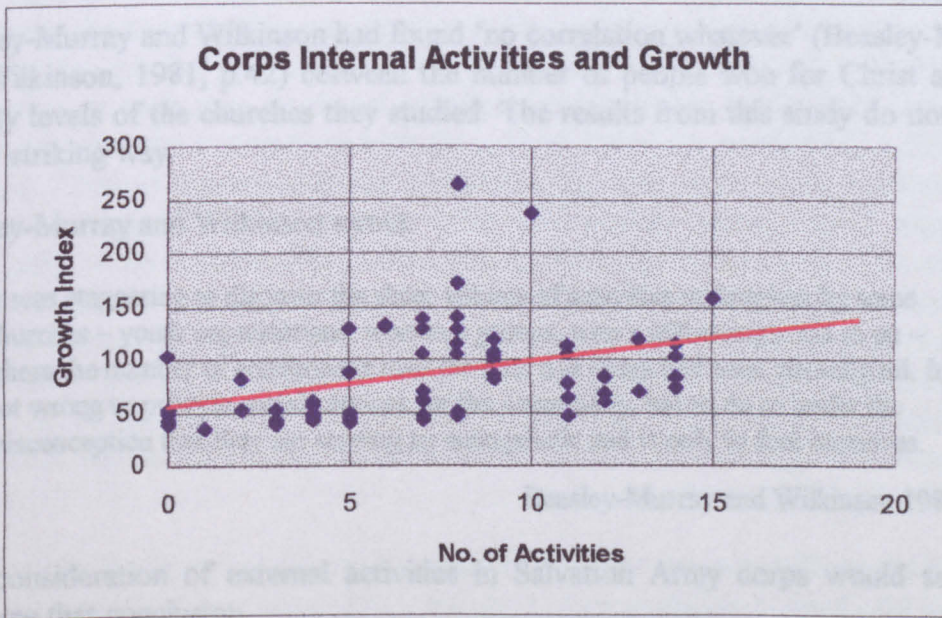


Figure 59: Corps Internal Activities and Growth

Broadly similar results were found when considering the numbers of leaders per activity and the number of attenders.

3.3.3.1 External Activities

It was found that there was no significant correlation between the number of 'external activities' and growth ($r = 0.01, p = 0.47$). The result was more positive for those external activities viewed as outreach in relation to growth ($r = 0.18, p = 0.10$). However, the correlation is weak and does not achieve significance at the 0.05 level. This means that it would be unsafe to build any conclusion on the apparent association, since it could have occurred by chance.

Some of the questions asked in Section B of the questionnaire (see Appendix D) were difficult, since they required information which was probably not recorded other than in personal memory. Nevertheless, out of 55 who replied to Section B, 26 provided information on the number of converts for whom the listed activities were perceived as the first point of contact for converts over the ten-year period (1982-1991). From the 26 corps, a total of 139 converts were contacted through these activities – or more correctly through 43 out of 91 of these activities. This suggests that less than half of the external activities undertaken by corps are productive in terms of growth. Out of the reduced sample (those who provided data), only 5 converts per corps had been contacted through these activities – just over one every two years per corps.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson had found ‘no correlation whatever’ (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, 1981, p.42) between the number of people won for Christ and the activity levels of the churches they studied. The results from this study do not differ in any striking way.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson wrote:

It was staggering to discover the sheer volume of activities undertaken by some churches – youth organisations, women’s groups, men’s fellowships and so on – where the number of conversions over the past five years had been virtually nil. It is not wrong to provide social services for the community, but to do so under the misconception that they are serving an evangelistic end is only to fool ourselves.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p.42

This consideration of external activities in Salvation Army corps would seem to reinforce that conclusion.

3.3.3.2 Internal Activities

One is initially struck by the sheer quantity of ‘internal’ activities which take place. From a sample of 63 corps, 453 activities were reported – 7.25 per corps. This is in addition to the external activities and the normal worship programme, and seems quite astonishing when it is remembered that the sample includes a representative number (that is, a high proportion) of small corps.

Respondents were asked to identify the activities which took place by their purpose (Evangelism, Nurture, Service or Other) and to give the number of converts resulting from that activity between 1982 and 1991. The number of activities in each category was then tested for correlation with both the number of converts and the growth index, with the results shown in Table 16.

Purpose	Converts		Growth Index	
	Correlation	p	Correlation	p
Evangelism	0.27	0.02	0.20	0.06
Nurture	0.29	0.02	0.38	0.001
Service	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14
Unstated	-0.01	0.47	-0.008	0.47
All Activities	0.34	0.003	0.37	0.001

Table 17: Correlation of Internal Activities by Purpose with No of Converts and with Growth Index

From Table 17 it can be seen that there are reasonably strong correlations (Pearson's r) between the number of 'evangelism' activities and the number of converts and also between the number of 'nurture' activities and the number of converts. The correlation in each case is almost identical, and both are statistically significant. However, when the correlations with the growth index are considered, a difference emerges. There is a much stronger correlation between 'nurture' and growth than between 'evangelism' and growth, with the former being highly significant statistically, while the latter falls just outside the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that, although the number of evangelistic activities may be related to the number of converts gained, a number of those converts may not be incorporated into full membership (the growth index is based on the number of senior soldiers at the corps). It is apparent that corps need a balanced programme, including both evangelism and nurture – but that nurture is much more strongly associated with growth.

The statistics for 'Service' (Social/Community Service) are very different. It happens that the correlations and probabilities are all 0.14 (rounded to 2 significant figures). This is a weak correlation, and the probability is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. There is therefore insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the number of 'service' activities is related to either the number of converts or to the growth of the corps.

Predictably, the statistics for the 'Unstated' category produce no meaningful results. The correlations are extremely low, and the probabilities are almost 0.50, indicating that the number of such activities has virtually no relationship with either the number of converts or the growth index. This may be because these were not the purposes for which the activities were held – but one might suspect that it was because holding activities without a clear purpose is likely to produce no result.

3.3.4 Conclusions

a The Vital Sign

Although Wagner is somewhat vague about his meaning when he claims that growing churches will be 'big enough', it is clear that he favours large churches as being more likely to provide a range of services which will meet the needs of the membership. This claim was tested in three different ways in this study.

Firstly the question of corps size as measured by membership was considered, using several different membership categories. Of these, only the number of Junior Soldiers was found to be significantly related to growth. Wagner's hypothesis is therefore not supported when measuring corps size by membership.

Secondly, corps size measured by attendance at the main worship and/or teaching meetings was considered. There was no correlation between growth and attendance at the Sunday morning meeting (traditionally the holiness meeting – for believers), but there was a significant correlation between growth and attendance at the Sunday evening meeting (traditionally the salvation meetings – intended for evangelism). This correlation was, however, not strong, which perhaps reflects the fact (see 3.1.12 above) that few corps actually treat the meeting as a regular weekly evangelistic exercise. Junior Salvation meeting (Sunday School) attendance was found to be strongly correlated with growth, as was the existence of a Junior Soldiers' Class – rather than attendance at such a class. The most surprising finding in this series of tests was the very strong association between growth and the Teen programme (which may come under the SAY heading, though it could be handled differently in some corps). There was an extremely significant difference in terms of growth between corps which had a Teen programme and those which had none, and there was also a highly significant correlation between growth and attendance at (or participation in) such a programme. These results suggest that, whereas the number of people in formal membership is not associated with growth, there may be such an association for the number of people attending. However, the striking difference between the results for adult attendance and youth attendance indicates that the most valuable measurements for predicting growth may be found in those for youth.

Corps size was also considered by reference to the number of activities which the corps provided. External activities were found to be unproductive in terms of growth. Even for activities which, though in this category, were seen as having an evangelistic purpose, there was no significant association between the activities and the growth of the corps. This is similar to the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson in their study of Baptist churches in England. Internal activities produced some more positive results. A surprisingly large number of such activities took place. Activities identified as evangelistic or as nurture were found to each be significantly associated with the number of converts reported (indicating that they were more productive of converts than other kinds of activity), but nurture activities were much more strongly associated with corps growth as measured by membership. Service activities were only weakly correlated with both converts and growth. The total number of activities per corps was, however, very strongly correlated with both the number of converts reported and with the growth index for each corps. This seems to indicate that the number – and nature – of activities undertaken at a corps is associated with growth – supporting Wagner's claims.

He says that

... a growing church can consider itself big enough when it is effectively winning lost people to Christ, when it provides the range of services that meet the needs of its members, and when it is reproducing itself by planting new churches.

Wagner, 1984, p.109

This study has not considered in detail the question of church planting, and Wagner's first point is somewhat tautologous, since it suggests that a church which is not big enough to win people to Christ will not be a growing church – which rather implies the conclusion that it never will be big enough, since it is unlikely to grow.

However, the results outlined above tend to confirm Wagner's second point; a church which has a sufficient range of activities to satisfy the needs of its members is likely also to be a growing church. However, these results also indicate that corps which have an emphasis on both evangelism and nurture are more likely to be growing than those which emphasise service, or which pursue evangelism through external activities. Furthermore, the results indicate that there is a surprisingly strong connection between the existence of a youth programme (and attendance where it does exist) and growth which may be perceived as a development of Wagner's argument.

b Other Issues

There is no clear relationship between the number of Senior Soldiers or the number of Adherents and the growth record of the corps – and this might indicate that the size of the corps was not a material factor. However, there is such a relationship when Junior Soldiers are considered. Taken with the results for attendance, which indicate that growth is associated more with worship/teaching activities for youth (especially Teens) than with similar activities for adults, this seems to indicate that growth may be a feature of corps which lay an emphasis on young people. It is, of course, not necessarily true to claim that higher Junior Soldier membership or higher youth attendance will produce growth – they might be symptoms of growth rather than part of its causes. However, the similarity of the patterns for most youth events, and the contrast with the patterns for key adult events, seem to suggest that there is an important aspect of growth here.

The level of corps activity was found to be generally high, but there was no evidence to support the idea that external activities were associated with growth – even those considered to be part of the outreach programme had no significant association with growth. There are other justifications for engaging in social or community service (such as expressions of Christian compassion or concern), but it seems that the evidence does not justify them as aspects of effective evangelism. However, internal activities *were* found to have an association with growth: there is a clear tendency for corps with more activities to also have a higher growth index. This is, however, mostly connected with those activities with the perceived purposes of evangelism or (*a fortiori*) nurture. Again, as with external activities, the internal activities perceived as having a social or community service purpose were least associated with growth – except for those which seem to have had no clear purpose at all.

From this evidence it seems that corps which can offer a sufficient range of activities for evangelism and nurture – especially concentrating on younger people, and which avoid placing too much resource into social or community service, are those corps which are big enough to grow.

3.3.5 Summary

From the evidence of this study, growth seems not to be associated with:

- the 'raw' size of the corps, as measured by adult membership
- attendance at main adult worship/teaching meetings and growth
- the number of external activities

Conversely, there is evidence that growth is associated with:

- the number of Junior Soldiers
- attendance at meetings for young people, especially Teens
- the number of internal activities and growth, especially when these activities have the purpose of either evangelism or nurture.

Therefore, Wagner's third sign is to some extent supported, although not through the direct measurements of adult membership or attendance, but through the range (and type) of activities which is provided. The somewhat unexpected discovery of a strong link between growth and the youth programme (as measured by both membership and attendance/participation) may suggest an area for further study, as well as a potentially fruitful area for strategic policy.

3.4 Balance of Corps Groupings

According to Wagner:

The fourth vital sign of a healthy, growing church can be best expressed by this simple formula: Celebration + Congregation + Cell = Church

Wagner 1984, p.111

The terms are used to describe both the style of the events and the numbers involved (see 2.10.4). To recapitulate briefly, by 'Celebration' Wagner means a large gathering when the whole church meets for an experience of worship; a 'Congregation' means a gathering of people who may group together because of an activity or task orientation, and which encourages some degree of fellowship – an optimum size is thought to be between 30 and 80; a 'Cell' is a small, relatively intimate, fellowship group of about 8 to 12 people.

Frankly, the research methodology adopted for this study shares the defect which Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found: from the data, there is practically no way of checking on the extent to which corps were involved in an experience of celebration according to Wagner's definition, while in very few cases did meetings of sufficient numbers occur. However, it is possible, to a limited extent, to examine the ways in which members of the corps meet in groups which may be interpreted as forming congregations or cells.

3.4.1 Celebration

Taking Wagner's definition of a congregation as consisting of 30 to 80 people (others – and Wagner himself in other places – have used figures up to 120), a celebration was taken to be a worship meeting (or service) which was larger than a congregation: *i.e.* attended by more than 80 people. Out of a sample of 63 respondents, 13 corps met this criterion, and the difference in growth index between these and the remainder of the sample was not significant ($r = 0.13$, $p = 0.16$), indicating that the two groups are drawn from the same population.

This result does not support the Wagner hypothesis in respect of celebrations, but – having in mind the relatively small number of corps which were able to support such meetings, even so few as 81 attenders – it would be too much to claim that the hypothesis is refuted.

3.4.2 Congregations

Traditionally in The Salvation Army the Sunday morning service (usually known as the Holiness Meeting) has been the main worship event for Salvationists, and this was therefore the first to be considered in terms of congregations. Of 63 responses, the mean attendance figures (for 1992) could be grouped into three bands: Band 1 had an attendance of less than 30, Band 2 had an attendance of between 30 and 80 (Wagner's suggested congregation size), and Band 3 had an attendance of over 80 (*i.e.* these could be considered celebrations, although here they were treated as a larger variety of congregation). There was a difference in the mean growth index between the three groups, as shown in Table 18.

Attendance	Sunday Morning		Sunday Evening	
	Number	Mean Index	Number	Mean Index
< 30	37	77.62	34	76.16
30 to 80	17	100.88	20	100.63
> 80	9	96.60	9	94.91
Sample	63	86.61	63	86.61

Table 18: Sunday Attendance and Growth

However, ANOVA indicates that the difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($F = 1.79, p = 0.18$). Even with the groups reduced to 2 (those under 30 and those over 30), although the difference was accentuated it was not significant ($F = 2.81, p = 0.10$).

A similar result emerged when the Sunday evening service (Salvation Meeting) was considered, as shown also in Table 18. Corps were grouped into three bands, as described above and tested by ANOVA. The result was not significant at the 0.05 level ($F = 2.03, p = 0.14$). However, when this test was developed by regrouping the sample into only two bands, as described above, the difference was found to be significant ($F = 4.54, p = 0.04$), with a mean index of 99.17 for those corps with a mean attendance of 30 or more, contrasting with a mean index of 75 for those with a smaller mean attendance. Although this is not growth, it is very near to stability, and is a substantial improvement on the mean index for the UK as a whole (approximately 78).

Wagner's assertions about congregations include other aspects, such as a degree of autonomy for a group which is to be considered as a congregation. Such aspects were not considered in the present study, though they may reward future consideration.

Although the data does not directly support conclusions about growth in relation to meeting as congregations, it does suggest that decline has been more rapid in corps which have no meetings attended by more than 30 people.

3.4.3 Cells

Establishing the number of groups which could be classified as cells was not easy – partly because of acknowledged deficiencies in the design of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked in different places to give information about “Housegroups” and “Bible Study Groups” (Question C1), “Prayer Groups” (Question C19 *ff.*) and “Small Group Fellowships” (Question D8 *ff.*). Other groups, which might be seen as cells, also met in some corps. The replies were not consistent – as should have been expected – and this difficulty was resolved by totalling the number of groups reported under each category, with their average attendance, and then determining the integer which met most closely the claimed average attendance and number of groups. The basis for categorising was twofold – groups of the types described above seem to fit into the ‘intimate fellowship’ type of meeting described by Wagner, while other meetings of an appropriate size (up to 12 attenders) should perhaps also be so regarded – even if they don’t see themselves in this role. This is not totally satisfactory, but is the best approximation that can be obtained from the data.

From the sample (63 corps), all corps have cell groups of some kind. There is a significant correlation between the number of groups and the growth index of the corps in the sample ($r = 0.35$, $p = 0.002$), as shown in Figure 60, which is very striking, even though it also reflects to some extent the size of the corps.

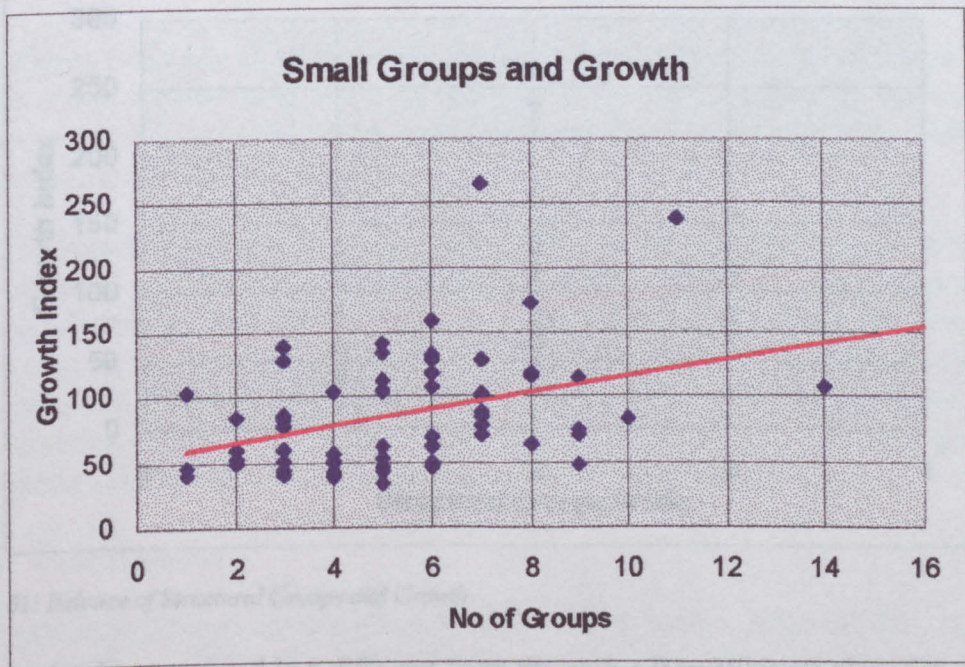


Figure 60: The number of small groups in corps, with their growth index

However, since the size of the corps has been found to have very little direct relationship with the growth index of the corps (see 3.3.1 above), the relationship between the number of cell groups and the growth index may be important. This would support Wagner’s contention that the intimate fellowship – *kinship*, as he calls it in one place (Wagner 1984, p.123) – of the cell is a ‘significant dynamic for growth in most churches’.

3.4.4 Balance of Groups

Wagner's claim is that the three elements of cell, congregation and celebration are to be found in combination as a vital sign of growing churches. Therefore, an attempt has been made to investigate the extent to which this may be true.

The formula applied is simple: the existence of one or more groups of each kind was given a score of 1 (regardless of the number of groups of each kind), and the scores totalled for each corps in the sample. This gave a possible grade of 0 to 3 per corps (it would be possible with this algorithm for corps to have no meetings small enough to be considered cells and none large enough to be congregations giving a zero grade, although in fact there were no such corps). Corps with a grade of 3 were deemed to have all three elements in place, although the precise balance was not explored; corps with grades of 2 or 1 had, respectively 2 or 1 elements of the groups under consideration.

The result is shown in Figure 61 as an X-Y scatter graph with a regression line superimposed to show the correlation which is significant ($r = 0.27, p = 0.02$).

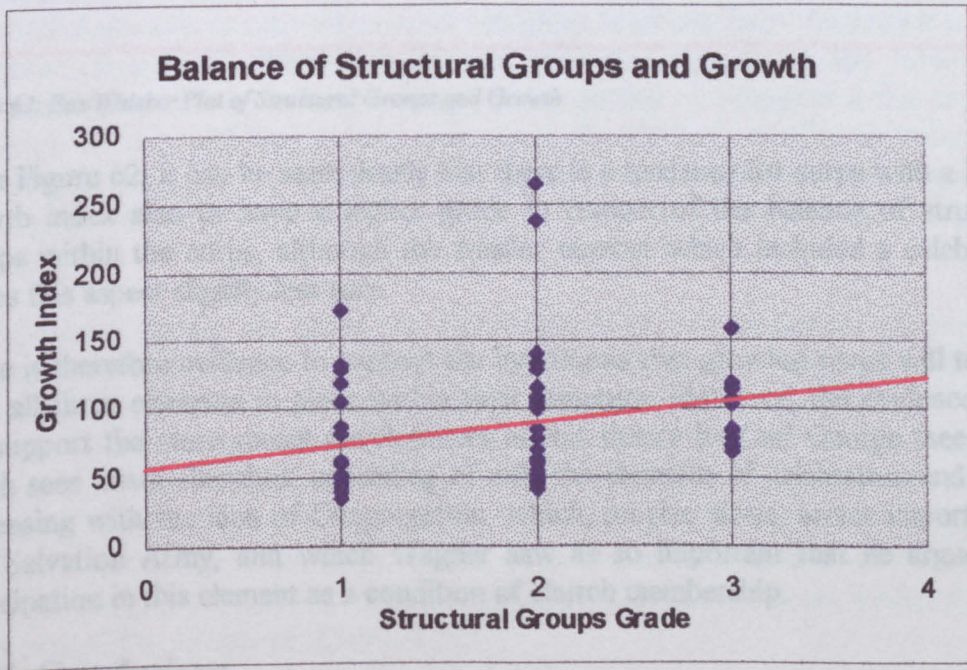


Figure 61: Balance of Structural Groups and Growth

This can be demonstrated in a different form through a Box/Whisker plot (Figure 62), which shows the distribution of growth index for each of the grades.

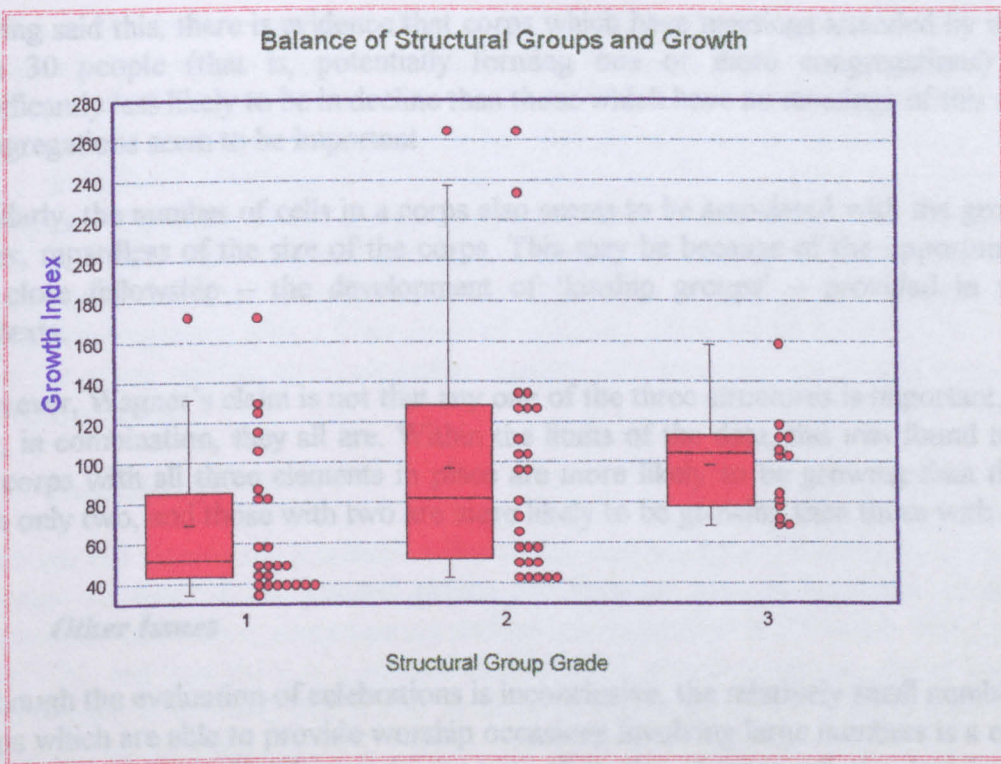


Figure 62: Box/Whisker Plot of Structural Groups and Growth

From Figure 62, it can be seen clearly that there is a tendency for corps with a higher growth index also to have a higher grade in respect of the balance of structural groups within the corps, although the smaller number which included a celebration makes this aspect slightly less sure.

There is therefore evidence to support the hypothesis that growing corps will tend to have all three elements in place within their structure. However, the evidence does not support the more recent development of this theory by Carl George (see 2.12) which sees 'meta-churches' consisting of only the elements of celebration and cell – dispensing with the idea of Congregation, which, on size alone, seems important in The Salvation Army, and which Wagner saw as so important that he argued for participation in this element as a condition of church membership.

3.4.5 Conclusions

Although this aspect of the study has been somewhat limited, since the data available was not really sufficient for a more adequate analysis, some conclusions can be formed.

a *The Vital Sign*

From the data, it is not possible to confirm that 'Celebration + Congregation + Cell = Church'. No attempt has been made to discriminate fully between types of meeting or fellowship by these categories. Moreover, although an assumption has been made that meetings attended by more than 80 people can be classified as celebrations, this is on only the flimsiest justification (that they were too big to be congregations). No research has been undertaken into the actual style or content of the meetings, to see whether they fit the descriptions offered by Wagner, Pointer and others.

Having said this, there is evidence that corps which have meetings attended by more than 30 people (that is, potentially forming one or more congregations) are significantly less likely to be in decline than those which have no meetings of this size. Congregations seem to be important.

Similarly, the number of cells in a corps also seems to be associated with the growth index, regardless of the size of the corps. This may be because of the opportunities for close fellowship – the development of ‘kinship groups’ – provided in such contexts.

However, Wagner’s claim is not that any one of the three structures is important, but that, in combination, they all are. Within the limits of the data, this *was* found to be so: corps with all three elements in place are more likely to be growing than those with only two, and those with two are more likely to be growing than those with only one.

b Other Issues

Although the evaluation of celebrations is inconclusive, the relatively small number of corps which are able to provide worship occasions involving large numbers is a cause for some concern. If Wagner is correct, then the absence of the ‘celebration experience’ may be a contributory factor in the decline of Salvation Army corps. A resolution of this difficulty is not easy, since the desired worship experience is, according to Wagner, closely linked with the presence of large numbers of people – and they are unlikely to attend unless and until the large-scale experience can be provided.

Consideration should be given to this issue, with the objective of providing celebrations which are not only available to Salvationists and others, but which are also sufficiently attractive for them to want to attend. Some moves in this direction have been made through the introduction of occasional Divisional Celebrations – but perhaps the style remains too conservatively ‘Salvation Army’ to provide the experience described by Wagner, Pointer *et al.* Furthermore, these events perhaps need some extra ingredient which would overcome the inertia and commitment to only the local group which seems to prevent many Salvationists from feeling that this too is part of the activity of ‘their’ church.

All the sample corps had groups of the cell size, and nearly half had one or more meetings which fell into the congregation size. There is, however, the feeling that the corps were not always operating in ways appropriate to these styles. Some of those with congregations may have seen these meetings as equivalent to celebrations, and some of the smaller corps – with groups of only cell size – may have been attempting to function as ghosts of their former selves, rather than providing the intimate spiritual fellowship which might be more likely to regenerate the life that is in them. A recognition of the realities would perhaps be helpful in these cases.

Finally, it should be mentioned that several corps in the sample had meetings of groups which were too large to be cells (using Wagner's limits) but too small to be congregations (that is, they were between 13 and 29). These were not included in the analysis, but it may fairly be asked whether they should be seen as overgrown cells, or as undersized congregations. On the answer to that question may hang the appropriate treatment of the group. It might function more productively in growth terms if divided into smaller cells (even meeting simultaneously) to which other people could be invited. Success as cells could lead in due cause to the constitution of new congregations with a fresh sense of purpose, which would be unlikely to arise while the group persists as an enfeebled remnant of a structure which was formed to meet other needs.

3.4.6 Summary

Although not completely conclusive, due to the nature of the available data, there is evidence to support the general claims by Wagner, that each of the structural elements of celebration, congregation and cell are important in Salvation Army corps in the UK, and that there is a greater likelihood of growth occurring (or at least of decline being contained) where two or three of the elements are present than when only one is to be found.

3.5 Homogeneity and Social Factors

Wagner's hypothesis in this area is that:

the fifth vital sign of a healthy, growing church is that its membership is composed of basically one kind of people.

Wagner 1984, p.127

This, the 'Homogeneous Unit Principle' (HUP) is probably the most contentious of the products of the Church Growth school, at least in the formulations of McGavran and Wagner. It was not supported by the work of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, although they admitted that their data was not entirely appropriate for this test, while many Christians (as discussed in 2.8.1 above) regard the principle as – at best – ethically questionable.

The principle has been explored, rather than tested thoroughly, in this study, but the opportunity has also been taken for some consideration of other social issues which may have effects upon the growth or decline of a Salvation Army corps.

The homogeneity of the corps in the sample was considered in several ways, including employment, housing, schooling and ethnicity.

3.5.1 Employment

Respondents were asked about the types of employment undertaken by the members of the corps (and more specifically by the local lay leaders) and by the population of the district. Naturally, this is to some extent a matter of perception rather than objective fact, since the corps members were not asked directly, and local census reports were not used for information about the population.

Respondents were asked about a number of types of employment, broadly following the categories used in government statistics. One notable and regrettable omission was a category for unemployed people, and this may have led to some significant inaccuracies in some responses. Respondents were encouraged to add their own categories – some of them adding "unemployed". The various categories were grouped into five sets, based largely on my perception of their socio-economic standing, as shown in Table 18. The set into which they were placed also served as a value in the formula to be used for analysis.

Respondents were asked to place the employment categories into rank order for both the district and the corps members, and this was then inverted, so that the employment type seen as most common received a value of 10, and so on down to 1 for the tenth most common. Any below that were given the value 0, and effectively disregarded.

The employment set value was then multiplied by the rank value to give an employment grade for each corps by district and membership¹¹¹, as shown in Figure 63.

Employment Sets	Employment Categories
1	Retired
	Home Managers
	Adult Students (18+)
	Unemployed
2	Unskilled
	Other Employment
3	Semi-skilled / Personal
	Armed Services
	Hotel & Catering
	Oil & Fishing
4	Intermediate non-manual
	Skilled / Self-employed
5	Professional
	Employers / Managers

Table 19: Employment Categories

As can be seen in Figure 63, the respondents' perception of the type of employment undertaken in the district is very similar to the employment of the corps members.

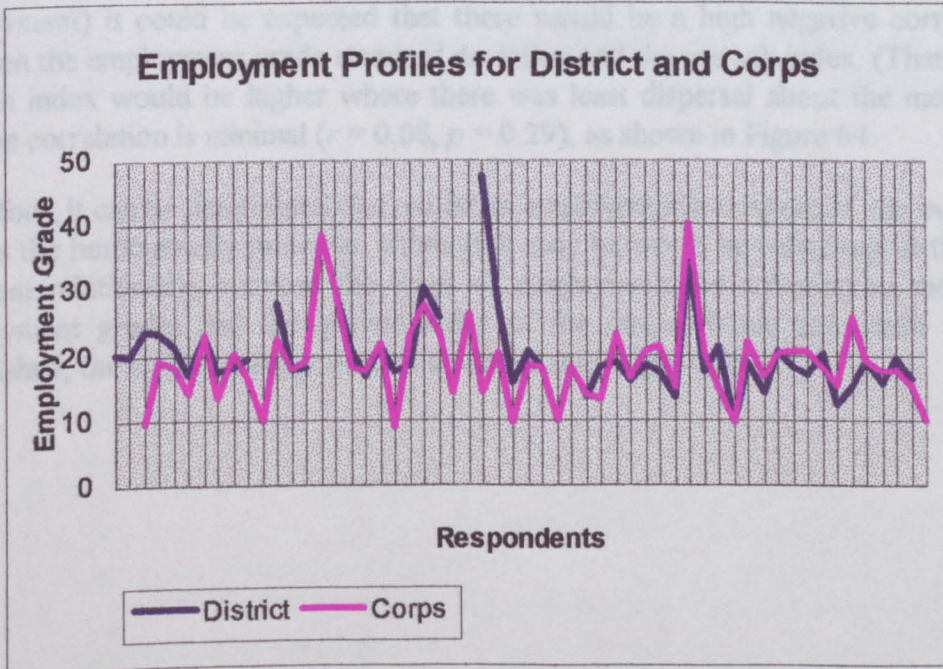


Figure 63: Employment Profiles for Community and Corps

¹¹¹ Some values are missing owing to some respondents electing to leave part of this question unanswered.

A calculation of this relationship indicates that there is a strong correlation, with a probability which suggests that the corps membership and the people of the districts are (overall) drawn from the same population so far as their employment is concerned ($r = 0.44$, $p = 0.001$). This does not mean that it is so in every case, as can be seen from the chart, but there is no indication that, overall, Salvationists have a different employment profile from their neighbours in the community.

When the employment grades are compared with the growth index it is found that there is no significant correlation between the employment profile of the district and the growth index of the corps ($r = 0.10$, $p = 0.24$). The correlation is somewhat stronger between the corps employment grade and the growth index ($r = 0.18$, $p = 0.10$), but is still not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

This suggests that the actual location of the corps (in terms of the employment profile of the district) is not important for growth, although there may be some relationship between the types of people (again, judged by their employment) and the propensity for growth. However, the relationship is relatively small, if it exists, and the evidence from this study is not sufficient to justify a strong claim of this kind. Further study may reveal more information in this area.

Wagner's point is that a growing church will be made up of one kind of people. Although he qualifies this to some extent, the claim is a clear development from McGavran's Homogeneity Principle, and should be examined. The employment data for the corps was therefore considered on the basis not only of the types of employment, but also the extent to which these types varied. The standard deviation ranges from zero to 24.75, and if Wagner's claim were true (in respect of types of employment) it could be expected that there would be a high negative correlation between the employment grade standard deviation and the growth index. (That is, the growth index would be higher where there was least dispersal about the mean.) In fact the correlation is minimal ($r = 0.08$, $p = 0.29$), as shown in Figure 64.

Therefore, it can be determined that, so far as employment is concerned, the evidence refutes the homogeneity principle, although it may be worth investigating further the apparent relationship between the types of employment (contributing to the mean employment grade) and the growth index of the corps. While this could not be established, the evidence suggests that a relationship might exist.

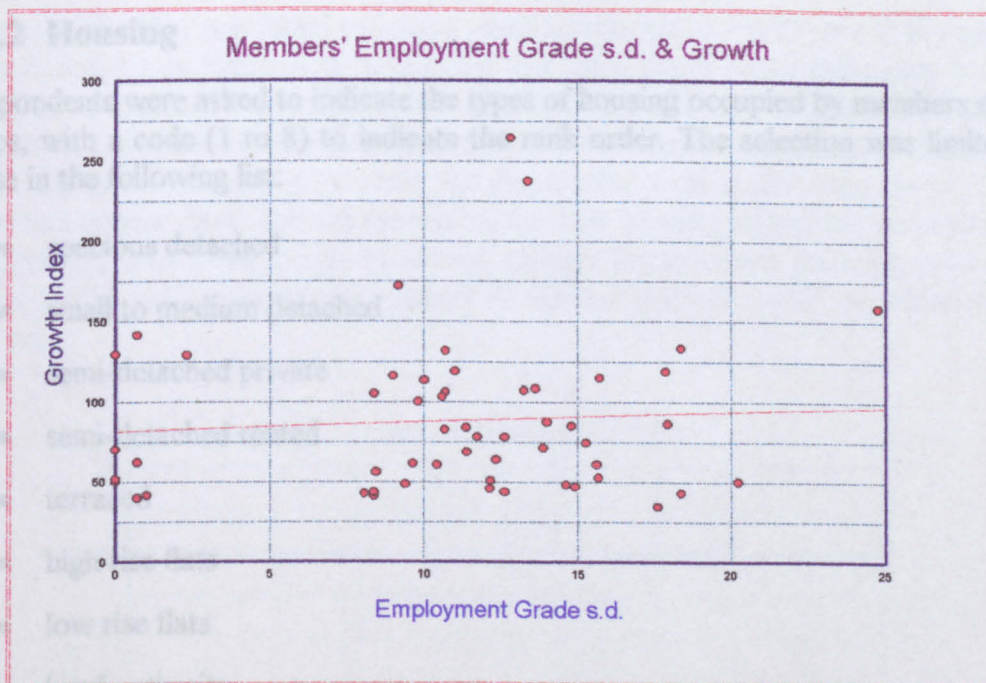


Figure 64: Corps Members' Employment Grades (standard deviation) and Growth

Surprisingly, the standard deviation for the perceived employment grades of the communities in which the corps operate has a significant correlation with growth ($r = 0.26, p = 0.03$). This indicates that growing corps tend to be in communities which have a wide spread of employment, as shown in Figure 65. Although this issue has not been pursued in depth, it may be that this finding is related to the economic condition of an area. A high standard deviation might indicate a thriving community with a wide variety of industry, commerce and services. Such a community may be one which will best support growth in its churches, including the Salvation Army corps.

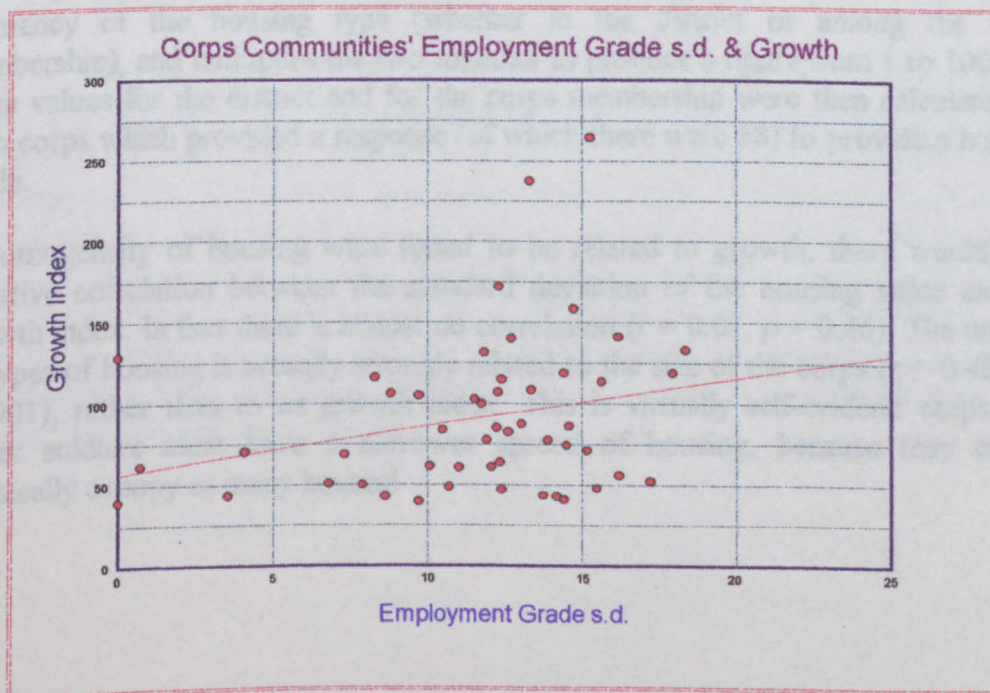


Figure 65: Corps Communities' Employment Grades (standard deviation) and Growth Index

3.5.2 Housing

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of housing occupied by members of the corps, with a code (1 to 8) to indicate the rank order. The selection was limited to those in the following list:

- spacious detached
- small to medium detached
- semi-detached private
- semi-detached rented
- terraced
- high rise flats
- low rise flats
- local authority
- home – sheltered *etc.*
- other

Clearly, by itself this categorisation would be insufficient to indicate the affluence of the membership, but it can show the homogeneity on this dimension.

The codes for types of housing were somewhat arbitrary, but broadly represent the level of affluence, and similar codes were applied to the respondents' perception of housing in the district served by the corps. The formula assigns a score of 1 to 10 to each type of housing (with 10 for the "spacious detached" taken to be occupied generally by the most affluent householders), a score of 1 to 10 for the perceived frequency of the housing type (whether in the district or among the corps membership), and multiplies the two together to produce a figure from 1 to 100. The mean values for the district and for the corps membership were then calculated for each corps which provided a response (of which there were 58) to provide a housing grade.

If homogeneity of housing were found to be related to growth, there would be a negative correlation between the standard deviation of the housing value and the growth index. In fact there is almost no correlation ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.46$). The number of types of housing is actually strongly related to the size of the corps ($r = 0.48$, $p = 0.0001$), rather than to its growth index. This is virtually self-evident: corps with fewer soldiers must have a narrower spread of housing, because they cannot physically occupy as many houses!

The housing value was found to have a small correlation ($r = 0.17, p = 0.10$) with the growth index (see Figure 66), suggesting that there might be a relationship between the type of housing occupied by the corps and the tendency to growth or decline. However, the relationship is weak, and falls short of statistical significance at the 0.05 level. There may therefore be some justification for a claim that corps in which the members appear more affluent (according to their housing styles) are more likely to be growing than other corps. However, though the evidence does not refute this claim, neither is it sufficient to support it. Further research could be undertaken in this area.

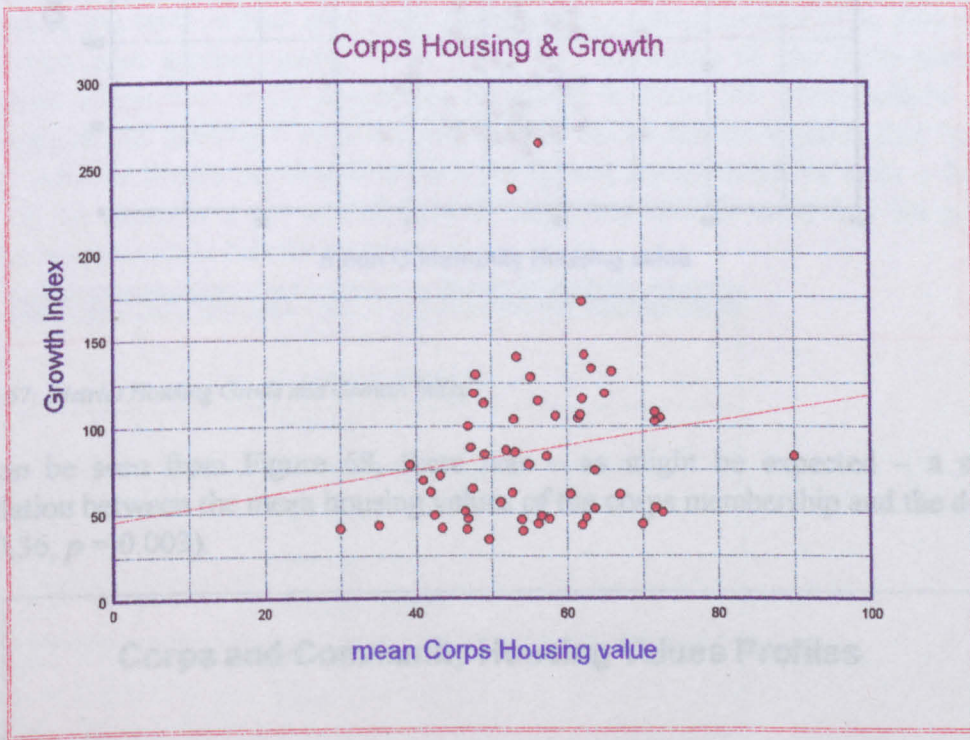


Figure 66: Corps Housing Grade and Growth Index

This potential relationship might be a phenomenon of the district rather than the corps, and so a similar exercise was undertaken for the perceived types of housing in the district (or community). The result in this case was much clearer, with very little correlation ($r = 0.09, p = 0.24$), and certainly not enough to justify any claim about a relationship between the affluence of the district and the likelihood that the corps would be growing (see Figure 67). Similarly, the correlation between the district housing value standard deviation and the growth index was extremely low ($r = -0.06, p = 0.33$), which suggests that the corps are probably representative of their communities on the dimension of housing, and that there is no connection between this and the propensity for growth.

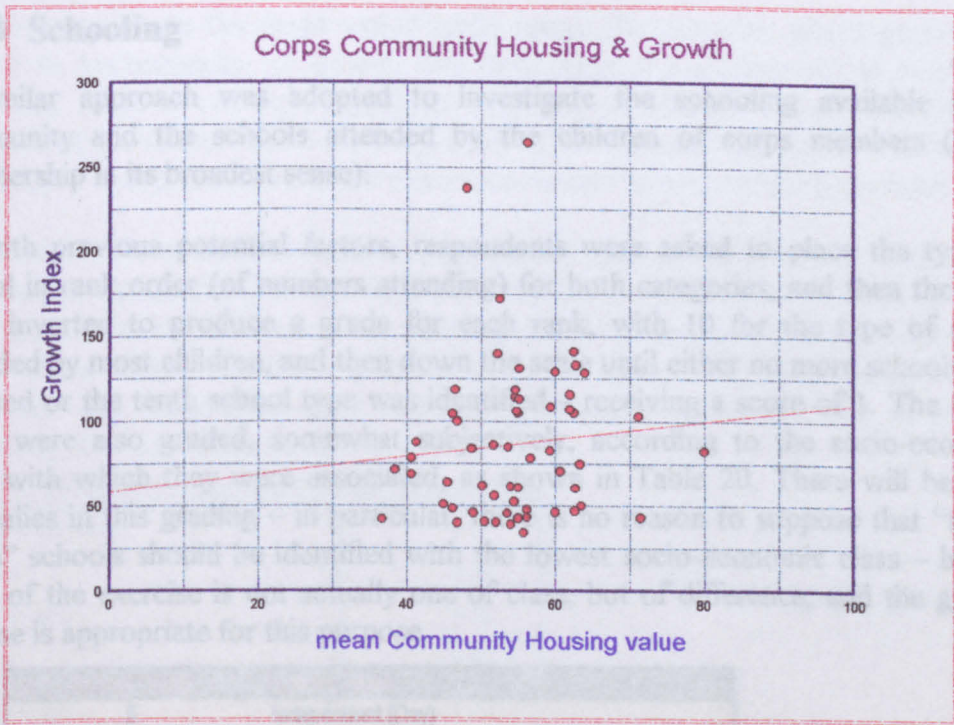


Figure 67: District Housing Grade and Growth Index

As can be seen from Figure 68, there was – as might be expected – a strong correlation between the mean housing values of the corps membership and the district ($r = 0.36, p = 0.003$).

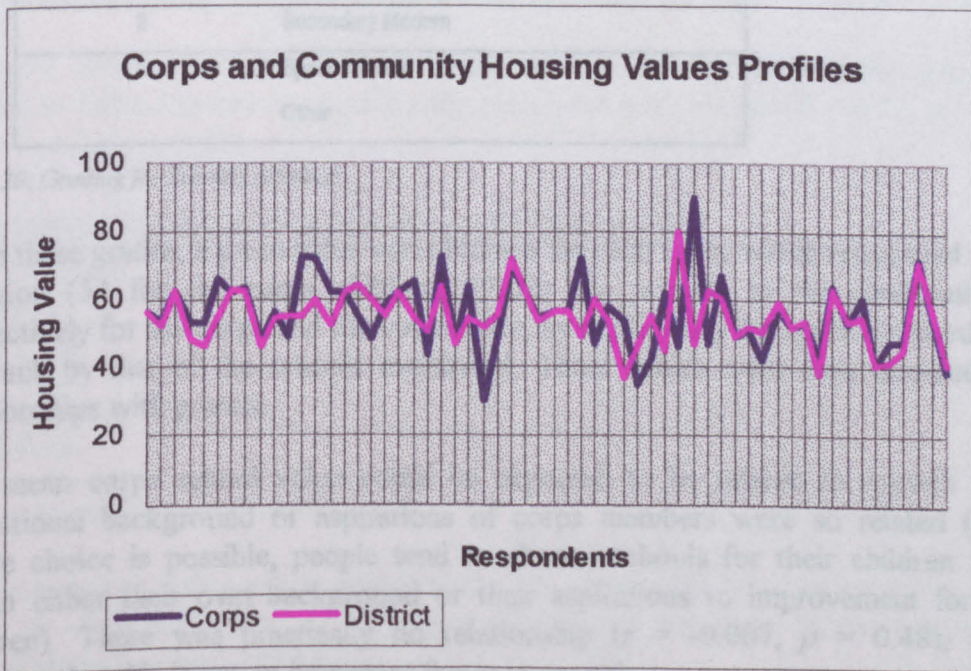


Figure 68: Corps and Community Housing Values Profiles

This too indicates that corps are largely representative of their wider community, in terms of the housing occupied. However, it makes still more striking the difference between the results shown above, since although the corps are representative of the community, the type of corps housing may be related to growth, while that of the community is clearly not. This may well offer further scope for research.

3.5.3 Schooling

A similar approach was adopted to investigate the schooling available in the community and the schools attended by the children of corps members (taking membership in its broadest sense).

As with previous potential factors, respondents were asked to place the types of school in rank order (of numbers attending) for both categories, and then the ranks were inverted to produce a grade for each rank, with 10 for the type of school attended by most children, and then down the scale until either no more schools were selected or the tenth school type was identified – receiving a score of 1. The school types were also graded, somewhat subjectively, according to the socio-economic class with which they were associated, as shown in Table 20. There will be some anomalies in this grading – in particular, there is no reason to suppose that “special needs” schools should be identified with the lowest socio-economic class – but the point of the exercise is not actually one of class, but of difference, and the grading scheme is appropriate for this purpose.

School Grade	School Types
5	Independent (Day)
	Independent (Boarding)
4	Grammar
	City Technology College
3	High School
	Comprehensive
2	Secondary Modern
1	Special Needs
	Other

Table 20: Grading for Schools Attended

From these grades, a mean value was obtained for each corps which responded to the question (53 for the corps children, 57 for the schools in the community¹¹²), respectively for the corps and the community, by multiplying the grade obtained from the rank by that of the schools mentioned. These values were then examined for relationships with growth.

The mean corps school value could be expected to be related to growth if the educational background or aspirations of corps members were so related (since, where choice is possible, people tend to choose schools for their children which reflect either their own background or their aspirations to improvement for their children). There was practically no relationship ($r = -0.007$, $p = 0.48$), which indicates that this is not an important factor in growth.

The dispersal about the mean would again reveal the extent to which growth was related to homogeneity. If growth and homogeneity were related, in respect of schooling, there would be a significant negative correlation between the standard deviation of the school value and the growth index. No such correlation was found ($r = -0.02, p = 0.45$), and there is therefore no evidence to support the hypothesis.

A related issue concerned the age at which formal education was ended. Respondents were asked to identify (in very broad terms) the proportion of children of corps members continuing their schooling until 18, and the proportion of children attending higher education (universities or polytechnics). The hypothesis was that a relationship exists between the growth index and the aspirations expressed by the duration of schooling. The responses are shown in Table 21.

Proportion at school till age 18	No	ratio
None in the corps	15	0.24
< 20%	30	0.48
20% to 49%	6	0.10
> 50%	11	0.18
Total Sample	62	1.00

Table 21: Corps children staying at school till 18

In fact, no such relationship was found. The use of ANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences between the four groups ($F = 0.35, p = 0.79$), and this was confirmed by a test for correlation with the growth index, using approximate representations of the mid-points of the proportion categories ($r = 0.01, p = 0.48$).

Similarly, the proportions of corps members' children attending higher education (shown in Table 22) was not significantly associated with growth ($F = 0.75, p = 0.53$, and $r = 0.02, p = 0.43$).

Proportion in Higher Education	No	ratio
None in the corps	18	0.30
< 20%	30	0.49
20% to 49%	8	0.13
> 50%	5	0.08
Total Sample	61	1.00

Table 22: Corps children in higher education

This suggests that there is no evidence for any association between growth and the social or other aspirations of the corps members as expressed by the educational route followed by their children.

It also, however, highlights the disturbing fact that over a five year period (1987-1991) 24% of the corps had no young people in the 17-18 age group, and 30% had none who would be eligible for higher education. (The Salvation Army Census of 1995 revealed that 19% of all centres in the UK had no under 14s attending worship, either in Sunday School or senior meetings (Escott and Pickard 1996, p.27).) This affects the age-profile of Salvation Army corps – and consequently of the whole denomination – and also affects the future prospects for leaders. If such high proportions of corps have so very few young people, there will be difficulty in generating a succession of leadership for the future of the corps and the Army as a whole.

3.5.4 Ethnic Groups

It was considered that Salvation Army corps might be more inclined towards growth where the community itself was largely ethnically homogeneous, and one measure of this was the extent to which the ethnic mix was perceived to include members of ethnic minority groups. Respondents were therefore asked to say whether more than 5% of the community was composed of ethnic minorities.

Out of 63 responses, only 18 said that more than 5% of their community was made up of post Second World War immigrants or their families. However, there was a significant difference between the two groups, as illustrated in Figure 69: those with an ethnically homogeneous population had a mean growth index of 96.99, compared with 60.83 for those in an ethnically mixed population.

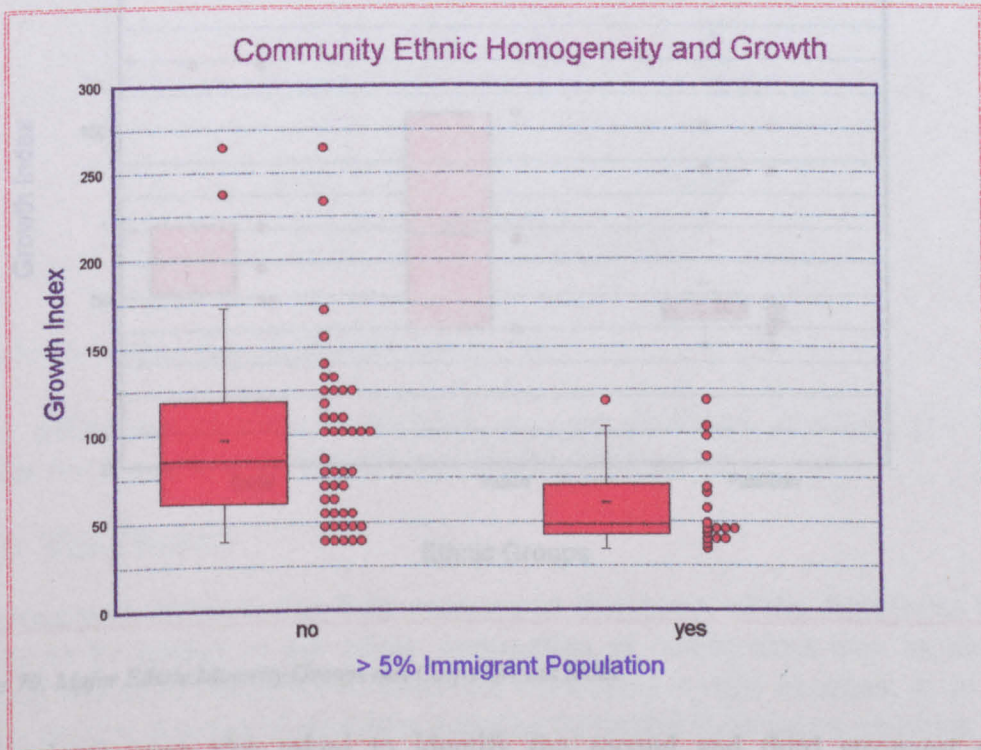


Figure 69: Ethnic Homogeneity of the Community and Corps Growth Index

This difference cannot be taken alone – since it may reflect other community factors, such as comparisons of inner-city corps with those in small towns – however, the strength of the relationship, as tested by ANOVA ($F = 8.98, p = 0.004$), seems to indicate a real phenomenon. It may be that Salvation Army corps tend to do badly in ethnically mixed populations.

The association of decline with ethnic groups can be more specifically established. Respondents were asked to identify the three largest ethnic minority groups in their community. Of the 18 corps which are in populations with a significant (>5%) minority community, 10 have large Pakistani or Bangladeshi populations, while 5 have large Caribbean communities and 3 have large Indian communities. There was practically no difference between the latter two groups, with a mean growth index of 70 and 70.97 respectively. The first group was very different: the mean index was 53.21. This may indicate the particular resistance of the Muslim community, or the inappropriateness of the Salvation Army approach for evangelising such a community (or, of course, a combination of both). However, the difference was not statistically significant ($F = 1.02, p = 0.39$), which reflects the wide variance in three relatively small samples. The “Indian” group in particular, consisting of only 3 corps, includes widely disparate indices of 104.31, 40.00 and 68.57, which may obscure the differences between the other two groups, as shown in Figure 70.

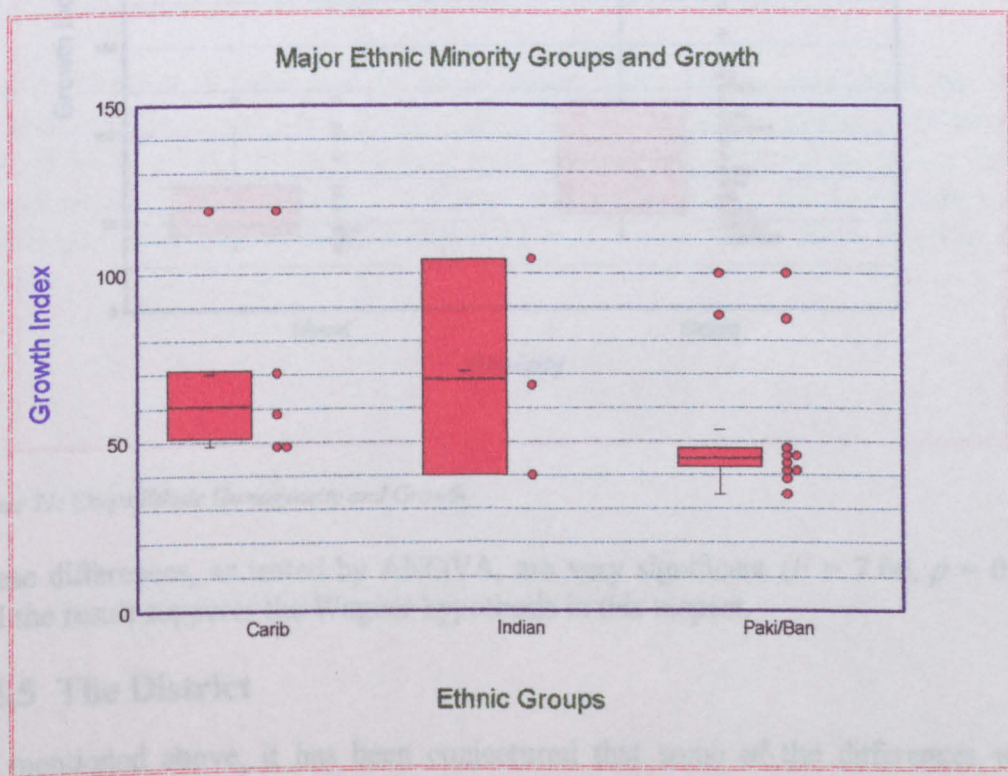


Figure 70: Major Ethnic Minority Groups and Corps Growth Index

Respondents were also asked to identify the second and third strongest ethnic minority groups in their populations, but these have no clear associations with the growth of the corps.

Only 15 corps had members of minority communities represented in their membership, and 13 of these had 10% or less of their membership from these communities. One corps had 11-20% and one had 21-40% ethnic minority membership.

Those corps with a significant ethnic minority membership had a very low mean index (56.64) and a small standard deviation (20.89), suggesting that such corps were declining more rapidly than those with a more ethnically homogeneous membership. This issue was developed further by reconsidering it in the light of the whole sample ($n = 63$), comparing those with any part of their membership consisting of minorities and those with none. The distribution of growth indices between the two groups is different, as shown in Figure 71.

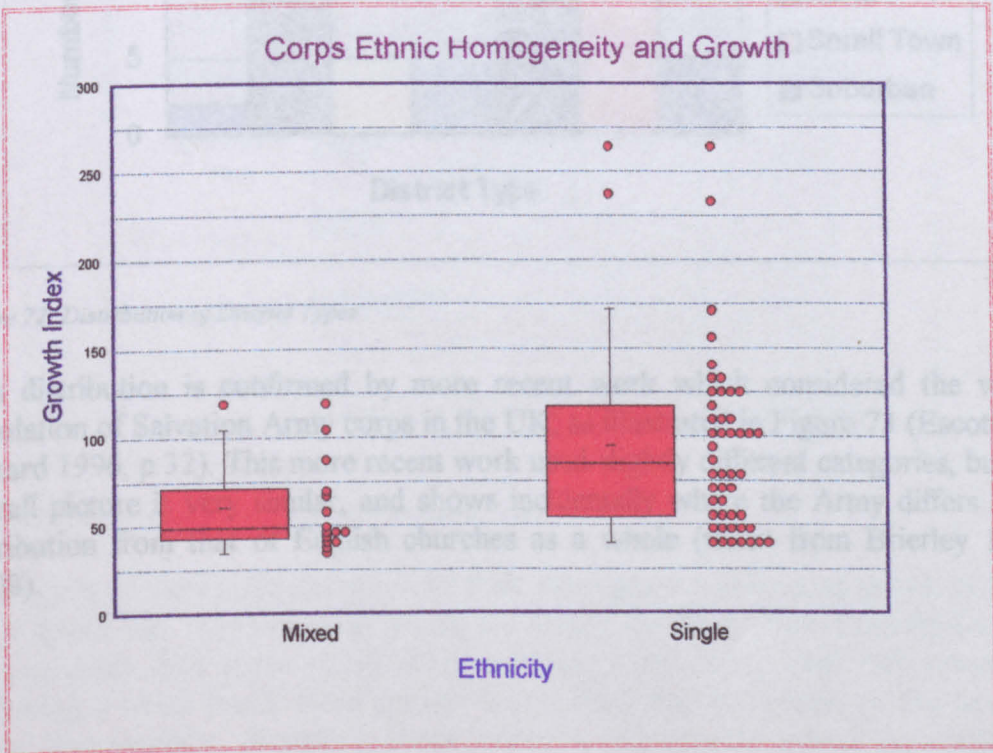


Figure 71: Corps Ethnic Homogeneity and Growth

These differences, as tested by ANOVA, are very significant ($F = 7.06, p = 0.01$), and the result supports the Wagner hypothesis in this respect.

3.5.5 The District

As mentioned above, it has been conjectured that some of the differences which appear to be related to the ethnic composition of communities may be also (or instead) related to the extent to which the community is rural or urban, or to other similar factors. A series of questions therefore addressed these issues, resulting in the data shown in Appendix Table 7 (Appendix C).

Out of a sample of 63, the distribution by perceived types of community was as shown in Figure 72, and since the sample is known to be a good representation of the population in terms of both corps size and growth index, it is reasonable to believe that it is also representative of the communities and districts in which the corps are placed.

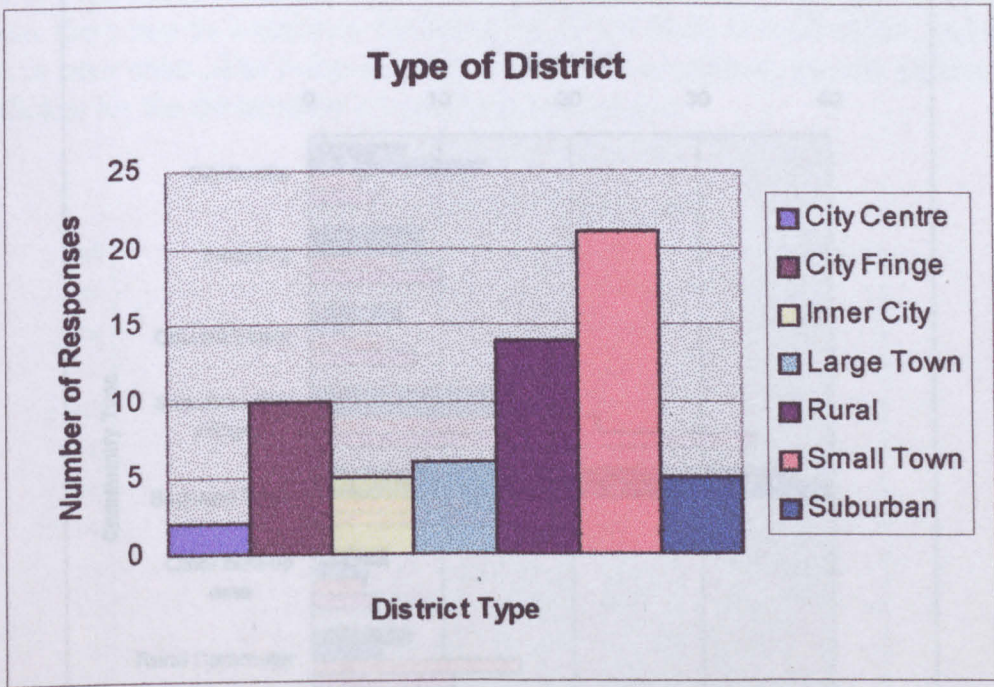


Figure 72: Distribution of District Types

This distribution is confirmed by more recent work which considered the whole population of Salvation Army corps in the UK, as illustrated in Figure 73 (Escott and Pickard 1996, p.32). This more recent work used slightly different categories, but the overall picture is very similar, and shows incidentally where the Army differs in its distribution from that of English churches as a whole (taken from Brierley 1991, p.108).

When the types of district are compared by their mean growth rates, as shown in Table 23, it seems that corps in small towns are clearly producing better results (on this measurement) than those in all other settings. Conversely, inner city corps are producing a much lower mean growth rate. This may be related to the issue of ethnic heterogeneity, discussed above, since a significantly ethnic population is generally found in inner city areas.

District Type	Mean Growth Rate	Standard Deviation
City Centre	1.2	0.3
City Fringe	1.5	0.4
Inner City	0.8	0.2
Large Town	1.1	0.3
Small Town	2.1	0.5
Rural	1.4	0.4

Table 23: District Types and Growth Rates

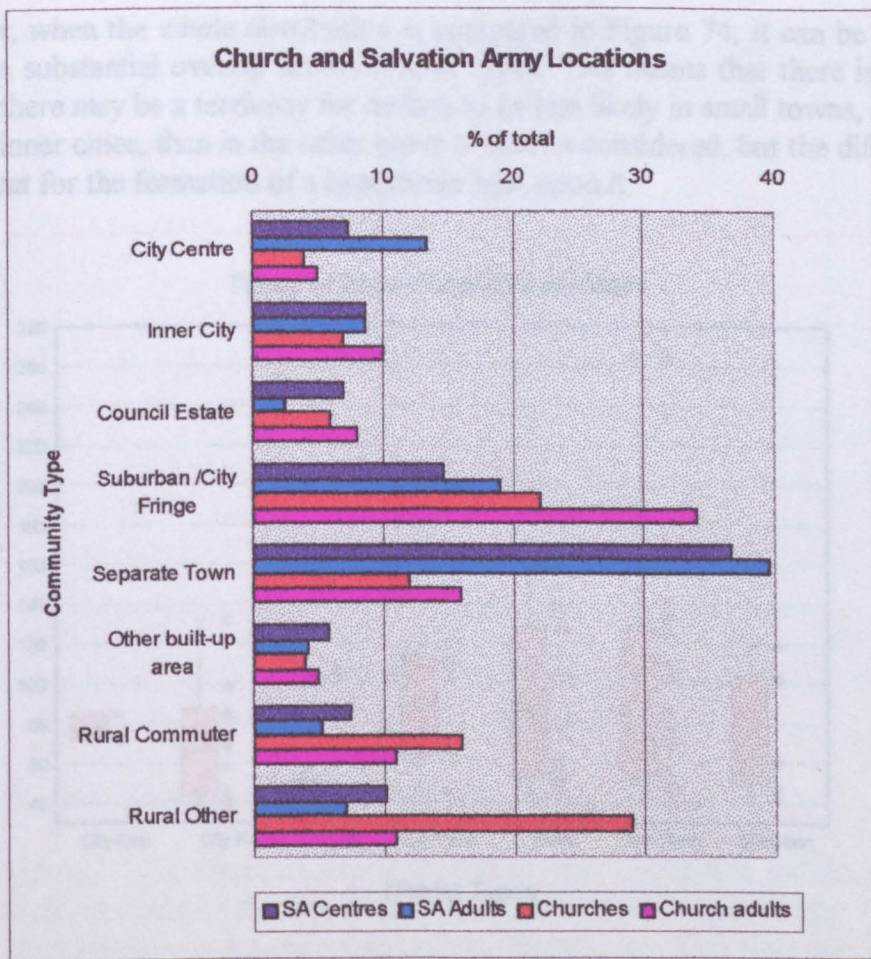


Figure 73: Salvation Army distribution by Community Type

If the types of district are compared by their mean growth indices, as shown in Table 23, it seems that corps in small towns are clearly producing better results (on this measurement) than those in all other settings. Conversely, inner city corps are producing a much lower mean growth index. This may be related to the issue of ethnic homogeneity, discussed above, since a significantly mixed population is generally found in inner city areas.

District Type	Number	Mean Growth Index
City Centre	2	78.23
Inner City	5	57.25
City Fringe	10	68.96
Suburban	5	75.68
Large Town (>=50,000)	6	86.50
Small Town (< 50,000)	21	103.81
Rural	14	89.05

Table 23: District Types and Growth Index

However, when the whole distribution is compared in Figure 74, it can be seen that there is a substantial overlap across district types. This means that there is no clear pattern: there may be a tendency for decline to be less likely in small towns, and more likely in inner cities, than in the other types of district considered, but the difference is insufficient for the formation of a hypothesis built upon it.

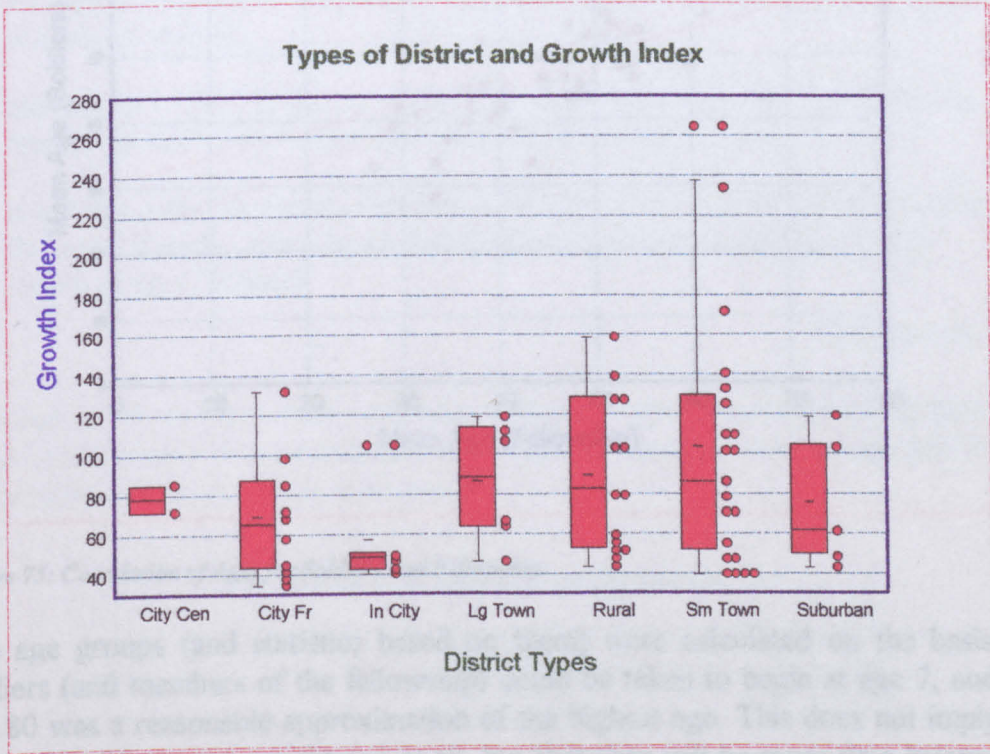


Figure 74: Distribution of Corps District Types and Growth Index

This conclusion is supported by an ANOVA test, which indicates that although there are apparent differences – which may be worth exploring in other ways with a larger sample – these are not significant ($F = 1.16, p = 0.34$).

The other district factors, as shown in Appendix Table 7, were not found to have any significant associations with growth, although there was a small negative correlation between the estimated size of the population of the district and the growth index ($r = -0.11, p = 0.23$). This, however, was not a strong enough correlation to support any conclusions.

3.5.6 Age Factors in Membership

The age ranges of corps were considered in respect of both the soldiers (junior and senior) and the combined fellowship, where the respondent was able to produce a figure for this wider group. The correlation between the two was very high ($r = 0.47, p = 0.0002$), as shown in Figure 75, suggesting that similar results would be found by using either data set for testing against other data.

It can be concluded with a great deal of confidence that the mean ages for the two groups are so similar that they can be taken as drawn from the same population.

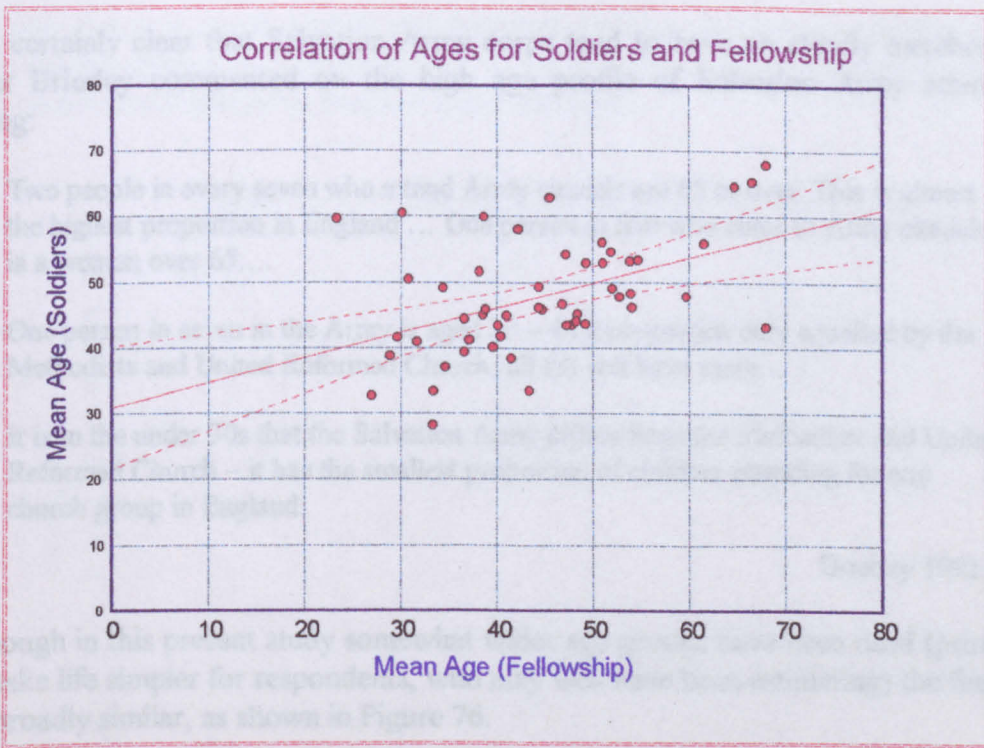


Figure 75: Correlation of Ages for Soldiers and Fellowship

The age groups (and statistics based on them) were calculated on the basis that soldiers (and members of the fellowship) could be taken to begin at age 7, and that age 80 was a reasonable approximation of the highest age. This does not imply that those over 80 are not considered at all, but that they will be more than balanced by those aged over 56 but under 80. Having made these judgements, respondents were asked to identify the number of soldiers and fellowship members within the age groups: ≤ 15 ; 16-35; 36-55; ≥ 56 . There were 58 responses about soldiers, and 52 about the whole corps fellowship (which is much more difficult to measure), with mean ages of 48.34 and 44.57 and standard deviations of 8.78 and 10.75 respectively. These results differ a little from those in the Census of 1995, which revealed (by asking everyone attending worship to identify their own age group) that the mean age for all attenders was 44.46, while that for adults only was 54.27 and for senior soldiers it was 53.82 (Escott and Pickard 1996, p.18). The sample may therefore have erred a little towards a younger age, or the respondents may have made miscalculations about their membership, or possibly during the intervening period (3 years) the average age of senior soldiers has actually increased by 5 years.

It is certainly clear that Salvation Army corps tend to have an elderly membership. Peter Brierley commented on the high age profile of Salvation Army attenders, saying:

Two people in every seven who attend Army citadels are 65 or over. This is almost the highest proportion in England ... One person in five who come to Army citadels is a woman over 65....

One person in seven in the Army is aged 30 – 44 a proportion only equalled by the Methodists and United Reformed Church; all the rest have more...

It is in the under 30s that the Salvation Army differs from the Methodists and United Reformed Church – it has the smallest proportion of children attending for any church group in England.

Brierley 1992, p.78

Although in this present study somewhat wider age groups have been used (primarily to make life simpler for respondents, who may well have been estimating) the findings are broadly similar, as shown in Figure 76.

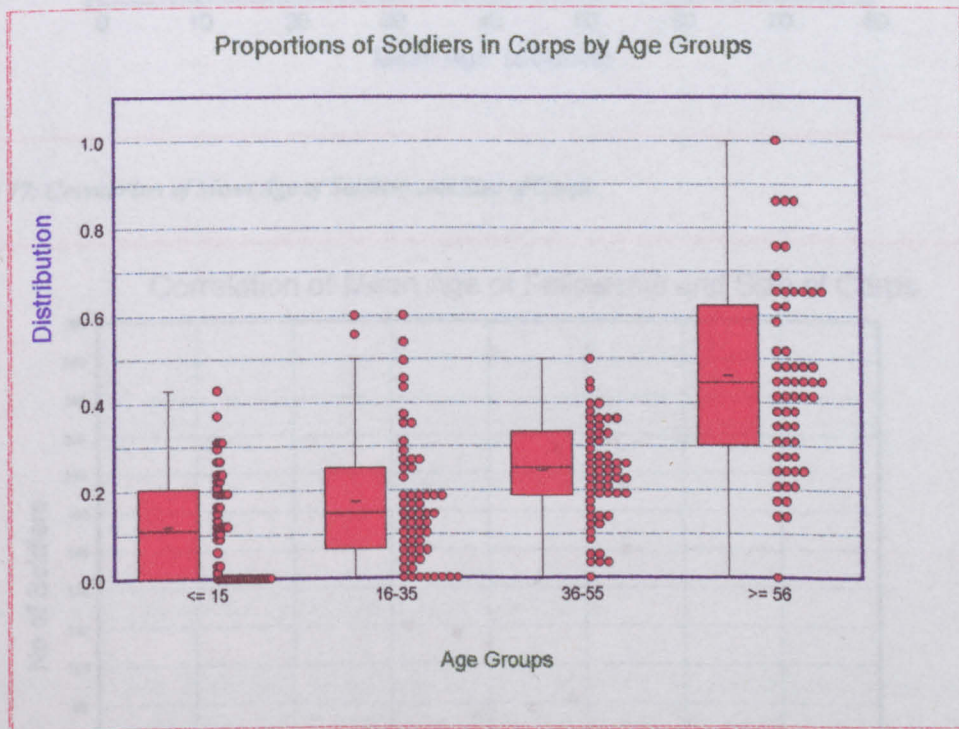


Figure 76: Proportions of Soldiers in Corps by Age Groups.

Out of a sample of 58 corps, it is striking how many had no soldiers aged 35 or under, and in how many more than half their membership was aged 56 or over.

It is not possible to calculate a measure of dispersion for each corps sampled, since the ages of individuals were not collected. However, the mean age can be considered in several ways. There is a small negative correlation ($r = -0.11$, $p = 0.20$) between the mean age of soldiers and the size of the corps (as measured by the number of soldiers) as shown in Figure 77, suggesting that larger corps tend to have a slightly younger membership.

The correlation is much weaker and becomes positive, as illustrated in Figure 78, when the full fellowship is considered ($r = 0.03, p = 0.43$), which indicates that there is no discernible relationship between these measures.



Figure 77: Correlation of Mean Age of Soldiers and Size of Corps



Figure 78: Correlation of Mean Age of Fellowship and Size of Corps

Since the dispersion could not be calculated, it cannot be established that age homogeneity and growth are associated. The impression, however, is that the reverse is the case. Where a corps has a largely homogeneous age profile, it has also an elderly membership: this is associated with decline rather than growth, as shown in Figure 80 and Figure 80.

The picture is different when the mean age is tested against the growth index. The mean age of senior soldiers in the sample corps has a strongly negative correlation with the growth index ($r = -0.36$, $p = 0.003$), as shown in Figure 79, which means that growing corps tend to have a mean age lower than that for the overall sample. Clearly this could not be taken to an extreme: corps are unlikely to be composed predominantly of infants, although a balance in which children predominated would reduce the mean age. Nevertheless, it seems to be true that growing corps include a higher proportion of younger people.

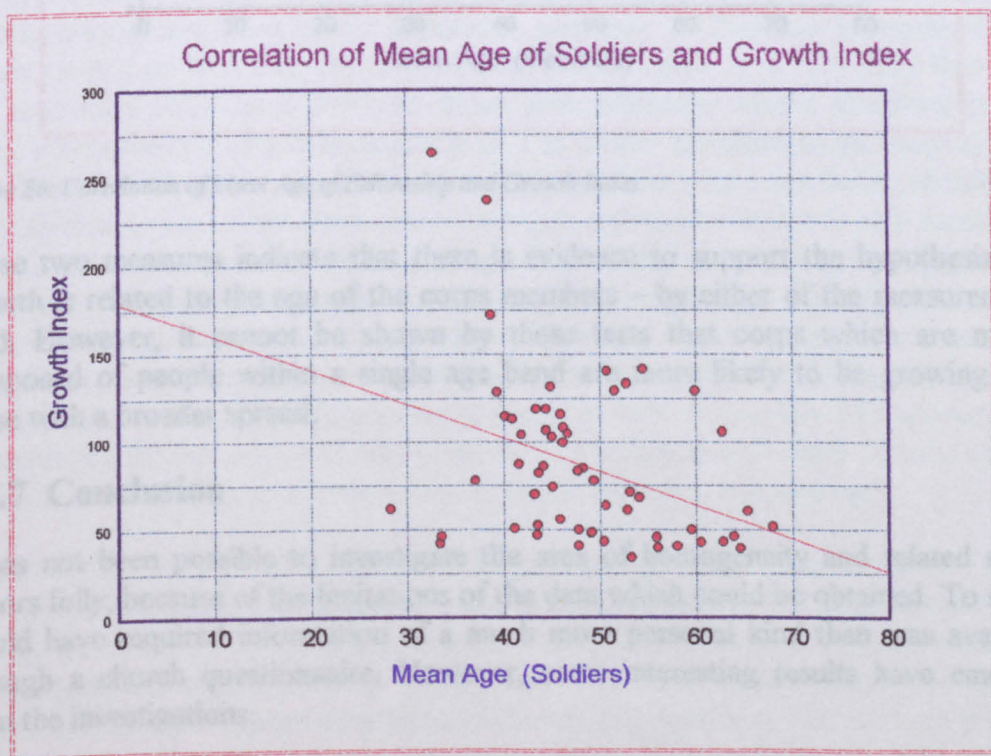


Figure 79: Correlation of Mean Age of Soldiers and Growth Index

A similar picture emerges when the total fellowship is considered. The negative correlation between the mean age of the fellowship and the growth index ($r = -0.32$, $p = 0.01$), though not as strong as that with the mean age of the soldiers, is still very significant, as shown in Figure 80. This compares with Geoffrey Walker's findings in the Anglican parish of Chester le Street, where church plants were found (in retrospect) to grow where the dominant group was aged 25-40, but to decline when the dominant group was aged 55-65 (and also female) (Walker 1993, pp. 46-47).

It remains unclear to what extent age homogeneity may be associated with growth, but there is evidence that an older age profile is more strongly associated with decline than growth.

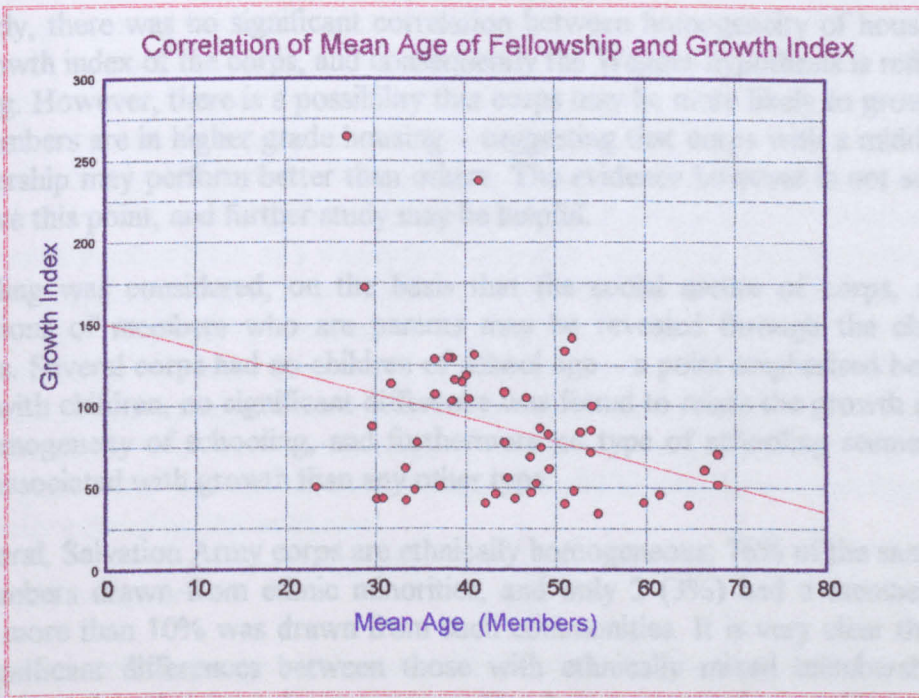


Figure 80: Correlation of Mean Age of Fellowship and Growth Index

These two measures indicate that there is evidence to support the hypothesis that growth is related to the age of the corps members – by either of the measurements used. However, it cannot be shown by these tests that corps which are mainly composed of people within a single age band are more likely to be growing than those with a broader spread.

3.5.7 Conclusion

It has not been possible to investigate the area of homogeneity and related social factors fully, because of the limitations of the data which could be obtained. To do so would have required information of a much more personal kind than was available through a church questionnaire. However, some interesting results have emerged from the investigations.

a The Vital Sign

Wagner's 'Vital Sign' is a homogeneous group – 'basically one kind of people' – forming the church. Others, such as Newbigin, have considered this claim theologically, and cast doubt on it from that perspective. Here, it has been considered in social terms through a number of tests.

There was no significant difference between the growth indices of corps which had either a single type of employment (homogeneous) and those with a wider spread. Therefore the Wagner hypothesis is refuted for employment.

Similarly, there was no significant correlation between homogeneity of housing and the growth index of the corps, and consequently the Wagner hypothesis is refuted for housing. However, there is a possibility that corps may be more likely to grow where the members are in higher grade housing – suggesting that corps with a middle-class membership may perform better than others. The evidence however is not sufficient to prove this point, and further study may be helpful.

Schooling was considered, on the basis that the social nature of corps, and the aspirations of members who are parents may be revealed through the choice of schools. Several corps had no children of school age – a point emphasised below. Of those with children, no significant difference was found to relate the growth index to the homogeneity of schooling, and furthermore no type of schooling seemed to be more associated with growth than any other type.

In general, Salvation Army corps are ethnically homogeneous: 76% of the sample had no members drawn from ethnic minorities, and only 2 (3%) had a membership in which more than 10% was drawn from such communities. It is very clear that there are significant differences between those with ethnically mixed membership, and those where the ethnicity is homogeneous. The former are much more likely to be in severe decline. However, the ethnic homogeneity of the wider community should also be considered, since there is an even stronger association between this factor and growth than between the ethnic homogeneity of the membership and growth. It seems that Salvation Army corps are not – generally speaking – proving successful in areas with a significant minority population. This may be for reasons associated with the Army (the military appearance and music, for example), or with the culture of the community (Muslims especially being perhaps unlikely to become Salvationists in a conventional British corps). It may however be associated with other factors, such as the type of district, socio-economically, in which the corps is operating.

In considering the type of district in which a corps operates, it was found that “inner city” corps have been least successful, and such corps may be the ones most affected also by the factors producing the tentative findings about socio-economic class, and by a significant ethnic minority population. The three factors may well operate together, forming a higher-order factor, although this possibility has not been pursued further here. The only ‘geographical’ group which is associated with growth is the group of “small towns”, though the evidence is too diverse for any strong claim on this issue. Apart from the link between “inner city” districts and decline, all others seem not too far removed from the norm for the whole UK territory.

The age groups of soldiers (senior and junior) and of the wider fellowship were considered, and it was found that the former was a fair representation of the latter. A worrying number of corps had no members below the age of 35, and many had more than half their members aged over 55. This broadly agrees with the findings of Peter Brierley, and suggests that the Army has an ageing membership, which is not being replaced as losses occur. Age homogeneity has not been analysed, since the data does not permit the calculation of a measure of dispersal. However, the impression is that where homogeneity exists, it is because the membership is all (or almost all) aged over 55. The mean age of members is negatively associated with growth: the older the membership, the more decline is likely. If the Wagner hypothesis were true, the corps with an age homogeneous membership would attract others of that age group. Since this seems to be not so, and corps of this kind are not associated with growth, it is suggested that the homogeneity principle should be doubted – even though it is not strictly refuted by this evidence.

b Other Issues

There is a possible, though weak, association between socio-economic class and the growth index, which needs further investigation. It is possible, if this association is substantiated, that the Army has drawn itself away from its traditional constituency (perhaps through the ‘redemption and lift’ phenomenon – see 2.2.1 above), and that some innovative approaches are required to meet working class people in ways which are appropriate to their cultures.

Salvation Army corps seem to be disproportionately composed of older people, while those with a younger (and more varied) composition are more likely to grow. It follows, then, that a strategy for growth would involve targeting younger people (say, 40 and under) and learning ways of communicating within the cultures of such people. The lack of school age children (and young adults in education) is a serious concern. This tends to make Army meetings seem like events for old people – and this is a self-reinforcing cycle, since new young people are unlikely to join and remain in a corps, without the company of others of their age. Meanwhile, those now in older age groups get older still, past fertile age, and so the biological growth potential is also blocked.

A way needs to be found to make younger people happy with the kind of worship and lifestyle which is available through The Salvation Army. Perhaps the answer is to change the style of the Army to become more acceptable to younger people.

The ethnic question is in some ways odd. The Salvation Army operates successfully in many countries from which ethnic minority communities have originated (the West Indies, India, most of sub-Saharan Africa, Hong Kong *etc.*). Yet people from those ethnic origins rarely become (or remain) Salvationists when they live in the UK. It may be that the Army in the UK is not addressing their culture; but if it were to encourage the changes which would do so, the result may not be acceptable (or even recognisable) to the more conservative existing members. Perhaps the presence of ethnic minority communities is associated with decline because the Army in the UK is not sufficiently diverse to present a valid communication across the cultural divides which exist.

3.5.8 Summary

As Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found, it is very difficult to test for homogeneity in the membership of a church without close personal knowledge, as the 'blest ... tie that binds' might be one which is not apparent to an outsider. The results from this section nevertheless are interesting, and provoke some serious further questions.

There is no support for the homogeneity principle on the issues of:

- Employment,
- Housing or
- Schooling.

Conversely, there was some support for the principle on the issue of:

- Ethnicity.

This, however, was not strong, since a number of interfering factors were also identified, including the localities of corps which may have been affected by ethnic minorities either in membership or in the surrounding community.

Other social factors were also considered, and two potentially important issues emerged.

- Corps seem to be more likely to grow in small town communities, with least likelihood in inner cities.
- There seems to be an inverse relationship between the mean age of the corps members and the probability of growth.

Two issues of Salvation Army policy and practice emerged as needing practical attention.

- The lack of success with ethnic minorities, even those in whose country of origin the Army is successful, needs study since this is a significant part of the population from whom the Army is largely estranged.
- The ageing, even elderly, membership of many corps is itself unattractive to younger people, even if all other issues were resolved. The Army needs to tackle this issue urgently if it is to check the rate of decline, since the number of deaths (inescapable in an ageing population) is not being balanced by the number of new entrants.

3.6 Effective Evangelistic Methods

Wagner says:

The sixth vital sign of a healthy, growing church is that it is using an evangelistic method that works.

Wagner 1984, p. 160

One might be justified in asking just what Wagner is claiming here, since to an extent, at least, he is employing a tautologous argument.

- A growing church uses an evangelistic method that works;
- If an evangelistic method works, one result will be a growing church.

While Wagner describes a number of evangelistic methods which, he claims, have worked in given settings, he does not prescribe a panacea. Instead he argues for a 'fiercely pragmatic' approach, by which a local church will adopt methods which are right for its setting, leadership and members, and which will, in Robert Schuller's phrase, 'find a need and fill it'. This however, returns us to the circular argument described above, suggesting that if a local church (or, in this study, a Salvation Army corps) is not growing this is because it has not discovered the correct approach for its situation. This may not allow sufficiently for the effects of other factors – especially the surrounding culture – which might make almost any method inappropriate. It is really not enough to claim that a healthy, growing corps will use effective evangelism. Even accepting McGavran's Church Growth concepts, sometimes a healthy corps may be required to watch the fields until they ripen (see 2.6.2 and 2.7.2 above); sometimes there may be an underlying pathological condition, or some element of the cultural context, which will prevent *any* methods being effective while that condition or context remains unchanged.

However, sometimes and in some circumstances Wagner may be right. Where all else is in place for growth, then the use of appropriate methods might be the key to growth, and it is this aspect of the question which will be explored in this section.

3.6.1 Evangelism through 'External' Activities

The concept of 'external activities' was introduced in an earlier section (see 3.2.1 above). In general this means aspects of community service, but includes some (such as Guides) which the corps may not see in those terms.

The number of reported activities, by category, with the number of converts produced from them over ten years, is shown in Table 23.

Activity	No of Corps providing	No of Corps responsible	Seen as Outreach by	No of Converts 1982-1991	Mean Converts per year per Corps	Mean Converts per year per Corps (Outreach)
Drama / Dance	1	2	1	4	0.40	0.40
Other	13	11	11	22	0.17	0.20
Meals Club	26	25	22	35	0.13	0.16
Parent & Toddler	31	29	27	27	0.09	0.10
Brownies	18	15	8	8	0.04	0.10
Disability	10	6	7	6	0.06	0.09
Play Group	11	4	7	6	0.05	0.09
Welfare Work	6	7	6	4	0.07	0.07
Youth Club (Snr.)	15	15	13	9	0.06	0.07
1 Parent Families	4	4	3	2	0.05	0.07
Socials	18	16	6	4	0.02	0.07
Youth Club (Jnr.)	28	28	25	11	0.04	0.04
Societies	11	1	3	1	0.01	0.03
Alcoholics Anon	4	2	4	0	0.00	0.00
Cubs	2	2	1	0	0.00	0.00
Guides	9	8	4	0	0.00	0.00
Scouts	1	1	1	0	0.00	0.00

Table 24: External Activities and the generation of Converts

It will be apparent from Table 24 that few of these activities are *very* productive. The most productive group of all is “other”, which means those which are not amenable to classification. Drama or dance classes appear productive, and may well be so, but (even allowing for the apparent error in reporting – it seems that while one corps provides this activity, two are responsible for it) there are only one or two corps operating these activities, which makes it impossible to generalise from such isolated instances.

Of those activities which take place in more than a handful of corps, the Meals Club¹¹³ seems most productive, with 0.16 converts per year per corps participating. 26 corps provided the service (one doing so through a third party), and 22 of these saw it as an important part of outreach. This view is justified, since 35 converts have resulted from this activity, although this is not many over 10 years.

¹¹³ A Meals Club provides, for a small charge, a meal (usually lunch) in company. Many participants are either elderly or infirm, though some are simply lonely. It is not, generally speaking, the provision of a free meal in the old ‘soup kitchen’ tradition, but is a social event, for which the meal – to some extent – provides an occasion.

Parent and Toddler¹¹⁴ groups also seem productive. These are a relatively new activity, generally starting in the 1980s. Almost all corps providing this activity (27 out of 31) see it as an important part of outreach, and there have been 27 converts from those 27 corps, producing the statistic of 0.10 converts per year per corps.

Brownies¹¹⁵ are catered for in eighteen corps, although three of these only provide facilities for an activity which is run by someone else. Eight corps see the activity as an important aspect of outreach, and over 10 years eight converts have been produced through Brownies, giving a statistic of 0.10 converts per corps per year, though it is not specified whether these were child or adult converts.

Disability Support Groups were provided by 10 corps, though only 6 were responsible for them. Six converts were identified as being first contacted through this approach over the ten years, giving a statistic of 0.09 (where corps viewed the activity as an important part of outreach). It is not clear whether the converts were themselves disabled people, since this question was not asked, but this is probably a matter of no importance, since neither physical nor mental abilities are essentials for faith.

Finally, 11 corps provide Pre-School Play Groups¹¹⁶, although only 4 are responsible for running them. However, 7 of the 11 see the Play Group as an important part of outreach, and 6 people are reported to have become Christians through the Play Groups, making a statistic of 0.09 converts per year per corps where Play Groups are seen as outreach (although 0.05 over all corps providing the service). Play Groups must be run by qualified people, and this is a restriction which may explain the small number of groups operating; nevertheless they may have the same types of strengths as a Parent and Toddler group, when viewed from the perspective of evangelism.

We can then say that 'effective evangelistic methods' include Meals Clubs, Parent and Toddler Groups and Pre-School Play Groups, Brownies and Disability Groups.

3.6.2 Evangelism through 'Internal' Activities

The range of activities which are operated in connection with the 'worship' programme of a corps, rather than with its social care programme, should also be considered in terms of growth effectiveness. These are shown in Table 24, which indicates the effectiveness of the various activities (on this criterion) as a standard figure both for the whole sample (n = 61), and for the number which view each activity as having the purpose of evangelism.

¹¹⁴ A Parent & Toddler group, which normally takes place during the daytime, provides a social activity for mothers (and sometimes fathers) who are responsible for the care of young children. It is not a Play Group, since the parents run it themselves without professional help, though it does provide some play activities for the children.

¹¹⁵ Brownies are the junior branch of guides, catering for girls aged 7 to 11.

¹¹⁶ Pre-School Play Groups are run by qualified workers, and are in many ways a part of the education system, preparing young children for school. In addition they provide child care for parents who may need a break, or who may be working, and also in many cases include parents as volunteers in the group activities, and in social activities which arise from the Play Group.

Activity	Number of Corps	Converts (1982 - 1991)	Purpose = Evangelism	Converts (Purpose = Evangelism)	mean Converts per Corps per Year	mean Converts per Corps per Year (Purpose = Evangelism)
Sunday School	57	351	37	285	0.62	0.77
Charity Shop	1	2	1	2	0.20	0.20
Over 60s	22	40	14	21	0.18	0.15
SAY Groups	19	30	8	0	0.16	0.00
Coffee Bar	9	11	6	9	0.12	0.15
Band Practice	44	50	1	0	0.11	0.00
Home Leagues	55	55	29	34	0.10	0.12
Junior Soldiers	39	39	3	0	0.10	0.00
Women's Mtgs.	23	16	11	5	0.07	0.05
Youth Club	23	15	21	15	0.07	0.07
Songster Practice	39	24	1	0	0.06	0.00
Soldiers Mtgs.	27	14	3	14	0.05	0.47
House Groups	19	5	8	2	0.03	0.03
Bible Study	40	8	6	2	0.02	0.03
Singing Co. Practice	32	6	0	0	0.02	0.00
Corps Cadets	14	0	1	0	0.00	0.00
P & T	3	0	3	0	0.00	0.00
Men's Mtgs.	5	0	1	0	0.00	0.00
Under 5's	1	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Discovery Group	1	0	1	0	0.00	0.00
Children's Club	4	0	3	0	0.00	0.00
YP Band Practice	21	0	0	0	0.00	0.00

Table 25: Internal Activities and the generation of Converts

The activities outlined here are in some respects a collection of dissimilar elements, including teaching, social activities, preparations for worship (music rehearsals *etc.*) and activities which take place for other reasons. Respondents were asked to identify each activity according to whether its main purpose was seen as social, nurture or evangelism. Some activities, such as Youth Clubs, which appear in Table 25 seem to be identical to those in Table 24: this is not a problem, since both are subject to similar analysis, and it probably reflects the reality that similar activities are viewed as either external or internal in different contexts.

From Table 25 it can be seen that in general the activities classified as internal are more productive of converts than those classified as external. Even so, few activities seem to be more than marginally productive.

The single activity which has by far the most effect in winning converts is the Sunday School, which operates in some form in most corps, and which produces 0.62 converts per year per corps (0.77 where the purpose is specified as evangelism), although this will presumably be mainly children rather than adults.

The next most productive activity seems to be the Charity Shop with 0.20, but since only one of the sample reported a shop it would not be safe to generalise from this.

The Over 60s Clubs with 0.18 were also productive, as were SAY groups¹¹⁷ with 0.16, and Coffee Bars with 0.11.

Very surprisingly, the Band Practice is reported to be a relatively productive activity in terms of converts: 72% of the sample included Band Practice in their programme, and overall they have produced 50 converts over the decade, generating a figure of 0.11. Oddly, only one respondent claimed that Band Practice had the primary purpose of evangelism, and that one was unable to identify any converts produced by this means. Perhaps the meaning there was that the Band Practice was a preparation for evangelism, rather than a participation in it.

The Home League (a women's meeting for worship and fellowship) scored 0.10, as did the Junior Soldiers' Meeting (which is essentially a teaching activity for children who have already made a profession of Christianity).

Activities which scored below 0.10 are assumed to be relatively unproductive evangelistically.

3.6.3 Specifically Evangelistic Activities

Respondents were also asked to provide the number of adult converts over a five year period (1987-1991), following a first contact with the corps via a given range of specifically evangelistic activities, events and relationships. This produced the results shown in Table 26, giving a total of 535 converts.

Activity	No of Corps	No of Converts	Converts per Corps	Converts per Corps per Year
Sunday School	20	143	2.80	0.56
Normal Sunday Meetings	26	100	1.96	0.39
Friendships	27	64	1.25	0.25
Corps Community Service	15	57	1.12	0.22
Normal Pastoral Care	18	44	0.86	0.17
Corps Youth Work	8	31	0.61	0.12
Family Relationships	10	22	0.43	0.09
Special Events	9	21	0.41	0.08
Other (Unlisted) Activities	8	15	0.29	0.06
Open-air Ministry	5	14	0.27	0.05
Evangelistic Campaigns	6	11	0.22	0.04
Literature Distribution	6	10	0.20	0.04
SA Social Services	2	3	0.06	0.01

Table 26: Effectiveness of Specifically Evangelistic Activities, Events and Relationships

¹¹⁷ SAY (Salvation Army Youth) Groups are not in fact a programmable activity but are an umbrella under which all 'youth' (i.e. ages 13 - 30) activities can be grouped.

Many of the activities shown in Table 25 have appeared elsewhere in this study, as well as earlier in this section. Some respondents replied in ways which differ slightly when questions have been asked in different forms, and therefore the repetition is useful as a cross-check. Since Clarke (1994) and Finney (1992) both have researched this issue in more depth, their work has been considered as reference points for some of the activities.

As before, it can be seen that by far the most productive activity in terms of converts is the Sunday School with 20 respondents (out of 51 replying to this question) identifying between them 143 adult converts through this source. This produces a score of 0.56¹¹⁸ or 27%. What is not clear (because the question was not asked) is how many of these were children of Salvationist parents, growing up through the corps and accepting the Sunday School as part of the normal routine of childhood, and how many came from an 'unchurched' background. This should be explored in the future, but for the present it is helpful to know that this is such an important element in recruiting new Christians. Finney found that 76% of adult converts had previously had contact with a church through Sunday School or something similar, although this had generally not been a main contributor to their eventual faith (Finney 1992, p.12). Clarke seems not to have considered this factor, unless he included it as 'brought by family', where Christian parents brought their children to church.

A relatively large number of converts were first contacted through 'normal' Sunday worship meetings, producing a score of 0.39 or 19%. This is reassuring, since it indicates that people are willing to enter a Salvation Army place of worship, and through the worship experience *inter alia* some will enter the Christian faith. Clarke, asking a similar question in a broader form, found that 25% found faith through a first contact of this kind.

The next highest score is that for Friendships, with a score of 0.25 or 12%, indicating that people enter the corps fellowship, and subsequently find faith, through friendship with someone who is already a member. This seems to be related to McGavran's 'bridges of God', since it shows faith flowing through relationships – however, it can be contrasted with the much lower score for Family Relationships (0.09 or 4%). McGavran's argument in this respect is primarily that Christianity flows best along the lines of natural or marital relationships: this result indicates that (in the specific population of people coming to faith within The Salvation Army) such relationships are not particularly powerful, but that relationships of choice (*i.e.* friendships) perform a similar function. These results are much lower than those of Clarke, who found 27% of new Christians were brought by friends while 18% were brought by members of the family (Clarke 1994); they nevertheless confirm that even in the (fairly arid) setting of the sample of Salvation Army corps, these two factors remain among the most important. Finney found up to 40% were introduced by friends, while up to 22% were brought by family members¹¹⁹ (Finney 1992, pp. 38-47).

¹¹⁸ Scores are calculated according to this formula:
(Number of Converts / Total Number of Corps) / Number of Years)

¹¹⁹ It is difficult to be more precise in citing Finney's results, since they differ for males and females and also for the specific family relationship being considered.

Corps Community Service scores relatively highly (0.22 or 11%), which indicates that this type of social service can operate as 'Presence' evangelism, whether in respect of the 'client' receiving benefit from Community Service, volunteers helping to provide the service or observers impressed by the service. Clarke, working with a larger sample which probably had a lower commitment to community service, found that 9% of converts had a first contact of this kind, which differs very little (*op. cit.*). However, this result contrasts with that for Salvation Army Social Services (0.01), the institutional, largely residential, social work. This does not mean that the Social Services produce no converts (since this issue was not explored), but that very few people come to faith *within a corps* after an initial contact through Social Services. In Church Growth terms, this suggests that the Salvation Army Social Services are very ineffective as a means of evangelism, since – even if they *are* producing new Christians – they are not producing responsible church members.

Normal Pastoral Care is moderately productive (0.17 or 8%). This activity would encompass such situations as sickness, need or bereavement, in a family unconnected with the corps, being noticed by a corps member who provides or arranges for the provision of some form of help or support. In general, pastoral care would be provided for people who are already members of the corps fellowship (including members and their families *etc.*) but as respondents identified 44 people who came to faith after a first contact of this kind (and not through family or friends), this seems to indicate that pastoral care is also provided for people beyond the fellowship – and that this provision produces a number of new Christians. Clarke also considered the same type of factor, though under more specific headings; taking these together, he found that pastoral care was the first contact for 15% of converts, although more than half of these were associated with infant baptism or dedications. If that single factor is removed from the equation, the percentage drops to 7% (*op. cit.*).

Corps youth work is also moderately successful (0.12 or 6%), producing 31 converts over five years from 8 corps, though other respondents (43) claimed no such successes through this route. Neither Clarke nor Finney considered this factor in relation to adult converts.

Other activities all scored below 0.10, indicating that they are relatively unproductive in terms of the growth of the corps. It might, however, be worth drawing attention to the specific items which feature at or near the bottom of the list, since Open-Air Ministry, Literature Distribution and Evangelistic Campaigns are all methods of evangelism which form part of Salvation Army tradition. Similarly, the work of Salvation Army Social Services is respected by the public, and most Salvationists are proud to be associated with it, but there is no evidence here for its value in 'Christianising' either its clientèle or other members of the public:– viewed as a means of evangelism, it may be a massive investment of resources for minimal return.

3.6.4 Other Factors in Evangelistic Methods

Since this entire study is concerned with assessing effective evangelism (which, as McGavran suggested, might have been a better name than Church Growth for the movement), a great many other factors have been considered in other places. A recapitulation here would be somewhat redundant, while the value of those factors in assessing this 'sign' is rather limited since they merely contribute to the tautology of Wagner's argument.

3.6.5 Tests for Effective Evangelism Methods in Growing Corps

The three types of factor identified above (external activities, internal activities and specifically evangelistic activities) were tested for correlations with growth.

Each corps in the sample ($n = 61$) was given a score by adding one point for each external activity identified in Table 23 as having more than a marginal relationship with the number of converts (Meals Clubs, Parents & Toddlers, Brownies, activities for Disabled People). This score was tested for correlation with the growth index, using Kendall's *tau* (a rank correlation method). From this test it was found that $\tau = 0.14$, $p = 0.08$; this is not significant at the 0.05 level, though it approaches significance, which suggests that further explorations may be useful. For the present though, the null hypothesis should stand in relation to external activities and growth.

In a similar way, each corps was given a score by adding one point for each of the internal factors¹²⁰ identified in Table 24 as producing at least 0.10 converts per corps per year (*i.e.* Sunday School, Charity Shop, Over 60s, SAY Groups, Coffee Bar, Band Practice, Home League and Junior Soldiers Classes). This score was tested for correlation with the growth index. It was found that $\tau = 0.20$, $p = 0.02$, indicating a significant correlation between the provision of these particular activities and growth. However, too much should not be read into this, since it may very well be that a growing corps is more likely to be able to resource such a range of activities, rather than growth resulting from them. Nevertheless, it seems that growth is associated with the number of activities which occur out of this complex of factors.

¹²⁰ As with the external activities, no attempt was made to weight the factors according to the productivity shown in the earlier tables, since these were not considered reliable enough for such action. It was, however, thought that there was adequate evidence for dividing the factors into two groups separated by an arbitrary line: those which were relatively productive, and the remainder.

The specifically evangelistic activities were also tested by a similar method, though this was less easy to quantify and interpret¹²¹. From the tests it was established that $\tau = 0.14$, $p = 0.07$. As with the external activities, this is not significant at the 0.05 level, but comes very close to significance, which suggests that there might be something here worthy of further and more detailed exploration.

Finally, the aggregate score for each group of factors was tested for significance, with the result $\tau = 0.20$, $p = 0.01$. This is highly significant, and indicates that, while it cannot be stated with confidence that any of these methods of evangelism is of itself associated with growth, involvement in this *range* of activities, rather than any other, seems to be characteristic of growing corps. This can be seen in summary in Figure 81, showing that the use of all methods of evangelism tends to be higher where corps are growing, and that the aggregate score for all methods is closely related to growth. Nevertheless, the individual set of factors which has the closest relationship with growth is that for internal activities, which is near parallel with the aggregate score. This indicates that while all methods seem to have an effect on growth (which is cumulative as more methods are used), internal activities have the major effect.

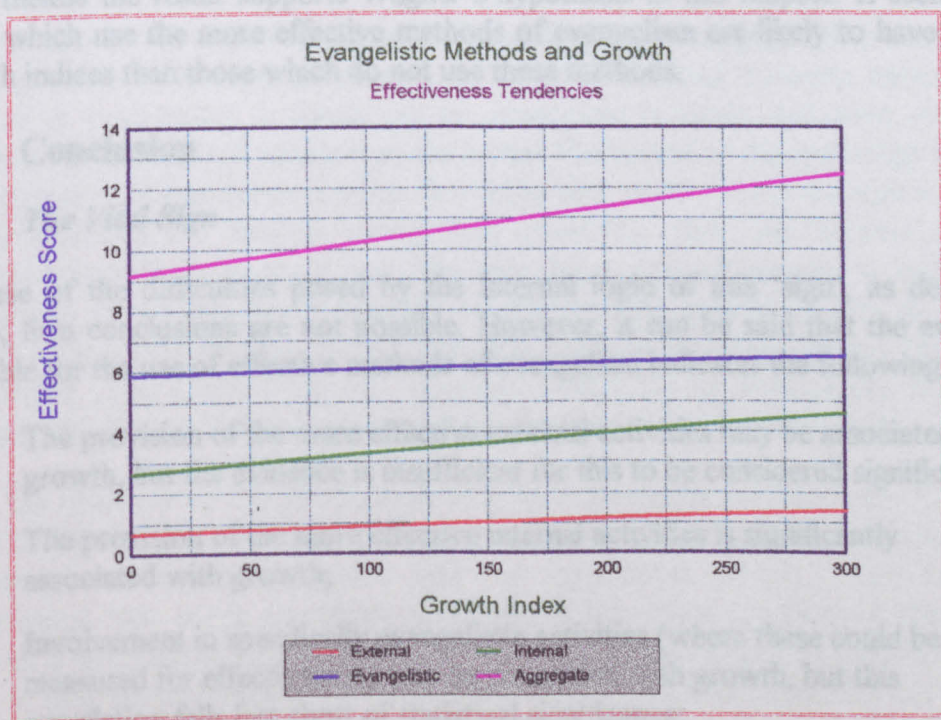


Figure 81: Effective Evangelism and Corps Growth

¹²¹ All corps in the sample provide Sunday worship meetings, and almost all provide Sunday Schools. Friendships are (literally as well as metaphorically) immeasurable. Corps were therefore given a score by giving each a base of 1 point (for Sunday worship), and then adding 1 point where a Sunday School was provided, 1/5 points for each type of Community Service provided, 1/3 point for a positive response on each of three measures of pastoral care taken from Section D of the Questionnaire, and 1/3 point for the provision of each of three different types of youth work. The scores were then rounded to produce an integer score for specifically evangelistic activities, which could be tested as in the previous examples.

The claim that Wagner's 'sign' is supported, while based on evidence, should not be overstated, since the methodology was undoubtedly affected by difficulties in measuring some of the factors, as well as by a certain dubiousness about the original data (*e.g.* people may have come to Christian faith through a combination of routes, rather than as a result of the single factor for which the tests were designed). Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the claim itself is tautologous: it would be surprising if growing corps were using ineffective means of evangelism.

The analysis of growth and decline in United Church of Christ congregations (USA) by Marjorie Royle is instructive. She found that in the smallest churches (150 or fewer members), '... the presence of community service ministries ... was negatively related to the number of new members received'. This size bracket would include most Salvation Army corps. Royle suggests: 'Perhaps very small congregations, often without full-time staff, have little energy left for nurturing newcomers if they also support significant community ministries' (Royle 1993, p.163). Her conclusions agree with those discussed above, indicating that in small churches it may be necessary to choose between community service and evangelism.

Nevertheless the result supports Wagner's hypothesis in this respect. It seems that corps which use the more effective methods of evangelism are likely to have higher growth indices than those which do not use these methods.

3.6.6 Conclusion

a The Vital Sign

Because of the difficulties posed by the internal logic of this 'sign', as described above, firm conclusions are not possible. However, it can be said that the evidence available for the use of effective methods of evangelism indicates the following:

- The provision of the more effective external activities may be associated with growth, but the evidence is insufficient for this to be considered significant;
- The provision of the more effective internal activities is significantly associated with growth;
- Involvement in specifically evangelistic activities (where these could be measured for effectiveness) may be associated with growth, but this correlation falls just short of statistical significance;
- The aggregate involvement in activities which can be seen as effective evangelism has a highly significant correlation with growth.

These results are useful but not conclusive. However, it was anticipated that conclusive results would be unlikely in this context. So far as the tests permit, it seems that there may be considerable truth in Wagner's hypothesis, and that there is a real difference in the growth record of corps which is associated with the range of activities which are undertaken. Those corps which provide the kind of activities identified in this section as being more productive, in terms of first contacts with eventual converts, are likely to have higher Growth Indices than those which are not so engaged.

b Other Issues

The issue of external activities has recurred at several points in this study, and there is a real question which should be asked in this context:

- If, as seems to be the case, most external activities are relatively unproductive, can the use of resources in these ways be justified?

Some external activities (*e.g.* Meals Club, Parent and Toddler, Brownies) are productive (though less so than some internal activities) and they can probably be justified on this basis. However, other activities seem relatively unsuccessful, and could perhaps be justified only on the grounds that they raise the profile of Christianity in the community (that is, they contribute to 'Presence' evangelism). Nevertheless, corps community service (as a whole, rather than by individual activities) was identified as one of the more effective means of evangelism. Asking questions about such issues does not presuppose the answer, but it does indicate there is a need for an answer, rather than mere perpetuation of current practice without understanding the purpose.

In general, internal activities (those based around or associated with worship or teaching events) are more productive in terms of eventual converts making first contacts at these points. It should not be overlooked however, that there may be a difference in the kinds of people who encounter The Salvation Army through internal and external activities. It may be true that those who make contact through worship-related activities are already asking faith questions: they are 'seekers'. Those contacted through 'community' activities may feel in need of material or social help (of various kinds) but not necessarily of any spiritual change. If this surmise is correct, then it may be easier to win converts from the first constituency than from the second. The Church Growth response would be to concentrate effort on enlarging the former, rather than expending resource in less profitable fields.

From the evidence of this study, there may be a particular problem with Salvation Army Social Services, which seem a very ineffective means of evangelism, since even if converts are produced (which was not considered directly), very few are incorporated into corps as church members. If the prime function of the Social Services is evangelism, then they seem to be failing badly, at least in Church Growth terms. If their prime function is as a witness to the life of Christ in his Church, there is another serious problem, which falls beyond the scope of this study but deserves serious attention, since some Salvationist writers (such as Needham and Read) mentioned in 1.6.1 above, have expressed concern about the issue¹²². If their prime function is to provide a practical improvement in the lives of those people who benefit from the services provided, then this may well be achieved, but does this alone provide sufficient justification for the use of church resources in this way?

¹²² Few Salvationists are actively involved in Salvation Army Social Services, at least partly because of geographical distribution – there is no suitable Social Service centre within reach of many corps. The majority of Social Services staff, and an increasing number of those in professional or management positions, are not members of the Army, and many are not members of any church. In these circumstances, can it be arguable that the Social Services remain a valid expression of the life of Christ operating in his Church?

3.6.7 Summary

Conclusions in this area are tentative, since the form of the study and the data do not permit confident assertions, while the initial hypothesis (Wagner's) is not susceptible to testing in its standard form. However, the evidence indicates that:

- Internal activities are most closely associated with growth, suggesting that these speak to 'seekers', who may be more ready to be won than those whose perceived needs may be material or social;
- Specifically evangelistic activities may be associated with growth, though the evidence is not strong in most cases;
- External activities may have little association with growth, and should perhaps be re-evaluated by their results;
- The aggregate score for all evangelistic methods is associated with growth, implying that better results follow the application of more effort.

Salvation Army Social Services seem to be ineffective as a means of evangelism, when measured by the growth of local corps. This issue needs further investigation, but it seems that either:

- Opportunities are not being taken to incorporate into churches those converts won by this means, in which case some changes in methods are necessary – possibly by the creation of corps which are based upon the institutions, or
- Converts are not being won, or not in sufficient quantity to justify the resources expended in this way, in which case (assuming that evangelism is the purpose of Salvation Army Social Services) the expenditure should be curtailed, or (as above) the methods changed to become more effective.

3.7 Biblical Priorities

Wagner says:

The seventh – and last – vital sign common to healthy, growing churches ... is that they have their priorities straight.

Wagner 1984, p.173

It is, of course, a matter of opinion as to what constitutes 'straight' priorities for the range of activities which can occur in a church, but Wagner argues that there is biblical justification for a particular view, which he summarises as three levels of priority:

- *Priority One*: Commitment to Christ.
- *Priority Two*: Commitment to the Body of Christ.
- *Priority Three*: Commitment to the work of Christ in the world.
 - *Subpriority One*: Evangelism.
 - *Subpriority Two*: Social involvement.
 - *Sub-subpriority One*: Social service.
 - *Sub-subpriority Two*: Social action.

It is probably impossible to measure the extent to which Wagner's first and second priorities are achieved: it has not been attempted in this study. However, Wagner's emphasis indicates that his main concern is prioritising evangelism over other aspects of church life¹²³, and especially over activities which are directed towards social service and social action. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that in their sample there was a 'bias towards growth' where churches placed outreach as the first or second priority (of three), and a bias towards decline where service was given the highest priority. Those churches which placed nurture first had no discernible bias (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, 1981 pp. 50-51).

In this study, the sampling was designed to give a wider cross-section (compared to Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson's larger English Baptist churches), and the priorities and categories were increased to four (to include administration as a possible use of time and effort). The results were very different.

¹²³ Wagner quotes Article 6 of the Lausanne Covenant: 'In the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary'.

3.7.1 Priorities and Growth

Table 27 below shows the results which were obtained, and reveals some striking aspects of corps life, as perceived by the respondents.

Activity	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3		Priority 4	
	cases	Mean Index	cases	Mean Index	cases	Mean Index	cases	Mean Index
Nurture	31	96.99	6	52.10	17	79.90	0	
Service	13	71.81	19	91.92	11	99.74	11	81.88
Admin.	8	80.34	22	84.61	8	90.70	16	90.51
Outreach	2	47.40	7	108.20	18	83.14	27	86.26
TOTAL	54	86.63	54	86.63	54	86.63	54	86.63

Table 27: Emphases by Priority Allocation

From Table 27 it is apparent that only 17% of corps are perceived as giving first or second priority to evangelism / outreach, compared to 69% for nurture, 59% for service and 56% for administration. This is surprising in itself, but the mean index for the 2 corps which gave outreach as their highest priority is astonishingly low (47.40) in comparison with the other emphasis categories. However, when tested by ANOVA, the difference is not significant ($F = 1.46, p = 0.24$). Conversely, when considering the second priority it was found that those selecting evangelism / outreach had a noticeably higher mean index than the other three groups. However, again this difference, though interesting, was not significant ($F = 1.70, p = 0.18$).

In summary it can therefore be shown (see Figure 82 and Table 28) that though there is a difference between those who give evangelism / outreach a high priority and those who do not, the difference is small and not statistically significant ($F = 0.31, p = 0.58$). From Figure 82 it can be seen that these results are affected by three 'outliers' among the 'low priority' group, but when these are removed from the sample, the results still do not achieve significance ($F = 2.75, p = 0.10$). This result means that there is insufficient evidence for a claim that there is a real difference between the growth records of the two groups, which could therefore be composed of different samples from one population.

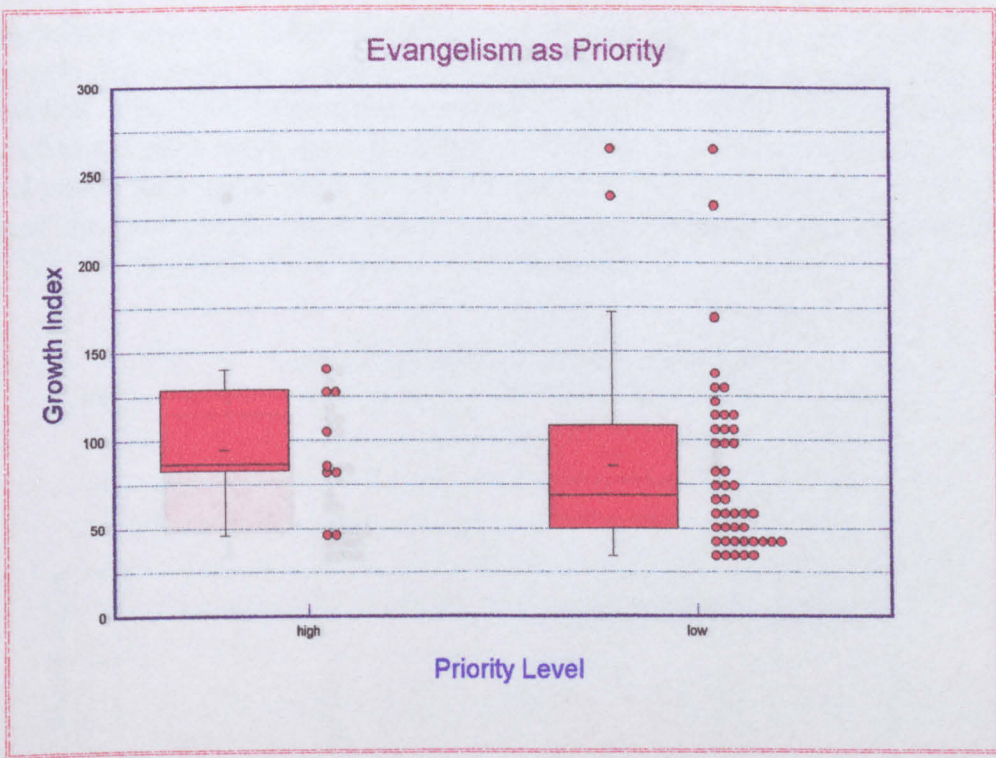


Figure 82: Evangelism as Priority, with Growth Index

Priority	Priority given to Evangelism / Outreach	
	cases	mean Index
Low (3 or 4, out of 4))	45	85.01
High (1 or 2, out of 4)	9	94.69
TOTAL	54	86.63

Table 28: Relationship between Evangelism priority and Growth Index

This indicates that (a) startlingly few corps are allocating a high priority to evangelism / outreach, and (b) the difference in the growth index is too small to support the claim that this is a 'vital sign' of a healthy church. However, none of the other three categories of church life emphasis have significant associations between their priority level and growth either, which may suggest that, despite the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, the measure is inappropriate.

However, Wagner is also insistent that churches which place a high priority on social service (and especially on social action) will tend to decline. The data was therefore tested for support for this claim. The summary data for this test is shown in Figure 83 and Table 29.

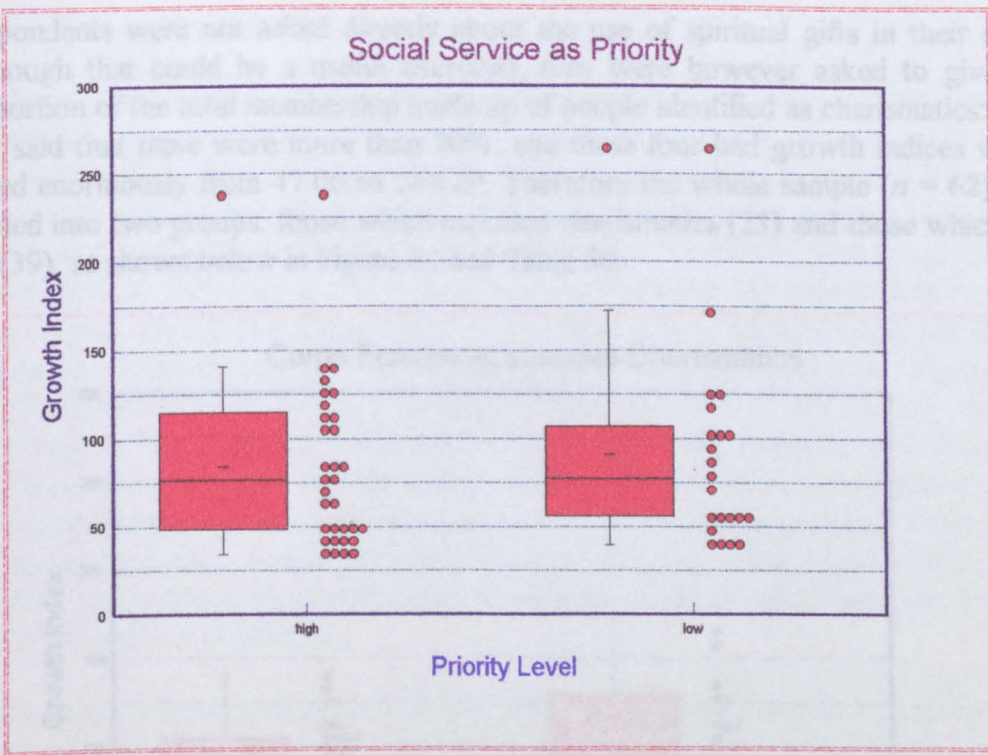


Figure 83: Social Service as Priority, with Growth Index

Priority	Priority given to Social Service	
	cases	mean Index
Low (3 or 4, out of 4))	22	90.81
High (1 or 2, out of 4)	32	83.75
TOTAL	54	86.63

Table 29: Relationship between Social Service priority and Growth Index

When tested by ANOVA, the results ($F = 0.29, p = 0.60$) indicate that although there was a difference between the two groups (those with a high priority for social service, and those giving it a low priority), this difference was even less significant than that for evangelism.

There is therefore very little support for the Wagner hypothesis from this data. The issue of social action (as opposed to social service) was not considered, since there is little indication that this is at present a high priority with any part of The Salvation Army in the UK.

3.7.2 The Charismatic Factor

Wagner, Gibbs, Pointer and others have all placed importance (varying from high to vital) on 'spiritual gifts' (see 2.3.2 above), while until very recently there has been a reluctance in The Salvation Army to acknowledge the more 'supernatural' gifts as acceptable aspects of Christian life and worship (see 1.3.2 above). Though this may now be changing, there are still few corps where many members could be described as charismatic.

Respondents were not asked directly about the use of spiritual gifts in their corps (although that could be a useful exercise); they were however asked to give the proportion of the total membership made up of people identified as charismatics: only four said that there were more than 20%, and these four had growth indices which varied enormously from 47.06 to 264.29. Therefore the whole sample ($n = 62$) was divided into two groups: those which included charismatics (23) and those which did not (39), as shown below in Figure 84 and Table 30.

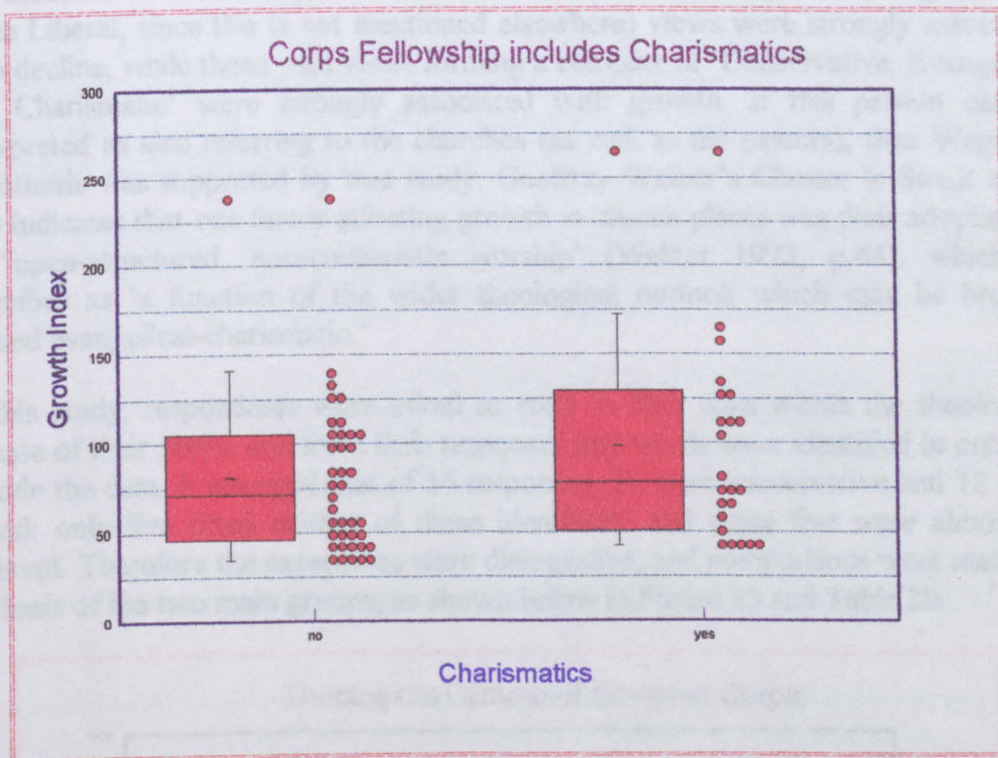


Figure 84: Charismatics in Membership, with Growth Index

Included in Membership	Charismatics in Corps	
	cases	mean Index
Yes	23	98.07
No	39	80.72
TOTAL	62	87.16

Table 30: Charismatics included in Corps Membership

As can be seen from Table 30, there is a difference in the mean Index which is fairly large and which tends to support the Church Growth claims. However, the degree of overlap between the two groups, as shown in Figure 84, is such that the difference in mean Index is not statistically significant ($F = 2.09$, $p = 0.15$). Again, therefore, the evidence is insufficient to support the hypothesis.

3.7.3 Theological Outlook

Wagner cites evidence from Dean M Kelley (*Why Conservative Churches are Growing*) and others to show that churches with a liberal theology are more likely to be in decline than those with a conservative theology. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson seem not to have addressed this issue, though they did ask the question. However, they found that the theology of the *pastor* was strongly connected with the growth of the churches in their study, and that those with 'Radical' (by which they perhaps mean Liberal, since this is not mentioned elsewhere) views were strongly associated with decline, while those with views forming a complex of 'Conservative, Evangelical and Charismatic' were strongly associated with growth. If this pattern can be interpreted as also referring to the churches (as well as the pastors), then Wagner's hypothesis was supported by that study. Geoffrey Walker's Chester le Street study also indicates that one factor affecting growth in church plants was their adoption of an 'open-structured, non-eucharistic worship' (Walker 1993, p.44), which he describes as 'a function of the wider theological outlook which may be broadly termed evangelical-charismatic.'

In this study, respondents were asked to state in their own words the theological climate of their corps, and from their responses key words were identified in order to encode the data. It emerged that of 56 responses, 39 were conservative and 12 were liberal: only five fitted neither of these identifiers, and these five were almost all different. Therefore the exceptions were disregarded, and comparisons were made on the basis of the two main groups, as shown below in Figure 85 and Table 30.

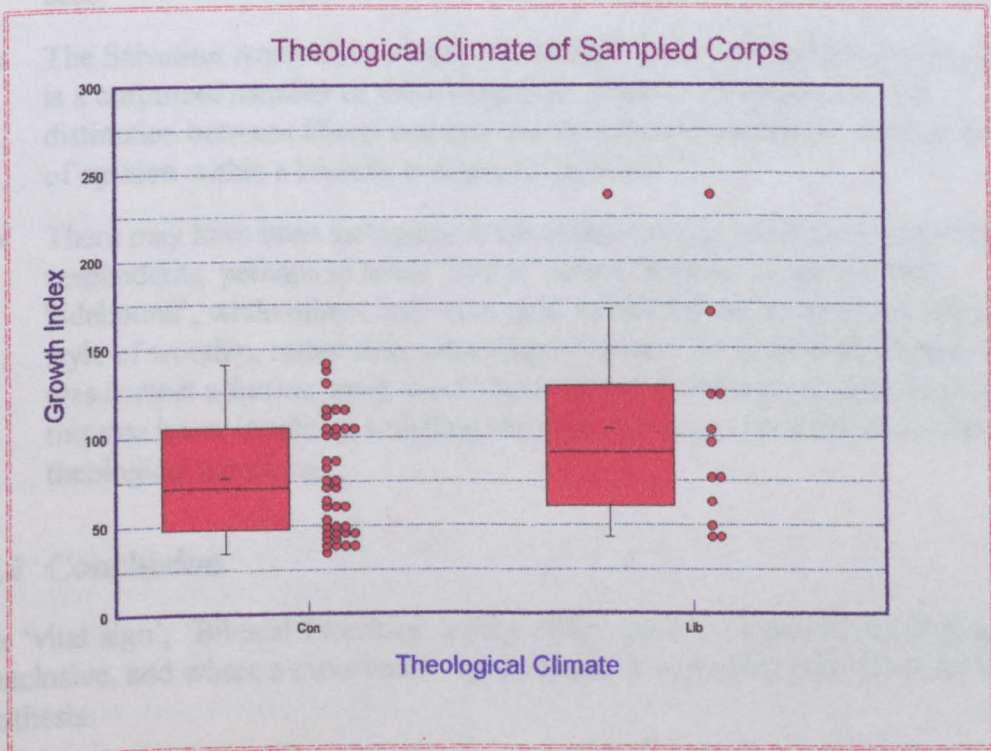


Figure 85: Theological Climate, with Growth Index

Theological Climate of Corps		
Climate	cases	mean Index
Conservative	39	76.77
Liberal	12	104.29
TOTAL	51	83.25

Table 31: Theological Climate of Sampled Corps

Somewhat surprisingly, it seems that those which identified themselves as conservative were likely to have a *lower* growth index than those which were liberal. Furthermore, of all the tests in this section, this is the only one which produced a statistically significant result ($F = 4.57, p = 0.04$).

This certainly merits further study, since it seems to refute the Wagner hypothesis, and also contradicts the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson. There are a number of possibilities which should be taken into account in interpreting this result.

- The Wagner hypothesis may be wrong, and growth may be associated with a liberal rather than conservative theology, or with no particular view. However, this is counter to the findings of other researchers (including Peter Brierley in the UK), and therefore seems unlikely.
- The tendency may be different for The Salvation Army for some reason, and while other churches conform to the normal rule, there is an exception in this case.
- The Salvation Army is, as a body, committed to an evangelical theology and is a corporate member of the Evangelical Alliance; consequently, the distinction between liberal and conservative should perhaps be read as shades of opinion within a broadly evangelical position¹²⁴.
- There may have been ambiguity in the understanding of the terms used by the respondents: perhaps to some 'liberal' meant 'socially aware' or 'not hidebound', while others may have used 'conservative' to mean a traditional style of worship, rather than a theological stance. To determine whether this was correct a further study would be necessary, with a more specific focus on this one issue, involving soliciting the views of corps members on a range of theological questions.

3.7.4 Conclusion

As a 'vital sign', 'Biblical Priorities' seems rather poor. In general, the findings are inconclusive, and where a clear result has emerged, it contradicts the Church Growth hypothesis.

¹²⁴ The possible influence of the 'Liberal Evangelicals' of the early 20th Century should not be overlooked. Although they seem to have been a largely British phenomenon (and perhaps this explains the inattention from American writers), their attempt to blend an evangelical approach to the faith with an acceptance of contemporary science and culture may have contributed to Salvation Army patterns of faith and practice.

a *The Vital Sign*

The evidence from this analysis indicates that, at least to the extent that the measurements were appropriate indicators of priorities, there is little evidence for a relationship between those priorities and the growth or decline of Salvation Army corps.

There is an inclination for corps giving a high priority to evangelism / outreach to have a higher growth index than the others, but this is too small to be significant (at least with this size of sample). Similarly, there is a tendency for corps giving a high priority to social service to have a lower growth index than others, but this is even less significant. Taking both measures together, the evidence therefore is generally in support of Wagner's hypothesis, but is insufficient to achieve significance. The null hypothesis should therefore stand in relation to the relative priorities of evangelism and social service. Neither can be shown to be significantly associated with growth or decline.

Similarly, as an indicator of the exercise of spiritual gifts in corps life, no significant association can be drawn between growth and corps which include charismatic members or those which do not. The tendency generally supports the Church Growth hypothesis, but the evidence is not sufficient for a confident claim that charismatics among the membership are associated with growth in a corps.

However, the theological climate of the corps, as identified by the respondents, *is* associated with growth – but not in the direction predicted by Church Growth claims. Where respondents identified corps as 'liberal', rather than 'conservative' (other responses being excluded) there was a significant difference with the former being more likely to have a higher growth index. Because this is contrary to most other findings in the USA and the UK, the results must be treated with caution, and several alternative explanations have been generated. Further, more detailed, study should be undertaken to clarify this issue.

b *Other Issues*

There are few other issues to be considered here, since the results of the tests are so inconclusive (most suggest a tendency in the direction predicted by Church Growth, but with insufficient strength for confidence). However, one issue which ought to be considered is that of the priority given to evangelism / outreach.

Respondents were asked to prioritise the four categories of emphasis according to the relative amount of time or effort they received. Very few (only 17%) claimed a high priority for evangelism / outreach, which perhaps has contributed to the inconclusive nature of the results. More importantly, since evangelism is defined in the Salvation Army's mission statement as a key part of its mission, it suggests that whatever the statement says, in practice it is not treated as having this high degree of importance.

3.8 Salvation Army Issues

In addition to Church Growth theory, there are several other issues affecting Salvation Army life about which questions should be raised. Some of these were discussed in Section 2.13, but this study has afforded an opportunity for a more detailed examination of some of these and other issues.

3.8.1 Music

Until very recently the use of music in Salvation Army worship was governed by regulations under which all music (including original compositions, arrangements and published works) required the approval of the International Music Board before it could be used (see 1.7.2 above). This rule was intended to ensure that musical standards (of compositions if not of performance) were kept high. The regulation applied also to the words of songs, in order to ensure conformity to doctrinal standards. However, the regulation has been rescinded (by gradual changes) due mainly to two powerful forces. The first of these was the growth (since the Joystings in the 1960s) of musical groups for which officially sanctioned music was simply unavailable. Groups of this kind also developed (often with more success than in The Salvation Army) in many other churches where they have become known as 'worship bands', and the wide variation in the possible instrumentation for such combinations means that it is virtually impossible to produce standard arrangements. Secondly, the change in the pace of life generally has meant that frequently music was required for a particular occasion, and could not wait for submission to a Board for approval. These two factors, together with a less authoritarian tendency within the Army, has meant that it is now possible officially for Salvation Army worship to include music groups in a wide variety of forms, and for worship music (hymns, songs *etc.*) of various kinds to be included.

However, because this is a change from the traditional practice, the data was examined to find whether there was a difference in the Growth Index between those corps which have adopted the changes and those which have retained the older approach.

Respondents were therefore asked to say what kind of musical accompaniment was used regularly in Sunday worship, with the results shown in Table 31. It can be seen that there is very little difference in respect of the growth index relating to the use of most kinds of musical accompaniment. However, the use of a Worship Band is noticeably different, suggesting that there is a relationship between growth and the use of 'contemporary' music in worship¹²⁵.

¹²⁵ The word 'contemporary' is used with some trepidation, since it has different meanings to musicians with different tastes. It is used here to mean music which has a pop or rock rhythmic style, whilst retaining sufficiently conventional qualities of melody and harmony to accompany congregational singing, rather than becoming a performance art in its own right.

Type of Accompaniment	Corps using		Corps not using	
	number	mean Index	number	mean Index
Piano	52	86.84	11	85.49
Organ	32	82.39	31	90.96
Brass Band	45	88.65	18	81.51
Worship Band	10	116.11	53	81.04
Other (various)	8	88.13	55	86.39
n = 63				

Table 32: Musical accompaniment used in worship

This relationship was tested by ANOVA, and found to be significant ($F = 5.26, p = 0.03$). However, a possible factor in this relationship is the size of the corps: perhaps only corps which exceed a certain size can form a worship band. This conjecture was tested, and found not to be an adequate explanation. As shown elsewhere (Section 3.3.1) there is no significant association between the growth index and corps size (as measured by Senior Soldiers). In exploring this issue it was found that there was also no significant relationship between the size of the corps and the existence of a worship band: those with such a group had a mean size of 67 Senior Soldiers, those without had a mean size of 47 Senior Soldiers, but the variance was very large in both cases.

It can therefore be stated with some confidence that a corps which uses a worship band is likely to have a higher Growth Index than one which does not. This may be because the style of music is itself associated with growth, or it may perhaps be that the use of a worship band indicates a corps where minds are open to change, and it is the willingness to embrace (or at least accept) change which is associated with growth.

A related issue is that of the worship music (songs, hymns *etc.*), rather than the accompaniment, which is used. The data was tested to find whether there was any discernible difference between corps which used only Salvation Army material and those which used other publications.

It was assumed that all used the official Salvation Army Song Book. This was published in 1986, though out of 962 songs (hymns) and 251 choruses very few date from later than 1960, and those which *are* of comparatively recent vintage were almost entirely written by Salvationists. Respondents were asked to identify any additional material which they used¹²⁶ regularly, with the results shown in Table 33.

¹²⁶ The respondents were not restricted in any way. Presumably logic would dictate that they could not claim to use *no* additional material, and then identify additional material used. Otherwise, however, there is likely to be some overlap, and several respondents indicated that they used more than one source of additional worship material.

Song Book / Collection	No of Corps using	Mean Index of users
Happiness and Harmony ¹²⁷	55	83.93
Junior Praise ¹²⁸	7	122.47
Sing for Joy ¹²⁹	8	115.80
Songs of Fellowship ¹³⁰	7	75.13
Mission Praise ¹³¹	14	102.80
Own Collection	6	91.77
Other material	8	120.64
None	3	100.07
Total Sample	63	86.61

Table 33: Additional Worship Songs/Hymns Used

There was little significant difference between groups using particular supplementary collections and those not using them. Exceptions included *Sing for Joy*, where the high growth index was found to be significantly different ($F = 3.88, p = 0.05$). Also significant was the mean growth index associated with *Junior Praise* as a supplement for adult worship ($F = 5.17, p = 0.03$). This might suggest that there is a need for a re-evaluation of the official Song Book, since it seems that at least in some circumstances and settings, the supposedly simpler material from both these collections for children is found to be useful, and is moreover associated with corps which are growing.

As shown in Table 33, eight corps (13%) used collections other than those suggested in the questionnaire, and also had a mean growth index which was much higher than the sample mean. This difference was found to be significant ($F = 5.40, p = 0.02$) when tested by ANOVA. However, the eight corps had very little in common: two used Spring Harvest material; two used publications which were, in the sample, unique; the remaining four used a 'Pick and Mix' approach, incorporating anything which came to hand, such as special 'Bible Sunday' publications. It was the third group which included the high growth indices, but the number of these was too small for a realistic generalisation.

¹²⁷ *Happiness and Harmony* (1990) was published by The Salvation Army as a supplement to the official Song Book: it includes several contemporary songs or hymns which are in wider circulation in the Church in the UK, such as some written by Graham Kendrick.

¹²⁸ *Junior Praise* (1986) (edited by Peter Horrobin and Greg Leavers, London, Marshall Morgan & Scott) is a supplement to *Mission Praise* intended for children's use.

¹²⁹ *Sing for Joy* (1986) is a Salvation Army publication intended for use in Sunday Schools, including a number of contemporary songs. It has, as shown above, been adopted as a supplementary song book for adult worship in some corps.

¹³⁰ *Songs of Fellowship* was first published in 1981, but has since extended to several volumes, published by Kingsway Publications.

¹³¹ *Mission Praise* (1986) (edited by Peter Horrobin and Greg Leavers, London, Marshall Pickering) was published as a collection of old and new songs and hymns in association with the *Mission England* evangelistic campaign.

The only conclusion which can safely be formed from this data is that the official Song Book alone is clearly felt to be inadequate in a large number of corps, and that the great majority (95%) have supplemented it in some way. This is a vindication of the change of policy, since it would not in earlier years have been possible to choose a diet of hymns and songs to suit the needs of a particular corps, whereas this can now be done. However, the trend could go further: the Song Book of The Salvation Army may actually be so inappropriate to the needs of today's Salvationists and for the evangelism of a wider public, that it should be revised or replaced by a different type of collection altogether. Prior to the 1986 Song Book, previous versions were published in 1930 and 1953: perhaps 20 to 30 years is now too long a gap in a field in which innovation is constant.

3.8.2 Spiritual Gifts and the Charismatic Renewal

It is probably a truism to say that the Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s and 70s has made serious changes in the public worship of many evangelical churches, as well as legitimating the use of 'supernatural' spiritual gifts such as tongues, healing, prophecy *etc.* in public and private. The Salvation Army was a slow developer in this area, with a reluctance to accept some of the gifts and the freewheeling worship style (see 1.3.2 above). However, by 1990 there was some evidence of change, and therefore it is legitimate to consider whether there is any connection between growth and the exercise of such gifts.

This was considered above (in Section 3.7.2) and it was found that corps which included charismatics tended to have a higher growth index, though not significantly so. However, see also below (3.8.5) for the results of an opinion-based survey within this current study.

3.8.3 The Age of the Corps

It was hypothesised that the age of the corps (as opposed to the age of its members) might be associated with growth. No such connection was found ($r = -0.01$, $p = 0.46$), but an interesting finding emerged.

The Salvation Army was founded formally in 1865, but only began its rapid growth in the late 1870s (see 1.8.4 and 1.8.5 above). The great majority of corps in the sample were founded in this initial burst of enthusiasm, as shown in Figure 86.

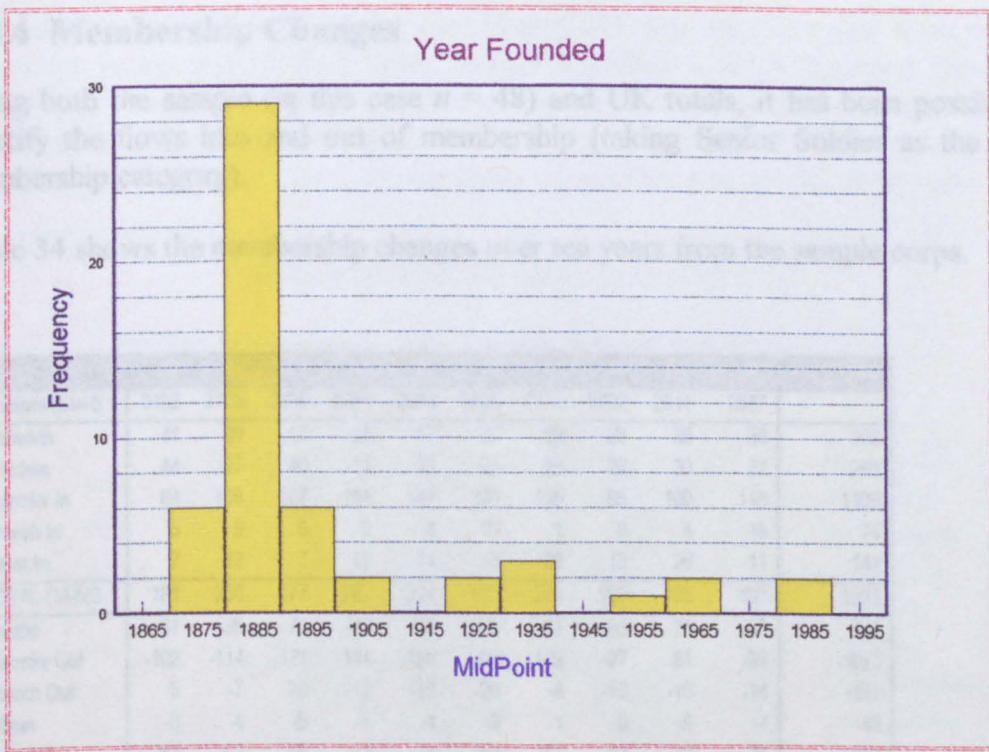


Figure 86: Numbers of Corps by Year Founded

The sampling process means that this can be taken as indicative of the wider population of UK corps¹³². This means that, of corps which were surviving in 1992, more than 75% had been founded before 1900, while more than 50% of the total were founded in the 1880s, the decade when the Army was growing most rapidly. Only a handful (less than 10%) of surviving corps are the results of plants during the second half of the 20th Century. There may have been other corps planted over the years (in fact, there certainly were) but of those which survive, the great majority date from near the foundation of the Army itself.

Perhaps then one of the reasons for the Army's decline is its failure to move strategically. Corps which were planted for a given population a century ago may now be surrounded by a completely different type of population whose needs are not addressed. Other centres of population will have grown as people have moved into or out of cities and large towns. It seems that the Army has paid too little attention to the changes taking place around it, and has not made provision for strategic planting. This is part of the broader picture of churches extending – and maintaining – beyond their means, which has been researched in detail by Robin Gill (see 2.9 above).

Having shown that this is part of the problem, the answer seems in principle easy – identify appropriate sites and launch (or re-launch) corps. Finding the resources (both human and material) is, of course, probably much less easy.

¹³² Additional wider research conducted for The Salvation Army in 1995/96 confirms that this is so (Escott and Pickard, 1996).

3.8.4 Membership Changes

Using both the sample (in this case $n = 48$) and UK totals, it has been possible to identify the flows into and out of membership (taking Senior Soldier as the main membership category).

Table 34 shows the membership changes over ten years from the sample corps.

Year	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	TOTAL
Soldiers (Start)	3192	3135	3086	2984	2903	2836	2771	2702	2611	2587	
Converts	41	49	14	25	17	32	39	23	35	33	308
Children	44	27	40	14	28	28	28	28	30	22	289
Transfer In	84	108	107	154	147	100	108	88	100	113	1109
Church In	5	9	9	2	8	10	1	8	4	18	74
Other In	7	13	7	12	11	13	28	13	26	11	141
TOTAL GAINS	181	206	177	207	211	183	204	160	195	197	1921
Deaths	-61	-65	-73	-83	-59	-68	-81	-65	-71	-94	-720
Transfer Out	-102	-114	-121	-114	-129	-92	-122	-97	-81	-91	-1063
Church Out	-5	-7	-20	-12	-16	-20	-9	-19	-15	-14	-137
Officer	-3	-4	-5	-5	-1	-2	-1	-5	-9	-7	-42
Removal	-67	-63	-60	-73	-73	-64	-54	-63	-43	-74	-634
Other Out	0	-2	0	-1	0	-2	-6	-2	0	-4	-17
TOTAL LOSSES	-238	-255	-279	-288	-278	-248	-273	-251	-219	-284	-2613
NET CHANGE	-57	-49	-102	-81	-67	-65	-69	-91	-24	-87	-692
Soldiers (End)	3135	3086	2984	2903	2836	2771	2702	2611	2587	2500	

Table 34: Sample Membership Changes 1982-1991

The data from Table 34 is expressed as percentages (taking the total number of soldiers each start of year as 100%) in Table 35, which enables it to be used more conveniently for comparisons. From Table 34 and Table 35 it can be seen that there was in the sample a net loss each year averaging 2.41%.

Year	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	Yearly Avg.
Soldiers Start %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Converts	1.28	1.56	0.45	0.84	0.59	1.13	1.41	0.85	1.34	1.28	1.07
Children	1.38	0.86	1.30	0.47	0.96	0.99	1.01	1.04	1.15	0.85	1.00
Transfer In	2.63	3.44	3.47	5.16	5.06	3.53	3.90	3.26	3.83	4.37	3.86
Church In	0.16	0.29	0.29	0.07	0.28	0.35	0.04	0.30	0.15	0.70	0.26
Other In	0.22	0.41	0.23	0.40	0.38	0.46	1.01	0.48	1.00	0.43	0.50
TOTAL GAINS	5.67	6.57	5.74	6.94	7.27	6.45	7.36	5.92	7.47	7.61	6.70
Deaths	-1.91	-2.07	-2.37	-2.78	-2.03	-2.40	-2.92	-2.41	-2.72	-3.63	-2.52
Transfer Out	-3.20	-3.64	-3.92	-3.82	-4.44	-3.24	-4.40	-3.59	-3.10	-3.52	-3.69
Church Out	-0.16	-0.22	-0.65	-0.40	-0.55	-0.71	-0.32	-0.70	-0.57	-0.54	-0.48
Officer	-0.09	-0.13	-0.16	-0.17	-0.03	-0.07	-0.04	-0.19	-0.34	-0.27	-0.15
Removal	-2.10	-2.01	-1.94	-2.45	-2.51	-2.26	-1.95	-2.33	-1.65	-2.86	-2.21
Other Out	0.00	-0.06	0.00	-0.03	0.00	-0.07	-0.22	-0.07	0.00	-0.15	-0.06
TOTAL LOSSES	-7.46	-8.13	-9.04	-9.65	-9.58	-8.74	-9.85	-9.29	-8.39	-10.98	-9.11
Net Change	-1.79	-1.56	-3.31	-2.71	-2.31	-2.29	-2.49	-3.37	-0.92	-3.36	-2.41
Soldiers End %	98.21	98.44	96.69	97.29	97.69	97.71	97.51	96.63	99.08	96.64	97.59

Table 35: Sample Membership Changes as Percentages 1982-1991

When shown in a graphical format (see Figure 87), it is apparent that most of the movement in membership has been through transfers – either between Salvation Army corps or between the Army and other churches. As might be expected, the total number of transfers in and out is broadly in balance, although the number of people transferring *to* other churches is almost twice the number transferring *from* them.

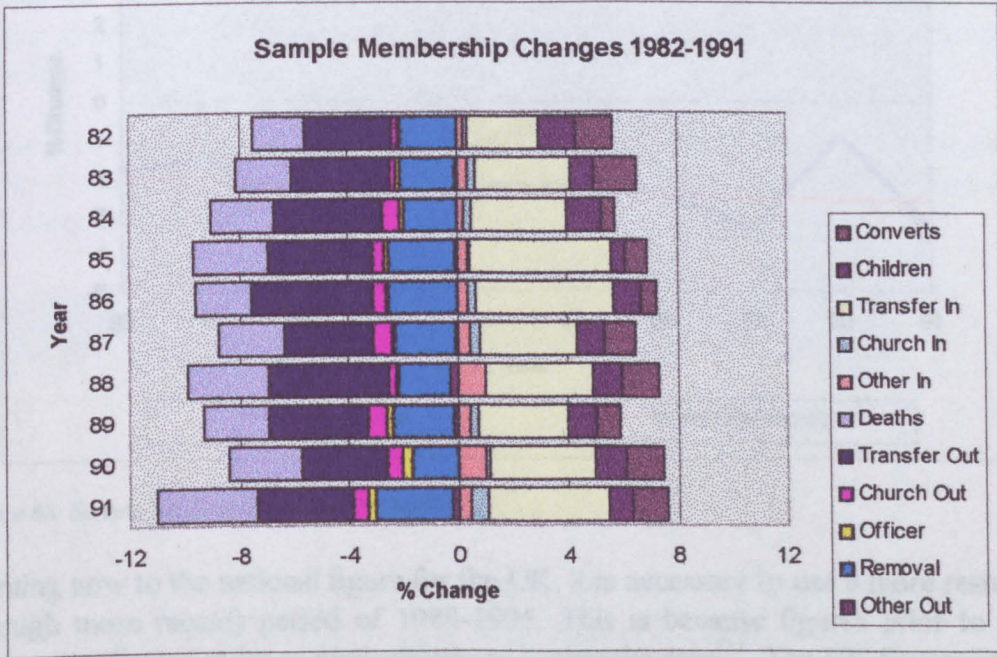


Figure 87: Sample Membership Changes 1982-1991

The next most frequent type of change each year was losses through deaths (usually referred to in The Salvation Army as ‘Promotions to Glory’). This would seem to be symptomatic of an ageing membership (see 3.5.6 above), and it is clear that the number of gains from recruits (conversion growth) and children (largely, though not exclusively, biological growth) just about balances the losses through deaths.

However, the picture is not complete without consideration of those ‘removed’ or lost through other causes. ‘Removal’ normally means either that the soldier lost interest, and consequently asked to end his or her membership, or that some lapse has taken place (moral or – more rarely – doctrinal) and the corps census board has decided that the person was no longer acceptable as a member (sometimes this is a temporary measure for disciplinary reasons, and the person may be re-accepted after a period of time). The losses of this kind are almost equal to those from deaths.

This means that, if we exclude all transfers (as being broadly in balance), the number of gains each year is approximately half the number of losses. This leads to a net loss averaging 2.41% per year, as shown in Figure 88.

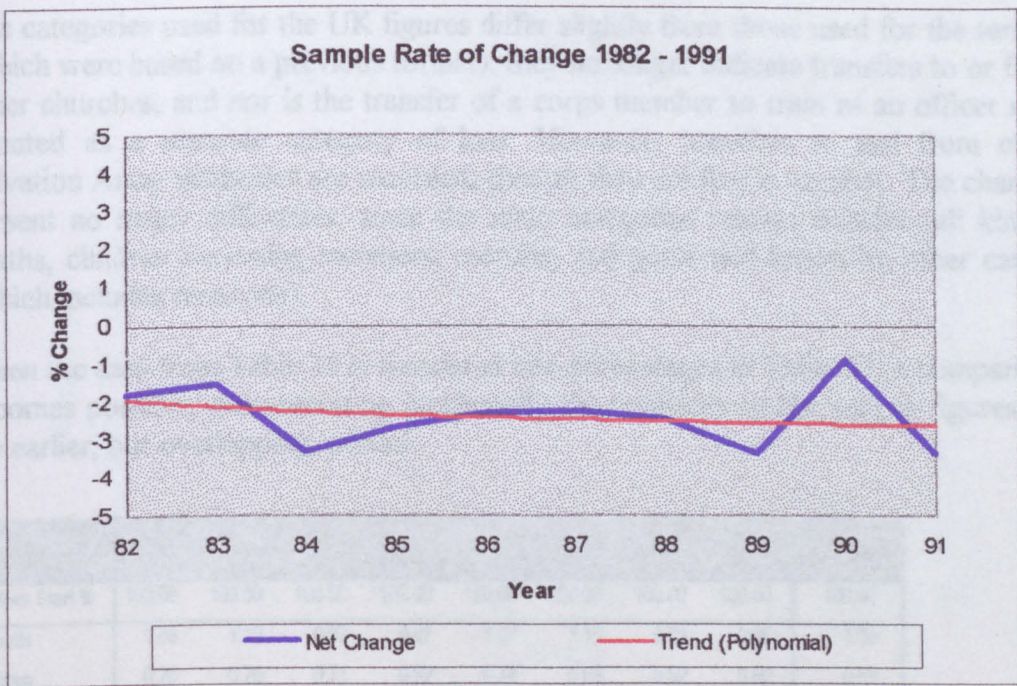


Figure 88: Sample Net Rate of Change 1982-1991

Turning now to the national figure for the UK, it is necessary to use a more restricted (though more recent) period of 1988-1995. This is because figures prior to 1988 were not collected quite as meticulously as is now the case¹³³. The UK figures for this period, shown in Table 36, therefore serve both as a check upon the sample figures and as a development of these.

Year	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	Total
Soldiers (Start)	54,662	53,358	52,249	51,196	49,583	48,321	47,036	45,880	
Recruits	581	597	508	443	532	534	367	437	3,999
Children	410	405	371	317	365	335	244	274	2,721
Transfer Gains	1,927	1,639	1,511	1,577	1,530	1,719	1,495	1,491	12,889
Overseas Gains	25	38	56	40	54	49	43	43	348
Other Gains	326	353	399	326	129	201	195	205	2,134
Total Gains	3269	3032	2845	2703	2610	2838	2344	2,450	22,091
Deaths	-1,257	-1,182	-1,135	-1,142	-1,060	-1,256	-1,034	-1,031	-9,097
Transfer Loss	-1,951	-1,655	-1,610	-1,705	-1,558	-1,777	-1,536	-1,522	-13,314
Overseas Loss	-60	-54	-53	-56	-60	-75	-71	-46	-475
Other Loss	-1,305	-1,250	-1,100	-1,413	-1,194	-1,015	-1,031	-834	-9,142
Total Losses	-4,573	-4,141	-3,898	-4,316	-3,872	-4,123	-3,672	-3,433	-32,028
Net Change	-1,304	-1,109	-1,053	-1,613	-1,262	-1,285	-1,328	-983	-9,937
End	53,358	52,249	51,196	49,583	48,321	47,036	45,708	44,897	

Table 36: UK Membership Changes 1988-1995

¹³³ The totals seem to be correct, since they match the trends, but the individual records of membership flows by category are not sufficiently detailed, many changes being grouped as 'other'.

The categories used for the UK figures differ slightly from those used for the sample (which were based on a previous format): they no longer indicate transfers to or from other churches, and nor is the transfer of a corps member to train as an officer now counted as a separate category of loss. However, transfers to and from other Salvation Army territories are recorded, though they are few in number. The changes present no major difficulties, since the main categories remain transfer (all kinds), deaths, children becoming members, recruits, and gains and losses by other causes (which includes removals).

When the data from Table 36 is translated into percentages in Table 37, a comparison becomes possible, demonstrating incidentally the reliability of the sample figures for the earlier, but overlapping, period.

Year	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	Yearly Avg.
Soldiers Start %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Recruits	1.06	1.12	0.97	0.87	1.07	1.11	0.78	0.95	1.00
Children	0.75	0.76	0.71	0.62	0.74	0.69	0.52	0.60	0.68
Transfer Gains	3.53	3.07	2.89	3.08	3.09	3.56	3.18	3.25	3.20
Overseas Gains	0.05	0.07	0.11	0.08	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09
Other Gains	0.60	0.66	0.76	0.64	0.26	0.42	0.41	0.45	0.54
Total Gains	5.98	5.68	5.45	5.28	5.26	5.87	4.98	5.34	5.50
Deaths	-2.30	-2.22	-2.17	-2.23	-2.14	-2.60	-2.20	-2.25	-2.26
Transfer Loss	-3.57	-3.10	-3.08	-3.33	-3.14	-3.68	-3.27	-3.32	-3.31
Overseas Loss	-0.11	-0.10	-0.10	-0.11	-0.12	-0.16	-0.15	-0.10	-0.12
Other Loss	-2.39	-2.34	-2.11	-2.76	-2.41	-2.10	-2.19	-1.82	-2.33
Total Losses	-8.37	-7.76	-7.46	-8.43	-7.81	-8.53	-7.81	-7.48	-8.02
Net Change	-2.39	-2.08	-2.02	-3.15	-2.55	-2.66	-2.82	-2.14	-2.52
Soldiers End %	97.61	97.92	97.98	96.85	97.45	97.34	97.18	97.86	97.48

Table 37: UK Membership Changes 1988-1995 (percentages)

It is again clear that, excluding transfers of all types which again broadly balance, the gains from recruits, children and other sources (totalling 2.22%) are approximately half the number of losses through deaths (2.26%) and other causes (2.33%) added together (4.59%).

This means that the UK figures as a whole indicate an average net loss per year of 2.52%¹³⁴, as shown in Figure 89.

¹³⁴ These figures agree strongly with those which were found for the sample of corps in this study (a mean annual loss of 2.41%), which provides corroborative evidence for the reliability of the sampling in other respects.

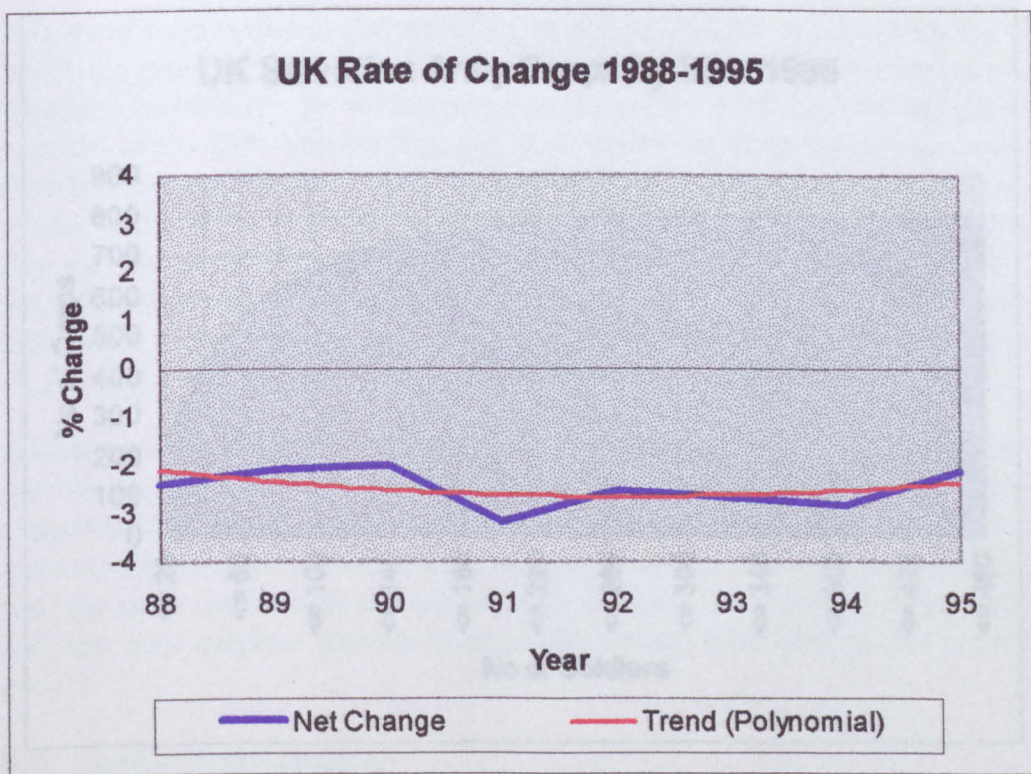


Figure 89: UK Net Rate of Change 1988-1995

An annual loss of 2.52% may not seem severe, but over the eight years this amounts to a total loss of 8.02%, which better shows the magnitude of the problem facing the Army. If a simple forecast is made, projecting the average number of losses per year, it appears that by 2035 the Army would reach zero membership. Using a more complex projection algorithm, with a mean change annually for each change category, the decline is less drastic. Nevertheless, although the Army would on this basis survive for much longer, the membership would by 2020 be about 20,000, of whom possibly as many as half would be inactive¹³⁵.

The forecasts both assume a constant rate of change, without taking into account the 'catastrophe effect' which is likely when existing corps cease to be viable. In 1995 there were 798 corps in the UK, but as shown in Figure 10 and Figure 90, the great majority of these are small. According to the 1995 data, out of 798 corps, almost two thirds (501) have 50 or fewer senior soldiers, and very few (only 2) now have more than 300. More than a quarter of all corps (240) have fewer than 20 senior soldiers.

¹³⁵ A recent exercise on behalf of the Army has revealed that on Sundays only about 60% of Soldiers are attending worship (Escott and Pickard 1996).

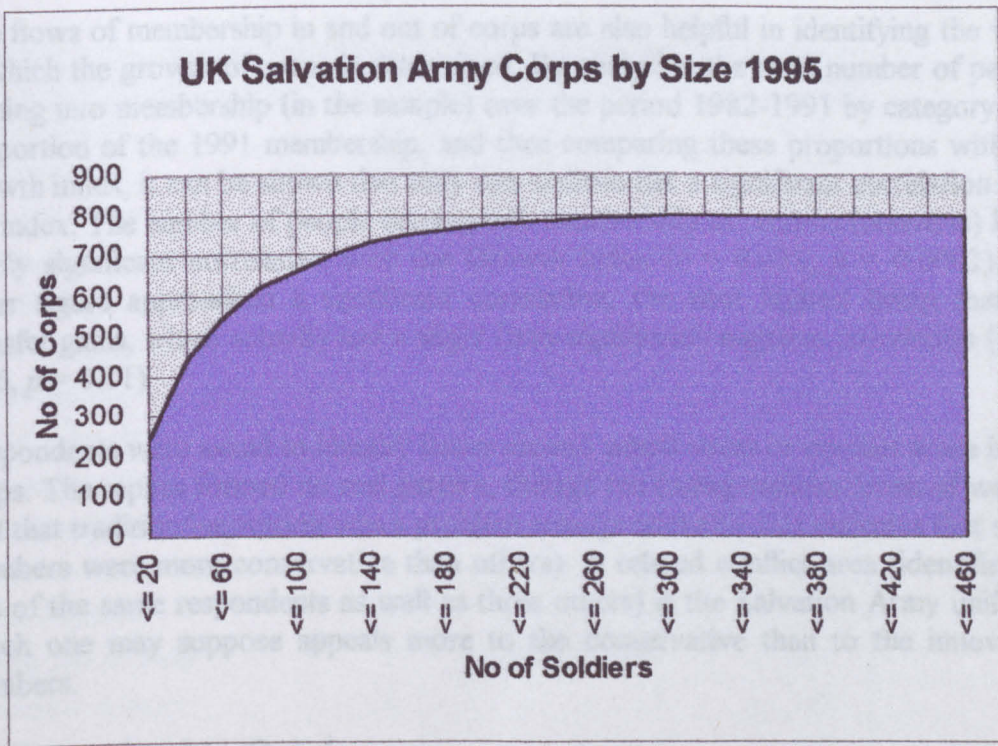


Figure 90: UK Salvation Army Corps by Size 1995

A surprisingly high proportion (78 corps or 9.77%) have fewer than 10 senior soldiers – it may be assumed that most of these corps are relics of times when they were larger; only a handful (if that) are new plants. If we assume a notional figure of 7 soldiers for each of these very small corps, and also that these are likely to close in the near future, there is the prospect of about 550 soldiers being suddenly lost because their place of worship has closed, rather than for any other reason¹³⁶. Meanwhile, the corps in the next band (under 20 soldiers) are also declining and becoming increasingly unviable.

Consequently a dilemma facing the Army is that there are so many small corps, most of which are currently in a state of continuing decline, that there is a serious risk of drastic, catastrophic, loss of membership if these corps are closed. Conversely, most of these small corps are not financially viable, surviving on subsidies from central funds, and many are no longer in strategically useful sites. If the trends in these small corps cannot be reversed, it might make strategic sense to close them in order to better utilise resources (particularly finance and personnel) where they will be more effective. This would follow Church Growth teachings (see 2.6.2 and 2.7.2 above), in that it would conserve resources where the harvest is scarce in favour of the fields where it is plentiful. However, it would also mean accepting the risk (almost the certainty) that such a number of closures would also add considerably to the number of losses. Taking the decision to close corps which are not viable would require a great deal of confidence that the re-allocation of resources would result in growth elsewhere.

¹³⁶ This is, of course, a simplified argument – some *would* transfer to other corps, but experience suggests that many would choose *not* to do so because they aren't comfortable with a larger fellowship, while for others there would be no other corps within a practical travelling distance.

The flows of membership in and out of corps are also helpful in identifying the ways in which the growth of corps is determined. By analysing the total number of people coming into membership (in the sample) over the period 1982-1991 by category as a proportion of the 1991 membership, and then comparing these proportions with the growth index, it can be shown that only one statistic has a significant correlation with the index. The number of people coming into membership as recruits (converts) has a highly significant correlation with the Growth Index ($r = 0.431$, $p = 0.0002$). No other figure approached a significant correlation, the next highest being that for transfer gains, which actually had a slight (non-significant) negative correlation ($r = -0.16$, $p = 0.11$).

Respondents were asked to identify issues around which stress or conflict arose in the corps. The replies formed no real pattern, though ten (using various forms of words) said that tradition/innovation was a problem area (presumably this indicates that some members were more conservative than others). A related conflict area (identified by five of the same respondents as well as three others) is the Salvation Army uniform, which one may suppose appeals more to the conservative than to the innovative members.

3.8.5 Leadership Opinion

The final area covered by the questionnaire is concerned more with opinion than with quantifiable data. This departs from the precedent of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, whereas much of the preceding material has followed their approach quite closely, although using a different measure of growth tendency. This approach was taken in order to make comparisons possible, although translating terms into Salvation Army jargon wherever necessary and introducing additional items where appropriate.

The final, opinion-based, section was added because it is very difficult to gauge the opinions of corps leaders in The Salvation Army. The Army remains autocratic, and little opportunity is available for the dissemination of dissent, or even for questioning the decisions of those in authority. The questions were designed to elicit opinions on a number of issues which were expected to be contentious, while avoiding any appearance of a threat to the respondents.

Respondents were therefore asked to say from their experience what effect (if any) on numerical growth they associated with a number of Salvation Army features. For each response claiming the feature promoted growth, one point was allocated; one point was deducted for each response claiming the feature restricted growth. The results are shown below in Table 37.

Salvation Army Feature	Promotes Growth	Restricts Growth	Aggregate Score	% of Sample
Uniform Wearing	8	23	-15	-25.00
Ranks and Titles	2	11	-9	-15.00
Level of Commitment	12	34	-22	-36.67
Abstinence from Alcohol	11	18	-7	-11.67
Abstinence from Tobacco	10	11	-1	-1.67
Abstinence from Gambling	9	10	-1	-1.67
Non-observance of Sacraments	0	15	-15	-25.00
Salvation Army Music	32	7	25	41.67
Salvation Army Terminology	1	31	-30	-50.00
Practice on "Charismatic" Issues	1	17	-16	-26.67
Social / Community Service	52	1	51	85.00
Level of Autonomy*	0	1	-1	-1.67
Identification as Charity*	0	1	-1	-1.67
Recognition as Church*	0	1	1	1.67
Other*	1	0	1	1.67
n = 60				

Table 38: Salvation Army Features and Effect on Growth

* = added by respondent

From Table 38, it can be seen that some odd results emerge, and maybe those odd-looking results deserve further investigation. Results close to zero can be safely interpreted as having, in the opinions of the respondents, no effect on growth, which eliminates the last four categories and the issues of tobacco¹³⁷ and gambling¹³⁸. Abstinence from alcohol was also not perceived as a serious issue by many, in terms of its effect on growth.

The use of ranks and titles was perceived as a problem by some, and if this is considered alongside Salvation Army terminology or jargon, there were many who thought the Army was shooting itself in its collective feet by mystifying people rather than attracting them. This may be correct, since much of the jargon, including the use of military titles, originated in a highly militaristic age (see 1.8.4 above), when they would be understood by most; in today's culture it may be true that a military image is seen negatively by some people, and is not readily understood by many more. In Church Growth terms, the Army is erecting additional cultural barriers, making it difficult for people to become part of the fellowship.

¹³⁷ This may be somewhat optimistic, since my experience of young people especially suggests that there is still a serious struggle between an aspiration to conform to high standards, which includes abstinence, and a high level of peer pressure in school and elsewhere which promotes the use of tobacco. Adults are perhaps more willing and able to make a decision to abstain, and then to abide by that decision.

¹³⁸ The questionnaire was undertaken before the launch of the National Lottery. It was probably true then that gambling was not a serious issue, but this might be considered differently now, since while many people consider the lottery to be a 'soft', acceptable, form of gambling, the Army leadership, particularly Commissioner Dinsdale Pender, has taken a strong stand against it.

The question of uniform is also part of this issue, although it goes further. A number of respondents saw uniform-wearing as a source of stress or conflict in their corps (3.8.4). Of the 60 respondents, 8 felt that uniform contributed to growth, whereas 23 (almost three times as many) felt that it was a restriction on growth, while the remainder felt it had no effect. As a Salvationist I am a member of one of the largest and oldest corps in the UK, where Salvationists feel they have a high reputation to maintain. Among the musicians especially, the commitment to uniform wearing is very high, extending beyond that required by regulations (for instance, black leather gloves must be worn with uniform in winter, and neither men nor women musicians may have hair on their collar). However, a Salvationist who participates in both the Band and Songster Brigade needs several different types of uniform, the cost of which exceeds £500. This may not be what all the respondents had in mind, but one feels that this *must* be an obstruction to growth, particularly among young and/or unwaged people.

Perhaps related to such questions as uniform wearing is the level of commitment expected of Salvationists. As has been shown throughout Chapter 3 of this study, Salvationists tend to be busy people, engaged in a multitude of tasks (sometimes, one suspects, regardless of the value of those tasks). It is perhaps true that existing Salvationists tend to expect a similar level of commitment and activity from new people who come into membership. This may be inappropriate for today's society, since such levels of involvement in the work of the church restrict potential involvement in the life of the family and the wider community. It may also contribute to a 'scare' effect, leading potential new members to flee such expectations, when they might have been weaned into full membership if the initial expectations were lower. Perhaps the barrier to membership is, in this respect, too high for many to scale.

Salvation Army music is to a large extent distinctive, for reasons which have been explained in earlier sections (see 1.7.2 and 3.8.1 above). Most respondents felt that this was beneficial, though a small number (7) felt that it restricted growth.

A very high proportion of respondents felt that the Army's involvement in social / community service contributed to growth. This contrasts with the results which were reported earlier – by the same respondents (see 3.6.3) – which indicated that very few people had become responsible members of the corps, through Salvation Army Social Service (which is largely institution-based), although Community Service (which is largely corps-based) was more effective in this respect. Are the respondents deceiving themselves, or being deceived, into thinking that social service is an effective contributor to evangelism? Perhaps they are resting on the laurels of the past, or believing the Army's own propaganda rather than the evidence in front of them.

Two perpetually contentious 'spiritual' issues were considered from the perspective of their perceived effect on growth, and as can be seen from Table 37 they produced very similar results (although not always from the same respondents).

The Army's position on the sacraments was thought by no-one to contribute to growth, while 15 (25% of the sample) thought it was a restriction on growth. The position on 'charismatic' issues (exemplified as 'tongues, prophecy *etc.*') was considered by one respondent to contribute to growth, while 17 (28%) thought that it was a restriction.

As has already been shown, both of these are difficult issues for the Army (see 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 above). William Booth chose to discontinue the sacraments on a *pro tem* basis (which became indefinitely prolonged) because their administration tended to provoke more conflict than harmony. Many Salvationists are convinced that observance is unnecessary to salvation, and that the Salvationist (with the Quaker) voice is important in maintaining this aspect of Christianity. Others, however, feel that it would now be right to re-introduce some form of sacramental observance, and the vote from this questionnaire seems to be in favour of such a move.

The 'charismatic' question is similarly difficult. The Army for a long time held out, officially, against the charismatic renewal movement, claiming that its roots in the holiness tradition were of a different nature within the family of evangelical Christianity. In the late 1980s, there seemed to be a change of direction, and the worship music, and some of the characteristic practices of the charismatic renewal have appeared in parts of the Army. However, as was shown in 3.7.2, these influences are at present small, and there is still considerable resistance at all levels to any kind of 'take-over' by what are perceived as 'foreign' elements.

Because the Survey was undertaken in 1992, the changing practices may have influenced the results, though it seems likely that most respondents would be reacting to the long-standing resistant policy on 'charismatic' issues, as was intended in the design of the questionnaire, rather than the possible changes which may have been taking place at the time of the survey. If this supposition is correct, then – while most respondents held no strong opinions – of those with strong views, the overwhelming majority felt that the restrictive policy contributed to a restriction of growth. Since there has been a pattern of growth for some time in many churches which have a charismatic style of worship, the balance of opinion among respondents may well be right. On the other hand, one must avoid the trap of seeing two things which frequently go together and assuming that one causes the other. Nevertheless, if there is a frequent juxtaposition between growth and a certain style of worship and order, and the Army has neither that style nor growth, a few experiments might be in order, if only to test the hypothesis.

3.8.6 Conclusions

The new (relative) freedom in matters of music seems beneficial, since corps which use a worship band (for which officially sanctioned arrangements are not available) are more likely to be growing corps, while most corps find the official Salvation Army Song Book unsatisfactory, supplementing it from other sources.

There may be some relationship between growth and the inclusion of 'charismatics' in the corps membership, although this is not clear. However, the corps leaders seem of the opinion that the old Salvation Army policy, restricting the use of 'charismatic' gifts in worship, may have restricted growth in the Army. Similarly, the leaders seem unconvinced about the Army's policy on the sacraments, and a large proportion feel this policy restricts growth (although it is unclear how this effect might be produced).

Most extant corps were founded before 1900, and very little church planting has taken place since 1940. There is no significant relationship between growth and the age of the corps, but it may be true that many corps are now wrongly sited, and that too little vision has been applied to the formation of new corps in other sites.

From both the sample and the field totals, it can be shown that there has been a net annual loss of membership averaging about 2.5%. This may be largely due to the high rate of deaths, associated with the high age-profile of the Army, according to Brierley (1992). Such a rate of loss, if continued, would lead to the Army's virtual disappearance in the UK. This is aggravated by the high proportion of very small corps, many of which are not viable, while others are approaching this point. If these corps close – as seems inevitable – there will be sudden losses of membership. Yet maintaining them – in their present sites and with their present membership – may prevent growth because they are clearly not attracting new people at present.

Of all the flows of membership, only that of new converts is significantly associated with growth, but the significance level is so high that this is an important point which should not be overlooked. Transfers and biology cannot be relied upon for growth. To reiterate the point: *growing corps are those which make converts.*

Stress and conflict in corps seem to arise over tradition and innovation, often focused on the Salvation Army uniform. This is shown too in the opinion-based section (see 3.8.5 above), where it was shown that many felt the uniform was a restricting factor, although a substantial number felt that it contributed to growth. Perhaps both can be true, if uniform attracts some kinds of people while deterring other kinds, but if this is the case it is perhaps necessary to decide which types of people are to be targeted, and then to devise appropriate strategies. At present it seems that the uniform is part of a pre-determined strategy, and the problem is perceived as being that not enough people respond to it, rather than that the uniform may itself be a deterrent.

In some ways the Army contributes to its own decline by erecting barriers. The uniform is today one such barrier, but others include its use of jargon and specialist quasi-military terminology, as well as the traditional high level of activity within the church (corps). Even people who are relatively comfortable with church (such as former members of other churches) might find it difficult to scale the barriers of Salvation Army membership – those who are not familiar with church, and for whom the military world is a mystery, may easily give up the attempt.

Salvation Army Social Service was shown in an earlier section to have contributed little to the growth of the church, in terms of new members. Nevertheless, the respondents (who gave the evidence on which that conclusion was drawn) felt that social / community service contributed to growth. This may indicate that locally-based community work is linked with growth, but it may be a symptom of self-deception. Perhaps there is scope for a larger study concentrating on this issue, to determine to what extent the Army's Social Services are correctly perceived as part of its evangelistic mission. On the evidence of the current study, there is little relationship between the two, and if further study confirms this it may be necessary to decide whether the Social Services – in their current institution-based form – are a valid expression of the mission of the Army.

3.9 Summary of Findings

What can be discerned from the mass of numbers discussed in this chapter?

Firstly, that the situation is extremely complex. It is simply not possible to apply a formula to the management of Salvation Army corps, and to expect this to bring about success in terms of numerical growth. The range of factors involved, many of which cannot be controlled because they are exerted from the environment rather than from within the corps – or even within the Army, is too wide to permit any approach which consists of pressing a sequence of levers in the right order. Other levers are being pressed in other sequences, and this will inevitably affect anything which the Army, locally or nationally, may do.

However, there seem to be ways of tipping the balance in favour of the Army's objectives. In this study this has been considered within the framework of the Church Growth movement, particularly C Peter Wagner's concept of the 'Vital Signs', and it seems that this approach is broadly fruitful, even though some of the claims are not fully supported by the evidence.

In this section the findings will be recapitulated, omitting areas where the results were inconclusive and without repeating the technicalities of the tests which were applied to the data.

3.9.1 The 'Vital Signs'

3.9.1.1 Leadership

According to Wagner the first *Vital Sign* of a healthy growing church is a strong pastoral leadership. This was considered from several different angles – some of which proved rewarding.

There is a significant difference in growth between corps which have married officers and those with single officers, even when married couples are compared with pairs of single officers. Other factors, such as the sex of the officer were considered and may have contributed to differences, but the contributions were relatively minor: the major difference seems to be associated with marital status. The Army's policy on the marriages of its leaders is unusual among churches. Officers may only marry other officers and, in general, married couples share appointments. From the evidence of this study it seems that either this is to the benefit of the corps, or that the Army's appointments policy favours married couples. There is a clear relationship between the marital status of the officers and the growth index of the corps – but whether either is the cause of the other is not yet clear, and requires further study.

The Army does not *require* a high academic level of achievement from its officers, although the general educational standard has been increasing over time. There is no evidence that academic level is associated with growth, but this may be because of other factors. Age in particular seems to interfere with this result, as the officers' age is linked with educational attainment (in general, younger officers are more likely to have experienced degree level education), while the youngest and least experienced officers (groups which may not be identical) tend to be appointed to small corps with limited growth prospects. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a tendency for officers with higher education of some kind (not necessarily at degree level) to be found in corps with a growth index towards the high end of the scale.

The officer's age was not, in itself, strongly associated with growth, although there is a small tendency for corps with higher growth indices to have officers in the 30 – 39 age group. The difference is not, however, strong enough to have predictive value.

A strong claim from the Church Growth school of writers is that growing churches tend to have leaders who stay for an extended period of time. This is a particular challenge to The Salvation Army, which has traditionally worked under short term leadership. Although this is changing to some extent, the mean tenure of those in the study was only 2.23 years, which is much less than recommended by Church Growth writers (Wagner says maximum effectiveness after the 4th to 6th year; Pointer says an optimum of 5-7 years). The results from this study confirm these claims, showing a clear relationship between tenure and growth, so that in terms of probabilities, growth only becomes likely when a leader has been in place for more than 3 years. It is perhaps a logical development of this finding to question whether long-term leadership at corporate level should also be examined. In The Salvation Army it is normal for Divisional Commanders, Territorial Commanders and even the General, to have appointments lasting only 3 - 5 years. If it is true at local level, as this evidence suggests, that long-term leadership is associated with growth, might this not also be true at other levels of leadership?

Conversely, there was no relationship whatever between growth and the length of service of officers, which seems to suggest that this may not be the best criterion for promotion in either rank or the size of corps for which officers have responsibility.

From self-assessment, the particular gifts and abilities of leaders were revealing, when compared between different index groups. There were two key differences:

- Officers in high index corps tended to score lower in their assessment of their abilities in the related areas of Pastoral Care and Visiting;
- Those in high index corps tended to have higher scores for Vision / Leadership and Administration.

This supports Wagner's claims, indicating that officers who concern themselves directly with pastoral care may not be the best leaders for growth, while those who, recognising their own limitations, delegate such work to concentrate on leadership, may be more likely to lead their corps into growth.

Church Growth writers are not united in their views on shared leadership, with Wagner, for example, arguing for a strong single leadership, while Holloway and others say that leadership should be shared. In all probability both are correct, in that there should be a balance between both extremes. In this study it was found that growth was not related to the extent to which decision-making was shared, but was related to a willingness to share responsibility, particularly for leading worship.

Pointer generally avoids an explicit statement in favour of a 'charismatic' theology and practice, while hinting that he believes it is frequently to be found in growing churches. Some other Church Growth writers are more explicit about this, and virtually all claim that a 'conservative evangelical' stance is associated with growth, and a 'liberal' position is associated with decline. This proposition was investigated in this study, although it should be remembered that The Salvation Army is formally an evangelical church, even though there have been what were described as 'liberal woolly' influences at least since the 1960s. Perhaps surprisingly, it was found that, although there was a difference between the conservative/charismatic and the liberal groups, the difference (and the variance) was insufficient to support the Church Growth claims. It may be that the Army (at least in the UK) continues the approach of the 'Liberal Evangelicals', who attempted to unite an evangelical faith with an acceptance of contemporary (especially scientific) culture.

There is certainly scope for more study here. It is argued that conservative/evangelical churches are likely to grow, while liberal churches tend to decline. According to its 'Articles of Faith', The Salvation Army seems to be a conservative/evangelical church. Yet the evidence is plain that the Army nationally has been in severe decline for many years. Although many other factors are involved, there may still be some sense in which the Army is an exception to the general trend. Is the Army really a conservative/evangelical church, or does it subscribe to a statement of doctrine which is not actually believed by its leaders and members? A serious study of the Army's beliefs and practices from an evangelical perspective might be rewarding.

The key findings about leadership are that a corps is most likely to grow when:

- it has officers who see their abilities as concentrated in Vision/Leadership and Administration, rather than in aspects of Pastoral Care;
- the officers stay in that appointment for three years or more, and
- it is led by a married couple, rather than by single officers.

From this study it is not possible to say that any of these three factors cause growth – it is possible in every case that the Army's appointments policy is such that the identified factor follows growth rather than precedes it – but there is certainly an association between these factors and the growth of corps.

The first two factors support the claims of the Church Growth writers, particularly Wagner. The third factor is not a feature in other studies, but may reward further investigation, both for the Army's sake and for anything it may offer to other churches. These findings therefore are in broad agreement with those of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 38).

3.9.1.2 Mobilised Membership

All Church Growth writers are convinced that a mobilised membership is important for growth. By this they mean that churches will grow if the existing members are involved in the work of the church, and if potential members have opportunity to become involved. This contrasts with the 'one-man band' type of church where (in an exaggerated form reminiscent of theatrical performance) the priest / pastor conducts all the work of the church, while the members constitute a kind of audience (including a few critics). Church Growth writers claim that the former style is essential for growth, and this forms one of Wagner's 'vital signs'.

To an extent mobilisation of members is reflected in the consideration of leadership, since part of their involvement will consist of sharing the leadership of the church; this was discussed above, and will be developed further in this section, and across several other topics.

The activities in which a corps engaged were considered as an indicator of mobilisation: it was found that there was no relationship between growth and the number of *external* (community-focused) activities, but that there was a significant relationship where *internal* (church-focused) activities were concerned. A similar relationship was discovered between growth and the number of leaders of internal activities, as well as the number of activity participants sharing the leadership, although this was not proportionate to the number of participants.

The number of Census Board Local Officers (lay leaders) was found to be related to growth, regardless of the size of the corps – which perhaps indicates that a balance of lay leadership, with specific responsibilities, is necessary. However, the ways in which responsibilities should be distributed and personnel selected have not been considered in this study. Other Local Officers (those with minor responsibilities) were also related to growth, although this time not as a number, but as a ratio, suggesting that this might be a useful indicator of mobilisation.

The Census Board Local Officers were also considered in terms of their length of service. It was hypothesised that if (1) mobilisation was associated with growth, and (2) lay leadership of this form was an indicator of mobilisation, then where such leaders held office for long periods of years this may be an obstruction to the mobilisation of other potential leaders (whereas a circulating leadership would involve more people) and that this would have a negative relationship with growth. This was found to be the case, and the evidence suggests (although inconclusively) that an average period of from five to ten years is optimal for a corps.

Public testimony was considered as an indicator of mobilisation, but was found to have no association with growth.

The extent to which people would give time to sharing prayer was considered as an indicator of mobilisation. The sample corps included a majority which had prayer groups, but a substantial minority which did not. There was a highly significant difference between the two groups of corps, with those possessing such groups having a much higher mean growth index than those without. There was, however, no such association between growth and the number of prayer groups, the number of people involved in prayer groups or the way in which they were organised – it seems that it is the existence of such groups which is important as an indicator, rather than the logistics.

Growth was found to be associated with shared leadership of worship, and this was considered in more depth as an aspect of mobilisation. There was little or no relationship between growth and most types of participation considered, and surprisingly this included leadership of prayer and directing worship as well as preaching. Conversely, the activities which had significant associations with growth involved participation in music, Bible reading and a “Children’s Spot”. It is unclear why this should be so, and further study may develop and clarify these findings. Certainly, however, there is indication that mobilisation through such means as these is associated with growth.

None of the financial issues investigated were found to be associated with growth, which was slightly surprising. However, perhaps the key issue here could have been the extent to which personal tithing was practised by corps members. This may have been a good indicator of mobilisation, and might also have been associated with growth. Unfortunately the design of the study did not include this issue, as it would have involved much more work on the part of the respondents, even if (by no means certain) they were able to obtain relevant information.

The extent to which members were mobilised in pastoral care was considered, and investigated for association with growth. There was insufficient evidence of a relationship between growth and any kind of organised nurture for new attenders, though there was a (not significant) tendency for this to occur. Similarly, there was no significant evidence to support the hypothesis that there was a relationship between growth and the number of people involved in pastoral care. However, there was a very clear relationship between growth and the number of people involved in pastoral visiting, especially where this involved a formalised extension of responsibility beyond those who might be expected to have this role (the CO, other officers and Census Board Local Officers).

It was hypothesised that the existence of cell groups in corps would be an indication of mobilisation, and would therefore be associated with growth. Approximately half the sample had such groups, and there was an apparent difference in growth index between those with cell groups and those without, although the difference was not (quite) significant at the level which has been used in this study. No other factor associated with cell groups was found to be significant in association with growth, which leaves this issue undecided, but with sufficient evidence in support of the hypothesis to warrant further study.

The extent of involvement in evangelism was considered as possible evidence for mobilisation, and it was hypothesised that there would be a correlation between growth and mobilisation of this kind. There was a clear correlation between growth and the extent to which responsibility for evangelism was shared. Growing corps tended to have a wider sharing of evangelism than those in decline, evidenced by the involvement of two or more identifiable groups or individuals (by role) in the work of evangelism. Even corps which, while not growing, are declining more slowly than the rate for the whole territory, were found to have either a special "Outreach Committee" of some kind co-ordinating evangelism, or the involvement of two or more groups or individuals.

The mobilisation of the members through structured (published) evangelism programmes was investigated, but too few positive replies were received for a confident conclusion to emerge. However, while generalisations are therefore unwise, it is worth noting that of those using a programme, six were involved in 'Person to Person', and those six had a much higher mean growth index than the mean for others¹³⁹. This is inconclusive, but suggests that there might be evidence to support the use of this programme in particular, and that further study should be undertaken.

The number of members of the corps involved in literature distribution has a positive correlation with growth, regardless of the size of the corps – although this correlation is only clear for non-officer members. There is therefore evidence to support the hypothesis that mobilisation is demonstrated through literature distribution, and that this is associated with growth.

Traditionally in the Salvation Army, a committed (mobilised) membership has been viewed as a membership which attends frequent and regular meetings and which wears uniform. In this study the first supposition was supported: *i.e.* there is a positive correlation between the growth index and the proportionate number of soldiers regularly attending meetings. However, the second supposition was not supported by the evidence: there was a small correlation between growth and the proportion of the membership wearing Salvation Army uniform, but this correlation was very small, and was not significant statistically.

¹³⁹ At the time of writing (Spring 1996) an increasing number of corps seem to be adopting the 'Alpha' course programme of evangelism, popularised by Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, but no research has been undertaken in a Salvation Army context to determine the effectiveness of this method.

The key findings concerning the mobilisation of membership broadly agree with the Church Growth (*i.e.* Wagner) claims. The number of people engaged in internal (church-based) activities of the corps, and especially the number of leaders engaged in such activities is associated with growth. The number of Census Board Local Officers is correlated with growth (although this is perhaps also connected with the need for functional leadership in specific areas), and the number of other Local Officers (lay leaders) as a ratio of the total membership is associated with growth (which indicates that the more people are involved in leadership tasks, the more likely is the corps to be growing). The turnover rate for Census Board Local Officers is related to growth, indicating that too long a period of service was linked with decline. This may be because people who remain in office for too long present obstacles to the service of others, but it may be because in declining corps there are simply too few candidates for such leadership tasks. If the former is the case, then this too provides evidence for the Wagner claims. Public testimony (a Salvation Army tradition) was found to have no association with growth, but the existence of prayer groups (any number and of any size) was a key indicator of growth – suggesting that this activity may be a particular indication of mobilisation. The involvement of the membership in leading worship is associated with growth, although the precise details of which activities have the strongest such associations remain puzzling. Insufficient evidence was available for any association between corps finance and growth, and some aspects of pastoral care were also unsusceptible to investigation of this kind, owing to lack of clear data. However, it was found that growth tended to occur in association with the involvement of the corps membership in pastoral visitation. The existence of cell groups was thought likely to indicate mobilisation, but the results were inconclusive on this issue. The extent to which the corps members were involved in evangelism was found to be clearly associated with growth, but there was no such association between uniform-wearing – a possible measure of mobilisation – and the growth of a corps.

Again, in general, there is broad agreement with Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, who found that ‘a committed laity is a vital factor in church growth’ (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 41), although several other issues were considered as ways of discovering the extent of commitment. In all, there is clear evidence to support Wagner’s claims for this ‘vital sign’. A growing corps tends to be one with a mobilised membership, provided it is mobilised in the directions which have been identified.

3.9.1.3 Corps Size and Activities

Wagner’s claims for this ‘vital sign’ are not clear: he says only that a growing church must be ‘big enough’ to provide the range of activities which will ‘meet the needs of its members’. This is clearly unsatisfactory for a prescriptive outline, although from the actual amount of attention he and most other Church Growth writers give to examples, it is apparent that they really favour large churches.

In this study a wide range of Salvation Army corps was considered and the activities they provide was evaluated according to the growth index they exhibit.

There is little relationship between growth and the number of adult members, whatever measure was applied – small corps are as likely to grow as are large corps: unfortunately, by their track records, both are actually likely to be in decline. Surprisingly, however, there was evidence that growth was related to the number of Junior Soldiers.

Attendance at Sunday morning meetings (normally the main meeting for Salvationists) was not associated with growth, but there was a small but significant relationship between growth and attendance at Sunday evening meetings (officially intended as outreach meetings). However, as with membership, it was found that the best indicators of growth were found in the attendance at children's and youth events. It can be strongly argued that attendance at Sunday School (now officially termed the Junior Salvation Meeting), and the provision of Junior Soldiers Meetings and a SAY (youth) programme is indicative of the likelihood of growth. Since in this survey growth has been measured by the number of (adult) Senior Soldiers, this relationship is not a simple one, by which measuring one factor one automatically measures the other. There is therefore a strong argument that growth in adult membership is related to activities which focus on children and youth.

As reviewed above, there is little indication that the number of external activities (community-focused) is associated with growth, although there are some exceptions. However, while there was a difference where such activities were identified by the corps as having 'outreach' as part of their aim, this difference was not statistically significant, which limits the claims which can be made for the result, but suggests that further study would be valuable. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that the range of activities in which a church engaged had 'no correlation whatever' with growth. This is also supported by the results from Salvation Army corps.

The range of internal activities (church-focused) is also large – even the very small corps attempt to provide a programme of activities for their members and potential members. There was a strong relationship between growth and the number of 'evangelistic' activities, but a still stronger relationship between growth and the number of 'nurture' activities. Evangelism on its own produced converts, but nurture was also necessary for the corps to grow. However, viewed overall (*i.e.* regardless of the type or purpose of activity) there was a significant relationship between the number of 'internal' activities and the growth index of the corps.

These results are to some extent counter-intuitive. One might expect that activities which focus on the 'world outside' would be more likely to be associated with growth, while those focusing on the church would not. In fact the results indicate that the opposite is true. However, this is exactly what Wagner claims. A growing corps has a range of activities which 'meet the needs of its members', rather than being directed in its activities to those outside its membership. Since this is so, according to the evidence, one might be permitted some speculation. Perhaps the secret is not in the attraction of new members (often one of the intentions behind 'external' activities) so much as in the retention of those already in membership, or hovering close to it. If current members or near-members have activities which satisfy their needs they are more likely to remain (or become) members, and are perhaps also more likely to invite others. The 'religious' focus of the 'internal' activities is more likely to meet the needs of the members than is a focus on the community – the non-members.

The evidence therefore supports Wagner's third 'vital sign': a corps which is growing is likely to have a range of activities which meet the needs of its members, *but* – as Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found:

it would seem to be a positive advantage for the activities to be spiritually based, rather than for them to be secular in the belief that they will be attractive and will keep people in contact with the church.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 42

3.9.1.4 The Balance of Corps Groupings

Wagner's fourth 'vital sign' is that a growing church will include specific worship/fellowship experiences which he calls celebration, congregation and cell. This was hard to investigate in a Salvation Army context, since the data gathered did not identify the style of the events recorded, although it did, to some extent, show the number of people involved, and this was used as the basis for investigation.

Few corps had any gatherings which were of celebration size (80+), and there was no significant difference in terms of growth between those with such gatherings and those without.

Wagner defines a congregation as typically 30-80 people. There was again no significant difference in growth index between those with gatherings of this size and those without. However, when the sample was re-divided into corps with gatherings of 30 or more and corps with only smaller gatherings, a significant difference emerged, with the former showing a much greater probability of growth. While Wagner's claims could not be thoroughly investigated from this data, it does seem that growth is more probable where members can experience worship/fellowship in gatherings of 30+.

The issue of cells was again not easy to investigate, given the design of the study, and this should be addressed in any future exercise. Again taking the size of meeting groups as the determining factor, corps were analysed by the number of small groups (up to 12 people) which met, as indicating the number of cells. Few corps had no such meetings, and there is a significant correlation between growth and the number of cells in the corps. Since the size of the corps, in itself, has little relationship with growth, while the number of cells has such an association, it seems that the number of cells operating in a corps is a good indicator of growth.

But Wagner's claim is not that growth is associated with the existence of any one of the three types of gathering, but that it is found where the three are in balance. This was investigated, and strong support was found. It is not possible to assert with confidence that corps with all three types of gathering *will* grow more rapidly than others, but there is a clear tendency for this to be so. Once again, this finding confirms that of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 46). Though differing in the details which were considered, a similar result emerges, demonstrating the association between growth and a balance of structural groupings.

3.9.1.5 Homogeneity

Wagner's fifth 'vital sign' is that growing churches will be made up of basically 'one kind of people'. The main implication of this claim, especially in the USA, is concerned with the ethnicity of members, and this has led to strong criticism that it is contrary to the ideal that in Christ all barriers are broken down. Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found no evidence to support Wagner on this issue.

In this study it was found that there was little correlation between growth and the extent of social homogeneity, whether this was viewed in terms of employment, housing or schooling. Only in the area of ethnicity was a significant association found to support Wagner's claim. However, corps with an ethnically mixed membership were also invariably in inner city areas, with a very mixed population ethnically, and it was found that in such areas, especially where there was a strong Muslim influence, corps were likely to be in severe decline. The relationship in such cases between growth and the ethnic homogeneity of the corps was obscured by other factors. Therefore, although the evidence supports the Wagner hypothesis in respect of (only) the ethnicity of the membership, the validity of this conclusion may be doubted, because of the interference from other factors.

Although homogeneity in terms of age could not be calculated, there is an impression that where homogeneity is found, it is in corps where the membership is ageing. Furthermore, there is a strong negative correlation between growth and the mean age of the Senior Soldiers in the corps. Taking these together, it seems likely that where there is an homogeneous (and therefore elderly) membership in terms of age, the corps is less likely to be growing. However, this is not provable from this study. There is good evidence that growth is inversely related to the mean age of the membership, but insufficient evidence to support any claim about homogeneity of age.

Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson found that their data tended not to support the homogeneous unit principle (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 47). There is similarly very little support for it from this study, once allowance is made for the interfering factors which affected the question of ethnic homogeneity. These results therefore confirm those of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, rather than the claims of Wagner.

3.9.1.6 Effective Evangelistic Methods

Wagner's sixth 'vital sign' is that growing churches use effective methods of evangelism. This is somewhat tautologous and greatly over-simplified. In this study the various methods of evangelism used were considered in terms of the number of converts produced through those means.

As briefly discussed above, external activities, while apparently ways into the community in order to evangelise it, were relatively unproductive. This does not devalue such activities if they are seen in other perspectives, such as the provision of care to people in need, but if they are evaluated by their effectiveness in evangelism, few external activities seem to justify the expenditure of effort made. The main exceptions to this are found in 'Meals Clubs', 'Parent and Toddler' groups and 'Brownies'. 'Disability Support Groups' and 'Pre School Play Groups' also produced a number of converts, indicating that they are relatively effective means of evangelism. However, it must be stressed that none of these methods was *very* effective.

Internal activities were in general more productive than external activities – a finding which has emerged through a number of different ways of looking at the data. Nevertheless, few activities were more than marginally productive. Sunday Schools were the most productive means of evangelism in terms of the number of adult converts won. At the other end of the age range, the Over Sixties Club was the next most effective activity in general use, while SAY groups and coffee bars were about parallel with the best of the external activities. Surprisingly, the Band Practice emerged as being quite a success as a means of evangelism, and this should perhaps be explored further. The Home League and Junior Soldiers' Class produced a number of converts over the decade averaging at one convert per corps per decade which, while better than nothing, is not very productive.

Corps were asked to evaluate their use of given *specifically* evangelistic activities in terms of the number of adult converts gained over a five year period through a first contact with this activity. Again, Sunday School is the most productive activity, although the results demand further investigation as they were insufficiently detailed about the background of the people concerned. The next most productive activity was normal worship meetings – people who are willing to enter a place of worship without any strong prior links, and who come to faith as a result of that first contact. Many more people came to faith through a first contact with Salvationist friends than through family relationships. This is perhaps a feature of contemporary life in Britain, and may indicate that relationships of choice are more important to people today than relationships of nature. Corps community services (*i.e.* mainly those activities grouped together as external activities in this study) were reported as relatively highly productive for first contacts. Pastoral Care led to a healthy number of first contacts who subsequently became converts – which might suggest that the strengthening of the group engaged in such work might also increase the effectiveness of evangelism. Finally, Youth Work was relatively successful in some corps, but not overall, which perhaps indicates that some could learn from others about the ways in which they work. The least effective means of evangelism were (in descending order) Open-Air ministry, Evangelistic Campaigns, Literature Distribution and the institutional social work of Salvation Army Social Services. The Social Services work was given an extremely low grade for its evangelistic effectiveness, leading one to doubt whether, *as a means of evangelism*, the work is really justified at all.

Viewed as evangelistic methods, external activities have no significant association with growth, while internal activities are so associated. However, when all activities undertaken by the corps as evangelism are taken together, there is a positive relationship between growth and the number of activities.

With some reservations about both the internal logic of Wagner's claim and the design of this study, there is evidence for the sixth 'vital sign'. However, the evidence is weak, and further and better study is necessary to determine which evangelistic methods are effective. What is clear is that external community-focused activities are not very productive in terms of growth, and that, viewed as a means of winning new committed members of the church, the institutional social services seem extremely ineffective.

Once again, this result tends to agree with the findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, who also found that 'the evidence is limited, but what there is does all support Wagner's Vital Sign' (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, p. 50).

3.9.1.7 Biblical Priorities

Wagner's claim is that healthy growing churches will 'have their priorities straight'. There is no objective measurement of this factor: Wagner really seems to mean that such churches will have priorities which agree with his, in placing commitment to Christ first, commitment to the Church second and commitment to mission third. Within mission, Wagner sees evangelism as the primary task, with social involvement secondary.

In this study it was not considered appropriate to address the issues of the first and second priorities, since they are not susceptible to statistical analysis. A more theological analysis, with much closer study of individual churches – and possibly of individual members – would be required in order to tackle this level of study. However, it was possible to investigate the balance between corps priorities in terms of evangelism and social involvement. Nurture and administration were also considered, since it was conjectured that they would be areas of ministry which would compete for time and attention with those listed by Wagner.

Very few corps placed evangelism as either first or second priority in terms of the time allocation, and those which did so were not significantly different in terms of growth to those with other priorities. There is no significant relationship between growth and the priority given to evangelism. Similarly, there was no significant relationship between growth and the priority given to social involvement.

There is therefore no evidence to support Wagner's specific claims about the priorities of the church.

This result differs from that found by Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, who found a bias towards growth where outreach received first or second priority, and a bias towards non-growth where community service received the first priority (Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson 1981, pp. 50-51).

However, Wagner and others have also placed importance on the place given to the exercise of 'spiritual gifts', and this issue was also tested to find whether there was any difference in growth between those corps where a charismatic expression of Christianity existed and those where this was not the case. While a difference emerged, this was not statistically significant; there is therefore insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the employment of such gifts is associated with growth.

There is a general consensus among Church Growth writers that liberal theology is detrimental to growth, while a conservative evangelical theology, with a charismatic flavour, tends to promote growth. The findings of Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson support this opinion, although not very clearly, since they addressed only the views of the pastor on this issue. In this study a difference was found, but contrary to that expected – that is, there was a higher growth index associated with those corps which had a liberal flavour to their theology. There is certainly no support here for the Church Growth claims, but a full understanding of this issue will require further study, since too many possibilities exist to permit firm conclusions at this stage.

There is therefore little support for this 'vital sign' in any of the measures which have been considered.

3.9.2 Salvation Army Issues

Throughout the study, reference has been made to issues which are primarily concerned with Salvation Army factors other than those which are related to the claims of Wagner. Some were considered separately, but many were noted as they emerged. These various findings will be collated here in order to consolidate the results on this topic.

3.9.2.1 Officers and Leadership

It was found that corps were more likely to decline when they had no officer – but it is not clear from the evidence to what extent the lack of an officer contributed to the decline, or the fact of decline had contributed to the Army's decision to appoint no officer.

There is a highly significant association between growth and the marital status of the officer(s), with growing corps being much more likely to have married officers. Again, however, it cannot be stated with certainty whether married officers are more likely to be appointed to growing corps or corps which have married officers are more likely to grow. If the latter is the case, this finding is also an incidental support for the Army's policy on the marriage and appointment of officers. This needs further investigation, which should include the appointments policy within its parameters.

There is a tendency for officers to have an increasingly high standard of education. However, younger officers (generally those with the higher educational standards) are also affected by other factors; for instance more of the younger officers are single and they also are generally appointed to smaller corps and for shorter terms. The result is that the various factors tend to interfere with one another, preventing a clear view of any difference which might be associated with a higher educational standard. This is important because people who have studied at a high level (and also people who have held responsible management positions) are frequently taught to think of themselves as leaders. Such people may be find it an extremely frustrating experience to be placed in corps in which there is virtually no-one to lead.

The length of officer appointments has a very clear relationship with growth, with the probability of growth being negative until an officer has been in post for more than three years, and increasing thereafter at least up until the seventh year (no periods longer than this were considered). From the nature of this study it is not possible to say whether the short stay causes growth, or the lack of growth induces a short stay. However, in the sample, the mean length of stay was 2.23 years. This suggests that the Army may be programming itself out of growth by moving its officers before they reach their peak effectiveness in an appointment.

Conversely, while the Army tends to value its officers by their years of service (for promotions and in considering more responsible appointments), there is no evidence whatever for an association between growth and the officer's years of service. If it is desirable to show recognition to particular officers, then a means of measurement other than years of service should be used, since this has so little association with effectiveness. Furthermore, the combined effects of this finding and that mentioned in the previous paragraph suggest that corps officers should have generally longer appointments (not normally less than three years, and with much higher upper limits) and that in consequence some younger or less experienced officers should be appointed to corps which would at present be the commands of officers of more advanced age or years of service, since these corps are those to which officers would in current practice be appointed for their fourth or fifth command, whereas with longer appointments such corps should be available to the right people in their second command.

In this study it was found that officers in growing corps were much more likely to identify themselves as possessing ability in vision and leadership and in administration, and less likely to see in themselves abilities in pastoral care. Although it cannot be claimed from this evidence that growth was occurring *because* these officers had a specific set of abilities, this possibility should be explored. It is possible that a personality analysis of some kind would be helpful to the appointments process by indicating those officers with appropriate abilities for given appointments.

It was found that corps were more likely to be growing where leadership, especially of worship, was shared. This has an implication for officer training, both preliminary and in-service, since it indicates the value in providing wide opportunities for leadership by members other than the officer of a corps.

3.9.2.2 Membership and Activities

As has been noted in several places, it is simply not possible to isolate membership issues from others such as leadership, because there is a systemic relationship between them. There is, however, no direct relationship between growth and the size of the corps. Both large and small corps were generally in decline, but exceptions were found in both cases.

It was found throughout this study that even where there were very few members they were engaged in many activities, although frequently without any clear idea of their objectives and effectiveness in achieving those objectives.

There is insufficient evidence for a connection between growth and external (community-focused) activities, but there is a clear relationship between growth and the number of internal (church-focused) activities and between growth and the number of leaders per internal activity. This suggests that it might be beneficial in terms of numerical growth to concentrate on church-focused activities, ensuring that they offer a sufficient range to meet the needs of the members, while also that there are sufficient leaders for each activity.

It seems that growth is associated with the number of people holding office. There is a relationship between growth and the number of Census Board Local Officers, although as with so much in this study it is not clear whether the number of leaders has enabled the corps to grow, or the growth has produced more potential leaders. Conversely the number of non-Census Board Local Officers is not directly linked with growth, but the ratio of these leaders to the membership is associated with growth. In general it seems that where 20% or more of the membership has specific roles as leaders or workers, the corps is likely to be growing.

However, linked with this issue is that of the length of service of Local Officers. It was found that there was a negative correlation between growth and the length of service of Census Board Local Officers (even if the actual position changed). The relationship was not completely linear however, since that would imply that effectiveness began to deteriorate from the moment a person took office. It seems that the relationship between growth and the mean term of service for the Local Officers of the corps peaks between the fifth and tenth year, and declines thereafter.

In the light of this finding and that mentioned in the preceding paragraph, there seems to be benefit in broadening the leadership, so as to enable a high proportion of the membership to have distinct leadership roles, whilst keeping the mean length of service of Census Board Local Officers down to approximately 7.5 years.

3.9.2.3 Prayer

A statistical study of this kind could not measure the depth of prayer in a church or corps, any more than it could in an individual. In Christian churches generally people are encouraged to meet for prayer, but frequently this is without objective evidence that there is practical (as opposed to personal / spiritual) benefit in so doing. From this study it has emerged that there is a real difference in the growth performance of corps, associated with the existence of at least one prayer group, regardless of the numbers of people involved or the way in which groups are organised. It is therefore arguable that all corps should endeavour to have at least one group of people meeting specifically for prayer.

3.9.2.4 Worship

The extent to which people were involved in the leading of worship was correlated with the growth of the corps, although surprisingly few *specific* types of involvement had a clear correlation in themselves, and for those which had clear relationships with growth it is hard to see why this should be so. In the light of these findings, it is probably wisest to err on the side of caution, and simply to say that where corps are growing there is more involvement in the leadership of worship. This implies that there is benefit in training people in the arts of leadership, and in providing as many opportunities as possible for them to practise these skills.

3.9.2.5 Pastoral Care

Growth is associated with the extent to which responsibility for pastoral care was shared in the corps. This is particularly so for pastoral visiting, which should therefore be seen as the responsibility of the corps (however it is organised practically) rather than the officer.

3.9.2.6 Evangelism

Since the name 'Salvation' Army implies that the movement's focus is upon evangelism (getting people saved), it is disturbing that only 17% of respondents claimed that their corps gave a high priority to evangelism. Perhaps this is a key finding to emerge from this study: if evangelism is given such a low priority, it is hardly surprising that few converts are won. From the results of this study it is clear that growth in a corps is correlated with the number of new converts. This is not self-evident, since biological and transfer growth also contribute, but it is very clear that *growing corps are those which make converts*.

Growth is associated with the extent to which responsibility for evangelism is shared among the corps membership. This implies that corps should be encouraged to accept such responsibilities, seeing evangelism as the responsibility of the whole corps, which may be distributed as the specific task of a number of individuals and groups rather than to only one person.

On a related theme, corps which use recognised evangelism programmes such as 'Person to Person' seem to be more likely to be growing than other corps. Although the data for this conclusion is not strong (owing to the small number involved) the difference was striking, and such methods should be explored further.

The sampled corps revealed no innovations in effective evangelism, while many of the methods in use were clearly ineffective. The biggest single surprise is that one special feature which distinguishes The Salvation Army from many other churches – social and community service – actually produces fewer converts (and thus potential church members) than more church-focused activities. This suggests that it is inappropriate to consider such service as a means of evangelism, though it might be justified on other grounds. Where resources are limited (as is often the case) they might be better invested in more effective evangelism. Even Band Practice was more effective as evangelism than most forms of community service, although it is not clear how this was accomplished. (Possibly this should be explored, since Salvation Army Bands could become key components of evangelism by unexpected means.)

3.9.2.7 Children's and Youth Activities

A key indicator of corps growth is the extent of activities for children and young people. Growth was found to be associated with:

- Attendance at the Junior Salvation Meeting (*i.e.* Sunday School);
- The number of Junior Soldiers;
- The provision of a Junior Soldiers Meeting (training classes);
- The provision of a Teen programme;
- Attendance at Teen programme activities;
- Members' Participation in the provision of a children's 'story' spot in worship meetings;
- The provision of a 'Parents and Toddlers' facility.

Taking these together, a clear pattern emerges. Perhaps growing corps attract more young people, and having attracted them must provide for them. However, since in this study growth has been measured in terms of *adult* members, it seems more likely that corps grow when they offer suitable activities for children and young people, and that by attracting youngsters in this way these corps also attract adults such as other members of the families.

3.9.2.8 Community and Social Service

The provision of community services (which were regarded as external activities) had very little association with growth, even when viewed by the corps as having the purpose of evangelism. Of such activities only the 'Parents and Toddler' groups seems to have a strong association with the growth of corps. Yet a great many external activities take place. While recognising that it is part of the mission of the Christian church to provide help and service for people in need, it is perhaps necessary to consider whether the expenditure of resources on this scale is justified by the return received. Community Service is a form of 'Presence Evangelism', but is unlikely of itself to be fruitful; more developed evangelistic methods are required which build upon the goodwill gained through Presence Evangelism. If this is not done, then the Community Service is probably not worth continuing for all the effectiveness it demonstrates.

Other serious questions emerge from the small amount of consideration given to the institutional work of Salvation Army Social Services. Respondents were asked to identify how many of their converts over a five year period came to faith through a first contact with Salvation Army Social Services. The answer was almost zero. Further study is necessary to establish the extent to which people are converted through contact with Social Services, but it seems that – even if this takes place frequently – such converts do not become incorporated into Salvation Army corps.

In other words, if

- evangelism is only completed (as McGavran and Wagner would have it) when believers are incorporated into a church, and
- The Salvation Army Social Services exist as a means of evangelism,

then

- There is good reason to doubt whether the Salvation Army Social Services are justifying their existence.

That the caring and rehabilitative work of the Social Services has value is not doubted, but one may ask whether the resources of a church should be deployed in this manner with so little return on the investment.

A very high proportion of respondents felt that the Social Services contributed to growth, despite the evidence which they themselves provided. It may be that the reputation of Salvation Army Social Services is accepted at face value, despite any evidence to the contrary.

Perhaps the problem is in part the divorce between the church (corps) aspect of the Army and the social service aspect. For the Social Services to be a valid form of 'Presence Evangelism' they need to be identified as 'the church in action'. In reality there is frequently little contact between the social service institution and the worshipping community, except that some of the social workers (mainly the officers) are members of the local corps. There is no sense in which social service is undertaken by or on behalf of the local corps, and this may limit the value of the Social Services as a means of evangelism.

3.9.2.9 Celebrations, Congregations and Cells

Very few of the sample were able to experience a celebration within their own corps, as defined by Wagner in terms of numbers, and perhaps this issue should be addressed. If the Army is convinced that Church Growth methods should be deployed (and the evidence of this study broadly supports such methods) then it should be looking for ways of correcting methodological inconsistencies. This may, for example, mean grouping a number of corps together (where geography permits) for frequent large-scale celebrations.

The experience of worship as a congregation is available to more, although in small corps the worship meetings may not even have attendance exceeding 30. There is a significant difference in growth between those corps which have attendance exceeding 30 and those with lower attendance. This is, of course, a case where either factor could be (at least in part) the cause of the other – that is, low attendance may lead to declining membership or *vice versa* – but it seems that growth is less likely where people do not meet in congregation-sized groups.

Almost all corps were able to provide groups of cell size (up to 12 people), although no attempt was made to discover whether they were meeting in the kind of intimate fellowship group which is implied by the term, or were attempting the larger scale activity of a congregation or even a celebration. There was a significant correlation between growth and the number of cell groups in a corps, suggesting that a strategic decision to multiply cells might be beneficial to growth.

However, as was noted when reporting the results, several corps in the sample had meetings of groups which were too large to be cells and too small to be congregations (given Wagner's distinctions by size). There are issues here about the way in which such groups should be treated – it is quite possible that, since there is a correlation between growth and the number of cells, such groups should be divided into groups of an appropriate cell size in order to improve the prospects of growth. If the Church Growth claims are correct (as seems to be the case in this respect) then this may in time lead to the formation of a range of appropriate groups, including congregations and celebrations.

There was a highly significant correlation between growth and the number of kinds of group provided by corps in the sample, confirming Wagner's claims and indicating that there may be value in finding ways in which corps of all sizes can experience the different dynamics of cells, congregations and celebrations.

3.9.2.10 Social Factors

There was very little support for Wagner's claims concerning homogeneity, except where ethnic origin was concerned, and this particular issue was so fraught with other difficulties (the ethnic mix of the wider community, the effects of an inner city environment, *etc.*) that it could not be regarded as conclusive evidence.

However, one very alarming result emerged which was not directly relevant to the tests of hypotheses. A quarter of the sample had no young people aged 17-18, and even more had no young adults who would be eligible for higher education (18+). The magnitude of this situation suggests that this is an issue which should be addressed by the Army. If there are no young adults in a corps, it would seem that a demographic problem is being built into the future of that corps, as the present membership ages and dies. Given the numbers revealed by the sample this is a problem for the whole Salvation Army, not merely an isolated corps.

Less than 1% of the adult membership is renewed each year from children attending the Army, while about 2.5% is lost through deaths. It seems therefore that the Army is either not attracting or not retaining children in sufficient numbers to maintain its strength.

Peter Brierley, in his confidential report to the Army's leadership, indicated indirectly that this was a cause for concern, by saying that 'it has the smallest proportion of children attending for any church group in England' (Brierley 1992, p.78). If there are very few children, then we cannot expect many young adults (except in specific youth churches, of which the Army has none).

The issue of ethnicity is curious. The Salvation Army has been able to become indigenous in many countries from which immigrant communities originate, but seems quite unable to do so in ethnic minority communities within the UK.

3.9.2.11 Music

The range of music in use for worship has expanded greatly in recent years, as has the choice of styles. Corps with worship bands were more likely to be growing. Whether the worship band contributed to the growth, or the growth produced musicians for the worship band is of course not explained. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that this difference occurs, since worship bands are still not fully accepted, especially by Salvationists with a strong commitment to more traditional styles.

3.9.2.12 Theological Issues

Although it is quite unclear how it could be so, a significant number of respondents felt that the Army's position on the traditional sacraments was a hindrance to growth. In practical terms this is hard to explain, but if respondents expressed this view as a way of saying that they were unhappy with the Army's position, or unconvinced by it, then this issue should be addressed by the Army itself¹⁴⁰. There is little point in maintaining a position which is in disagreement with the majority of the Christian Church if it is not totally convincing even to the leaders and members of the Army.

The 'charismatic' issue is unclear, largely owing to the way the question was asked and the Army's changing ground, except that – of those expressing an opinion – most respondents (17 to 1) felt that the Army's position restricts growth. This suggests that the issue should be more carefully considered. Wagner, Pointer, Gibbs and other Church Growth writers all claim that churches which employ the full range of 'spiritual gifts' are more likely to be growing than those which do not. If this can be supported by evidence (which is not the case in this study), and if many corps officers feel that the Army's current position on the issue is a hindrance to growth, then the Army should reconsider its position.

3.9.2.13 Salvation Army Culture

The Salvation Army was in its developmental phase in the late 19th Century, and developed its own sub-culture reflecting the ways of that time. (It is not unique in this – the use of Latin, vestments and Gregorian chant are vestiges of an earlier time, but they are retained in some places and for some occasions in the present.) However, the Army sub-culture in the UK in the 1990s is a branch of a sub-culture from a century earlier, and is considerably removed from the 'standard' culture today, and even more removed from today's competing sub-cultures.

Examples of this from the survey include the use of military jargon, and the formal use of ranks and titles, when it has now become normal for people in many walks of life to use personal names in virtually all situations. The uniform itself was perceived by a significant number as a hindrance to growth, although some others saw it as beneficial, and while it was not established to what extent this was because it was a cultural barrier or because of the high cost, the Army should consider the negative effects of the uniform.

There is no significant correlation between growth and the proportion of the corps who wear Salvation Army uniform, which may throw its value into question, since the available evidence does not indicate that it is useful in terms of growing the church. It may, however, be the case that in growing corps people tend to become non-uniformed Salvationists first and to adopt the uniform later. Nevertheless, there remains some doubt over the issue, since it leaves unexplained the higher tendency towards decline in corps where a higher proportion of soldiers wear uniform.

¹⁴⁰ Since this study was undertaken, General Paul Rader has instituted a 'Spiritual Life Commission' with an international brief. One issue which it is to address is the Army's attitude to the Sacraments. The Commission met for the first time in July 1996, but is not due to report until several months later.

3.9.2.14 Corps Planting

Almost all extant corps were founded between 1878 and 1900, and very few examples of corps plants since 1910 have survived (it is not possible to say how many failed). This may be a major element in decline, although this is not a straightforward issue, as explained by Robin Gill. However, the long trend of corps closures since the 1930s (at least) has been inevitably accompanied by declining membership, although neither fully explains the other, since there is a complex systemic relationship between the two figures. It therefore seems that planting new corps (or re-planting old ones), taking account of the local culture and sub-cultures, may be necessary in order to maximise the possibilities of growth.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the early products of Church Growth, once it became popularised under the influence of C Peter Wagner, was his list of the 'Seven Vital Signs' of a growing healthy church. These have been used extensively, by Roy Pointer, the Bible Society and others as a basis for church diagnosis. The 'vital signs', especially homogeneity, have been attacked by opponents of the Church Growth approach. They have also been the focus of research, much of it unpublished, though including *Turning the Tide*, a study by Paul Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson of Baptist churches in England (2.11¹⁴¹). Their study broadly supported Wagner's claims, though with some reservations, and it has provided a basis for this current work.

A full discussion of the 'vital signs' in the context of The Salvation Army is the subject of Chapter 3 of this study, and is in fact the focus of the entire work. It is therefore not considered necessary to rehearse the issues in full at this point. However, certain conclusions follow from the findings, and these are discussed below. To summarise, Wagner's claims, based on the work of McGavran, are generally supported, though with some reservations; however, the investigation into these claims has led to a number of discoveries. Though theoretical, these discoveries could be used to provide a foundation for practical action, which – given the broad support for the Church Growth approach – might be expected to address the issue of decline, and improve the probability of growth

Growth is associated with five of Wagner's 'vital signs':

- Officers who are primarily leaders, rather than pastors, and who remain in an appointment for long enough to be effective (generally, more than three years). There seems also to be an increased probability of growth where the corps is led by a married couple.
- A mobilised membership – that is, a high proportion of members involved in activity of varying kinds (though the detailed deployment of spiritual gifts was not considered). Perhaps significantly, the presence of prayer groups seems important, as does wide opportunity for service through lay leadership.
- A wide range of activities to meet the needs of the members. Activities which are church-focused, rather than community-focused, appear more strongly associated with growth, and activities for children and young people seem to be particularly significant in this respect.
- A balance of groupings, including cells, congregations and celebrations. Although the evidence was not conclusive (because it was quantitative rather than qualitative), while few corps were able to provide the celebration experience, there is a tendency for growth to be more likely where all three groupings are present.

¹⁴¹ Where numbers are given in parentheses, they indicate the section in this document where more detailed support may be found for the assertions being made.

- The use of effective means of evangelism – methods which produce converts. In this study the evidence strongly supports an emphasis on evangelism through church-focused, rather than community-focused, activities.

Conversely, the evidence does not support the claim that growth is associated with:

- A homogeneous membership. None of the variables considered in this study showed any association between homogeneity and growth, except for ethnicity. However, very few corps had a substantially mixed ethnicity among the members, and while those which were mixed were in a worse-than-normal decline, they were also in areas (such as inner cities) where other factors also made decline more likely. The evidence in this respect is therefore unreliable: however, where there is evidence about homogeneity, other than of ethnicity, it does not support Wagner's claim.
- Any particular theological emphasis. Although this study was not approached from a primarily theological perspective (which would have been necessary for a full examination of this issue), no evidence was found for the claim that growth was more likely with conservative evangelical than with liberal corps or leaders. Similarly no evidence emerged that growth was associated with an emphasis on evangelism rather than on service, nurture or administration. It should be noted, however, that The Salvation Army is not very diverse theologically, and it may be that the differences were insufficiently marked to affect the results.

However, it would be inadequate, having stated the results, to leave the study there. With a view to not merely reducing decline, but promoting growth, it is necessary to consider also what implications are to be found when Salvation Army practice – past and present – is compared with those Church Growth principles which the evidence supports. It is further necessary to consider the other results which have emerged from this study in order to make clear some of the ways in which Salvation Army policy and practice might change.

4.1.1 Leadership

William Booth's leadership of the Christian Mission was originally subject to a committee, but was redefined in 1877 to place him in sole charge (1.8.3). He was a 'dynamic leader', in Wagner's terms, and was at his best when that dynamism was allowed full rein.

If the Church Growth principle of 'maximising the harvest' is to be followed, then the Army should be appointing to corps (whether new or existing) with the best growth potential those officers who can be identified as having a profile which is associated with growth.

The Salvation Army was, arguably, founded not by an individual but by a married couple (1.8.1 and 1.8.2) – William and Catherine Booth – and has what may be the unique policy of requiring its officers (clergy) to marry only other officers, and subsequently (usually) to work together as a team, or to remain unmarried and work (frequently) alone (1.4.2). The evidence from the survey, on face value, supports this policy, since the probability of growth is higher in corps which have a married couple as officers. However, since this may be result of the appointments system favouring couples, further research is necessary before hard conclusions can be drawn (3.1.3).

There is no academic threshold for candidates for training as officers, other than a fairly minimal level of literacy and numeracy (1.4.2). Nonetheless, there is a tendency for officers to have been educated to increasingly high levels. A higher proportion of cadets are graduates than has previously been the case (3.1.4), and – although this does not show in the research – many who were not graduates on entry take degrees as mature students, usually combining study and work. There is a tendency for younger officers (or those relatively recently commissioned) to have higher academic qualifications than their predecessors, though there is little evidence that the appointments procedure takes this into account.

The Army has tended to reward long service, often placing people in more responsible appointments or larger corps on the basis, at least in part, that they have served longer than other possible candidates. There is however no evidence for a relationship between growth and long service (3.1.7), and taking this with the evidence for a relationship between growth and length of stay in an appointment, it is clear that younger officers, especially those with evidence of ability, which might include academic qualifications, should be given at an early stage the responsibility for the types of corps which they might currently be expected to reach by their fourth or fifth appointment.

As mentioned above, the results of the survey indicate that corps led by married couples tend to perform better in terms of growth than corps with other kinds of leadership. However, the results do not show clearly the relative effectiveness of women and men officers. In the absence of evidence (and until evidence is forthcoming), it seems reasonable to assume that there is no difference. From this premise it seems that the Army is not deploying its officer strength to the best advantage, since both in corps (the subject of this study) and elsewhere, the great majority of positions with serious responsibilities are given to men (or, to a lesser degree, single women); there seem to be very few married women whose leadership potential is exploited. This should be addressed by providing appropriate leadership opportunities for all officers, whether single or married, male or female, without securing any kind of *de facto* primacy for the male in a partnership.

Since it was found that growth tended to occur with leaders who saw themselves as having high ability in leadership and administration, rather than in pastoral skills, the Army should take these abilities into account when considering the appointments of officers (3.1.8). While the extent of shared leadership, in the sense of decision-making, was not conclusively linked with growth, there seems to be an association with *some* element of sharing, regardless of the nature or extent (3.1.9). However, growth is clearly associated with the extent to which public leadership in worship is shared (3.2.5), and this should therefore be reinforced by the Army, through training both of officers and non-officer members to recognise and enhance the value of participation in such ways. One key component may be the encouragement of officers and others to accept shared leadership roles in public worship as a regular element, rather than seeing it as primarily a form of deputising when the corps officer is absent. In this way the opportunities for participation would be opened more widely, non-officers would be able to learn by doing the relevant tasks, and officers would benefit by receiving ministry from their people, rather than feeling obliged always to minister.

Church Growth theorists have generally argued that The Salvation Army has itself caused much of the damage it has sustained, because of its policy of moving officers frequently. Although it could never be claimed that long stays produce growth, there is a clear indication (3.1.6) of a trend linking growth with longer periods in appointments – and conversely, decline with shorter periods. It is therefore important that this relationship is used positively, so as to encourage growth in corps. At the time of the survey, the mean length of stay was 2.23 years, whereas growth becomes much more probable after the third year. This is an issue which the Army could resolve quite easily, by deciding that corps officers should normally stay in an appointment for a minimum three years (emergencies apart) and that where a corps is growing, no move should be contemplated other than at the express wish of the officers in question and the lay leadership of the corps.

However, the logic of the relationship suggests that the length of stay in senior management appointments should also be increased, so that benefit can be gained from consistent long-term leadership. At present, most senior appointments involve people who are aged 55 or over, and they normally, having reached the high rank of lieutenant-colonel, could expect three or four appointments at that level before retiring at 65 (or 60 for women¹⁴²). The need for long-term leadership may also imply that officers should receive senior appointments at an earlier age, in order to permit longer stays, which may introduce other benefits beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁴² Single women officers of the rank of lieutenant-colonel or higher may opt to delay retirement until the age of 62.

There was a complex of issues surrounding the age, length of service and academic qualifications of officers, because each is related to the others. Nevertheless, it seems that younger officers tend to have higher qualifications, but are normally given appointments with less growth potential. This question was not addressed directly, because corps were not considered by size, but by growth. However, it is recommended that proven intellectual ability, through academic or professional qualifications, should be considered alongside spiritual and personal qualities, when appointments are to be made. There may be grounds for introducing a 'fast track' which allows younger, well-qualified, officers to rise more rapidly (through fewer, not shorter, steps) to the command of corps which are larger or have more growth potential. Graduates or professional people, when becoming officers, will frequently have been trained as decision-makers: if these abilities are not used in their earliest years of service, the officers may become frustrated, and there will certainly be avoidable waste of opportunities.

It may be wise to use such people in positions where their intellectual training is most beneficial – that is, in settings where either they are reaching other educated people, or where opportunities exist for either analytical or creative leadership.

4.1.2 Mobilisation of Membership

The Army, in line with its military imagery, is leader-directed (1.5.3). This conforms to the first of Wagner's *vital signs* (where the leader in question has appropriate gifts and abilities) but may restrict the second (2.10.1 and 2.10.2). This is because there can be a tendency for officers to try to do (or at least to control) every activity which the corps undertakes; similarly, many members of the corps may seem happy to leave the work to the officer. It would probably be fruitless to look for cause and effect – but it is necessary for the cycle to be broken. Officers need to become more facilitative, rather than active and directive, and members, especially 'lay' leaders, should expect and receive more responsibility for the direction and activity of the corps, as well as for their own individual life and witness as Christians.

In its early days, the Army mobilised its membership through activities such as street processions and public testimony (1.8.1 and 1.8.2). Moreover, the rapid rate of growth provided opportunities for leadership as hundreds of new stations (later corps) were opened (1.8.5). The current rate of decline, with a more sophisticated and less easily galvanised membership, means that opportunities of that kind are reducing, but with imagination other types of opportunity can be envisaged. These might mean reducing the formal programme, in order to liberate people for informal Christian activity and witness among family and friends.

Most corps surveyed had an astonishingly high level of mobilisation, as measured by the activities which took place (3.2.1 and 3.3.3). However, the available measures did not identify the individuals involved in each activity, and it therefore remains possible that the activities were led and undertaken by a small group of highly committed members, while the majority did little. Surprisingly, the external (community-focused) activities bore little relationship to growth, which is much more strongly associated with the internal (church-focused) activities (3.6.1 and 3.6.2). This finding was replicated across a range of different tests, using a variety of measurements, and is therefore quite reliable. Accordingly, if the Church Growth approach is taken, the Army should be placing its resources where they produce the best return, and this seems not to be from social and community work. However, some caution should be exercised: it may be that the community work, as Presence Evangelism (2.5.1), is tilling the ground which consequently becomes fertile for evangelism through other means. This should, however, be monitored, to ensure that scarce resources are used for the mission of the Church, and not dissipated by using them for work which is rightly the realm of other agencies.

The number of Local Officers in the corps was found to be significantly associated with growth, in a number of different ways (3.2.2). Firstly, the number of people in the key structural positions (the Census Board) has such an association, but secondly, the ratio of other Local Officers to the total membership is also associated with growth. Finally, there is a non-linear relationship between the length of service of Local Officers and the growth of the corps, indicating that growth is more likely where there is a regular turnover of members in Local Officers roles, averaging about 7 years. All of these factors, taken together, give strong support to Wagner's second 'vital sign'. They should also provide guidance for Salvation Army practice, indicating that corps ought to be encouraged to provide leadership opportunities for many of their members.

Prayer was found to be an important factor in growth, as measured by involvement in prayer groups (3.2.4). While there was no relationship between growth and either the number of prayer groups or the number of participants, there was a clear distinction between corps with no prayer groups (almost all of which were in severe decline) and corps with at least one prayer group. Whatever the reasons, identifying which would involve a different kind of study, the facts are clear: growth and prayer go together. This should be known by all Salvationists, whether or not they are officers, and especially by those with responsibilities for training or deploying officers, since any deficiency on this ground may be simply addressed.

Participation in the leadership of worship was found to be associated with growth, although the precise nature of the types of participation which have such a relationship is obscure (3.2.5). That is, while some of the effective types of participation have been identified, it is by no means clear why these in particular should be associated with growth. Further work is needed in this area, but for the present it may be sufficient to know that relatively simple, undemanding, forms of participation in the leadership of public worship are associated with growth. Therefore, officers and other leaders should make every opportunity for people to participate in such ways.

A wide, though clearly identified, involvement in pastoral care, including visiting, was found to be associated with growth (3.2.7), and Salvationists should therefore be encouraged and trained to accept the responsibility for the care of one another, rather than assuming that it is the job of the professional (the officer).

There was insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that mobilisation could be indicated by the number of members wearing Salvation Army uniform, or at least that this number (or proportion) was associated with growth (3.2.11). Given that there is a relationship between growth and the number of Local Officers (all of whom will normally be uniformed members), the lack of evidence on this question is the more striking. It seems therefore that, while there may be value in the uniform in many situations and tasks, it should not be seen as an indicator of commitment or mobilisation, either for individuals or for the corps. It may be that it is at best an irrelevance to growth, though a substantial number of officers actually feel that it can be a hindrance (3.8.5). Uniform should therefore be used with caution, rather than assuming it is necessary in all circumstances, and corps officers and other leaders should be alert to the possibility that growth may in some circumstances be accelerated by the absence of uniform.

There seems to be a gap in the way most corps work. According to the results of this study, corps which are growing are likely to share responsibility for both evangelism and nurture widely among the members (3.2.10 and 3.2.7). However, the normal operational structure has the Corps Sergeant-Major and Recruiting Sergeant only (where both exist) sharing with the CO the main responsibilities for evangelism and nurture (1.5.3). This seems to be restrictive in both areas, while resources (time, money, effort *etc.*) are spent on activities which should be a means, rather than an end. A way needs to be found by which the whole corps, and especially the lay leaders, are involved in evangelism and nurture, rather than leaving it to a few.

4.1.3 Corps Size and Programme

Wagner says that in order to grow, churches should be 'big enough' to provide a programme which meets the needs of their people, and that churches of all sizes can be big enough for a particular section of the population (2.10.3). In fact, in this study there was very little relationship between growth and the size or programme of the corps, except for one area.

The Salvation Army has clear programmes (the 'Young People's Corps' and 'SAY') for children and young people (1.4.1). From this study it seems that such work is even more important than has previously been realised (3.3.1 and 3.6.3). Very significant correlations were found between growth and, respectively, the numbers of Junior Soldiers, the Junior Salvation Meeting (Sunday School) attendance, the existence of Junior Soldiers' Meetings, and the existence of a Teen programme of some kind. While the causal relationship is not clear, the fact that such high correlations exist is at least grounds for further research, and may warrant fresh emphasis and resourcing for such work with some expectation that growth will follow.

Taken together, this evidence suggests that growth occurs where there is an emphasis on work with and for children and young people. It is a Church Growth principle that resources should be directed to fields which produce a harvest (2.6.1, 2.6.2 and 2.7.2): from this evidence it seems that, either directly or indirectly (this was not investigated) work with young people is fruitful, and this aspect of mission should therefore be well resourced in terms of materials, time, training and finance.

Wagner favours large churches, since they can provide a wide range of activities for their members. Salvation Army corps of quite small size seem to provide a surprising range of activities, although many of these are not for their members but for the wider community (3.3.3, 3.6.1 and 3.6.2). However, in general these 'external' activities have been remarkably unfruitful (3.6.1), and considerably less successful in terms of growth than the 'internal' church-focused activities (3.6.2 and 3.6.3). This seems to indicate that while there is merit in providing as wide a range of activities as possible, the emphasis should be upon those which are church-focused, since these seem to be the ones which are associated with people both coming into faith (converts) and joining the church (church growth).

4.1.4 Celebrations, Congregations and Cells

According to Wagner, a healthy, growing church should be providing its members with worship and fellowship experiences in cells, congregations and celebrations, and he stresses the importance of the congregations (2.10.4). Carl George, on the other hand, argues for the *meta-church* model, which omits the congregation element entirely, concentrating on multiplying cells, the members of which gather for celebration (2.12).

From this study of Salvation Army experience it is not possible to say which (if either) is correct, since too few corps were able to offer the entire range under consideration. The evidence however supports the claim that a balance of worship and fellowship experience is associated with growth (3.4.4). It is very clear that most Salvationists have few opportunities to meet in celebration mode, since most corps are very small (3.4.1). Many of the corps are not even able to meet as a congregation if the numbers involved are the sole measure of the experience (3.4.2). Most, however, do meet in cells of some kind, and the number of cells in the corps is associated with growth (3.4.3). It would therefore be reasonable for corps members (and their leaders) to be encouraged to make cell meetings a priority. Meeting regularly for Bible study, fellowship, prayer, worship and similar activities would probably be helpful for the individuals concerned in any event, even if there were no association with numerical growth, since such activities should lead to growth in the spiritual dimension.

Although very few corps were able to provide all three types of experience, it was found that where this was happening, such corps tended to have a significantly higher growth index (3.4.4). Even where only two of the experience-types were provided, those corps were more likely to be growing than where only one type of gathering was available (whether this was a cell or a congregation).

It is therefore recommended that, while most corps meet as congregations at present, and most could also arrange for cells to be implemented by local decisions, the Army should consider centrally and regionally how it may make the celebration experience of worship more available and attractive to Salvationists and others. A meeting which is essentially a concert (many of which take place in different venues) is not a celebration of worship, and would only attract a certain kind of people – primarily those who appreciate the style of music on offer. The Army needs to consider ways in which worship of God can be celebrated as a coming together of the community of God, within the Salvation Army as a denomination. This might be done, for instance, where geography permits, by clusters of six to eight corps pooling their resources to engage together in the best possible act of worship. Alternatively (or additionally) where the opportunity can be found, Salvation Army corps might work with other local churches (many of which will also be small and experiencing similar problems) to mount inter-church celebrations¹⁴³.

Such means, together with re-emphasising the benefits of (and making opportunity in a busy schedule for) the cell group, should provide the balanced experience which Wagner and others say is characteristic of a healthy church. This is well within the Army's power to implement, once the members are convinced of the benefits.

4.1.5 Homogeneity and Cultural Relevance

The most controversial of Wagner's 'vital signs', echoing the mixed reception given to McGavran's teaching from which it originates (2.2.1 and 2.8.1), is that of homogeneity. According to Wagner, a healthy growing church will be composed of one kind of people (2.10.5). The survey found no evidence to support Wagner's claims on this issue: where growth was associated with homogeneity on any of the measures used, the correlation fell well short of statistical significance (3.5 *ff.*). The only issue on which there was a discernible difference was ethnicity, but this involved very few corps, and was obscured by additional factors, such as the type of locality (3.5.4). The evidence of the survey therefore does not support Wagner on this 'sign'.

However, it is possible to interpret the issue of homogeneity as being concerned with 'cultural relevance', on the basis that what is relevant to one culture may be irrelevant to another, and that therefore people will naturally group together where they find a church or corps which meets their needs.

¹⁴³ From personal experience, I would argue that this approach can work. In 1976 I directed a production of a Christian musical which involved 12 churches in Exmouth. The exercise was ostensibly evangelistic, but in fact functioned more like Wagner's celebration, giving a new and stimulating experience of worship (albeit theatrical) for the cast and team (about 40 people) and the audience (more than 600). Most of the audience were associated with churches, which is why it was functionally a celebration rather than a successful attempt at evangelism. Nevertheless, it changed the spirit and level of co-operation among those churches for several years.

The Salvation Army began (1.8.1, 1.8.2 and 1.8.10) with a mission focused on the poor (though it was, as shown by Ward, most effective among a slightly higher class of people); it adopted (and adapted) the culture of its target group. For example, the late Victorian era was militaristic – even jingoistic – and the use of a quasi-military approach was an inspiration (1.8.4). Other aspects of working-class city culture were also adopted by the Army, such as evangelistic meetings with programme formulae and environments similar to those of the music hall (1.8.2). The Army did not adopt one sub-culture: it adapted several, in order to appeal to a wide audience.

The Army was culturally relevant through its overall style, including imagery, language, costume and music. This cultural relevance continued, surviving the First World War through the impact of the Army's relief work, but it could not survive the Second World War (1.8.18). By that time, the public had seen enough militaria, and had become less impressed by organised Christianity in general. The combination of religion and an obsolescent sub-culture became associated with a constant rate of decline.

Regrettably, it seems that the factor which holds Salvationists together in corps today may be Salvationism itself, rather than any other kind of homogeneity. This *esprit de corps* might be laudable in one sense, since it demonstrates a high degree of loyalty: however, it is inevitably unattractive to those – the vast majority of the population – who do not share the common bond.

It was found that the mean age of the corps members was related to growth, and that there was a tendency for growth to occur in corps with a higher proportion of younger people (3.5.6). It seems that in years past The Salvation Army made some serious mistakes in communicating with the young 'baby-boomer' generation, which means that relatively few of that generation (roughly, those born between 1946 and 1964) are now within its ranks. This inevitably has repercussions, as the absence of this generation means that even fewer of its offspring are presently within the Army's sphere of influence. This is reflected in the small numbers of children and young people reported, and in the number of corps with little effort directed at young people (3.3.2 and 3.5.3).

This is an issue which needs to be addressed both long and short term. In the short term, the Army must find ways of speaking to the needs of the missing generations, which may mean changing some aspects of its culture. For instance, the baby-boomers tend to be individualistic, informal and anti-military, and their culture(s) involve contemporary (especially rock) music: a regimented organisation with a taste for brass bands may be several cultural steps away. In the long term, the Army needs to ensure that this never happens again. It must strengthen its work with today's children and young people, using methods which are appropriate to the people concerned, rather than to the workers or those supervising them. This is not only a matter affecting youth work, since the young will get older; as they do so, they need to find that worship, and the other activities of their church, remains relevant to their needs and their culture.

The question of ethnicity is a similar issue in some ways. The Salvation Army seems to be able to make itself relevant in some of the countries from which ethnic minority communities have originated (1.8.6), but it seems that immigrant Salvationists have not found a place in indigenous UK corps, and that there has been little if any success in creating alternative corps which are adapted to the needs of the minority groups (3.5.4). This is a similar issue to that of the missing generations, because it seems to be again a question of culture blindness. The Army needs to find ways of respecting, and working within, cultures which are at some distance from that of the current UK membership.

The distinctive nature of Salvation Army music has been noted in several places (*e.g.* 1.7.2 and 3.8.1). Although this study was not directly concerned with music, it was found *passim* that most corps use congregational music from a variety of sources (3.8.1). Moreover, there is some evidence, although inconclusive, that the use of contemporary music is associated with growth. More research is needed, but if confirmation is found, this would suggest that corps should be encouraged to adopt a wider variety of material and style in order to remain (or become) relevant to a wider variety of cultures.

The Salvation Army uniform was adopted from 1878, following the inspiration of Cadman, to identify the wearer as a soldier of Christ, specifically as a member of The Salvation Army, while avoiding the tendency to follow fashion (1.7.1 and 1.8.4). It was to be cheap, adaptable and practical. However, it was also a product of fashion, or at least of *zeitgeist*: the late 19th Century was a militaristic period, in which military imagery was clearly understood; it was also a period in which Christianity was dominant and influential – the people understood what was being said, even if the methods attracted scorn or amusement. The Salvation Army uniform was thus culturally relevant. However, the military style of dress may now be counter-productive; it is now out of key with contemporary British culture (or the mix of cultures), and is recognised by a significant number of corps officers as presenting a restriction on growth (3.8.5).

Today there are issues which should be addressed.

- Since the Second World War at least, the United Kingdom has been generally less interested in military matters, and the armed forces have declined, although remaining active in relatively small scale conflicts or in alliance with other powers. Moreover, where conflict does occur, the devastating scale of the weaponry and other factors mean that it is no longer widely perceived as a normal and acceptable part of life. The military imagery is consequently less appealing.
- The population of the UK is now generally unchurched: only about 10% are regular church attenders (though this may be misleading, since there may be many who are active church members but who cannot attend regularly); the remainder includes nominal Christians, members of other faiths, people with no faith. Of the whole population, there may be many who are not immediately aware that a Salvation Army uniform identifies a committed Christian (it might, for instance, identify a social worker, a musician, some kind of authority figure *etc.*).

- The uniform was designed to be cheap, but is not so today. In a major corps, a new Salvationist who wishes to become involved in the various musical activities must spend more than £500 on uniform. This will be prohibitive to the long-term poor (ironic, given the Army's initial mission objective) and to others such as students, who are temporarily poor.
- The uniform (to some extent) removes the need to follow fashion. There has only been one major redesign of the uniform (in 1970) since it was first standardised. Today, however, the changes in fashion are so much more rapid that a suit which was designed 26 years ago (or 110, since some are still wearing what is essentially the earliest style, with minor modifications) immediately identifies the wearer as old-fashioned, formal, and irrelevant.

There may be occasions when uniform is totally appropriate. Some clergy use a kind of uniform to identify themselves, and this might be a sensible move, especially if the uniform were adapted to make it clearer that (for officers) it was clerical garb. However, other ministers use no such distinguishing clothing, perhaps because they do not want to raise the same barriers which are perceived in Salvation Army uniform. It may be that there is no one answer, and the issue should be considered by the individuals concerned, in the context in which they work. Sometimes Salvationists work together in a group, such as a band or songster brigade (choir) and the use of a uniform may enhance their work in such a context, although this does not seem to be the view of participants in worship bands in most churches where these are found. The uniform can, however, be a useful identifier, and sometimes even a safe pass, where it is important for someone to be recognised as a Salvationist. This may include emergency support services (*e.g.* at a rail crash), literature evangelism in a town centre, fund raising activities, *etc.* The fact that the uniform has strengths should not blind the Army to its weaknesses, and it may be necessary for both the style of uniform to be made more flexible and cheaper, and for the option of wearing it or not to be left to the individual (or local group) discretion of those concerned.

There may therefore be value in reconsidering both the concept and style of Salvation Army uniform, in favour of greater flexibility and less formality, as well as increased viability economically.

The issue of uniform is in some respects similar to that of language. Both create artificial cultural barriers, increasing the difficulty of communication with people of a different sub-culture. The Army's use of military terminology is acknowledged as a cause for concern by a significant number of corps leaders, claiming that this was a factor restricting growth (3.8.5). This could be easily resolved by abandoning (or restricting) such jargon in Salvation Army publications and on public occasions. For instance, while it may be of interest to some Salvationists to know whether Mike Parker is a captain or a major, to the public at large it is only relevant (if at all) that he is the leader of the Army in Croydon. This being the case, there is little reason to use the formal titles in public (and perhaps not at all, unless there may be some occasion on which they are relevant), and if the Army is to address the cultural issues which alienate it from the informal 'baby-boomers' and their progeny, it would be an easy step to minimise formality and jargon in its language.

William Booth was aware of both the strengths and difficulties of homogeneity in a church, although he did not use the term. His initial objective had been to 'win the lost', through the Christian Mission, and then to transfer them to the 'normal' churches. However, as he explained, they did not fit (1.8.2). The members of the churches may have lived in the same area as the new converts and may have spoken English, but they had different outlooks on the community, used language differently, and were different in many ways. They were in fact different 'people groups', and each group felt uncomfortable in the presence of the other. Booth recognised this, and formed the new converts into largely homogeneous churches of their own. Booth himself was a product of the 'church' group, but he adopted a 'cross-cultural' approach to evangelism, identifying himself with the unchurched.

McGavran also increased the church's awareness of 'people groups', showing first that there are real cultural differences which should be taken into account in evangelism, and secondly that where these differences are respected, the whole group, or significant numbers, may choose together to become Christian (2.2.1). Booth was operating successfully on these principles when he specifically targeted the poor of London (and then of Britain) with methods appropriate to their culture. Bearing in mind that the early members of the Christian Mission, and then the Salvation Army were products of the middle-class church culture, this meant that they were already operating in E-1-C and E-1-D evangelism. The Army's expansion into Europe, especially France, meant that it was engaging in E-2 evangelism, and this was extended further when the Army began work in India, where Tucker adopted local culture so far as possible, including dress and symbolism, moving into E-3 evangelism (1.8.6).

William Booth was always concerned about 'How to reach the masses with the gospel' (the title of one of his early books, published in 1870, as well as a constant theme) (1.8.1). This agrees well with Church Growth thinking, especially that of McGavran and Wagner, since it targets large numbers of people – which implicitly (and, in Booth's case, explicitly) means the people towards the lower end of the socio-economic scale (2.2.2). However, according to Wagner, in England (by which he may mean the UK) the masses are resistant to the gospel, which is an exception to the general rule. This may be so, and might be associated with the 'middle-class captivity' of the church¹⁴⁴. It seems that today, with a very small, and declining, largely elderly membership, and with little impact on people at the lower end of society, The Salvation Army is no longer reaching, nor even targeting, 'the masses'.

4.1.6 Effective Methods of Evangelism

Wagner's sixth sign is (somewhat tautologously) that of 'effective evangelism': a healthy growing church will use 'an evangelistic method that works' (2.10.6). Few of the 'external' activities were found to be effective (3.6.1). Meals Clubs, Parents and Toddlers and Brownies were the exceptions, although Disability Groups and Pre-School Play Groups were marginally useful in terms of evangelistic success.

¹⁴⁴ A term used by Clive Calver at Spring Harvest 1994 (Minehead) though it may be in wider circulation.

The simple conclusion to be drawn is that, if Church Growth principles are employed, resources should be applied to those activities with a reasonable prospect of evangelistic success (which may then be magnified by increased resourcing), and withdrawn from those which are not successful (2.7.2). In general the 'internal' activities are more successful, although this is relative – few can be called highly productive (3.6.2). The most productive activity by far is Sunday School (by whatever name), which reinforces again the importance of resourcing youth work in the Army. The Over Sixties Clubs were moderately successful, as were the SAY groups (although these may in many cases be an aspect of nurture for people already 'captured' by Sunday School type activities). Marginally productive activities included Coffee Bars, Band Practice (surprisingly), the Home League and Junior Soldiers' Meetings.

Some caution should be exercised in interpreting these figures, since some of these activities, and even more of those not mentioned here, do not have evangelism as their main objective. Since it is necessary for church members to be nurtured, not merely recruited, activities which are successful in that objective should not be condemned because they are not also winning converts. However, those activities which do win converts need to be given a high priority and adequate resources. This applies especially to the work with children and young people, since it was found so consistently that growth is associated with this type of activity. The surprising (relative) success of Band Practice in evangelism needs further exploration, since this may be an evangelistic method which deserves better exploitation. Are non-Christian musicians attending (and participating in) rehearsals and becoming Christians through the music or the fellowship they find? Are non-musicians attending rehearsals and finding faith in some way? Are significant numbers of Salvation Army band members not in fact Christian when they begin their membership, but are finding faith through their involvement in music? Can the reason(s) be established and capitalised upon?

It is very clear that growing corps are those which make converts (3.8.4). Other types of growth, including biological and transfer especially, do not balance deaths and transfer losses.

Some Salvation Army activities are generally understood to be evangelistic in intent, and the effectiveness of these activities was explored in the survey (3.6.3). Again, the results reinforce the prime importance of youth work, although a surprisingly large number of people came to faith through the normal worship meetings, apparently without any previous (identifiable) contact.

The third highest score for effectiveness was that for Friendships, which seems to be related to McGavran's 'bridges of God'. Possibly in the UK, at least among those people The Salvation Army reaches, the important relationships are not those of blood or marriage (as suggested by McGavran) but those of choice. This indicates that Salvationists need time to form genuine friendships with unchurched people; there is a serious risk that Salvationists may be so busy with the very full programme of their corps that they cannot create the 'bridges' over which their faith can flow. There is perhaps also the potential problem that those who create time for such relationships may be rejected (as uncommitted) by those who don't, and consequently instead of winning new people, the Army may lose those who are already members. The Army needs to validate, and encourage, an increased freedom from the corps programme so that Salvationists may be more active – as church members – in the community, where they may influence others.

Corps Community Service ('external' activities) came out of this set of questions with a different, much more positive, result to that on other measures, indicating that in some ways it is valid as Presence Evangelism. It would therefore be inappropriate to abandon Community Service, but (on Church Growth principles) the effectiveness should be monitored, so that those methods which are evangelistically effective are employed.

Social Service and Evangelism

The findings of this survey, coupled with the Army's formal adoption of Church Growth principles and methods, mean that Salvation Army Social Service merits a fairly detailed discussion.

The Army has a deserved reputation for its social service. Some Church Growth writers and speakers (such as Roy Pointer) have commented favourably on The Salvation Army's involvement in social and community work, constituting Presence Evangelism by which, 'The Salvation Army has earned the right to share its faith' (2.2.3.1).

The Salvation Army had been involved in Social Work from its earliest days, even before the adoption of its military style (1.8.10). The 'Drunkard's Rescue Brigade' was formed in 1870 from the Shoreditch station of the Christian Mission. However, the form of such social work was that of an aspect of the local mission, rather than as a separate institution.

McGavran and others have taken 'Go ... to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples,' (Matthew 28:19) as the primary commission of Jesus to his followers (2.1). This means that all other aspects of Christian mission are subordinate to this and, with exceptions in emergency situations, should only be undertaken by the Church (by contrast with other agencies, including Christian parachurch agencies such as Christian Aid) insofar as they contribute to the primary task (2.2.1, 2.3.4, 2.6.2 and 2.7.2). This is over-simplistic, as was observed when this issue was more fully discussed in Chapter 2, and should perhaps not be taken too far as validating one form of mission whilst making invalid all others (2.3.4). Nevertheless, it is arguable that while both evangelism and practical concern are legitimate aspects of Christian mission, the priority should be given to evangelism, as was stated in the Lausanne Covenant. If this is so (as Church Growth writers would generally argue), and if this view is also held by The Salvation Army, as indicated by Arnold Brown in 1984, then some aspects of the Army's social work may be questionable, since they appear to contribute little to evangelism.

One of McGavran's primary contributions to missiology was his conclusion that, for the church, mission means growth (2.2.1). This meant that he rejected other forms of mission, especially medical, social and educational, *unless they were justified by in some way increasing the probability of new people becoming Christians and church members*. This was also (many years earlier) the approach of William Booth, who in 1890 launched his 'Darkest England' programme of institutional social service (1.8.12), not because of its contribution to social welfare, which was nevertheless significant, but because by making such a contribution it could increase the chances of salvation for those who were unable to consider religious questions because of their material or social deprivation (1.6.1).

However, an unfortunate side-effect, which Booth probably did not anticipate, is that institutional social services, as a distinct department, have become largely divorced from the church aspect of the Army. As Needham (1986) and Read (1986) both show, this means that the church membership is removed from the social service (1.6.1). The corollary of this is that the social services are not effective as a means of evangelism.

If the social services are to be understood as the church in action, it is important that the service is actually provided by the church, rather than by professionals who may be of any or no faith, and that the service is integrally linked with evangelism. The role of Presence Evangelism is understood and accepted, but it should lead to and be associated with Proclamation and Persuasion Evangelism.

From the evidence of this survey, Salvation Army Social Services are remarkably ineffective in terms of Church Growth; that is, they produce only 0.01 converts per corps per year – much the lowest score of all factors considered (3.6.3). They may make converts; some converts may attend worship at the institutions; others may join churches belonging to other denominations or none – but very, very few people join Salvation Army corps as a result of contact through Social Services. The issue certainly warrants further investigation, if only because of the tremendous expenditure of resources, both human and other, in this work.

- People may become *Christian* through Social Service activities, but without joining Salvation Army corps or any other church as *members*, possibly because of a lack of acceptance by existing members or some kind of cultural inappropriateness perceived by the new Christian.
- People may become *Christian* through Social Service activities, and then join other churches in preference to The Salvation Army; if so, the Army needs to find out why this should be so, and possibly take some corrective action.
- Converts may form part of a fellowship based upon the institution where they found faith, and perhaps this institution is *de facto* if not *de jure* a Salvation Army corps (or church), and should be recognised and resourced as such, to enable it to develop as a functioning worshipping and evangelistic community, as well as being a service provider.
- It may actually be true that very few people find faith through Salvation Army Social Services, and not merely that they find faith but do not join the corps; if so there may be grounds for a radical re-consideration of the value of such activities.

Salvation Army Social Services were formed in order to further the evangelistic mission of the Army, not merely to provide for material and social needs. If they are not fulfilling their primary mission, then perhaps their role should be revised. A number of approaches present themselves.

- The most radical is that the Army should close its institutional social services. This would make it very clear that the primary mission had once again taken priority, but would probably be a public relations and financial disaster, since for many members of the public the Army is perceived as its social services. It would also leave a great many people without the service upon which they rely, and would leave a smaller number of people for whom Salvation Army Social Service is a vocation without the means to fulfil that calling.
- The weakest approach is that of re-emphasising evangelism (up to and beyond the goal of 'responsible church membership') as the prime objective of the Social Services. This may be effective but, given that many Salvation Army Social Services workers are non-Salvationists, including a number of non-Christians, it may be impractical.
- A third option, which would be difficult to implement but may be rewarding, is to sacrifice the distinction between Social Services and Field, seeing all Salvation Army work as aspects of the one Army – a church. While this would result in some losses, in terms of personnel and services (since it would not be possible to employ non-Christian workers in roles which had been redefined as primarily evangelistic), it would lead to greater involvement of ordinary Salvationists as church members in Social Service. Salvationists would be enabled to form relationships with Social Service clients, which would then make their introduction to the 'church' fellowship less difficult. The Army could evaluate and modify its Social Services according to their evangelistic effectiveness.

As Booth said, on seeing the human need about him, *Something must be done!*

The Army was also engaged in social reform in its early days, including the battle for the raising of the age of consent (1885), and the liberation of Japanese serf prostitutes (1900) (1.8.11). The last significant such campaign (which took some 20 years to accomplish) was the abolition of the 'Devil's Island' penal colony. Since the 1950s, the Army seems to have abandoned its campaigning approach, preferring to avoid political issues. This would be welcomed by Wagner, who argues that growing churches may get involved in social service, but should avoid social action, since this can distract them from their primary mission, which is evangelism (2.3.4 and 2.10.7). However, there is little evidence that forty or more years without social action has benefited the Army's evangelistic work, whereas the period at which it was most active politically (up to 1900), involving several campaigns beyond those cited including the Darkest England programme itself, was also the time when it was most successful evangelistically (1.8.5 and 1.8.6).

McGavran recommended that in order to maximise the harvest, church resources should be applied where they produce the best results. This is not the practice of The Salvation Army, which tends to apply its resources on either the basis of 'fair shares' or on the basis of the greatest need. There is a conflict, usually unstated, within the Army at this point, since it operates in two roles: it is undoubtedly a church (despite its lack of formal sacraments) but it is also a para-church agency, acting in the area of social relief. From this internal conflict there arises difficulty over the allocation of resources.

There are lessons to be learnt from both the history and the present day effects of Salvation Army Social Services. The divorce between worship and service is a crucial factor. For social service to be effective both as a witness (presence evangelism) and as more direct evangelism, it must be undertaken by the local church. If legal restrictions mean that this cannot be done (for instance, because certain kinds of work can only be undertaken by qualified professionals, who are not to be found among the church membership) then perhaps the Army should accept that this is a kind of service in which it should no longer be involved.

4.1.7 Doctrine, Theology and Practice

Wagner's final 'vital sign' is that a healthy growing church will have biblical priorities (2.10.7). Since this is to a degree a matter of opinion, Wagner's summary is taken as the definition, and corps were tested to find their relative priorities in terms of evangelism, service, nurture and administration (3.7.1). Wagner's claim is that growth will be associated with a high priority for evangelism, coupled with a low priority for social service (and even lower for social action). In this survey, no such relationship was found.

It is disturbing to find that only 17% of respondents report their corps as giving a high priority to evangelism. Since the Army's name implies that its focus is on 'Salvation', this seems to suggest that the focus has slipped in some way. It may be necessary to re-emphasise that the movement exists to bring people to Salvation (not as an enclave of people experiencing it), and then to find ways of implementing this teaching. Since the present methods are clearly ineffective on the whole, this may involve a thorough revision of programme and methods, including among other things the actions proposed in this chapter.

Church Growth writers in general have stressed the importance of 'spiritual gifts' in growth (e.g. 2.3.2). This is a relatively new concept in The Salvation Army, at least where the overtly supernatural gifts are concerned (1.3.2), and the sample corps were considered on the basis of the involvement of 'charismatic' Christians in their fellowship (3.7.2). Few corps had a substantial number, and only about 30% had any at all. While there was a difference in growth between those corps with charismatic members and those without, favouring the former, the difference was not significant. This may, however, repay further study, since the field is currently changing in many ways.

McGavran and other Church Growth writers stress the importance of a conservative evangelical theology in growth, rejecting what they identify as the liberal alternative (2.3.3). This issue was explored, but the result was not clear, Salvation Army denominational theology is broadly evangelical, although shades of opinion inevitably exist (1.2.1 and 2.13.2). It is not clear that the respondents all meant the same thing by their choice of terms, and this finding should probably be rejected on this point alone, leaving the question unanswered (3.7.3). There should therefore be further study on this issue, involving both the officers and the corps membership, in order to determine the extent to which theological variation is associated with growth.

The Army's theological variations, within a broadly evangelical position, range from liberal through to conservative and charismatic. Evidence gathered for this study suggests that the liberal tendency was strongest in the generation of leaders trained in the 1960s and 1970s, but that current leadership training is more conservative (2.13.2). Many of those who trained during the 'liberal' period may also have changed their views, partly because with maturity they may have developed an increasingly independent view, but also perhaps because of the influence of 'theological fashion' reinforced by the impression that conservative, and especially charismatic, churches grow, while the Army declines.

Respondents (mostly officers) revealed a considerable level of disquiet on two 'spiritual / theological' issues, claiming that the Army's position on both was a restriction on growth (3.8.2 and 3.8.5).

Respondents expressed their unhappiness with the Army's practice on 'charismatic' issues. Unfortunately, because the survey took place during a period when the Army's practice was changing (1.3.2), the question may have been worded ambiguously, allowing people to register protests against either the non-charismatic stance or the more tolerant (even welcoming) position espoused by the then Territorial Commander, John Larsson. However, to some extent, it doesn't matter against what the protest was made: it may be far more important to know that there is disquiet over the issue, which needs to be addressed in some way. Perhaps a starting point would be to find out which aspects of Salvation Army practice (past or present) on such issues as 'spiritual gifts' provoke disquiet among officers, and the reasons for such unhappiness.

They were also asked about the Army's lack of sacraments, and it emerged that many officers were unhappy with the current position. This is therefore an issue which needs further consideration. To change this long-standing policy on this evidence alone would be an over-reaction, but it would be quite reasonable to undertake further study, ascertaining both the opinion of Salvationists (especially officers), and whether the theological and practical issues which influenced Booth's reluctant decision are still relevant.

The sacramental question is a serious issue, which should really be re-assessed anew in each generation. Early Salvationists found problems in observing the Eucharist (and also baptism) and William Booth decided that the sacraments should not be observed at that time (1.3.1). However, no firm decision was made – the question was 'postponed for some future day, when we shall have more light'.

Many of the original objections seem no longer valid, for instance:

- There are at present few new converts in the UK, and very few are former drunkards to whom communion wine would be a temptation (non-alcoholic wine could be used if necessary);
- Women officiating at the celebration of Eucharist or baptism is no longer shocking to most people – even the established Church of England now has women priests;
- Few new Salvationists, and very few leaders, come from competing traditions of observance, and people are much more tolerant of difference than was the case a hundred years ago.

A high proportion of respondents claimed that the Army's policy of 'non-observance of sacraments' was a restriction on growth (3.8.5). While it is not clear how such a restriction might operate (if we discount the mystical view that in some sense Salvationists are denied God's grace because they do not use these particular means), it is very clear that a significant number of corps leaders are not happy – for whatever reason – with the current position.

On this issue, The Salvation Army is out of step with the overwhelming majority of the Christian Church (only Quakers have a similar policy), and there is – as shown here – an arguable case that the position should be reconsidered.

The Salvation Army owes its main origins to the Methodist Church in England, and derived most of its doctrine from that source, including the re-statement of the Methodist doctrine of 'entire sanctification' (1.3.2). The Church Growth movement originated in the USA, and owes much to the Pentecostal / charismatic wing of the evangelical church (2.3.2). There is therefore a tension between the two emphases, which is now present within The Salvation Army (2.13.2). From its origins, the Army has stressed the 'fruit of the Spirit', as seen in holy living; by adopting in the mid-1980s the Church Growth approach, the Army introduced the competing emphasis on the 'gifts of the Spirit', which include special abilities such as teaching, hospitality *etc.*, but which also include supernatural phenomena such as tongues and prophecy.

Church Growth writers have consistently stressed the importance of spiritual gifts: Gibbs is typical in saying, 'the issue of gifts is crucial for church growth'. The Salvation Army has yet to come to terms with this issue. In its early days, the Army experienced many of the phenomena now associated with the charismatic wing of the Church. Since then it has stressed personal holiness, and has for years actively forbidden the public exercise of some spiritual gifts, such as that of tongues. This policy may have now changed, but the Army has yet to (and may never) explicitly state that it was wrong in the past, and intends now to adopt a more charismatic practice.

Nevertheless, the more welcoming posture was an innovation in Salvation Army culture, and it is still unclear whether either emphasis will become dominant in the future – possibly a kind of 'creative tension' will emerge. However, the Church Growth emphasis on gifts means that Salvationists, including their leaders at all levels, may come to expect that appointments are made on the basis of appropriate giftings, rather than earned merit (such as long service).

There are corps with a significant number of charismatic Christians among the membership, and there is some evidence that such corps are more likely to be growing, although this is inconclusive (3.7.2). This issue needs to be addressed more thoroughly, since it carries within it a challenge to the Salvation Army approach to both worship and deployment of resources. The Army needs to know whether growth really is associated with the adoption of a more charismatic style, as the Church Growth teachers suggest; if this proves to be the case, Army leaders need to be brave enough to lead the Army into the new ways.

Church Growth writers are generally opposed to liberal theology, saying, either explicitly or by implication, that an evangelical theology, and preferably one with a charismatic emphasis, is the only valid form of Christianity (e.g. 2.3.1 and 2.3.3). The Salvation Army has adopted Church Growth as its preferred strategy, but has perhaps not yet grasped the implications of this near unanimity of view in the Church Growth school of thought.

Salvationists promise to abstain from alcohol and other non-medical drugs, tobacco and gambling (1.1.3). Although these issues were not directly addressed, it seems from this study that there is some disquiet over the effects on growth of abstinence from alcohol (3.8.5). This implies that, for some at least, this issue has prevented people coming into membership. Since the survey took place before the launch of the National Lottery, it was probably true that gambling was a very minor issue. However, whether it would still be minor is in doubt; the restriction, if strictly observed, might be a prohibition too far for some prospective members – but it may be that despite official pronouncements, the ‘letter of the law’ is not observed, and that numbers of Salvationists participate in the lottery. These issues should be explored more fully, rather than simply repeating the orthodoxy of the past. The established standards *may* be appropriate for today, but they should be based on today’s evidence.

4.1.8 Methods and Tools

McGavran’s concern was to find and develop ways of maximising numerical growth, using methods from commerce and elsewhere to produce the best return on investment. A major element in these methods is the use of statistical information, particularly demographics (2.6.3). The Salvation Army has always used statistics in order to monitor its own performance, though this has not always been in relation to numerical growth. There is therefore no conflict in principle between the approach of the Army and that of Church Growth: such difference as exists is essentially over which factors should be measured, rather than whether measurement should take place. There seems little reason why The Salvation Army should not, if convinced of the value, adopt the Church Growth systems of measurement, with their strength in identifying trends and opportunities as well as marking progress.

In recent years the Army has increasingly used such means as community surveys when considering either new corps plants or a re-focusing of programme in an existing corps. However, there is as yet very little evidence that the Army has developed the goal-oriented approach of Church Growth (*e.g.* 3.8.4).

4.1.9 Salvation Army Growth

The Salvation Army expanded very rapidly – almost exponentially – between 1875 and 1890 (1.8.5). However, this expansion can now only be measured in terms of centres and leaders – not members – and this may obscure important elements in the pattern of growth. It seems that when the Army first appeared in a neighbourhood it attracted, if only by novelty, a significant number of its target people group. However, there is no indication that many of those attracted became active members. The likelihood is, according to Ward, that people attended for a while (perhaps until the novelty wore off), but that only a relatively small number became committed.

This means that initially the places of worship were overcrowded, seeming too small for those attending, but that for the numbers who became regular members the halls were actually too large. This had the double effect, as noted in different ways by Ward and Gill (1.8.5 and 1.8.6), that the Army increased its investment by planting many new corps very rapidly, and that most of those corps were small and others became small because the numbers attending (compared to the size of the hall) made the corps seem unattractive to newcomers. With hindsight it seems that the Army would actually have provided better for its own future if it had concentrated its resources on local growth, and allowed extension to take place only where (a) this was necessitated by overspill into an adjoining area, or (b) a deliberate planting policy was undertaken so as to open work in new areas from a position of strength rather than of weakness.

Although of historical interest, this is also relevant today: The Salvation Army is currently planning a wave of new planting in the UK, and it should learn from its own past. There is little prospect of the Army today being attractive simply through novelty: it has been around for a long time, and there are many more exciting activities which compete for the attention of the public. However, it has strengths – and could perhaps have many more, if it has the courage to become more innovative – which could be attractive. There is a reasonable prospect of growth through extension (planting), but if this is not large scale growth, based on relatively large membership (a minimum of 50 people) it will sow the seeds of its own future decline, and the cycle will be repeated.

The Salvation Army underwent some radical changes in 1890. There is no evidence which can clearly identify cause and effect, but the complex of changes seems significant.

- Catherine Booth, who was a convinced evangelist and the co-founder of the movement, died after protracted illness.
- George Scott Railton, who was also primarily an evangelist – although perhaps a little eccentric in his approach – had been Booth's first Chief of Staff; in 1890 he was transferred to the command of the new German territory.
- Railton was replaced as Chief of Staff by Booth's son, Bramwell. Bramwell Booth's gifts included strengths in forming systems and organisations, and he was renowned as a teacher of holiness, but he was less creative than his parents or Railton, and seems to have seen his role as keeping the machinery working, rather than facilitating an organic developmental flow.
- William Booth published his major book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, which set out Booth's views on social problems of the day, and his dream for a network of social institutions to combat these problems. Booth's intention was that the lives of people should be improved socially and materially, 'in order that they might better be evangelised'; it seems today that the social and material improvement may have become an end in itself, to some extent divorced from the main objective of evangelism.

- Finally, in or about that same year (1890) the growth trend changed. Prior to that date, growth had been rapid (according to the measurements which are now available), from 1890 (give or take a year) the rate of growth slowed, leading to a gentle peak in the 1930s and apparently inexorable decline thereafter.

The rapid growth of The Salvation Army in the UK tailed off around 1890, and the movement seems to have become almost petrified in the form it held at William Booth's death in 1912 (see 1.8, esp. Figure 15). Though some growth continued until the mid-1930s, it was slow. Since that point there has been almost constant decline, which has inevitably affected the mind-set of Salvationists, and perhaps especially their leaders. When three generations have experienced nothing but decline, it is understandable that they should see the trend as inevitable, and feel that if current strength could be maintained a great accomplishment would be achieved. By contrast, McGavran's emphasis on a 'theology of harvest' is remarkably optimistic. The concept that growth is not only desirable but *normal* in the church is contrary to the experience of Salvationists.

Eddie Gibbs has produced Church Growth material of greater profundity than some other writers, addressing the objections of evangelical Christians who hold contrary views (2.2.3.2). His contributions to the discussions have been both theoretical (including theology and missiology) and practical, with special attention given to problems presented by nominal Christians. He has identified four stages in the life of churches: 'progressive', characterised by high conversion growth (though also suffering high losses); 'marginal', with high biological growth, but lessening external appeal; 'recessive', with declining biological growth and reducing external networks of contacts through whom recruits can be won; and 'residual', in which the external constituency is virtually extinguished, while biological growth becomes very low as children of existing members cease to be interested (or the remaining members are old and/or childless). Gibbs argues that this life cycle is normal, and that the pattern will only be broken by spiritual renewal and constant activation of the membership in the external constituency (the relationship network).

The Salvation Army experience in the UK tends to support Gibbs' analysis, though the phases are perhaps not so clear-cut as he implies: there seem to be significant cross-over periods in which it is not clear which of two phases is dominant.

- Its earliest period (possibly up to 1890, though with traces until Booth's death in 1912) saw high conversion growth, which reduced as the second generation took over.
- The Army continued to grow, though more slowly, but seems to have become more introspective, with a concern to perpetuate the methods which were once successful, perhaps at the expense of both the spirit through which those methods were adopted and the aims to which they were directed. The second phase seems to have lasted until the mid-1930s, but the beginnings of the third phase are not clear until about 1960.

- The 'recessive' phase of the Army's life is certainly apparent in the 1960s and thereafter. The introspection of the previous phase perhaps led to an excessive concentration on internal activities, which meant that members were unable (even if they wished) to form meaningful relationships with non-members. By the 1960s, this meant that many of the (then) young generation were facing a choice between the church and other relationships. Some chose the church, and so excluded themselves from an external constituency; others chose the external relationships, and hence biological growth declined. The evidence for this phase is found in the absence of the 'baby-boomer' generation from the Army's membership (3.5.6).
- The Army has (perhaps) not yet entered the 'residual' phase, though it may be in a preliminary cross-over period. The absence of baby-boomers is now becoming significant, as the previous generations are retiring or dying. Among other effects, the loss of a particular generation means the decline of influence in the subsequent generation, in addition to the simple equation between the strength of a given generation (in its fertile years) and the probability of biological growth.

This reinforces the findings above that the Army must now address its failings with at least two generations, in order to reach both those it was unable to reach from about the 1960s (the baby-boomers) and to avoid finding itself in the same predicament again. Culturally relevant evangelism, nurture and worship are required for the Army to succeed in its mission, and this may be at the cost of its established internal culture.

David Holloway identifies the difficulty of changing the culture of an existing church, so that it becomes relevant to a new people group, in such a way that the new culture is seen as genuine. The Salvation Army has, as has been shown, its own unique culture, which is some distance from that of many people groups in the UK. Holloway argues that it is easier to plant new churches, which are culturally relevant, than to change existing churches. The Salvation Army has little experience of planting new churches, though it now has a programme for planting over a 25 year period. It must, however, be careful that the newly planted churches are culturally relevant to the people groups they target, even if that means being radically different to existing Salvation Army corps.

Salvation Army corps were shown to have been founded overwhelmingly between 1880 and 1890, with only a handful planted since 1900. This may indicate part of the reason for the Army's decline, since it has not expanded into areas beyond those covered a century ago, while the needs it was meeting in those areas at that time may now be completely different, and not amenable to the same kind of approach (for instance, the inner city working class area which was once fertile ground for the Army may now be largely Bengali Muslim, with Salvationists commuting to worship or engage in other, inward looking, activities). It is therefore recognised as necessary for the Army to engage once again in an aggressive planting policy, identifying target communities (which may or may not be geographical entities), and then forming appropriate strategies to take the Gospel to those communities.

This may mean adopting very different methodologies, and the Army must be flexible enough to permit this to happen. For instance, in new openings the uniform may be inappropriate, as may brass bands or other militaria. So long as the theology is protected in all essentials, and ethical standards are not compromised, all else should be liberated in the interests of effective evangelism and the growth of the church.

The Salvation Army is facing the most severe test in its history since its earliest days; the issue now is survival, since a simple projection of the rate of change indicates that the losses will be terminal at some point from 2035 (depending on the projection formula employed). Dr Rankine of the Church of Scotland said in 1883 that the Army was 'a great fact in the religious world'. Even apart from the fact that the rate of decline means the Army is failing in its mission of evangelism, it would be sad to find that a movement with so much acknowledged potential had become a footnote in the history of the Church in Britain.

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Statistical Sources

The following archive sources were consulted for statistical information about The Salvation Army. In general, where information has been published in official documents it refers to numbers of corps and of officers; information about membership has remained confidential. Where published records disagree, the lower or lowest figure has been accepted. Although access to the statistical records of the United Kingdom Territory has been granted, this has sadly been of no help for dates prior to about 1950, because of war damage in 1941 and the time delay in reconstituting a viable records system; records have, however, been kept very carefully since 1960, and these figures have been used in several sections of this study.

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Appendix A – The Articles of War

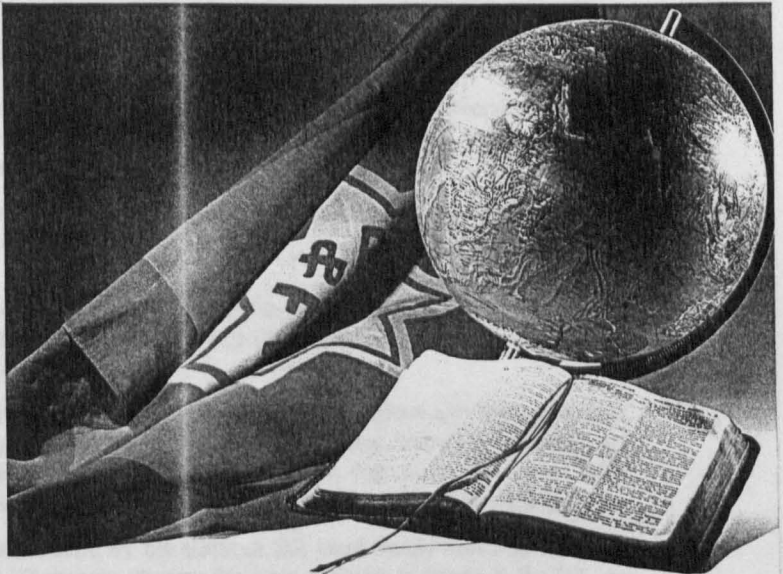
Appendix B – Glossary
Army Terms

The Salvation Army Articles of War

A Soldier's Covenant

HAVING accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and desiring to fulfil my membership of His Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army, I now by God's grace enter into a sacred covenant.

I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven articles of faith:



We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by His suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

We believe that we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

THEREFORE

I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to His leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible.

I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life.

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.

I will maintain Christian ideals in all my relationships with others: my family and neighbours, my colleagues and fellow salvationists, those to whom and for whom I am responsible, and the wider community.

I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life.

I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind and my spirit, knowing that I am accountable to God.

I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult, and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.

I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to Him, and in His name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged.

I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.

I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.

I now call upon all present to witness that I enter into this covenant and sign these articles of war of my own free will, convinced that the love of Christ, who died and now lives to save me, requires from me this devotion of my life to His service for the salvation of the whole world; and therefore do here declare my full determination, by God's help, to be a true soldier of The Salvation Army.

Signed

Signature of corps officer

Witness or officiating officer

Corps

Date



Appendix B – Glossary of Salvation Army Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Adherent	A person who may or may not have experienced conversion, but who wishes to regard the Army as his or her place of worship without making any other commitments.
Articles of Faith	The statement of belief, composed of 11 articles, accepted by all who join the Army.
Articles of War	The promises signed by every soldier in the Army. The document includes the Articles of Faith (the statement of belief) and ethical commitments.
Auxiliary- Captain	An officer who has accepted a call at a mature age (normally after the age of 40) undertaking an accelerated course of training. An auxiliary-captain can be promoted to the rank of captain after completion of a period of service and of correspondence study.
Band	The brass band for the corps. A full band should normally comprise about 20 or more players; the great majority of bands in the UK are considerably smaller than this (some, in fact have only one surviving musician).
Cadet	A person undertaking training to become an officer. In the UK this involves a course at the William Booth Memorial Training College in Denmark Hill, London.
Captain	The second rank for an officer, normally awarded after 5 years service and the completion of correspondence studies.
Cartridge	A regular monetary gift by members of a corps for the work and upkeep of the corps. The term arose from the military metaphor: to 'fire a cartridge' was to make one's contribution to the war.
Census Board	The body responsible for managing the membership and leadership of a corps. The corps officer and the qualifying Local Officers (<i>q.v.</i>) normally form the Census Board; the Board can agree to accept people as members, but the agreement of the Divisional Commander is required for removals from membership or office.
Colonel	The fifth rank for an officer, reserved for officers in very senior appointments, such as heads of service departments, commands or smaller territories.
Command	A geographical unit of the Army which usually includes one country though with fewer than (approximately) 40 corps.
Commissioner	The sixth rank for an officer, reserved for officers in very senior appointments, such as heads of international departments or territorial commanders of larger territories.
Corps	The usual local grouping of the Army, functionally equivalent to a church. Corps in the UK have up to 440 members (soldiers), but the great majority have fewer than 80.

Corps Council	An advisory board for a corps officer, theoretically responsible for discussing and advising on policy and programme (as distinct from personnel, which is the Census Board's responsibility). In practice, the Census Board will often serve also as the Corps Council, especially in smaller corps. All Census Board Local Officers are <i>ex officio</i> members of the Corps Council, but other people (not all of who need be in formal membership of the corps) can be co-opted.
Corps Secretary	The Local Officer (with a seat on the Census Board) responsible for statistical and historical records, and (with the Corps Treasurer) the finances.
Corps Sergeant Major	(CSM) The Local Officer (with a seat on the Census Board) who acts as principle assistant to the corps officer. The CSM is responsible, in addition, for planning meetings, especially those held outdoors.
Corps Treasurer	The Local Officer (with a seat on the Census Board) responsible for managing the corps property, and (with the Corps Secretary) the finances.
Division	A geographical unit of the Army composed of between 20 and 50 corps (some of which may have outposts or societies attached to them), and possibly 1 to 5 goodwill centres. As of April 1996, the divisions in the UK also have responsibility for Social Service institutions, most of which are clustered in or near city centres.
Divisional Commander	(DC) A senior officer, usually a major or lieutenant-colonel, responsible for the oversight of a division.
Divisional Headquarters	(DHQ) The administrative office for each division, under the leadership of a divisional commander.
Envoy	A lay employee undertaking a role normally occupied by an officer (e.g. as the leader of a corps), without training or commissioning.
Field Service	The largest branch of the Army in the UK, including almost 800 corps, plus goodwill centres, outposts and societies. The Field Service is the branch which is concerned with the church life of the Army.
General	The seventh rank for an officer, reserved for the sole international head of the Army, there is only one active general at any time.
Goodwill centre	A specialised form of local grouping, usually in a needy inner-city district, which has the particular aim of providing practical help and local social service to the people in that district, as well as providing religious services and pastoral care.
Holiness	A key aspect of Salvation Army doctrine, this was inherited from the Wesleyan tradition, and has been variously defined as sanctification, the second blessing, etc. An alternative name is 'perfect love', the term coined by Wesley and followed by Brengle. The Army holds regular Holiness Meetings, and traditionally the Sunday morning meeting is so called.
Home League	The section of the corps which includes work specifically with, for and by women.
Home League Secretary	(HLS) The Local Officer (with a seat on the Census Board) responsible for the leadership of the Home League.
International Headquarters	(IHQ) The central administrative office (in Queen Victoria Street, London) for the international Army, operating under the leadership of the General.

Junior Corps	Also known as Young People's Corps, this is the equivalent of Sunday School, but including all other children's work and activities associated with a corps. The Junior Corps is normally under the leadership of a Young People's Sergeant Major.
Junior Soldier	A young person (aged 7 to 18) who has claimed an experience of conversion and who has undertaken a simplified commitment similar to that of a senior soldier.
Lieutenant	The first rank on commissioning as an officer.
Lieutenant-Colonel	The fourth rank for an officer, reserved for officers in responsible appointments, such as divisional commanders.
Local Officer	A lay leader in a corps. There are two types of Local Officer – those forming the Census Board (the body responsible for the corps membership) and others. All Local Officers responsible for leadership of main sections form part of the Census Board, as do those with key management roles.
Major	The third rank for an officer, normally conferred after 20 years service
Meeting	A religious service (as well as a business meeting). Initially, the term 'service' was rejected as being too 'churchy'.
Mercy Seat	See Penitent Form
Officer	A full-time worker (equivalent to an ordained minister) with the rank of lieutenant, captain, auxiliary-captain, major, lieutenant-colonel, colonel, commissioner or general; the term is often extended to include workers with the rank of envoy (<i>cf.</i>). Normally (with the exception of envoys and auxiliary-captains) an officer has undertaken a course of training as a cadet over a period of years.
Officer Wife	A female officer (married to a male officer), now officially known (since 1992) as a 'married woman officer'. Officers may only marry other officers; the female partner takes the rank of the male, and usually also shares the appointment of the male.
Outpost	A sub-group of a corps. Sometimes an outpost may be a 'planted church' with hopes of growth, sometimes a former corps which has diminished to the point at which it must be oversighted from a neighbouring corps.
Penitent Form	A place of prayer, usually at the front of a hall, where a personal commitment (conversion, rededication <i>etc.</i>) is often made. The penitent form (sometimes also called a mercy seat, and occasionally an altar) is usually plain, sometimes simply a row of chairs facing the congregation, and the 'seeker' will kneel on the floor, facing the penitent form, to pray.
Province	A geographical unit including several social service centres. The term is now obsolete (since April 1996) as social service centres have been incorporated into Divisions (<i>q.v.</i>).
Provincial Officer	A senior officer, usually a major or lieutenant-colonel, formerly responsible for the oversight of a province (<i>q.v.</i>).
Recruit	A person who has claimed an experience of conversion, and who is considering (and being considered for) admission as a soldier.

Recruiting Sergeant	In principle, the Recruiting Sergeant (who has a seat on the Census Board) is responsible for the recruitment and training of new members. In practice, he or she is often either left with no recruitment activities (sometimes because of infirmity) or a very small role, because there are few recruits in many corps. Sometimes this role is supplemented by a general responsibility for pastoral care of those who are already members of the corps.
Singing Company	A junior choir, similar to the Songster Brigade, but attached to the Junior Corps.
Social Service	The branch which in the UK is concerned with most aspects of institutional social work, including (especially) residential care, counselling services, rehabilitation work, family tracing <i>etc.</i>
Society	A sub-group of a corps, usually one which is provided to enable a particular group of people to be part of the fellowship, without any intention or expectation of growth (<i>e.g.</i> in an Old People's Home).
Soldier	A full member of the Army (aged over 14), often (though not necessarily) a wearer of uniform. All soldiers have claimed an experience of conversion, and have undertaken to observe normal Christian ethics <i>etc.</i> , but have also accepted an additional commitment to abstain from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and the non-medical use of drugs.
Song	A hymn or song. The Salvation Army initially regarded the term 'hymn' as being too associated with the churches, and used the more familiar term 'song'.
Song Book	The authorised collection of songs (hymns) and choruses, approved by International Headquarters.
Songsters (or Songster Brigade)	The corps choir.
Territorial Headquarters	(THQ) The central administrative office (in Queen Victoria Street, London) for the Army in the UK, under the leadership of the Territorial Commander.
Territory	A geographical unit of the Army which usually includes one or more countries, but which can in some instances be composed of a part of a country. To be constituted as a territory, there will normally be more than (approximately 40) corps in the region covered.
Timbrel Brigade	A female group formed for choreographed tambourine playing, normally to the accompaniment of brass band music.
United Kingdom Territory	(UKT) The grouping of The Salvation Army which includes the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland.
Young People's Band	A brass band, similar to that of the corps, but attached to the Junior Corps.
Young People's Sergeant Major	(YPSM) The Local Officer (with a seat on the corps Census Board) responsible for the leadership of the Junior Corps.

Appendix C – Data Tables

Rank	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Years Served	This Appt	Education Level	Index
Captain	29 or under	F	Single	5.5	2.5	Higher (non-degree)	39.53
Lieutenant	30 to 39	M	Married	4.5	4.5	Degree or equivalent	264.29
Captain	30 to 39	M	Single	5.5	5.5	Higher (non-degree)	103.00
Auxiliary Captain	40 to 49	F	Widowed	3.0	3.0	None	237.50
Cadet	29 or under	M	Married	0.0	0.4	O Level or equiv.	40.63
Envoy	40 to 49	F	Married	4.0	4.0	Higher (non-degree)	60.71
Envoy	50 to 59	F	Married	4.0	2.5	None	61.90
Envoy	60 or over	M	Married	2.0	1.0	Higher (non-degree)	133.33
Captain	40 to 49	F	Single	18.0	5.0	Other	63.85
Envoy	30 to 39	F	Married	4.0	1.0	O Level or equiv.	42.42
Captain		M	Married		2.5		104.31
Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	17.0	0.2	CSE standard	105.00
Lieutenant	29 or under	M	Married	1.5	1.5	O Level or equiv.	172.22
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	8.0	3.5	Degree or equivalent	114.81
Captain		M	Single		1.5		46.30
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	8.0	2.0	Higher (non-degree)	118.67
Auxiliary Captain	50 to 59	M	Married	1.5	1.5	Higher (non-degree)	129.41
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	10.5	3.5	Higher (non-degree)	78.00
Envoy	50 to 59	M	Married	6.0	6.0	O Level or equiv.	105.88
Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	6.0	3.0	Higher (non-degree)	116.00
Lieutenant	29 or under	F	Single	0.4	0.4	Degree or equivalent	34.38
Major	40 to 49	M	Married	20.0	1.5	Higher (non-degree)	87.50
Major	40 to 49	F	Single	25.0	2.5	Other	140.00
Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	8.0	1.4	Higher (non-degree)	45.71
Auxiliary Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	1.5	1.5	Higher (non-degree)	118.75
Envoy	40 to 49	F	Other	10.5	0.3	O Level or equiv.	41.03
Lieutenant	40 to 49	M	Married	5.0	1.5	O Level or equiv.	56.00
Lieutenant	29 or under	M	Married	3.5	1.5	O Level or equiv.	46.15
Lieutenant	30 to 39	M	Married	4.0	1.0	Degree or equivalent	78.00
Lieutenant	29 or under	M	Single	2.5	0.5	Degree or equivalent	131.58
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	13.0	1.1	Higher (non-degree)	113.25
Major	50 to 59	F	Single	33.0	0.5	None	43.48
Auxiliary Captain		M	Married		1.0		70.45
Major		F	Single		1.5		104.88
Lieutenant	29 or under	M	Married	0.5	0.5	A Level or equiv.	50.88
Lieutenant	30 to 39	F	Single	3.5	2.0	Degree or equivalent	48.00
Major	60 or over	M	Married	33.0	2.5	O Level or equiv.	85.12
Envoy		M	Married	20.0	20.0		128.57
Major	40 to 49	F	Single	19.0	1.5	O Level or equiv.	60.47
Major	50 to 59	F	Single	29.0	4.5	None	83.83
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	9.0	3.0	A Level or equiv.	74.53
Envoy		M	Married		4.0		50.00
Captain	50 to 59	F	Single		2.7	None	82.61
Auxiliary Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	1.0	1.0	Degree or equivalent	40.00
Major		M	Married		3.5		71.33
Captain	50 to 59	M	Married		2.4	Higher (non-degree)	106.86
Lieutenant	29 or under	M	Married	3.0	2.3	O Level or equiv.	48.65
Lieutenant	30 to 39	F	Single	4.5	1.5	None	52.54
Lieutenant	30 to 39	M	Married	2.5	1.0		86.15
Captain		F	Married		6.5		158.49
Auxiliary Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	3.0	3.0	Degree or equivalent	100.00
Captain	40 to 49	M	Married	14.0	1.5	Higher (non-degree)	108.33
Lieutenant	30 to 39	M	Married	5.0	2.0	O Level or equiv.	47.06
Major	50 to 59	M	Married	33.0	0.5	None	68.57
Captain	40 to 49	F	Single	15.0	1.5	None	52.00
Captain	30 to 39	M	Married	8.0	1.5		61.39
Envoy		M	Married		5.5		129.41
Lieutenant		M	Married		2.5		141.18
Lieutenant		F	Single		1.5		50.00

Appendix Table 1: The officers surveyed.

Involved in Churches Together	United Services Frequency	United Missions Frequency	United House Groups Frequency	United Community Service	Growth Index
yes	< Yearly	Never	Never	Never	39.53
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Yearly	Never	264.29
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	103.00
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	237.50
no	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	40.63
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	60.71
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	61.90
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	133.33
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Never	Yearly	63.85
no	Never	Never	Never	Never	42.42
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	104.31
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	105.00
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	Never	< Yearly	172.22
no	Never	Never	Never	Never	42.86
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Yearly	114.81
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	46.30
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	118.67
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	129.41
no	> Yearly	< Yearly	Never	> Yearly	78.00
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	105.88
no	< Yearly	Never	Never	Never	116.00
yes	Yearly	Yearly			43.33
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	34.38
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	< Yearly	87.50
no	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	140.00
yes	Other	Yearly	Yearly	Other	118.75
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	41.03
no	Never	Never	Never	Never	56.00
yes	< Yearly	Never	Never	Never	46.15
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	78.00
yes	< Yearly	Never	Never	Never	131.58
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	< Yearly	113.25
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	43.48
no	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	70.45
no	Never	Never	Never	Never	104.88
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	50.88
yes	Other	< Yearly	Other	Never	48.00
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	Yearly	> Yearly	85.12
yes	Yearly	Never	Yearly	Yearly	128.57
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	82.61
no	Never	Never	Never	Never	60.47
yes	Yearly	< Yearly	Never	Never	83.83
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	Yearly	Yearly	74.53
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	Never	< Yearly	50.00
yes	Yearly	Yearly	> Yearly	Yearly	82.61
no	Yearly	< Yearly	Never	Never	40.00
yes	Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	71.33
yes	> Yearly	Never	Never	Never	106.86
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	48.65
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Never	Never	52.54
yes	Never	Never	Never	< Yearly	86.15
yes	> Yearly	Never	Yearly	Yearly	158.49
yes	Other	< Yearly	Never	Never	100.00
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	< Yearly	< Yearly	108.33
yes	Yearly	Never	Never	Yearly	47.06
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Yearly	Other	68.57
yes	> Yearly	Never	Yearly	< Yearly	52.00
no	Yearly	Never	Never	Never	61.39
yes	> Yearly	Yearly	Yearly	Yearly	129.41
yes	> Yearly	< Yearly	Never	Yearly	141.18
yes	> Yearly	Never	Yearly	Never	50.00

Appendix Table 2: Ecumenical Involvement

No of Soldiers	External Activities	Internal Activities	Growth Index
89	6	13	118.67
94	4	11	113.25
34	5	6	100.00
93	6	16	114.81
218	5	14	104.31
52	3	8	60.47
22	2	5	129.41
20	1	6	133.33
199	7	14	71.33
143	4	12	85.12
9	4	7	128.57
197	4	14	83.83
79	4	14	74.53
19	1	10	237.50
26	6	5	40.63
17	0	4	60.71
12	4	5	50.00
10	-	0	52.63
6	4	4	42.86
52	6	13	108.33
13	2	6	50.00
84	7	15	158.49
26	-	0	40.00
56	5	7	140.00
19	0	9	82.61
172	5	12	104.88
31	1	8	172.22
21	2	5	87.50
62	3	12	61.39
37	7	8	264.29
15	4	3	52.00
56	0	9	103.00
49	3	11	78.00
38	5	11	78.00
24	5	8	141.18
16	3	7	47.06
25	4	8	46.30
58	5	8	116.00
31	4	7	70.45
13	-	4	43.33
18	0	7	105.88
17	0	3	39.53
22	4	8	129.41
42	4	8	105.00
25	1	6	131.58
48	5	5	45.71
31	2	6	52.54
83	10	11	63.85
19	1	4	82.61
29	5	8	50.88
11	2	1	34.38
14	3	7	42.42
109	5	11	106.86
13	2	7	61.90
18	1	4	46.15
42	4	10	56.00
24	2	11	48.00
38	2	9	118.75
18	5	4	48.65
16	0	3	41.03
56	2	9	86.15
30	4	3	43.48
216	6	12	68.57

Appendix Table 3: Response data showing numbers of Soldiers, External Activities, Internal Activities and Growth Index for each Corps in the whole sample.

Activities	Outreach	Converts	Productive	Unproductive	Growth Index
7	4	6	2	2	264.29
2	2	0	0	2	140.00
5	4	0			141.18
1	1	0			237.50
5	5	6	3	2	104.31
1	1	0			131.58
4	4	0	0	4	105.00
1	1	4	1	0	133.33
2	1	0			118.75
6	6	14	4	2	114.81
4	1	0			113.25
5	5	0			104.88
2	2	0			129.41
6	4	5	2	2	108.33
1	1	0	0	1	172.22
5	5	12	2	3	106.86
4	3	16	3	0	128.57
4	4	10	1	3	129.41
5	4	7	2	2	116.00
6	4	5	2	2	118.67
8	6	0			48.65
4	3	1	1	2	50.00
7	6	0			158.49
2	0	0			52.54
3	1	0	0	1	40.63
2	0	0			34.38
3	3	0			47.06
2	2	0			48.00
4	2	0			43.48
2	0	0			50.00
1	0	0			46.15
4	4	0	0	4	46.30
5	0	0			45.71
3	3	0			42.42
5	5	0			48.65
4	0	0			42.86
5	0	6	3		50.88
5	4	5	2	2	100.00
3	3	0			60.47
4	2	0			70.45
4	1	5	1	0	83.83
4	4	1	1	3	56.00
2	2	0			61.90
1	1	0			82.61
2	2	0	0	2	86.15
3	3	0			61.39
7	5	7	4	1	71.33
4	4	5	2	2	74.53
4	4	0			85.12
6	5	4	1	4	68.57
2	2	0			87.50
10	1	17	4	0	63.85
5	4	3	2	2	78.00
3	1	0			78.00
4	2	0			52.00

Appendix Table 4: External Activities per Corps and Productivity of Converts

Purpose :-	Evangelistic			Nurture			Social Service			Unstated		
	No.	Weighted Attend.	Converts	No.	Weighted Attend.	Converts	No.	Weighted Attend.	Converts	No.	Weighted Attend.	Converts
Sunday School	37	859	285	14	270	66				6	100	0
Over 60s	14	385	21	3	61	0	3	45	19	2	14	0
Junior Soldiers	3	15	0	32	302	39				4	18	0
Corps Cadets	1	1	0	12	88	0				1	0	0
SAY Groups	8	98	0	11	112	30						
Home Leagues	29	768	34	17	335	17	5	152	4	4	29	0
Women's Meetings	11	90	5	4	38	4	6	72	7	2	19	0
Men's Meetings	1	2	0	2	4	0	1	3	0	1	3	0
Bible Study	6	51	2	31	230	4				3	15	2
Discovery Groups	1	4	0									
Children's Club	3	77	0	1	6	0						
Soldiers' Meetings	3	9	14	17	16	0	1	3	0	6	4	0
House Groups	8	46	2	11	84	3						
Charity Shop	1	50	2									
Youth Club	21	496	15				1	0	0	1	0	0
Coffee Bar	6	85	9	1	6	0	1	350	2	1	0	0
Songster Practice	1	9	0	30	453	24	2	47	0	6	95	0
Band Practice	1	9	0	34	410	50	2	45	0	7	64	0
Sing. Co. Practice	26	249	6				1	8	0	5	26	0
YP Band Practice				17	166	0				4	7	0
Totals	180	3303	395	237	2581	237	23	725	32	53	394	2

Appendix Table 5: Internal Activities by Purpose and No of Converts (1982 - 91)

Evangelism	Nurture	Service	Unstated	Converts	Index
2	1	0	0	1	39.53
3	5	0	0	7	264.29
3	6	0	0	37	103.00
1	7	2	0	62	237.50
1	3	1	0	5	40.63
1	2	1	0	4	60.71
1	6	0	0	7	61.90
1	5	0	0	3	133.33
4	7	0	0	31	63.85
2	4	1	0	0	42.42
7	7	0	0	69	104.31
1	6	1	0	2	105.00
3	5	0	0	11	172.22
1	3	0	0	1	42.86
7	7	0	0	1	114.81
0	8	0	0	0	46.30
5	6	2	0	22	118.67
1	7	0	0	0	129.41
4	7	0	0	26	78.00
4	3	0	0	0	105.88
1	7	0	0	24	116.00
0	0	0	0	0	43.33
1	0	0	0	1	34.38
3	2	0	0	80	87.50
2	5	0	0	0	140.00
3	2	0	0	0	45.71
3	5	1	0	4	118.75
2	1	0	0	2	41.03
0	0	0	0	0	52.63
1	2	1	0	2	56.00
1	3	0	0	0	46.15
3	4	4	0	0	78.00
2	4	0	0	5	131.58
4	7	0	0	0	113.25
3	0	0	0	0	43.48
1	6	0	0	0	70.45
0	0	0	0	0	104.88
4	4	0	0	11	50.88
5	6	0	0	36	48.00
4	2	1	5	1	85.12
3	3	1	0	14	128.57
0	2	0	0	0	82.61
4	3	0	0	0	60.47
4	7	2	1	20	83.83
5	9	0	0	0	74.53
0	0	0	0	0	50.00
2	7	0	0	0	82.61
0	0	0	0	0	40.00
3	10	0	0	16	71.33
5	4	1	1	72	106.86
4	0	0	0	0	48.65
0	2	0	0	0	52.54
0	9	0	0	0	86.15
5	8	1	1	7	158.49
2	7	0	0	11	100.00
1	7	1	0	59	108.33
2	5	0	0	6	47.06
7	5	0	0	0	68.57
1	2	0	0	0	52.00
2	3	3	4	3	61.39
4	1	0	0	3	129.41
5	3	0	0	0	141.18
4	1	0	0	0	50.00

Appendix Table 6: Corps with Internal Activities by Purpose, Number of Converts and Growth Index

District	Population	Special Features	Congregation	Work Local	Index
Small town	30,200	Seaside	Local	Mixed	39.53
Small town	30,000	New Town	Local	Yes	264.29
Rural	1,000	Fishing Village	Local	Mixed	103.00
Small town	49,000		Local	Yes	237.50
Small town	25,000	Mining area	Local	Yes	40.63
Rural	5,000		Local	Mixed	60.71
Suburban	16,000	Mining	Local		61.90
Small town	3,300	Port	Local	Mixed	133.33
Large town	75,000	Tourist Area	Local	Mixed	63.85
Inner City	30,000	Council Flats	Mixed	Mixed	42.42
Inner City			Non-local		104.31
Small town	27,000	Market Town	Mixed	No	105.00
Small town	18,000	Border Town	Local	Mixed	172.22
Suburban	10,000	Housing estates	Local	Mixed	42.86
Small town	30,000	Housing Estate	Local	Yes	114.81
Large town	263,000	Council Housing	Local	Yes	46.30
Large town	150,000	New town development	Mixed	Yes	118.67
Small town	11,000	Seaside	Mixed		129.41
Small town	9,500	Seaside	Local	Yes	78.00
Small town	17,000	Seaside & Fishing	Local	Yes	105.88
Small town	55,000	Mining Town	Local	No	116.00
Rural	4,240		Local	Mixed	43.33
City Fringe	120,000		Local	Mixed	34.38
City Fringe	35,000	Council Housing	Mixed	Yes	87.50
Rural	6,500	Military Barracks	Local	Yes	140.00
Small town	11,065	Seaside	Local	Mixed	45.71
Suburban	52,000	Council Housing	Mixed	No	118.75
City Fringe		Immigrant district	Local	Yes	41.03
Rural	450	Village	Mixed		52.63
Rural	14,000	Mining Town	Local	Yes	56.00
City Fringe	18,000	Council Housing	Local	Yes	46.15
Small town	13,000	Fishing Port	Local	Yes	78.00
City Fringe	35,000	City Overspill	Local	Yes	131.58
Large town	80,000		Local	Yes	113.25
City Fringe	50,000	Mixed Development	Non-local	Mixed	43.48
City Fringe		Council Estate	Local		70.45
Suburban	100,000	Housing estates	Mixed	Yes	104.88
Inner City	100,000	Deprived area	Local	Yes	50.88
Small town	40,000	Growing town	Local	Yes	48.00
City Centre	36,000		Mixed	Mixed	85.12
Rural	3,300		Local	Yes	128.57
Rural	3,500		Local	Yes	82.61
City Fringe			Non-local	No	60.47
Small town		Seaside	Local	Mixed	83.83
City Fringe	84,000		Mixed	Mixed	74.53
Suburban	20,000	Housing Estates	Local		50.00
Rural	12,000	New Housing	Local		82.61
Inner City		Old Housing	Local	Yes	40.00
City Centre	100,000		Local	Yes	71.33
Rural	7,190	Mining village	Local	Yes	106.86
Inner City		Housing estate/flats	Local	Mixed	48.65
Rural	20,000	Seaside	Local	Yes	52.54
Small town	5,000	AWE Complex	Local	Mixed	86.15
Rural			Local	Mixed	158.49
City Fringe	5,500	Mixed Area	Local	No	100.00
Large town		New Town	Local	Mixed	108.33
Small town	28,000	Mining/Dock Town	Local	Yes	47.06
Large town	153,000	Seaside	Mixed	Mixed	68.57
Small town		Fishing	Local	Mixed	52.00
Small town	10,000	Seaside	Local	No	61.39
Rural	5,000		Mixed	No	129.41
Small town	20,000	Seaside, Fishing	Local	Yes	141.18
Rural	4,500	Ferland	Local	No	50.00

Appendix Table 7: The nature of the corps districts

Appendix D – The Questionnaire

Following a pilot study, questionnaires were sent to 151 corps randomly sampled within three strata, determined by their growth record over the period 1982-1991. Responses were received from 63 corps, although not all answers were usable in every respect. Generally, the response rate for individual questions was around 60, representing a population of around 800 corps.

The questionnaire was based on that devised by Beasley-Murray and Alan Wilkinson (1981) in their study of larger Baptist churches in England. The format was kept as similar as possible, to permit comparisons, although a few modifications were made to allow specific Salvation Army responses or to interpret questions in terms which would be understood by people more familiar with Salvation Army jargon.

The questionnaire is shown below (in the next 23 pages).

Questionnaire No.

This sheet will be separated from the rest of the questionnaire when the results are being analysed, and only the number above will be used for identification purposes at that stage.

Name and address of Corps:	
Name and address of respondent: (i.e. the person replying)	
Position held by respondent:	

Officer Details	Commanding Officer	Other Officers (including wives)	Other Officers (including wives)
Name:			
Age Group (last birthday):	29 or under <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60 or over <input type="checkbox"/>	29 or under <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60 or over <input type="checkbox"/>	29 or under <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60 or over <input type="checkbox"/>
Male or Female:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Marital Status:	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Highest educational qualification: <i>Please use the following key</i> A ... Degree (or equivalent) B ... Higher education (non-degree) C ... GCE A Level / highers D ... GCE O Level / CSE Grade 1 etc E ... CSE (other than grade 1) F ... Other (eg. City & Guilds) G ... None			
Years as an officer:			
Years in this appointment:			
Any special pastoral responsibilities (e.g. Youth):			

If there are more than three full-time officers, please give these details on a separate sheet of paper.

If you have any part-time officers, envoys, associate officers etc., or a team or shared ministry is associated with the corps, please give an outline below.

If there is no officer, how long is it since the departure of the last one?	Years	Months
Who provides supervision/help for the corps? (e.g. DIHQ, neighbouring corps, Training College)		

Questionnaire No.

Section A - The community which the corps serves

Note: the term "district" should be taken to mean the area around the corps hall - either to the boundary with any neighbouring corps, or to a radius of 3 miles, whichever is the smaller.

1	How would you describe the district in which the corps is situated?	City centre <input type="checkbox"/> Inner city <input type="checkbox"/> City fringe <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Large town ($\geq 50,000$) <input type="checkbox"/> Small town ($< 50,000$) <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/>
1a	Briefly describe any special features of the district (e.g. Seaside, housing estate scheme etc.)	

2	What is the approximate population of the district?	
---	---	--

3	Is your congregation mainly local, or drawn from a wider area?	Mainly Local <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly non-local <input type="checkbox"/> About half and half <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--

4	How many other Christian churches are there within a radius of three miles?	
---	---	--

5a	How many of these churches are actively engaged in evangelism?	
----	--	--

5b	How many of these churches do you know to be growing in numbers?	
----	--	--

6	Please fill in the table below to describe (a) the housing in the district as a whole, and (b) the housing occupied by the members of the corps. <i>In each column mark with the number "1" the predominant type of housing, "2" the next most common, and so on for all types which apply.</i>		
---	--	--	--

	Housing types	Housing available in the district as a whole	Housing occupied by members of the corps
a	Spacious detached (e.g. farmhouse or mansion)		
b	Small to medium detached		
c	Semi-detached private		
d	Semi-detached rented		
e	Terraced		
f	High rise flats (> 4 storey)		
g	Low rise flats (≤ 4 storey)		
h	Other (please specify)		

7	Please fill in the table below to describe (a) the kinds of secondary schools attended by children in the district, and (b) the kinds of schools attended by the children of adult members of the corps (soldiers, adherents, friends, regular attenders etc.).		
	<i>In each column, please indicate by "1" the type of school which is most commonly attended, "2" the next most common, and so on.</i>		
	Secondary School Types	Schools available in the district as a whole	Schools attended by children of the corps
7a	Comprehensive		
7b	Secondary Modern		
7c	Grammar		
7d	City Technology College		
7e	High School		
7f	Independent (Day School)		
7g	Independent (Boarding School)		
7h	Special Needs		
7i	Other (Please specify)		

8	Since 1987, what proportion of the children of corps members have stayed at school until the age of 18?	50% or more <input type="checkbox"/> Between 20% and 49% <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 20% <input type="checkbox"/> There are no children <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---

9	Since 1987, what proportion of the children of corps members have gone to university or a polytechnic on leaving school?	50% or more <input type="checkbox"/> Between 20% and 49% <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 20% <input type="checkbox"/> There are no children <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	---

10	Does the population of the district include more than 5% immigrants (or their families) who have originated from outside the UK since 1945?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>If your answer is "No" go to Question 13, otherwise continue with Questions 11 and 12.</i>	

11	What are the ethnic origins of the main immigrant communities?	White <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani/Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Please place "1" alongside the largest group, and then "2" and "3" for the next largest groups.</i>	

12	What proportions of your corps and of the local population have the ethnic origins mentioned in your answer to Question 11 (taking the total for all immigrant groups)? <i>Please place a tick opposite the appropriate percentage for the corps, and then place a tick against the approximate percentage of the local population which comes from those regions.</i>		
		Corps	Population
a	1 - 10%		
b	11 - 20%		
c	21 - 40%		
d	41 - 60%		
e	61 - 80%		
f	81 - 100%		

13	Do most people in your district work locally?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> About half & half <input type="checkbox"/>
----	---	---

14	Please fill in the table below to describe (a) the occupations of the adult population of the district as a whole, (b) the occupations of the adult members of the corps, and (c) the occupations of the Census Board local officers. <i>In columns (a) and (b) mark with the number "1" the predominant group, with "2" for the next most common, and so on with all groups which apply.</i> <i>In column (c) please enter the actual number of local officers in each category.</i>			
		(a)	(b)	(c)
	Occupation Types	Local population as a whole	Members of the corps	Census Board local officers
a	Professional			
b	Employers and managers			
c	Intermediate and junior non-manual			
d	Skilled manual and self-employed non-professional			
e	Semi-skilled manual and personal service			
f	Armed services personnel			
g	Adult students (i.e. aged 18 and over)			
h	Home managers (housewives)			
i	Retired			
j	Other (please specify)			

Section B - Activities associated with the corps

Which of the following activities (see later Sections for Sunday meetings, Home Leagues, Sunday Schools, Salvation Army section rehearsals etc.) is your hall used for?

Please tick all appropriate columns for each activity, and add any activities which have been omitted and which you feel are important. Complete the final column by entering the number of converts during the last 10 years (1982-1991) for whom this activity was the first point of contact with the corps.

	Activities associated with the corps	Activities for which the buildings are used	Activities for which the corps is responsible	Activities which the corps sees as an important part of outreach	Number of converts for which this activity provided first point of contact
1	Brownies				
2	Guides				
3	Cub Scouts				
4	Scouts				
5	Youth clubs (senior)				
6	Youth clubs (junior)				
7	Activities for one-parent families				
8	Mother / toddler groups				
9	Pre-school play groups				
10	Alcoholics anonymous				
11	Sports groups				
12	Amateur drama / dance clubs etc.				
13	Socials				
14	Activities for disabled people				
15	Job search clubs (or similar)				
16	Welfare work				
17	Local societies				
18	Meals clubs				
19	Other (please specify)				

Section C - The general organizational life of the corps

Please fill in the following table to show the regular activities of your corps. Several gaps have been left to enable you to add additional activities, or in case you have more than one example of a particular activity.

Notes on completion of the table:

Frequency (column 1) should be indicated by the code: *w* = weekly, *f* = fortnightly, *m* = monthly, *q* = quarterly, *h* = half-yearly, *y* = yearly, *o* = other.

Purpose (column 4) should be indicated by the code: *s* = social/community service, *n* = nurturing of corps fellowship, *e* = evangelism/outreach.

The term "SAY Groups" (row "e") is intended to include all "youth" activities (not children's activities) other than Corps Cadets and musical sections.

House groups (row "p") is intended to cover all regular meetings held in the homes of corps members or other people associated with the corps.

		Frequency (<i>w, f, m, q, h, y, o</i>)	Average attendance per event	No. of leaders or workers	Purpose (<i>s, n, e</i>)	No. of converts ('82-'91)
1	Corps Activities					
a	Sunday School					
b						
c	Junior Soldiers meetings					
d	Corps Cadets					
e	SAY Groups					
f	Home Leagues					
g	Other women's meetings					
h						
i	Meetings for men					
j						
k	Bible study groups					
l						
m						
n	Soldiers' meetings					
o						
p	House groups					
q						
r	Youth club					
s	Coffee bar					
t	Songster practice					
u	Band practice					
v						
w	Singing Company practice					
x	YP Band practice					

2	How many people (other than the Divisional Commander and the Commanding Officer) are on your Senior Census Board?	
---	---	--

3	How many people (other than the Divisional Commander and the Commanding Officer) are on your Corps Council?	
---	---	--

4	How many times a year does the Census Board meet?	
---	---	--

5	How many times a year does the Corps Council meet?	
---	--	--

6	How many (non-Census Board) local officers does the corps have? <i>Please do not include those who are local officers only because of their membership of the band or songster brigade - although those with leadership responsibilities for these sections should be included.</i>	
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7	Which body is responsible for discussing / reviewing policy (as distinct from "people" issues) <i>(e.g. property, annual programme, special events, finances etc.)</i>	Census Board <input type="checkbox"/> Corps Council <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---

8	On important policy matters <i>(such as property or programme changes)</i> , would you say that the decisions are made by the Commanding Officer, the Corps Council <i>(or Census Board where relevant)</i> or jointly <i>(a consensus)</i> ?	Commanding Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Corps Council <input type="checkbox"/> Consensus <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---

9	Please give the number of Census Board local officers who have been members of the Census Board <i>(not necessarily in their present positions)</i> for the total lengths of time shown.	
a	2 years or less	
b	more than 2 years and up to 5 years	
c	more than 5 years and up to 10 years	
d	more than 10 years and up to 20 years	
e	more than 20 years	

10	What kinds of musical accompaniment are normally (i.e. at least once a month) used in your main Sunday worship meetings? <i>Please tick all the categories which apply.</i> <i>Note: the term "Worship Band" is used here to refer to any combination of instruments (other than a conventional brass band) with or without singers, used to lead and accompany congregational singing through modern music.</i>	Piano <input type="checkbox"/> Organ <input type="checkbox"/> Brass Band <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Band <input type="checkbox"/> Rhythm / Rock Group <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
----	--	---

11	<p>Do you regularly (<i>i.e. at least once a month</i>) use in your Sunday worship meetings any Song or Hymn Books other than the Salvation Army Song Book?</p> <p><i>Please tick all the categories which apply.</i></p>	<p>None <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Happiness and Harmony <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sing for joy <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Songs of Fellowship <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mission Praise <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Junior Praise <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A collection of your own <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
----	---	--

12	<p>Would any members of the corps identify themselves (or be identified) as "Charismatics"? If so, what proportion of the membership?</p> <p><i>If your answer is "None", go to Question 15 - otherwise continue with Questions 13 & 14.</i></p>	<p>None <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Less than 20% <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>21 to 40% <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>41 to 60% <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>61 to 80% <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>81% or more <input type="checkbox"/></p>
----	--	--

13	<p>Do the "Charismatic" members of the corps meet together separately from the rest of the corps?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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14	<p>What is the general influence of the "Charismatic" members on the corps as a whole?</p> <p><i>Please tick each category which applies.</i></p>	<p>None <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Unifying <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Divisive <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Stimulating <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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15	<p>Do you have regular meetings to which corps members are particularly asked to bring non-Christian friends (<i>e.g. Invitation Meetings</i>)? If so, how frequently are such meetings held?</p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Weekly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Monthly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yearly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
----	---	--

16	<p>What provision is made for children during your Sunday worship meetings?</p> <p><i>Please tick all which apply.</i></p> <p><i>Note: "Family Service" is used to describe a meeting in which whole families can find something of interest, and which children are expected to attend and to remain in for the whole of the meeting.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">None <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Some attend, but do not participate <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Participate in worship <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A "children's spot" is included <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A creche is provided <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sunday School is held during meeting <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Family Services etc. are held <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
----	--	---

17	<p>If "Family Services" (or similar events) are held, how frequently do they take place?</p>	<p>Once a year, or less often <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Monthly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Weekly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Special Occasions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
----	--	--

18	<p>How often do any members of the corps give testimony to their faith during meetings?</p>	<p>Voluntarily</p>	<p>By Invitation</p>
		<p>Never <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Rarely <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Often <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Never <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Rarely <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Often <input type="checkbox"/></p>

19	<p>Does your corps have regular prayer groups?</p> <p><i>If your answer is "No" go to Question 23, otherwise continue with Questions 20, 21 and 22.</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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20	<p>How many prayer groups (as distinct from fellowship groups - see Section D) does the corps have?</p>	<p>Groups</p>
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21	<p>What is the average weekly attendance at the prayer groups (<i>the total attendance at all groups</i>)?</p>	<p>Avg. Attendance</p>
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22	<p>How is the prayer group membership organized?</p>	<p>By Geographical area <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>By Alphabetical list <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>By Age <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>By Compatibility <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>By Self-selection <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Open to anyone <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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23	In what ways do (non-officer) individual members of the corps participate in the meetings? How often do individual members participate? <i>Please place a tick in the appropriate columns in the table below.</i>			
	Activity	Never	Sometimes	Frequently (i.e. at least twice monthly)
a	Announcements			
b	Finance Statements			
c	Leading Prayer			
d	Leading Worship			
e	Preaching			
f	Children's Story			
g	Leading Singing			
h	Bible Reading			
i	Testimony			
j	Greeting/Welcome to visitors etc.			
k	Musical items (solos, group items etc.)			
l	Other (please specify)			

24	Is your corps financially self-supporting?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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25	Is tithing encouraged in your corps (by the Commanding Officer and the local officers)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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26	Does your corps hold general fund-raising activities (e.g. sales of work or coffee mornings)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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27	Does your corps have a "Charity Shop" which contributes to its income?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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28	What proportion of corps income is voluntarily used for Christian causes outside the corps? <i>Note: do not include headquarters centages etc., but include, for example, sponsorship of a missionary, whether Army or otherwise.</i>	% of total income
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29	<p>How much regular secretarial / administrative assistance does your Commanding Officer receive (on average) per week?</p> <p><i>Note: do not include assistance from other officers (including officer wives)</i></p>	<p>hours per week</p>
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30	<p>What office equipment does the corps own or keep for its own use?</p>	<p> Typewriter <input type="checkbox"/> Duplicator <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopier <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
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31	<p>What audio-visual equipment does the corps own or keep for its own use?</p>	<p> Video camera <input type="checkbox"/> Video player <input type="checkbox"/> Video projector <input type="checkbox"/> TV receiver <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead projector <input type="checkbox"/> Cine projector <input type="checkbox"/> Audio tape player <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
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Section D - Pastoral Care in the Corps

1	<p>How are new people (visitors / newcomers etc.) who visit your meetings for the first time received or welcomed into the fellowship?</p>	<p>No special procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors' book <input type="checkbox"/> Fill in a record card <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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2	<p>What kind of follow-up is undertaken with respect to new people who attend your meetings?</p> <p><i>Tick all those which apply.</i></p>	<p>None <input type="checkbox"/> A letter or card sent <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone call <input type="checkbox"/> Visit by officer <input type="checkbox"/> Visit by corps member <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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3	<p>How are new arrivals nurtured into the corps, and/or into the Christian life?</p> <p><i>Tick all those which apply.</i></p>	<p>No specific programme <input type="checkbox"/> Recruits classes <input type="checkbox"/> Link with existing member <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(mentor or buddy principle)</i> Study group <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship group <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Nurture group <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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4	<p>Who is responsible for direct pastoral care of the members of your corps?</p> <p><i>Please tick all those which apply.</i></p>	<p>The Commanding Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other officers <input type="checkbox"/> Census Board local officers <input type="checkbox"/> Other local officers <input type="checkbox"/> A wider group <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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5	<p>In your estimation, how many members of the corps would see pastoral care of other members as part of their own work?</p>	<p>Corps members</p>
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6	How is pastoral responsibility allocated?	Officer(s) only <input type="checkbox"/> By section membership <input type="checkbox"/> By geographical area <input type="checkbox"/> By compatibility <input type="checkbox"/> By age group <input type="checkbox"/> By fellowship group <input type="checkbox"/> By C.O.'s decision <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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7	Who undertakes pastoral visiting? <i>Please tick all those which apply.</i>	The Commanding Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other officers <input type="checkbox"/> Census Board local officers <input type="checkbox"/> Other local officers <input type="checkbox"/> A team of visitors <input type="checkbox"/> No-one <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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8	Does your corps have small group fellowships of any kind? <i>If "No" go straight to question 16, otherwise continue with question 9.</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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9	To what extent do the small groups (cells) play a role in the pastoral care of the corps members?	A major part <input type="checkbox"/> A large part <input type="checkbox"/> Some part <input type="checkbox"/> A minor part <input type="checkbox"/> No part <input type="checkbox"/>
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10	How often do the small groups meet (<i>the usual frequency, if they vary</i>)?	Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/>
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11	Where do the small groups meet? <i>Please tick all that apply.</i>	At the hall <input type="checkbox"/> At group leaders' home(s) <input type="checkbox"/> At other home(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Always the same location(s) <input type="checkbox"/> By rotation <input type="checkbox"/> By invitation <input type="checkbox"/>
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12	Which of these terms best describes the purpose of the small group fellowships in your corps? <i>Please tick the one answer which is closest to your situation</i>	Nurturing / Pastoral Care <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism <input type="checkbox"/> General discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly social <input type="checkbox"/>
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13	How many small group fellowships currently operate in your corps, and what is the average size of the group(s)?	groups
		members

14	For how long have the small group fellowships been functioning?	years
		months

15	How is the membership of the small group fellowships organized?	By geographical area <input type="checkbox"/>
		By alphabetical list <input type="checkbox"/>
		By age <input type="checkbox"/>
		By self-selection <input type="checkbox"/>
		Open to anyone <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>

16	In what ways is the wider corps fellowship (<i>i.e. corps members other than officers and Census Board local officers</i>) involved in pastoral and social care for the corps and the community?	Literature visitation <input type="checkbox"/>
		Visitation (specific) <input type="checkbox"/>
		Visitation (door to door) <input type="checkbox"/>
		League of Mercy <input type="checkbox"/>
		Organized help for aged/infirm <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>

17	Do you have a full-time youth worker or leader?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
		No <input type="checkbox"/>

18	Does your corps provide any specific kind of ministry (<i>e.g. a tape fellowship or a telephone counselling service</i>)? If "Yes", what kind(s) of work are involved?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
		No <input type="checkbox"/>

Section E - Evangelism / Outreach

1	<p>What activities in evangelism / outreach (<i>outside of the normal weekly programme</i>) has your corps undertaken from 1987 to 1991?</p> <p><i>Please tick all that apply.</i></p>	<p>Music programmes / Concerts <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Musicals / Drama <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Guest / Invitation Meetings <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Children's Holiday Clubs <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Door to door campaigns <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Cadets' campaigns <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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2	<p>What is actually being done now or planned for the current year (if anything)?</p>

3	<p>Who is responsible for planning and supervising the outreach work of the corps?</p> <p><i>Please tick each answer which represents a significant responsibility for this work.</i></p>	<p>No-one <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Commanding Officer <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other officer / full-time worker <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Recruiting Sergeant <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Corps Sergeant-Major <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Census Board collectively <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Corps Council collectively <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Special "Outreach Committee" <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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4	<p>How often are your Sunday meetings planned with outreach particularly in mind (<i>i.e. specifically so as to be attractive to people outside the current fellowship</i>)?</p>	<p>Weekly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Monthly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Special events only <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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5	<p>Does your corps carry out a specific programme of evangelism which has been published outside The Salvation Army (<i>e.g. Person to Person</i>)?</p> <p>If "Yes", which programme is followed?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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6	<p>If your answer to Question 5 is "Yes", how many people are involved in the outreach programme?</p>	<p>people</p>
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7	What literature distribution programme is carried out by the corps? <i>Please tick all that apply.</i>	None <input type="checkbox"/> Salvation Army periodicals <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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8	If literature distribution (<i>beyond the immediate corps fellowship</i>) takes place, how many people are involved, and what form does it take? <i>Please give the numbers of workers, and then tick the appropriate boxes for the forms of distribution.</i>	officers
		non-officers
		Public house sales <input type="checkbox"/> Market/Shopping centre sales <input type="checkbox"/> House to house sales <input type="checkbox"/> Free distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Circulation list <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>

9	From 1987 to 1991, how many adults have been won for Christ through a first contact with the following kinds of work?	
a	Corps youth work	
b	Normal pastoral care	
c	Sunday School	
d	Evangelistic campaigns	
e	Salvation Army Social Services (<i>e.g. Hostel</i>)	
f	Special events (<i>Festivals etc.</i>)	
g	Literature distribution	
h	Friendship with existing corps members	
i	Family relationship with existing corps members	
j	Corps community service (<i>e.g. Meals club</i>)	
k	Open-air ministry	
l	Normal Sunday Meetings (<i>i.e. Salvation or Holiness meetings</i>)	
m	Other (please specify)	
n	TOTAL	

10	Is the corps represented as a member of the local "Churches Together", "Council of Churches" or a similar body?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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11	How frequently does the corps take part with other churches in united services?	Never <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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12	If the corps takes part in united services, what kinds of participation take place (e.g. Band plays for Remembrance Sunday, Annual pulpit exchange etc.)?

13	How frequently does the corps take part with other churches in evangelistic missions or campaigns?	Never <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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14	If the corps takes part in united evangelistic missions or campaigns, what kinds of participation take place (e.g. Band plays, visitation undertaken etc.)?

15	How frequently does the corps take part with other churches in united house groups?	Never <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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16	How frequently does the corps take part with other churches in united social or community service?	Never <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
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17	If the corps takes part in united social or community service, what kinds of participation by the corps take place?

Section F - Information about the corps membership

Notes for completion of Section F

In this section, the term "Soldiership" is used to refer to both Senior and Junior Soldiers, unless otherwise specified. The term "Fellowship" is used to include all associated with the corps; *i.e.* Senior Soldiers, Junior Soldiers, children on YP Registers, Adherents, Friends, Recruits, people who regard the corps as their place of worship etc. - but does not include members of clubs, such as Over Sixties, Home League etc., since many of these people appear on several different rolls.

1		What is the present membership of the corps, by the categories shown in the table below?			
		Soldiership		Total Fellowship	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
a	Aged 15 or under				
b	Aged 16 to 35				
c	Aged 36 to 55				
d	Aged 56 or over				

2		What are the current average attendance figures and the normal Sunday meeting times, by the categories shown in the table below.			
		Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Sunday School	Youth Events (SAY)
a	Men (aged 16 and over)				
b	Women (aged 16 and over)				
c	Boys (aged 15 and under)				
d	Girls (aged 15 and under)				
e	Usual meeting times				

3		Please provide information about the corps membership in recent years, by the categories shown in the table below.			
		Year '82	Year '87	Year '89	Year '91
a	Senior Soldiers				
b	Junior Soldiers				
c	Adherents				
d	Total Fellowship				
e	Children on YP Register				

4	In what year was the corps founded? <i>Please give an approximate year if the actual date is unknown.</i>	
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5	Please complete the following table, showing by classification the numbers of people who have become - or ceased to be - Senior Soldiers in recent years.										
		82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
a	Conversions										
b	Transfer from other corps										
c	Transfer from other church										
d	Gains from YP										
e	Gains (other)										
f											
g	Promotion to Glory										
h	Transfer to other corps										
i	Transfer to other church										
j	Commissioned as officers										
k	Removal										
l	Losses (other)										
m											

6	Of the people on your Senior Soldiers Roll now, how many are regular attenders (at least twice a month) and how many wear uniform? <i>Please give the figures for the categories shown.</i>						
		Males			Females		
		On the Roll	Regular Attenders	Wear Uniform	On the Roll	Regular Attenders	Wear Uniform
a	Aged 15 and under						
b	Aged 16 to 35						
c	Aged 36 to 55						
d	Aged 56 or over						

Section G - Leadership Opinion

1	<p>How would you describe the theological climate of the corps as a whole (e.g. "Conservative", "Liberal", "Charismatic", "Existentialist" etc)?</p> <p><i>It is assumed that a broadly evangelical position will be held, possibly modified by tendencies such as those mentioned. If this is not correct, please give further details.</i></p>

2	<p>How would you describe the theological views of the Commanding Officer (e.g. "Conservative", "Liberal", "Charismatic", "Existentialist" etc.)?</p> <p><i>It is assumed that a broadly evangelical position will be held, possibly modified by tendencies such as those mentioned. If this is not correct, please give further details.</i></p>

3	<p>What do you consider to be the particular strengths of the present Commanding Officer, if one is appointed to the corps? If you are the C.O. please answer as objectively as possible.</p> <p><i>Please number in order, with "1" for the area of greatest strength, down to "8" for the least.</i></p> <p><i>Note: this is not intended as an opportunity for criticising any perceived weaknesses, but for discovering some of the Army's strengths.</i></p>	
a	Preaching	
b	Teaching	
c	Pastoral Care	
d	Visitation	
e	Evangelism	
f	Administration	
g	Vision / Leadership	
h	Other (please specify)	

4	In your opinion, how effective is the pastoral care of the corps now, compared to 1987?	More effective <input type="checkbox"/> About the same <input type="checkbox"/> Less effective <input type="checkbox"/>
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5	If the pastoral care is more effective now, briefly describe any changes in methods.

6	Are there now (compared to 1987) more or fewer people in the corps (<i>local officers or otherwise</i>) who could help with pastoral care and leadership?	More <input type="checkbox"/> About the same <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer <input type="checkbox"/>
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7	If there are "More" or "Fewer" people able to help with pastoral care and leadership, briefly describe the kinds of people who have been gained or lost, with the reason for the change (<i>e.g. moved away with work</i>).	
	Types of People	Reason for Change

8	Within the total life of the corps, please grade these emphases as to the amount of time or effort they occupy. Use "1" for that which occupies most time or effort, down to "4" for that which occupies the least. <i>Note: this refers only to the amount of time and effort actually spent - not to the importance you feel these emphases ought to have.</i>	
a	Nurturing the corps fellowship	
b	Evangelism / Outreach	
c	Community Service	
d	Administration	

9	In the context of your corps, how would you define growth?

10	Does the corps wish to grow in numbers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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11	Approximately how many extra people do you think the corps could handle, if they were to join within the next 2 years?	None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 99 <input type="checkbox"/> 100 to 149 <input type="checkbox"/> 150 to 199 <input type="checkbox"/> 200 or more <input type="checkbox"/>
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12	What limitations to growth do you see? (e.g. the capacity of the buildings, or the available leadership)

13	What areas of growth (if any) can you identify from 1987 to 1991?

14	In what aspects of corps life and work is growth currently taking place?

15	In what aspects of corps life and work do you see the best prospects for growth within the next two years (1993-4)

16	Around what issues does stress or conflict arise in the corps?

17	Do the corps buildings meet the current needs of the corps?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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18	If the corps buildings are not meeting the needs of the corps, what changes would you like to see and why?

20	From your experience, do you consider that any of these features of The Salvation Army (as distinct from some other churches) have an effect which either promotes or restricts numerical growth? <i>Please tick each category which applies.</i>			
		Promotes Growth	No Effect	Restricts Growth
a	Uniform wearing			
b	The use of ranks and titles			
c	The expected level of commitment			
d	Abstinence from alcohol			
e	Abstinence from tobacco			
f	Abstinence from gambling			
g	Non-observance of sacraments			
h	Salvation Army music			
i	Salvation Army terminology / jargon			
j	Salvation Army practice on "Charismatic" issues <i>(e.g. tongues, prophecy etc.)</i>			
k	Salvation Army social / community service			
l	Other (please specify)			

Thank you for your work and patience in supplying this information. I know it has been costly in terms of time and effort. It must also have taken a great deal of patience to struggle through, and your help is not taken for granted.

Please accept my assurance once again that (a) all replies are confidential, and will not be made available to anyone in any form which will identify people or corps; and (b) the information you have provided is *valuable*, and will be used to enable the Army to understand itself better, and to help leaders at all levels - including corps - to make informed plans for the future, as well as reducing the requirement for regular statistical information.

Phillip Escott

Major