Red, Yellow, Blue and Green: 
Examining the Relationship between the 
Spiritual, Social and Ecological 
within The Salvation Army

Matthew David Seaman 
BInfTech, (Qld); MA (TheolStud), (SCD)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy at 
The University of Queensland in 2013 
School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics
Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between spiritual, social and ecological dimensions within The Salvation Army. The relationship between these three elements is investigated using the methodological framework of practical theology and contains three distinct segments. The first element is a review of ecologically-aware Christian theology and mission literature, and mutually critical correlations with non-Christian ecological literature. The second is historical research on Salvationist precedents for spiritual, social, and ecological engagement and praxis, and an examination of current projects and literature within The Salvation Army. The third section is an analysis of the perceived relationships between these three elements within current Salvation Army discourse and mission.

This third segment applies a grounded theory approach to a series of interviews undertaken with individuals who have a significant connection with The Salvation Army within the South Queensland Division of the Australia Eastern Territory. The interview findings reveal three emergent streams of Salvationist understandings of the Church’s relationship between the spiritual, social and ecological and involvement in this interconnected discourse, mission and praxis: (1) the spiritual or Economy of God: ‘We have a responsibility to God’; (2) the social or Ecumenics: ‘We need to balance what we do’; and (3) the ecological or relationship to creation: ‘There really is a wholeness about the Earth.’

Overall, the findings corroborated a number of other research findings in the literature and have uncovered some particularly Salvationist-related themes. Participants generally have a deep respect for the natural world. The most significant variations of opinion relate to climate change, yet the vast majority of participants support caring for creation and agree there are socially responsible, logical and scriptural imperatives for caring for the environment. Responsible stewardship is seen as the proper response to God’s provision, whereas sin and greed are linked with irresponsibility, pollution and social and environmental injustices. There are financial, evangelistic, mental, health and spiritual benefits when spiritual, social and ecological matters are united.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

I acknowledge that an electronic copy of my thesis must be lodged with the University Library and, subject to the General Award Rules of The University of Queensland, immediately made available for research and study in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

I acknowledge that copyright of all material contained in my thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of that material. Where appropriate I have obtained copyright permission from the copyright holder to reproduce material in this thesis.
Publications during candidature

**Refereed Papers**


**Conference Abstracts**


Seaman, M.D. 2011. ‘Red, Yellow, Blue and Green: Eco-mission within The Salvation Army’. The Australian Association for Mission Studies Conference, Sydney, NSW.


Seaman, M.D. 2011. ‘Red, Yellow, Blue and Green: Environmental Concern within The Salvation Army’. The Australian Association for the Study of Religions Conference, Southern Cross University, Tweed Heads, NSW.

**Other Papers**
Seaman, M.D. (Accepted). ‘Recapturing a Salvationist Vision for all of Earth’. *Thought Matters* (2).

**Publications included in this thesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>Statement of contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Seaman, M.D.</td>
<td>Wrote the paper 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>Statement of contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Seaman, M.D.</td>
<td>Wrote the paper 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contributions by others to the thesis**
No contributions by others.

**Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree**
None.
Acknowledgements

A huge ‘Thank You!’ to all who helped, nudged, inspired and encouraged me throughout this journey. This includes (but certainly not limited to): my hermano Peter E. Wells, Nathan ‘Oikos’ Rule, John and Robyn Lutze, Nickey Bright, Rev. Dr. Glen O’Brien who planted the research seed, The Salvation Army USA National Archives, and The Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Sydney.

Heartfelt thanks also go to those who have been particularly patient, kind and supportive: my wise advisors Dr Sylvie Shaw and Rev. Dr. Clive Ayre, my wonderful parents David and Maureen, and of course, my amazing wife Carmen.

Keywords

The Salvation Army, ecotheology, ecology, social justice, environment, practical theology, spirituality, Christianity, stewardship, oikotheology.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

ANZSRC code: 220401 Christian Studies (incl. Biblical Studies and Church History), 50%.
ANZSRC code: 220405 Religion and Society, 50%.

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

FoR code: 2204 Religion and Religious Studies, 100%.
Table of Contents

List of Figures & Tables ........................................................................................................... viii

Chapter 1 - Introduction and Overview .............................................................................. 1
  1.0 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 The Current Environmental Situation ....................................................................... 2
  1.2 The Salvation Army on Earth .................................................................................... 5
  1.3 Faith Communities and the Environment .................................................................. 8
  1.4 Theology and Ecology ............................................................................................... 9
  1.5 The Study, Methods and Participants. ....................................................................... 10
  1.6 Thesis Outline ............................................................................................................ 11
  1.7 Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 12

Chapter 2 - Methodology: Practical Theology and Grounded Theory ............................... 13
  2.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 13
  2.1 Practical Theology ..................................................................................................... 13
    2.1.1 Context ................................................................................................................ 15
    2.1.2 Praxis .................................................................................................................. 17
  2.2 Grounded Theory ........................................................................................................ 19
  2.3 Data Collection Process and Analysis ........................................................................ 19
  2.4 Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 22

Chapter 3 - People and the Planet: Reviewing the Literature ............................................. 23
  3.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 23
  3.1 Conceptualisations of the Environment/Earth ............................................................. 23
    3.1.1 Earth as Machine – Dominion as Domination ....................................................... 24
    3.1.2 Earth as Creation – Dominion as Stewardship ...................................................... 28
    3.1.3 Earth as Holy Ecosphere – Partnership, Relationship, Sacrament ....................... 30
  3.2 The Interconnectedness of Health, Well-Being, Social Justice and Eco Justice ........... 32
  3.3 Christian Ecological Responses .................................................................................. 35
    3.3.1 Theology therefore Ecotheology .......................................................................... 35
    3.3.2 Christian Mission therefore Eco-mission .............................................................. 38
  3.4 Oikos: A Helpful Metaphor ....................................................................................... 41
  3.5 Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 44

Chapter 4 - The Salvation Army and Ecology .................................................................... 45
  4.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 45
  4.1 John Wesley and the Wesleyan Tradition .................................................................. 46
5.3.1.1 Growing Up: Childhood Experiences ..........................................................90
5.3.1.2 Still Growing Up: Adult Experiences .........................................................91
5.3.1.3 Gardens and Gardening .............................................................................93
5.3.2 Humanity’s Environmental Impact and Climate Change ..........................94
  5.3.2.2 Christianity and Science ..........................................................................96
  5.3.2.3 Sovereignty: God is in Control ...............................................................97
  5.3.2.4 Climate Change and Biblical Prophecy ..................................................97
5.3.3 Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Actions .................................................98
  5.3.3.1 Social Aspects of Nature .........................................................................99
5.4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................101

Chapter 6 - Reflection and Conclusion: Toward Holistic Salvationism ............103
6.0 Introduction .......................................................................................................103
6.1 Research Findings ............................................................................................103
6.2 Limitations and Further Research .................................................................106
6.3 Toward Balanced and Holistic Salvationism ................................................107

7.0 Appendices .......................................................................................................110
7.1 Semi-structured Interview Questions ............................................................110
7.2 Ethics Clearance ...............................................................................................111

8.0 Bibliography .....................................................................................................112

List of Figures & Tables

Table 1: Participant Details ..................................................................................22
Figure 1: ‘In Darkest England’ Chart .................................................................56
Figure 2: Riverview Nursery Plants – ‘Watch them Grow’ ................................69
Table 2: Emergent Interview Themes .................................................................72
Figure 3: Participants by Age Bracket and Gender ............................................73
Figure 4: Participants by Location and Gender ...................................................73
Table 3: Participant Codes and Details ...............................................................74
Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview

1.0 Introduction

The Salvation Army, an evangelical branch of the Christian Church, is a movement that seeks the restoration of humanity within the physical world and the redemption of humanity in the spiritual realm. Through its worldwide network of social services, The Salvation Army aims to serve people in need, with particular focus on serving the poor and disadvantaged. The evangelical Christian background of the movement functions as the backbone of these social services. The title of this thesis draws on the colours of The Salvation Army flag to highlight this Christian context, where blue is a symbol of the purity of God the Father; red represents the blood shed by Jesus Christ; and yellow the refining and empowering fire of the Holy Spirit. Understanding and acting upon the significant relationships between the physical situation of people and the state of their relationship to God has been a hallmark of Salvationist belief and action. Aware that the state of the natural world can significantly impact people’s lives, The Salvation Army has also taken a leading role in many countries to assist in the recovery from numerous disasters, both of natural and human origins.

Increased recognition of environmental degradation around the world, climate change concerns, and an expanding body of literature broadly relating to the relationship between Christianity and ecology suggest that environmental concern forms an integral part of Christian faith and mission. Therefore, this project examines relevant Salvationist-based spiritual, social and environmental themes that to date have received minimal exploration in both scholarly and popular literature. As such, the primary aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between the spiritual, the social and the ecological within The Salvation Army, and asks:

1) Are there any historical Salvationist precedents for integrated spiritual, social, and ecological engagement and praxis?

2) How is the relationship between the spiritual, social and ecological viewed by current Salvationists?
As the terms ‘spiritual’, ‘social’ and ‘ecological’ are diversely defined within the literature, brief descriptions are required. For the purposes of this thesis, the ‘spiritual’ broadly captures contemplated and practised theology, personal spirituality and shared religious beliefs and practices, particularly relating to The Salvation Army. ‘Social’ encapsulates the areas of social justice, the social history and praxis of The Salvation Army, and also the wider community in both individual and communal forms. ‘Ecological’ refers to the natural world, and in this thesis is expressed using a number of terms such as environment, Earth, ecosystems, creation and cosmos. This includes the human relationship to the natural environment, acknowledging that humanity is part of the natural world. It is also noted that considerable overlaps exist within the scope of these three terms.

In seeking to examine Salvationist interconnections between social and spiritual relationships with and within the natural world, the thesis title therefore also includes ‘green’ as a symbol of the created cosmos, of ecological awareness and environmental concern. This examination within Salvation Army discourse and mission has both global and local aims: to examine these notions in relation to broader Salvation Army work and mission, and also to examine and provide a local context focused on Salvationist voices regarding spiritual, social and environmental themes, deliberately limited to the South Queensland Division of The Salvation Army in Australia.

The remainder of this chapter offers an introduction to the current environmental situation and the close relation between environmental issues and their social impacts. These social and bio-physical impacts provide a useful point of departure to sketch the interconnectedness of the spiritual, social and the ecological within The Salvation Army. A brief description of the study and outline of the thesis completes this introductory chapter.

1.1 The Current Environmental Situation

Human beings inevitably have an ecological impact on their surroundings through the use of resources such as water and land and via agriculture, shelter and transport. However, over the past two hundred years, there has been a marked increase in pollution and environmental degradation throughout the Earth (Saier, 2006). Since the Industrial Revolution, the exponential rate of growth in population and consumption (The Royal Society, 2012), industry, economic forces, and other factors including transportation (Bergmann, et al., 2008; Melin, 2008), have all contributed significantly to ecological destruction and environmental problems. More recently, and particularly since the 1960s
with the support of publications such as *The Silent Spring* (Carson, 1999[1962]) and *The Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis* (White, 1967), there has been a rising awareness across the globe and within local communities of the numerous ways humanity has not been responsible for the care of the Earth. There are rapidly expanding bodies of literature focusing on the broad topics of anthropogenic climate change, environmental degradation and interrelated social and ecological upheavals. This literature is testament to the emergent understanding of humanity’s place in and as part of the biosphere, and the realisation of the levels of destruction that have occurred and are occurring due to humankind’s actions (Steffen and Hughes, 2013; UNEP, 2012; WCED, 1987).

Increasing perception and experience of the effects of pollution, environmental degradation and the potentialities surrounding anthropogenic climate change are reflected in the expanding numbers of organisations that are responding to environmental concerns and the growing bodies of literature around socio-ecological issues. It is outside the scope of this research to review the particulars of, and argue for, the validity of climate change. Nevertheless, due to the apparent weight of evidence, and the risks involved, it is wise to take climate change seriously. This project does so, and moves forward with climate change in mind, yet at the same time, this thesis does not completely rely on the notion of anthropogenic climate change. I suggest that climate change is a likely and unfortunate outcome of environmental degradation and the ecological destruction that has occurred through overconsumption, significant loss of biodiversity, extensive logging, desertification, pollution and other factors that have taken place under the dominion of humankind. Hence, climate change is a factor in this research, yet broader issues such as general environmental degradation and overconsumption are tightly linked to the underlying causes of climate change, further underscoring the need for this study.

Nonetheless, reports on the scientific basis for anthropogenic climate change and its potential effects on Earth systems and life forms have progressively publicised a worsening situation (CSIRO, 2012; IPCC 1990, 1995, 2001, 2007). Economic reports and predictions (Stern, 2006) and international food, water and security reports (Dupont and Pearman, 2006), also point to the substantial benefits of taking action towards reducing carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide equivalent emissions sooner rather than later. These reports, and the peer-reviewed scientific literature on which these reports are based, point to severe consequences for many of Earth’s life forms if current business-as-usual models are maintained (e.g. Appeaning, et al. 2011; Lobell et al., 2011; Mastaler, 2011; McCarthy, 2009; Vince, 2011; Webersik, 2010). Effects of climatic variations are beginning to appear...
as predicted (Hansen et al., 2012; Hughes and McMichael, 2011; Steffen and Hughes, 2013). For example, McKibben (2012) points to unprecedented record-breaking US weather statistics, and Monbiot (2009) reports that rising sea levels are already placing strains on communities, particularly in coastal and island communities in the Pacific Ocean. Australia is already experiencing predicted increases in the intensity and frequency of droughts, bushfires, floods and cyclones, with direct, indirect and broader impacts on the Australian society, economy and environment (The Climate Institute, 2011).

However, in contrast to the current widely accepted scientific models and dire predictions, there is still strong scepticism and denial around climate change (McCarthy, 2009). Within areas of the media, considerable attention is given to the view that climate change is either a hoax, an unstoppable or circular occurrence not due to human interference (Singer and Avery, 2007), and other politically-charged views. Media coverage and various political policies, most notably in Australia and the USA, have contributed to confusion (Sarewitz, 2011), as well as a polarisation of views which is argued to lead to lower levels of environmental concern and more dismissive attitudes towards climate change (Hulme, 2009).

Regardless of the actuality of climate change, matters of ecological awareness, environmental action and commitment to sustainability have emerged from numerous sectors in societies such as government, business, education, religious and grassroots groups. Environmental attentiveness and action are indicated through the growth of green businesses, recycling, and various other initiatives such as Australia’s Clean Energy Plan (Teeter, 2012). However, environmental discourses are still contested, evidenced by passionate debates over environmentally and socially sensitive issues such as the values and priorities given to employment and industry in ecologically sensitive regions. For example, within Queensland there are disputes over the social and environmental impacts of industries such as mining and coal seam gas extraction. This is just one area where the spiritual, social and ecological intersect within the present scope of Salvation Army pastoral care (Worthing, 2013).

In addition to the environmental impacts of various destructive human practices, there are also significant social and physical impacts on humanity itself. These negative effects are most acutely felt by the poorest and most vulnerable in society (Hood Washington, 2008; Mastaler, 2011; The Salvation Army, 2011b). The inequalities inherent in existing economic, political and social systems are seen clearly in the living conditions of those who are poverty-stricken. Impoverished communities and individuals have been, and
stand to be most severely affected by continued environmental degradation and climate variability (Binns and Low, 2011; Dominelli, 2012; Hughes and McMichael, 2011). They are, for the most part, faced with the greatest increases in competition for food and water, increases in pollution and waste, and other resource scarcity issues. The poorest also lack financial and other material resources to engage with wider societal conversations, lobby governments and corporations, or even to prevent or reduce damaging impacts of environmental issues. Hence, ongoing environmental concerns occurring in impoverished and less developed areas can cause severe harm including increased morbidity and mortality rates (Donohoe, 2003). In relation to climate change, the social theorist Ulrich Beck (2010:257) states:

Social inequalities and climate change are two sides of the same coin. One cannot conceptualize inequalities and power any longer without taking the consequences of climate change into account, and one cannot conceptualize climate change without taking its impacts on social inequalities and power into account.

Beck (2010:258) also points out the paradox of climate change and inequality, claiming that ‘climate change is both hierarchical and democratic.’ In the hierarchy of the rich and poor, the gap between the two extremes will grow, yet climate change is a leveller of hierarchy in that it is most likely that both the rich and the poor will be affected – climate change does not play favourites.

Beck’s comments on the relationship between social inequality and climate change resonate strongly with areas that have been a major part of Salvation Army mission, namely working towards a better world in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on the poor and vulnerable sits squarely within the work and mission of The Salvation Army.

1.2 The Salvation Army on Earth

The Salvation Army is somewhat unique within Protestantism. It initially identified itself as a social movement, rather than a denomination, within the wider church. Development occurred in response to the needs of people within Victorian-era London, not as the result of schism. East London during the mid-19th century was an area experiencing the deleterious effects of rapid growth in English industrialisation and urbanisation. Human suffering, poverty, exploitation, overcrowding, starvation and
associated impacts on the natural environment could be seen in its most unfortunate and unsightly forms. The East London birthplace of The Salvation Army was an area in which prominent churches of the Victorian era were ‘surprisingly scarce’ (Needham, 1987:1). The Methodist couple William and Catherine Booth noticed a lack of compassion towards the poor, homeless and lower class citizens that pervaded the middle-class churches of the day. In response to the perceived needs of the region, the Booths formed the East London Christian Mission in 1865. The mission initially endeavoured to take the message of spiritual salvation to the masses and over time encompassed various projects to bring about individual and collective redemption from personal and social problems through culturally relevant expressions of Christian faith. The movement gradually adopted a militaristic nomenclature, describing the mission as a ‘war’ against sin and as ‘fighting’ against the Devil. Visible symbols, such as uniforms, were also introduced in order to reinforce the vigorous approach with which the movement took the gospel to the streets. Hence, it was a natural progression that the movement was renamed ‘The Salvation Army’ in 1878. Over the intervening years, this redemptive ‘war’ spread rapidly beyond London and embraced an ever-increasing array of issues. The Salvation Army is currently in over 125 countries, serving and providing for people’s physical and spiritual needs in the shape of food, work and sharing the hope of salvation and holistic living through Jesus Christ.

Extensive connections exist between physical matters and the state of personal and social spiritual situations within Salvationist discourse and praxis. Donald Burke (2012) states this emphasis on redemption and salvation embraced not only the evangelical Christian belief in the world to come, but also to the material world here and now, ‘seeking not simply to reduce the suffering of the poor, but was also seeking to reform the world.’ Frederick Booth-Tucker, initiator of The Salvation Army’s work throughout India in 1882, similarly declared: ‘The Salvation Army is the evolution of two great ideas: first, that of reaching with the gospel of salvation the masses who are outside the pale of ordinary church influence, and second, that of caring for their temporal as well as spiritual interests’ (Lamb, 1909:5).

The evangelical nature of The Salvation Army is evident within early Salvationist literature and practice. Earlier histories of The Salvation Army report that sharing and spreading the Christian gospel effectively was at the forefront of Salvationist practice and thought. This focus on the gospel and the evangelical imperative to ‘save souls’ for Jesus stimulated the introduction of a number of well-known public Salvation Army rituals such as open air meetings and street processions. Similarly, the establishment of groups such
as brass bands and timbrels were seen as culturally relevant and effective ways to reach the masses with the gospel.

The Salvationist focus on saving souls and serving humanity, particularly in the movement’s first fifty years, produced a radical group determined to change the world for Christ. Hence, at times, it became a socially and politically polarizing movement. During the initial years of The Salvation Army, there was strong resistance aimed at counteracting public expressions of Salvationism in countries including Australia, Canada and England. This resistance to Salvationist methods of sharing the gospel caused physical harm and even death to Salvationists. Gangs such as ‘The Skeleton Army’ were formed, particularly in England. In some cases, this was due to The Salvation Army’s stance against alcohol and new Salvationist recruits leaving behind their drinking habits. Publicans and even the mayor of Eastbourne, England, were amongst those who encouraged crowds to riot against The Salvation Army (Campbell and Court, 2004).

Since those earlier days of Salvationist harassment, substantial, complex and contested changes have occurred within Western society. In response to a variety of cultural and societal shifts, and the perceived effectiveness of various means by which to share the gospel, shifts have also taken place in religious expression and spirituality across the religious spectrum. Expressions of Salvationism within the Australian context, such as consistent public activities like street marches and open-air meetings, have declined over the past few decades. Compared to the radical and subversive nature of many early Salvationist activities, The Salvation Army ‘brand’ has in some ways retreated, to inhabit a place of social and political respect and admiration for the social work that is undertaken. For some Salvationists, The Salvation Army’s mission and purpose are areas of contention and ardent discussion. For example: What is the heart of The Salvation Army? Is there still a raison d’être if one were to ‘take away the military paraphernalia’ (Palmer, 1981:np)? What does ‘salvation’ really mean within The Salvation Army (Davies-Kildea, 2007)? What is the mission of The Salvation Army? How does Salvation Army assistance in post-natural disaster areas, and the potential for these events to increase in number and severity, sit within the framework? In light of environmental degradation and climate change, Ball’s challenging response to climate change projections is that:

If hundreds of millions of the world’s poorest neighbors could face increased hunger, floods, droughts, and disease, the call for those of us who seek to emulate the compassion of Christ can be nothing less than to work for strong and immediate action to curb global warming (in Pritchard 2007:11).
How then does The Salvation Army, as part of the global church called into being for partnership in the mission of God, respond? This study aims to interact with this internal discussion of mission and salvation within The Salvation Army, following Eva Burrows’ (the second female and second Australian General of The Salvation Army from 1986-1993) statement that ‘Salvationists are encouraged to consider their responsibility to the environment by taking practical steps to preserve God's creation’ (2006). This thesis will also argue for an expansive vision of mission and salvation that includes all of God’s creation, and also outlines various Salvationist environmental actions, which includes partnering with other churches and faith communities in seeking to live holistically with care and compassion for the flourishing of all life.

1.3 Faith Communities and the Environment

Numerous religious groups, churches and organisations are engaging in practical and theological processes, policies and actions that tie the ecological, social and spiritual together. Across the globe, there are groups spreading the message of being faithful stewards of creation. For example, the World Council of Churches’ (2012) released a statement that: ‘faith communities are addressing climate change because it is a spiritual and ethical issue of justice, equity, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability... It is imperative to act now without more delays in view of the serious and potentially irreversible impacts of climate change.’ Within the United States, numerous groups and agencies are aiming to raise awareness, educate and support increased care of the Earth and its inhabitants from a Christian perspective. For example, the Evangelical Climate Initiative prepared a statement titled ‘Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action’ which is supported by over 300 evangelical leaders, including three Salvation Army officers. The United Kingdom also contains a well-established base of Christian environmental groups, at both national and local levels. The Environmental Issues Network, formed under the auspices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, has many denominations, groups and movements as members, including The Salvation Army.

In contrast to the UK and USA, Australian Christian environmental group formation is to some extent ‘still in its infancy’ (Ayre, 2008:5). Australia’s climatic, demographic, geographic conditions are considered significant factors affecting the development and maintenance of peak Christian environmental groups (Ayre, 2009). Nonetheless, there are certainly ecumenical groups in existence within the Australian context such as the National Council of Churches in Australia Eco-mission Project, and in Queensland the Queensland
Churches Environmental Network, and its recent progeny, the Toowoomba Churches Environmental Network. A number of denominations have groups working to integrate ecologically sensitive mission into church activities, such as Angligreen and Uniting Green. South East Queensland congregations are also taking steps to promote environmental issues and solutions such as the decision by the Caloundra Uniting Church to install solar photo-voltaic cells on the church roof in the shape of a cross, to bear witness to the interrelatedness of the ecological, social and spiritual.

The international scope of environmental degradation is being increasingly mirrored by global movements and local groups and individuals committed to reducing their impact and showing love, care and concern to all of Earth. These compelling reasons, such as the overuse and misuse of natural resources impacts most deleteriously on the poor and most vulnerable, point to further inclusion of environmental concern and action within Salvation Army policy and practice and the everyday lives of Salvationists. Yet pragmatic responses to the crises evident around the world require the accompaniment of robust and coherent theologies that are inclusive of the wider canvas of God’s creation.

1.4 Theology and Ecology

The dialogue between Christian theology and ecology and other general Christian-based literature on environmental issues has blossomed (Bakken, Engel and Engel, 1995; Conradie, 2006). To some extent, this is due to the publication of Lynn White’s (1967) article in which he argues the ‘Judeo-Christian’ tradition has brought about a scriptural interpretation of power and dominion based on humanity’s place on earth that has justified human-caused environmental degradation. Beyond Christian scholarship, the Muslim scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968) asserts that humanity’s shift away from God is a primary driver of environmental destruction. Since these seminal writings, other work on the intersection of religion and ecology has occurred, including Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim’s arrangement of a series of ten conferences and related conference volumes on ‘World Religions and Ecology’, and the subsequent founding of the Forum of Religion and Ecology (FORE), the ‘largest international multireligious project of its kind’ which is ‘engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns’ (FORE, 2012).

As a further example of the extensive work and literature available on religion and ecology, theologian Ernst Conradie’s (2006) attempt to gather a comprehensive bibliography of specifically Christian theological work on ecology published between 1975
and 2005 included over 5000 titles. Veldman, Szasz and Haluza-DeLay (2012) assert there are five primary bodies of literature where Christianity is the primary religious focus within the literature. The five areas include:

1. Linking theology and ethics to climate variability, or ‘reconceptualising the divine in light of global environmental change’ (266);

2. Work that argues religion and participation by the faithful is crucial in the ‘fight to mobilize the world to combat climate change’ (266);

3. Popular texts that aim to motivate or engage with particular religious groups on ecological issues;

4. Publication of survey and poll data concerning religious belief and ecological attitudes; and

5. The emergent body of literature which involves projects using social science research methods.

It is primarily within Veldman et al.’s fifth section of literature, that of social-scientific investigation, in which this study into the relationships and affinities between the spiritual, social and environment within Salvationism is situated.

1.5 The Study, Methods and Participants.

The finer details of methodology and methods will be explained further in Chapter Two. Nonetheless, it is briefly noted that this study of social, ecological and spiritual understanding and action within The Salvation Army is undertaken within a practical theological paradigm. As a subset of the broader Christian theological enterprise, practical theology examines the dynamic interplay between theory and practice within the context of lived Christian faith. This theory-praxis research is not only conducted within and for the church, but rather aims to keep the broader context of society beyond the church in perspective. Therefore, this then also brings current societal and environmental situations into the practical theological conversation.

Two approaches have been undertaken to examine Salvationist discourse and praxis in relation to the environment. The first approach aims to gain a deeper understanding of historical Salvationist connections and behaviours in the social/spiritual/environmental nexus through an analysis of various international Salvation
Army documents, actions and individuals. The second approach focuses on local Salvationist views, which aims to examine current Salvationist affinities and experiences concerning the interconnection of the social, spiritual and the ecological. To discover and explore these views and affinities, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 27 individuals who have significant connections with The Salvation Army in the South Queensland Division.

Following Bevans (2005), Ayre (2008) and others who maintain that all theology is contextual, and no researcher comes to their project from a vacuum, it is relevant to be open regarding personal backgrounds and biases especially when the research is ‘close to home.’ As a fifth-generation Australian Salvationist and having taken part in Salvation Army activities from a very early age, my involvement has certainly coloured my thoughts, opinions, beliefs and actions. I bring this background to the research project with the intention of being a voice for positive engagement on ecological matters, and to further conversation on environmental concern within both the wider Salvation Army, and the Australia Eastern Territory.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The further directions of this research project on the social, spiritual and ecological within The Salvation Army will now be briefly outlined.

Chapter Two, Methodology: Practical Theology and Grounded Theory, incorporates an overview of the practical theological framework of the thesis and describes the data collection methods and processes used.

Chapter Three, People and the Planet: Reviewing the Literature, briefly outlines the current state of the planet, the historical and current status of the Christianity and ecology nexus; the scriptural basis for creation care and pro-environmental action; and constructive and destructive evangelical Christian issues.

Chapter Four, The Salvation Army and Ecology, focuses specifically on interrelated spiritual, social and ecological themes within the Salvation Army, its traditions, history, important figures, and related literature.

Chapter Five, Results and Analysis: Grounded Salvationists, examines the wide range of emergent themes from qualitative interview data I have obtained from individuals in the South Queensland Division.
Chapter Six, *Reflection and Conclusion: Toward Holistic Salvationism*, aims to tie the strands explored in the thesis together, looking toward eco-mission, and pro-environmental action from individual Salvationists and The Salvation Army as a movement. Further theological implications, limitations of the thesis, and ideas for further research will be explored.

### 1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the main thrust of this research project, which aims to examine the relationships between the social, spiritual and ecological within Salvationist discourse and praxis, with a particular focus on the Australian context. A brief sketch of the history and current environmental situation and the strong basis for appropriate action has been outlined. The next chapter will expand on the practical theological framework and introduce research methods utilised in this thesis.
Chapter 2

Methodology: Practical Theology and Grounded Theory

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on describing and delineating the methodological approaches and frameworks shaping this multi-disciplinary examination of the relationship between the spiritual, social and environmental within Salvationist faith and praxis. The chapter is divided into two main sections. First, as this investigation is undertaken using practical experiences, theological insights, and other fields of knowledge toward distinctly practical yet theoretically inspired conclusions, practical theology is presented as the most appropriate paradigm for this research. Second, grounded theory, a qualitative research methodology is outlined, as are details of the research process involving a series of interviews with people who have a significant connection to The Salvation Army in the South Queensland Division of the Australia Eastern Territory.

2.1 Practical Theology

This research into the relationship between the spiritual, social and ecological within The Salvation Army is practical, yet also theological in nature. Hence, an appropriate model or paradigm that can incorporate social, environmental, theological, and other themes in a practical way is required. Practical theology, as shall be argued, is an apt framework. Rather than simply taking theological insight and applying it to the living out of faith in a pastoral setting, practical theology is both deeper and broader in its approach to Christian faith and practice. For example, Ogletree (1983:85) observes the clear link between theology and its practical outworking when stating that ‘theology is practical in the sense that it concerns, in all of its expressions, the most basic issues of human existence.’ In addition to basic human concerns, practical theology embraces probing reflections on the ways the Christian faith is lived. Therefore, Kinast (2000:52) expresses his definition of practical theology as ‘a critical theological reflection on current praxis rather than an application of theory to practice.’
Furthermore, Heitink (1999:6) enhances practical theology by including the wider societal milieu through his description of the discipline as ‘the empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society’, with the clarification that, ‘the exercise of practical theology does not have the church, but rather society, as its horizon’ (8-9). Applying Heitink’s expanded focus toward societal knowledge, norms and tendencies, there is an increasingly requisite need to be aware of issues of social injustice society’s use and abuse of the Earth (White, 2009). Following Bosch (1995:55), who explicitly stated in regards to missiology — which is indeed also relevant to the work of a practical theologian — ‘a missiology of Western culture must include an ecological dimension. The time is long past that we can afford to exclude the environment from our missionary agenda,’ I argue the mediation of the Christian faith therefore requires taking ecological issues into account. This ecological dimension to practical theological research sheds new light on Anderson’s (2001:22) assertion that:

as a theological discipline [the] primary purpose [of practical theology] is to ensure that the church’s public proclamations and praxis in the world faithfully reflect the nature and purpose of God’s continuing mission to the world and in so doing authentically addresses the contemporary context into which the church seeks to minister.

To undertake the process of examining Salvationist notions around the relationship between environment, social and spiritual themes, and being faithful to the continued discernment of the nature and purpose of God’s mission, I will look to the metaphor of conversation. This conversation, or dialogue, between various actors such as culture, earth, The Salvation Army and the gospel is described by David Tracy (1978) as finding relationship through mutually critical correlations. Rather than a one-way lecture, the conversation is a two-way and relational process. Hence, interpretations of culture and the natural environment by secular thinkers bring critical analysis and questions to Christian understandings of the gospel, the natural world, and Salvation Army traditions. Yet, at the same time, Salvationist understandings are also in a position to provide answers to those and other questions that arise throughout the process of mutual critical correlation.

To further expand and analyse the practical theological process of mutual critical correlation within this thesis, Ballard and Pritchard’s (1996:12) fourfold description of practical theology is briefly outlined. Ballard and Pritchard illustrate the four dimensions of practical theological activity as being: (i) descriptive of belief and practice through the use of historical, sociological and theological tools and discourses; (ii) normative by seeking
norms in faith and praxis in light of the gospel message and values; (iii) *critical* throughout the analysis of praxis, theology and other relevant discourses; and (iv) *apologetical* through engaging in constructive dialogue between the church and society.

These elements of Ballard and Pritchard’s practical theological model are interwoven throughout the thesis. All four of Ballard and Pritchard’s practical theological dimensions are interlaced to some extent in various thesis chapters. Predominantly, but not exclusively, the literature review of Chapter 3 aligns with the *apologetical* dimension; Chapter 4 and 5 on historical and current Salvationist belief and practice are both *descriptive* and *normative* regarding historical and current Salvationist belief and practice. The *critical* element of practical theological enquiry is employed to varying degrees throughout the entire work.

At this point, it should be noted that the church is not a singular theological monolith, but is multifaceted. Astley (2002:i) contends that ‘ordinary theology…is the church’s front line. Statistically speaking, it *is* the theology of God’s church.’ He describes ordinary theology as relating to the ‘theological beliefs and processes of believing’ carried out by ‘believers who have received no scholarly theological education.’ As many of the research participants have not received formal theological education, it is a relevant and important insight. Ballard and Pritchard’s four phase model and insights from Astley and others will be utilised in the examination and analysis of the relationships, affinities and ‘ordinary theology’ of Salvationists views on the bonds between the social, spiritual and ecological. As practical theology frameworks recognise theology both as contextual and praxis-focused, further description of these terms will be examined.

### 2.1.1 Context

Bevans (1992:3) claims that ‘a theology that is not somehow reflective of our times, our culture, and our current concerns – and therefore contextual – is also a false theology.’ To bring these assertions to bear on the current concerns of the global situation and of local circumstances, I argue for the inclusion of ecological dimensions to current theologies, particularly within The Salvation Army. Others such as Bosch (1995) agree that these matters are a crucial part of the practical and theological work of the Christian church. Earth and its myriad ecosystems are facing huge stressors from the ever increasing appetite of humanity’s need for more. The human-induced stressors reveal some of the cultural elements that Bevans sees as imperative in contextual theology. The context for this thesis includes my observations that as a capitalist, consumer and profit-driven society, modern civilizations as a whole rush towards the development of additional
ways to both produce and increase the commoditization of goods (Manno, 2012), profitability of food (Wirzba, 2011), misuse of land (Vitek and Jackson, 1996) and energy. There exists a dangerously large focus and prioritisation on profits and economic growth to the detriment of the limits and health of the natural environment, and the related impacts on the health and well-being of humanity, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

As many current ecological disasters and issues faced are of a global scale, yet are also actioned by local communities and individuals in small and at times personal ways, practical theologies therefore take into account the local and contemporary situation. I argue that the twofold realisations that: 1) Earth is a gift of grace and love, to be cherished and cared for; and 2) the way the Church lives and acts in the world has an impact, both positively and/or negatively, on itself and the rest of creation. I also contend these two concepts are crucial ingredients for any contextualised practical theology. Members of the church, principally in Western countries, live, act and have their being (cf. Acts 17:28) within generally competitive and materialistic economic and cultural imperatives which are negatively impacting the very same body of Christ in developing and poorer communities, not to mention future generations and the entire creation. This current situation is, taking Rahner’s (1972:104) words, ‘deficient [in its] self-realisation’ of the Kingdom values of love, peace, justice, hope and phronesis, or practical wisdom, throughout much of the worldwide body of the Church including The Salvation Army.

With these issues in mind, Rahner (1972:104) argues that practical theology, at its most inclusive, has ‘everything [as] its subject matter; i.e. the Church’s self-realisation in all its dimensions’ (emphasis in original). To take everything – everything within the created cosmos, the relatedness of all things – as the context and subject matter for a practical theology is a formidable task. And yet, there is a tension between the width and locus of practical theology. Müller (2005:6) reminds us: ‘it is the particularity of a practical theology that gives it life.’ For anyone, including Salvationists, it can be a complex task to consider the impacts of personal and collective consumerism on the poor and the environment in the seemingly mundane choices made every day. For example, are items of clothing or foods and beverages – such as coffee, tea and chocolate – being produced in unsafe or unhealthy conditions for the workers and local environment? Yet, these everyday choices inform and flow forth from a *habitus*. This *habitus*, while also in part socially constructed and culturally influenced, is described by Forrester (2000:5) as ‘a disposition of the mind and heart from which action flows naturally, in an unselfconscious way.’ The natural outpouring of love, peace, justice, hope and practical wisdom is a central principle of the
Christian journey toward living out the values of the kingdom of God. Practical theologies are therefore required to take into account the complex global/local situation and provide positive, sensitive and accessible theologically-sound teaching, with helpful points for praxis which assist in the holistic adoption of a personal *habitus*. As spiritual formation of the individual occurs, it then follows that this personal journey further informs and influences the communal theology and praxis of the wider Church, both locally and globally through the communication and sharing of new insights, helpful knowledge and vice versa.

### 2.1.2 Praxis

There are significant connections between the concrete context of life, the theology that is formed in that situation, and the practice that flows in response. With Forrester's (2000:5) definition of *habitus*, the ‘disposition of the mind and heart’ is not separate from the tangible actions that flow from the heart. Questions then arise: What does this action mean spiritually, physically and ecologically personally and collectively? Cultivating dispositions of the heart and mind, and their natural overflow also integrates strongly with the larger theological task. As Heitink (1999:102-3) states:

> practical theology, then, is more than mere practice; it is a strategic perspective that links the hermeneutical with the empirical so as to achieve an integrative theological model that underlies the theological task as a whole.

The hermeneutic or interpretative task which Heitink mentions, the task of analysing the relationship between theory and practice, can also be viewed in terms of a hermeneutic spiral (Forrester, 2000). This spiral starts in experience (praxis) which then grows as theological reflection (theory) is involved. Over time, situations change and questions arise over the relevance and particularity of a theology. This reflection on theory, in light of new insights, conveys practice for further evaluation. Hence, this circular motion between theory and praxis, the theology and activity of the church, shifts in a way that is not ‘a uniform, one-way linear movement’, but ‘rather a spiral, in the process of which we ascend to higher levels of understanding and more appropriate and faithful practice through a constantly moving process of radical questioning’ (Forrester, 2000:28).

Within this hermeneutical spiral, Heitink (1999:8-9) divides praxis into: praxis 1, being the mediation of the Christian faith; and praxis 2 being the sphere of modern society where ‘individuals and groups, motivated by their personal ideals and driven by varying interests, make specific choices and pursue specific goals.’ While stating this demarcation
between the mediation of the Christian faith and modern society can be upheld theoretically, Heitink (1999) agrees these two elements of praxis cannot be fully separated as practical theology and the work of the church includes the cultural and social structures beyond the church. Nonetheless, it is important to note this Salvationist project explicitly broadens the human-centric agenda from Heitink’s practical theological vision inclusive of ‘society’ to the wider perspective of the natural environment as the expanded and comprehensive horizon within which society is sustained.

In addition to theoretical and real-world distinctions between Christian and societal praxis, there is potential for differences between personal, communal and/or structural praxis. For example, it is conceivable that personal Salvationist praxis has the capacity to be isolated from the broader work of The Salvation Army. Pembroke (2011:11) explains how practice can transcend the personal/social dichotomy, as ‘social reality is neither determined by impersonal, pre-determined structures and forces, nor as merely the expression of human imagination and willing.’ In other words, social structures are important in the creation of personal and communal narrative and practice, however, transformation of these social structures is possible through personal reflection and engagement. Hence, having both the ability to receive change and yet also enact change gives greater confidence of concrete application of the potentialities inherent in a practical theology. While social systems and pressures are powerful and entrenched, there exists an amount of freedom to make change in the world (Pembroke, 2012). His view is supported by Graham (1996:110) who states that practice emerges as the process by which social relations are generated. As a working definition, we might characterise practice as purposeful activity performed by embodied persons in time and space as both the subjects of agency and the objects of history.

For example, personal Salvationist experiences are informed by the social structure of The Salvation Army, and yet these same experiences and theological reflections also have the potential to be a transformative influence on the structure and life of The Salvation Army, however large or small.

In addition to Salvationists being aware of, and engaging with praxis in global and local contexts, Rahner’s (1972:105) recommendations to be creative, prophetic and ‘engaged in critical reflection’ are significant. His suggestions as part of mutually critical correlation between theological, social and ecological areas are enhanced in this thesis
through a qualitative investigation of the ‘ordinary’ or everyday Salvationist theological considerations.

2.2 Grounded Theory

In the search for Salvationist’s views on the environment and experiences in nature, the project adapted and utilized data collection and analysis techniques from grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1997; Morse et al., 2009). Grounded theory was developed through the collaboration of Glaser and Strauss and was first published in 1967 as *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Their qualitative research approach aims to present a useful and systematic method which assists in data collection and analysis towards the construction of valid social theory (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz also argues for a flexible and constructive approach to grounded theory, where it is acceptable for grounded theory researchers to use strategies and approaches in forms that are applicable and relevant to the research situation. As these ‘guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules’ (Charmaz, 2006:2), it blends well with the emerging field of experiential Salvationist research being undertaken in this study.

As an avid photographer, I have found Charmaz’s (2006) explanation of grounded theory in terms of camera lenses helpful. Starting with a wide angle lens one can broadly view the terrain. As one proceeds through the use of progressively narrower angle lenses, the view of the terrain changes – different sections are seen with more clarity, depth and an element of closeness grows. In a way, the format of this thesis follows the progressive lens concept. It begins with broad views of scientific and theological foundations for the care of earth. The lens changes and the smaller scope of Salvation Army traditions and experiences come closer into focus. The lens is adjusted again to focus more narrowly on a number of individual Salvationists’ experiences of, and attitudes towards, nature. Likewise, the geographical scope of the thesis begins with an expansive view to all of earth, further narrowing to worldwide Salvationist work. The qualitative data collection further narrows its field of view in examining Salvationist perceptions, concerns and affinities to earth within the South Queensland Division of the Australia Eastern Territory.

2.3 Data Collection Process and Analysis

Two approaches have been undertaken to collect Salvationist data. The first approach aims to gain a deeper understanding of historical Salvationist spiritual/social/ecological views through textual analysis of relevant international and
Australian Salvation Army documents. The second approach gleans affinities, perceptions and observations relating to the relationships between spiritual, social and environmental concern from members of The Salvation Army through qualitative interviews. The prior preparation of a list of related questions and pertinent topics to the project assisted in guiding the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix). The benefits of using qualitative interviews include the ‘thick’ descriptions and depth of participant views, perspectives, motivations, background information and context. These deeper descriptions by participants also help provide and elicit further idea generation (Newing, 2011).

Participants for this research project are connected in various ways to The Salvation Army. They were recruited via non-probability sampling types, primarily the snowball, availability and purposive methods. The snowball sampling method was employed, where contact with one individual led, via referrals, to creating a snowball or network of other individuals. The availability and purposive methods were adapted through the use of personal communication, newsletters, emails or announcements at Salvation Army corps (churches) or centres.

Interviewees were required to have some significant form of attachment to The Salvation Army. The five primary ways in which participants can express their commitment, connection and support of The Salvation Army are: volunteer, employee, adherent, soldier and officer. Volunteer positions are open to persons who wish to assist the work of The Salvation Army in a way that suits them and the centre they partner with. Adherents are members of The Salvation Army who have signed a pledge to show their support of the work and mission of The Salvation Army. Soldiers have signed a longer covenant which includes the commitment to undertake other positive actions underlining the Salvationist dedication to be faithful and responsible in stewardship of resources and other aspects of faith, Christian living and mission, and to refrain from certain actions, such as the use of habit-forming drugs. Soldiers can be from all walks of life, and can take on careers outside of The Salvation Army while also giving time, finances and support to Salvation Army work. Officers are soldiers who at some point have undertaken further studies at a Salvation Army training college and have committed to full-time service to The Salvation Army. They are considered as having a similar position to ordained clergy within other Christian churches, are paid a living allowance by The Salvation Army and generally hold the primary leadership positions at corps and social centres. Salvation Army employees can also be soldiers or adherents. However, being a committed Salvationist is not a requirement to undertake paid positions required within Salvation Army centres.
Interviews with employees, soldiers, adherents, volunteers and officers from the South Queensland Division of The Salvation Army took place at a location of their choosing, either in their home, office or in a public place such as a coffee shop. Audio recordings and written notes were taken during the interviews to aid transcription and analysis. Information and consent forms were presented to participants outlining the research project details, and stating that personal information would be de-identified to protect their privacy. Permission to be interviewed and recorded was obtained from each participant. The 27 interviews conducted consisted of 21 individual interviews and three couples who chose to be interviewed together. The interviews aimed to have a balance of participant age, gender, corps or centre location (rural/urban), and their experience within The Salvation Army. Interviews contained open-ended questions and lasted from 20 minutes to 2.5 hours, with an average duration of 53 minutes. Table 1 provides basic participant information.

As the interview process proceeded, the first stage in analysing the data was the verbatim transcription of the recorded interviews. The grounded theory research method was adapted in the initial data analysis stages through coding or summarising the data within paragraphs and sentences. As interviews continued, the emergent themes and concepts enhanced and informed the subsequent interviews and textual research throughout the remainder of the research process. As Charmaz (2006:10) states, ‘some of our best ideas may occur to us late in the process and may lure us back to the field to gain a deeper view.’ This has certainly been the case within this project. Identification and coding of major themes within each interview and across the interviews was achieved through a combination of manual analysis and Leximancer software over the span of the project. The analysis of interview data forms the basis and framework for Chapter Five.
2.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has set the methodological context and goals in terms of structure, data collection and analysis for this thesis. Practical theology is the overarching paradigm for this research, where practical and theological insights emerge through the use of mutual critical correlation, the hermeneutic spiral, grounded theory, and Ballard and Pritchard’s model of descriptive, normative, critical and apologetical practical theology. The next chapter continues to examine literature that sets up the mutually critical conversation between the contemporary environmental situation and Christian theology and praxis.
Chapter 3

People and the Planet: Reviewing the Literature

3.0 Introduction

This chapter, based on the framework of practical theology, examines the spiritual, social and environmental relationships within the literature. First, it surveys various ways in which the environment is viewed and interacted with by humanity. Second, noting the interconnectedness of the social, the ecological and the spiritual, Christian theological and missional responses are then considered. The significant themes of ecotheology and eco-mission, and the potential barriers to ecotheology and eco-mission are also outlined. The chapter concludes with discussion of integrated vision of ecology, ecumenics and economics through the relational metaphor of oikos.

3.1 Conceptualisations of the Environment/Earth

The ‘environment’ is conceptualised in numerous ways within the literature. A broad yet decidedly localised conception of nature is seen through Harvey’s (1996:118) suggestion that the environment is ‘whatever exists in the surroundings of some being that is relevant to the state of that particular being at a particular place and time.’ Ayre (2008a:24) includes ‘the whole context in which life is lived’ in his definition, comprising not just natural and social surroundings, but also scientific and political discourses. Views and understandings of the ‘environment’, ‘nature’ and ‘earth’ are complex, as they are understood and contested in diverse ways. As cultures emerge and change, relationships with, and perspectives on the environment, nature and earth also vary. Different cultures have conceptualised the planet that sustains us in radically different ways, hence McGregor (2004:594) states that ‘our knowledge of nature will always be, at least partly, social.’

McGregor (2004) proposes a continuum of anthropocentric to ecocentric positions on the environment, and provides a simplified list of seven discourses that exist as key environmental narratives. This continuum moves from anthropocentric principles of ‘sustainable development’ at one end, through to the ecocentric or biocentric principles of
‘deep ecology’ – which sees the interconnectedness and equality of all life forms as defining principles – at the other. Regardless of the position taken on this continuum, humanity remains inextricably part of the ecosystems that make up the earth’s biosphere. These conceptualisations of the environment form an important part of understanding how people relate to their natural surroundings, and so it is necessary to examine them more closely. Hence, the next subsections cover various discourses, beginning with mechanistic and utilitarian understandings, followed by the environmental perspectives of stewardship and partnership.

3.1.1 Earth as Machine – Dominion as Domination

Advances in knowledge during the last few centuries have introduced ways of thinking which underpinned much of the social and environmental change around the Industrial Revolution in the West. These factors have considerably influenced Western societies to relate to the earth as they would a giant machine (Callicott, 1983; Northcott, 2011; Santmire, 1973), and have contributed to perceptions that technological and material progress is infinite. In contrast to mechanistic and unbounded progress, Michael Zimmerman (1993:v) states many ecophilosophs argue that modern environmental degradation stems from ‘Western society’s concept of endless material progress.’ The growth of information, knowledge, skill, scientific proficiency, technology, and material wealth has been fortified with the assumption that these increases may also over time cause many social problems, such as poverty and disease, to disappear. However, adherence to this model has seen many people, governments and businesses in the years since the Second World War ‘neglecting to consider [the model of infinite growth’s] potentially devastating ecological consequences’ (Zimmerman, 1993:v). These consequences are being seen in a vast array of environmental crises and disasters, the rapid loss of biodiversity, and increasing climate variability.

This focus on economic growth and material wealth has in turn led to greater burdens and pressure on the wider environment. Richard Sylvan (1993:15), writing as Richard Routley in his seminal 1973 article Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?, terms the prioritisation of humanity and the privileging of human interests to the detriment of the rest of nature as ‘basic (human) chauvinism.’ Further writings by Routley and Routley\(^1\) (1980) find no valid defence for this ‘chauvinistic’ approach to nature, where humanity is ontologically or metaphysically special, or above nature.

---

\(^1\) Similarly to Richard, the ecophilsopher Val Routley also changed her name, becoming Val Plumwood.
The expression ‘human chauvinism’ is also relevant to Christian conceptualisations of humanity and its place on earth. Ganoczy (1991) asks who has brought about the idea that nature serves human beings so much that it now requires liberation from abuse. His answer is humanity – we have made it so. Ganoczy notes two important Christian theological figures from the Protestant reformation, amongst many others in and outside the Christian faith, whose interpretive work has helped form and reinforce anthropocentric theologies and subsequently foster the diminution of care for earth: Martin Luther states that creation was given over to humanity for its perverse acts, while John Calvin asserts that creation bears, in part, the penalty for humankind’s sins.

Awareness and concern for the environment is evident in much of the biblical text, however, Ganoczy (1991:48) mentions this awareness is not always sensitive and ‘its anthropocentrism is indisputable.’ Similarly, Aldo Leopold (1989 [1949]:vii), a leading ecologist and environmental ethicist of the twentieth century, asserted that:

Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

Lynn White Jr. (1967:1205) concurs, asserting more strikingly that Christianity is ‘the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.’ Since White’s landmark article, a significant amount of literature has responded to his claims. Taylor (2010a:11) delineates these responses into four categories: 1) apologetic responses: that a genuine understanding of Christianity confirms the faith is largely environmentally sensitive; 2) confessional responses, where guilt is admitted and religious transformation encouraged; 3) indifference to White’s critique; and 4) hostility to the notion of heightened environmental concern.

Within sections of the environmental movement, Christianity may be viewed as past its use by date or as an obstructive worldview, largely due to anthropocentric bias within the faith. For instance, Watson (2005:176) specifically names Christianity, pointing to the notion that ‘Christians have denounced this idea [of biocentrism] as worshipping the creation and not the Creator. Yet in the name of the Creator, they have advocated the destruction of the creation.’

The development and focus on human-centred concerns to the detriment of issues that affect all of earth, has been argued to thrive within evangelical theology and praxis
(Langmead, 1998-99). As The Salvation Army places itself within the evangelical tradition this observation is worth examining. Langmead (1998-99:162-172) posits five reasons for the high levels of anthropocentricity within evangelical Christianity:

1. Evangelical views of the gospel are almost exclusively centred on the personal salvation of humans;

2. God’s transcendence tends to be over emphasized [over God’s immanence];

3. Evangelicals tend to emphasize the historical Jesus and his atoning work at the expense of Christ the cosmic creator;

4. Evangelicals often hold to an apocalyptic and otherworldy hope for the future;

5. Many evangelicals believe that reality is divided into spirit, which is ultimately real, and physical matter, which is at the least unimportant and perhaps even sinful.

Langmead’s elements are valid to a point, with the caveat that like all subcultures, evangelicalism is neither clearly defined nor homogenous. For example, Langmead’s fifth point is portrayed with even more pointedness by Bounds (2010:47) as a sort of ‘virus’, ‘a form of Gnosticism’ that devalues the physical world. Calvin DeWitt provides ten potential evangelical barriers to environmental progress, condensed by Simmons (2009:58) into three categories. First, environmentalism is perceived as closely linked with leftist politics, therefore of concern to those, who Wells (2013) argues, have ‘co-opted evangelicalism as a vehicle of right-wing politics.’ Second, Simmons notes evangelical concern can be elevated over ‘theological heresies’, such as perceived connections between pantheism, new age spirituality and biocentrist positions. And third, there are eschatological views prevalent within the evangelical milieu that diminish the apparent need for environmental concerns (Hendricks, 2005). There may be little room for caring for a planet which is not considered spiritually important and believed to only have a finite existence, when worldviews based on a reading of certain biblical texts that indicate the world will be destroyed and a new, holy and Edenic world will be created, are coupled with a Platonic dualism that reduces the gospel imperative to a purely spiritual exercise to ‘save souls.’

These potential obstacles to evangelical environmental concern have surfaced, for example through the partial impact of Richard Cizik’s environmental stances on his leadership of the USA National Evangelical Alliance (The Great Warming, 2013). Carr et
al. (2012:277) also report that numerous opinion polls within the United States ‘have identified evangelical Christians as one of the most climate sceptical groups.’ These stumbling blocks to evangelical environmentalism reflect, to some extent, the rich Christian ecological literary landscape. There are widely divergent views (Kearns, 2007; McCammack, 2007; Nagle, 2008), and as Conradie (2011a) contends, a lack of clarity. However, Ross’ (2011:1) review of articles focused on the ‘greening of mission’ in an evangelical Christian context claims there is also a commonality which appears to be a need to ‘justify the legitimacy’ of Christian environmental action and ecotheology in light of the relatively recent recognition of environmental concern as a significant topic within evangelicalism. The unclear relationship between environmentalism and levels of religiosity are corroborated by Lieberman’s (2004) survey of research studies investigating the effects of religious factors on environmental variables, published between 1980 and 1999. Lieberman concludes that it is not an easy task to construct consistent conclusions regarding the relationship between factors such as a belief in God, Biblical literalism, frequency of prayer, church attendance and the positive or negative effects of these factors on environmentalism. From their 1993 study, Guth and Kellstedt suggest that ‘evangelicals were the least environmental, protestants were somewhat greener, and Catholics the greenest’ (Lieberman, 2004:21). Their reasoning for this negative correlation between evangelicalism and environmentalism stems from the factors of ‘dispensationalism, end-times ideology, and pessimism about the possibility of reform’ (Lieberman, 2004:21), which corroborates Simmons’ (2009) third point, that eschatology is a potential barrier to environmental concern and action.

David Bookless adds his voice to the growing concern for evangelicalism to broaden the outlook of God’s purposes beyond human salvation or welfare. Based on Bebbington’s fundamental evangelical characteristics, Bookless (2008:38) suggests that ‘evangelicalism has largely failed to be fully biblical, cross-centred, conversionist or activist in engaging with the non-human environment.’ Bookless' argument is important. He identifies four elements: 1) the Bible, 2) the cross, 3) conversion to the faith, 4) and activism, as qualities and symbols evangelicals hold dear. For Bookless to state that evangelicalism has not upheld or lived up to its own deeply-held convictions and values is a substantial critique of evangelicalism. His response to the lack of broad evangelical engagement with the questions of dominion as domination, or as stewardship, is both encouraging and critical. It also positions environmental concern, care and action as vital subjects within evangelical discourse.
3.1.2 Earth as Creation – Dominion as Stewardship

Other Christian interpretations, while still human-centred, also place a strong emphasis on creation. The term creation, where the cosmos is understood as being created and sustained by God, brings the natural environment firmly into the theological realm. As Moltmann (1985:21) argues, the ‘sphere of reality which we call ‘nature’ must be lifted into the totality of being which is termed ‘God’s creation’. The overarching tenor of scripture places God decisively as creator and sustainer of the cosmos. Psalm 24:1-2 clearly expresses God as originator of the totality of the earth:

The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.

Yet, while creation is ordinarily recognized as the Lord’s, it has also been argued that, ‘western civilization inherited a picture of God as an absentee landlord’, leaving humanity as stewards of the available resources (Black, 2006:95). The term stewardship has a variety of perceptions and interpretations attached, and as Ayre (2008:112) states, ‘that one’s final position [on stewardship] tends to depend to a large extent on the prior assumptions or understandings one brings to it.’ Genesis 2:15, which states ‘the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it’ (NASB), is, for Thomas Derr (1998:82), a crucial text that supports the notion of stewardship, as humanity is ‘made to cultivate and manage the earth, not [to] passively accept whatever nature brings.’ However, this is a point where disagreement arises around humanity’s position within the ecological-theological system. For example, Northcott (1996) critiques stewardship as describing and incorporating a master-slave relationship between humanity and the earth. The label ‘stewardship’ itself has been somewhat obfuscated through its appropriation by groups such as the ‘wise use’ movement (Arnold, 1987), which have been critiqued for incorporating anti-environmentalist philosophies and having significant links with extractive industries (Hendricks, 2005; Kennedy, 2004; McCarthy, 2004).

The term ‘custodianship’ is another term often used in religious and secular circles instead of stewardship. Paul Watson (2005:176), the founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, also rejects ‘the anthropocentric idea of custodianship’ suggesting it ‘once again conveys human superiority.’ Yet, why does nature need stewarding anyway? Stephen Jay Gould (1990:30) states that the idea that humanity is the steward of the
natural world ‘however well intentioned, [is] rooted in the old sin of pride and exaggerated self-importance’ – the Earth can look after itself.

It is worth noting that Gould’s statement and even the term ‘creation’ can raise the spectre of creationist/evolutionist debates. This thesis places the process of creation beyond this debate, whereby Christians, whether following a literalist or figurative reading of the biblical creation accounts, can share a concept of creation which takes on a more unified understanding of the cosmos receiving the spark of life, being created and sustained through the influence of the creator God.

Notwithstanding the debate over the ‘how’ and ‘when’ of creation, Granberg-Michaelson (1988:40) argues ‘the Western Church’s modern theology has fought between being personalized or politicized, and largely has forgotten the theology of creation as its starting point.’ The scope of the kingdom and household of God has been reduced to include less than a full view of God’s entire creation. Yet, as Sittler (1972:10) asserts, the doctrine of creation is of vital importance to Christian faith and praxis. As an example of the importance of creation to Christianity, he states that it is ‘the only adequate referential context for Christology.’

In another reflection on the centrality of creation to Christianity using Romans 8:19-22, Cranfield (1974:227) offers an analogy and vision of the role that life-giving stewardship can play in creation:

The praise of the whole creation [is] prevented from being fully that which it was created to be so long as man’s [sic] part is missing, just as all the other players in a concerto would be frustrated of their purpose if the soloist were to fail to play his [or her] part.

Cranfield expresses the importance of interactions and relationships in the formation of melodious music, and within the web of life – both of which are relevant to Salvation Army ministry. Relationship and community are themes that emerge in numerous works, and are relevant to all notions and conceptualisations of the earth. R.J. Berry (2006:1) maintains that ‘relationship is at the root of stewardship,’ as does Wendell Berry, through his concerns ‘about the unsustainability of our culture’s casual relationship to the land, the community, even the past’ (Bonzo and Stevens, 2008:23). Visions of life-giving God-human-earth relationships – the spiritual, social and ecological – have a wealth of inspiration from the wide-ranging notions of stewardship.
3.1.3 Earth as Holy Ecosphere – Partnership, Relationship, Sacrament

Following both Wendell Berry and R.J Berry’s pointers to relationality as the basis for the flourishing of life, people from all walks of life agree ‘the only practical way forward [is] as ‘humans with nature’, not over or in it’ (R.J. Berry, 2006:7). Placing humanity as just one part of the web of life on earth is clearly seen within sections of the environmental movement and other biocentrist positions. For instance, Naess (1972) distinguished two subgroups within the environmental movement: 1) those that prioritise human welfare and securities; and 2) those who view all nature worthy of welfare and respect.

A further dichotomy has been developed by Taylor (2010a:10) in his examination of spirituality within the environmental movement. He distinguishes between green religion (where ‘environmentally friendly behavior is a religious obligation’) and dark green religion (‘in which nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care’). Taylor’s unravelling of emergent ‘dark green’ religious concepts are diverse and multifaceted. However, I argue this rise of green and dark green religiosity is of relevance to the current and future cultural engagement of the church, including The Salvation Army. For example, Proctor’s (2006:188) study found authoritative trust predominately came from two ‘hybrid’ locations: theocracy, trust in institutional religion and government, and ecology, a collective trust in nature and science.’ He also reports that many in Europe and the USA have a ‘deep trust in nature as inherently spiritual or sacred’ (193). To further highlight seeing nature as spiritual or sacred, in terms that Salvationists and evangelicals are familiar with, Paul Hawken (2007:184-186) declares: ‘[I]t has been said that we cannot save our planet unless humankind undergoes a widespread spiritual and religious awakening.’ He asks, ‘would we recognize a worldwide spiritual awakening if we saw one?… What if there is already in place a large-scale awakening and we are simply not recognizing it?’

Whatever one’s viewpoint is on these positions, humanity is part of the vast interrelated array of ecosystems that make up the earth’s biosphere. John Muir picked up on this interconnectedness during his time in the Sierra Nevada. Writing in his journal in 1869 he declared ‘when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe’ (in Fox, 1981:291). Noting this interconnectedness, Thompson (1983:85) suggests a right relationship with the rest of nature, treating all with care and respect, rather than simply as objects or resources, is a key to human fulfilment and contentment. Theologian Joseph Sittler, adding the spiritual dimension, enhances Thompson’s social/ecological suggestion. Noting the benefits of discerning and acting
responsibly within the interconnected relationships between God, nature and humanity, Sittler declares, ‘these three are meant for each other’ (2006:54). He further maintains that ‘restlessness will stalk out hearts and ambiguity our world’ until relationships between God, nature and humanity are fully ‘redeemed.’

Within the Salvation Army, the doctrine of holiness (further elucidated through the writings of Brengle, 1984[1896]; Coutts, 1957), and the ideal of the grace-filled sacramental life (Smith, 2011) may also be important steps towards a further strengthening ecologically-aware Salvationism. As Jenkins (2008:17) asserts, holding together ‘the paradoxes of grace and nature’ and ‘humble soil and heavenly glories’ can help move toward deeper love and relationship with God and the world. The idea of seeing life as sacred, as a sacrament itself, can be observed implicitly in at least one Salvation Army song. The hymn by Albert Orsborn (The Salvation Army, 1986:409), while not explicitly broad in its application beyond humanity, links the life of the Christian with the sacramental meal of the Eucharist and the hope for its realization within one’s life:

*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.*

Likewise, Lodahl (2003:146) explains the Wesleyan hymn initially titled *Grace before Meat* affirms the spiritual and ‘sacramental character of our [physical] relations and experiences’:

*Turn the full stream of nature’s tide;*
*Let all our actions tend*
*To Thee their source; thy love the guide,*
*Thy glory be the end.*

*Earth then a scale to heaven shall be,*
*Sense shall point out the road;*
*The creatures all shall lead to thee;*
*And all we taste be God.*
These similarly themed hymns also call attention to the close relationship between Salvationism and Methodism, and the rich theological heritage therein.

Another pertinent conceptual avenue for discerning the interconnectedness of God-humanity-nature is the paradigm of partnership. Viewing life as a partnership between all of creation, seeing the other as kin, as ‘co-siblings of creation in the drama of shared life’ (Rasmussen, 2006:179), may assist overcoming abusive human-centric perceptions of power within human-nature partnerships, and also add humility to human visions of God-human relationships. Similarly, White (1967) ends his paper by documenting St Francis of Assisi’s alternative Christian view towards nature which closely resembles the partnership model. Rasmussen (2006:179) also takes note of St Francis and advocates creation can be ‘playfully imaged as a kind of ‘holy democracy’ of all creatures great and small.’

There are other relational forms and concepts through which an increased salience, concern and care for the broader biosphere can develop. Due to space constraints, concepts such as covenant and priesthood will not be covered in depth. Yet, noting there are a number of valuable models that may connect with Bouma-Prediger’s (2010:97) articulation of a ‘creation-encompassing theocentrism’, Ayre offers an important observation. Ayre (2008:108) proposes the term ‘theistic biocentrism’ as the ‘most appropriate response’ for Christian ecological engagement, which like Bouma-Prediger’s ‘creation-encompassing theocentrism’, blends both the primacy of God and the essentiality of the ecosphere. However, Ayre (2008:123) also recommends that as varying approaches to humanity’s place within the earth are not entirely ‘in competition with each other… a composite model is required.’ The actual construction of such a composite model is still open to interpretation and further analysis. Regardless of the model(s) that emerge, or how the relationship between the spiritual, social and the ecological is viewed, as Rae (2006:309-310) points out, that for followers of Jesus, ‘language will be filled with its proper content only in attentiveness to the action of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.’

3.2 The Interconnectedness of Health, Well-Being, Social Justice and Eco Justice

A common theme that arises through the church’s journey to be increasingly attentive to ‘the action of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit’, is the interconnectedness of compassion and love for people in their physical situation and concern for their spiritual health (Rae, 2006:309-310). Issues around social justice and Salvation Army mission certainly have a strong history. The vulnerable and at-risk within society are a major focus
of Salvation Army work. As an example of the socially-motivated information publically promoted, The Salvation Army’s (2012) Australian Southern Territory website states that globally, ‘more than 800 million people go to bed hungry every day... 300 million are children. Every 3.6 seconds another person dies of starvation.’ Endeavouring to tackle these significant issues of social justice and the continuation of social services has become a major part of Salvation Army action. Yet, as Davies-Kildea (2007:7) argues, there is, at times, a significant disjoint between those ‘who are touched by the work of [The Salvation Army’s] social services’ and ‘the majority of people in the pews in Salvation Army congregations.’ Nonetheless, even with this contemporary divide, if compassionate social concern can be considered one of the basic ingredients in the spirit of Salvationism (Clifton, 2004), and if negative impacts from an ecological perspective are conducive to deleterious impacts on people and societies, then it follows that Salvationists’ concern for a wide range of social issues like health and well-being should also include the health and well-being of the planet. An important Salvation Army document in this regard is A Call for Climate Justice which illustrates the connections between environmental and social issues (The Salvation Army, 2011b). The paper reports findings that developing countries accounted for 97 percent of all natural disaster related fatalities between 1990 and 1998 (Easterly, 2001). The paper also describes two regional perspectives (from the South America West and India Northern Salvation Army Territories) that emphasize ‘that it is impossible to truly address health related problems in their local communities without first addressing the ecological causes’ (3).

Many health-related issues can be traced to economic inequality and poverty. There are also strong links between poverty, economics and environmental issues. To further underscore this interconnectedness, Alokwu (2009:ii) refers to the ‘double earth crisis’ of ‘poverty and environmental degradation.’ Herman Daly (1977) argues that the economy is a subset of the earth, rather than the economy as beyond and above environmental boundaries. Certainly, economic growth, even as a by-product of developing capital, may support the well-being and health of human populations. However, if the environment is neglected or ecosystems devastated through ‘economic growth’, this environmental neglect impacts negatively on people, societies and also the economic system. Hood Washington (2008:1) asserts that, worldwide, ‘environmental health risks carried by already marginalized communities’ are to a large extent brought about by ‘societal decision making.’ The societal decision to industrialise has brought many benefits, however Hood Washington (2008:2) also argues that ‘there has been a lack of adequate knowledge and awareness among community members of the health issues created and/or exacerbated
by environmental inequalities.’ It is not just a lack of adequate knowledge that has caused environmental inequalities. C.S. Lewis (1947:69) writes: ‘what we call Man’s [sic] power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument.’ Greed and the lust for power and status are major factors in both the destruction of ecosystems and serious economic and health inequalities.

Irrespective of how nature is experienced or wielded, Thompson, Aspinall and Montarzino (2008:112) maintain that a ‘wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits’ emerge from access to, and the use of natural green spaces, such as forests and parks, and blue spaces, such as rivers and seas (Shaw and Francis, 2008). For example, to have access to the natural environment has been indicated as an assistance to stress relief and can also enhance mental well-being (Bodin and Hartig, 2003; Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Pretty, Griffin, Sellens, and Pretty, 2003). Likewise, there are beneficial correlations between physical exercise, well-being, and activities undertaken outdoors (Bird, 2004; Ewing, 2005; Owen, Humpel, Leslie, Bauman and Sallis, 2004; Takano, Nakamura and Watanabe, 2002). However, if the natural environment is in an unhealthy or degraded state, it can also impact negatively on physical health. Therefore, on the whole, unpolluted environments, and equal access to these environments ‘means healthier people and healthier communities’ (Hood Washington, 2008:3).

Many Christian voices also echo the arguments that hold the state of the planet and the plight of the poor as mutually dependent. Bookless (2008:147) states it is ‘a false distinction to separate caring for the poor from caring for the planet. God has made a world that is interdependent.’ From both a theocentric and anthropocentric viewpoint, ecological concern is warranted. As Abbaté (2009:140) argues, ‘both our worship of the Creator and our compassion toward His children compel us to care for creation.’ This compassion toward other people and their present and future needs is modelled by Jesus. For instance, in the gospel of Matthew (15:32), Jesus states ‘I have compassion for these people.’ Furthermore, John’s gospel (13:34) speaks of a new mandate Jesus gave which is as simple as it is challenging: ‘Love one another, as I have loved you.’ This framework of love and compassion is an agenda The Salvation Army is historically familiar with. As Hood Washington (2008:2-3) contends:

With an increased knowledge of environmental conditions that clearly have negative impacts on the health of our communities, informed citizens [and movements such as The Salvation Army] should be able
to engage in dialogue that encourages and promotes environmental equity in places where inequality exists.

Therefore, deeper knowledge and understanding of the holistic spiritual, social and ecological needs of people and their environment can lead to constructive and progressive missional refocus and realignment.

3.3 Christian Ecological Responses

Increased interest and support for the closely connected areas of environmental concern and social justice as part of a renewed interest in God’s wider horizon of salvation can be enacted in a variety of ways. Support from the church and individual Christians for more extensive environmental and climate change policies, frameworks and legislation that aims to sustain the twin emphases of the social and the ecological, could have a significant impact on the uptake of such guidelines by corporations, individuals, churches and households (Spencer and White, 2007). Likewise, individual and localised congregational activities and practical actions offer ways to participate in the kingdom of God. Two factors in particular are important in bringing about positive change to the place of earth within the Christian church: 1) a rediscovery of the centrality of the entire creation to God and God’s kingdom; and 2) the significance of compassionately caring for creation in the face of environmental degradation and its impact on the entire web of life. However, a Christian perspective requires more than just pragmatic approaches in order to deal with this complex issue. A holistic understanding of Christian mission on earth is supported by careful consideration of contextual theology and ecotheology.

3.3.1 Theology therefore Ecotheology

Before engaging with ecotheology, it is pertinent to mention the theological situation within The Salvation Army. As Bevans (2005:3) states: ‘There is no such thing as theology; there is only contextual theology.’ In The Salvation Army context, Hein (2010) argues that Salvationists are well known for inspirational stories and practical works and, to a lesser extent, comprehensive, systematic theological work or penetrating histories. Early Salvation Army leaders such as Ballington Booth (1891:102) were content to say that, rather than being occupied with theological thoroughness, Salvationists ‘do not talk and argue over it, but live it out.’ He argues that this approach to mission ‘is the best way of demonstrating its reality.’ The prioritization of action over debate or theological work within Salvationism has been perceived by a number of studies (Green, 1989; Hill, 2004; Rhemick, 1984). For instance, Rhemick (1984:61) notes the lack of theological precision.
within early Army leadership as ‘Booth could lump Luther, Wesley and Whitfield together and do it comfortably because neither he nor his earlier mission nor his later Army was concerned with the fine points of doctrine.’ Rather than spending time in theological squabbles, the Salvationist priority was squarely within the realms of spreading the gospel, saving souls and serving the needy. Hill (2004:xii) mentions that ‘sometimes... they gloried in their ignorance’ around the finer details of theology. Ballington Booth (1891:102) again gives voice to the activist and evangelical resolve of Salvationism:

We do not propose to dive into any of the depths of theory and creed that are today absorbing the entire time and energy of so large a portion of the Christian Church. The theology of the Salvation Army is a plain and simple revival of the teachings of Christ and His apostles.

Giving primary energies to evangelical action and humanitarian service has contributed to the positive public view of The Salvation Army as being ‘Christianity with its sleeves rolled up’ (Larsson, 2004). Bruce Nicholls (in Langmead, 1998-99:169) asserts more broadly that rather than this being a particularly Salvationist phenomena, ‘evangelicals are activists and generally know little of contemplative prayer, fasting and meditation. Few are able to be still and silent before their Creator.’ An important consideration here is to ask whether evangelical action and humanitarian service without theological contemplation is helpful toward holistic Christian formation in the personal and communal spheres. Ayre (2008), with many others, would argue it is not. There is a real danger that important implications for relevant and fruitful Christian praxis can be neglected if a theology is carelessly or inaccurately considered. Theology is less meaningful if consistent praxis is deficient. Likewise, praxis and mission are less confidently lived if theology is undeveloped. As Hesselgrave (1978:9) reasons: ‘theology and mission go together. Without theology the mission of the church dissipates. Without mission the theology of the Bible stagnates.’ Hence, a deeper practical theological understanding of God’s call to responsibly care for all creation will inevitably assist in authentic expressions of faithful praxis in the world.

Within the broad scope of theology there are a number of branches such as biblical theology, systematic theology and ecotheology, all of which, as Millard Erickson (1998:17) states, ‘seek to understand God’s creation, particularly human beings and their condition, and God’s redemptive work in relation to humankind.’ Ecotheology concentrates on the idea of seeking ‘to understand God’s creation’, humanity’s place within creation, and how we act towards God’s creation as fundamental to faith and deeper understandings of God,
and God’s purposes. I argue that the understanding of our place in God’s creation is not just critical to the theological branch of ecotheology, but rather to the entire theological project. South African missiologist David Bosch (1995:55) agrees that Christian-based mission and praxis in the West ‘must include an ecological dimension. The time is long past that we can afford to exclude the environment from our missionary agenda.’

The ‘time is long past’ due to the far-reaching extent of human-induced environmental degradation, from the melting ice of the Arctic to the increased likelihood and severity of droughts in Australia. As Nash (1991:23) contends, environmental degradation is not just ‘a single, discrete problem, but rather a massive mosaic of intertwined problems.’ The expanded horizon of the causes and the correlated effects of humanity’s excesses are the basis for Ayre’s (2012:10) claim that ‘the Church’s past failure to act [on ecological issues] contains elements of a theological and ecclesiological crisis.’ Hence the field of ecotheology is of tangible importance to the worldwide Christian koinonia in its attempts to act in more consistent and compassionate ways on ecological issues. Ecotheology is also therefore an integral element of Salvationist theology and praxis. In arguing for a deeper integration of ecotheology into the doctrine and praxis of The Salvation Army, it both reflects the shortage of Salvationist theological wrestling in general, and yet echoes the growing number of studies on Salvationist theology and praxis over the past three decades (Hill, 2004). Hill mentions officers such as Philip Needham, Shaw Clifton, John Rhemick and Chick Yuill, and non-officers such as Roger Green, Donald Burke and David Rightmire who have enhanced this field. To Hill’s list, I add four examples of these nascent Salvationist theological reflections, which have to some extent given inspiration to my thesis: 1) Dennis Garland’s (2004) thesis on the influence of government and societal influences on The Salvation Army’s Christian beliefs and internal organisational rhetoric; 2) Harold Hill’s (2004:vi) significant thesis on clericalisation within The Salvation Army and the inherent ‘tension between function and status’ for the movement; 3) Jason Davies-Kildea’s (2007) exploration of A Theology of Social Service and Holistic Mission seeking to unify the social and evangelical arms of The Salvation Army; and 4) the recent publication of Dean Pallant’s (2012) practical theological enquiry into the place of faith in Salvation Army health ministry.

Like Salvationist theological literature, ecotheological literature has expanded over the past 30 years. Conradie (2011b:1) discerns eight discourses within this field:

1) Multi-faith collaborations in ‘religion and ecology’;

2) Ecumenical work;
3) Environmentally-themed studies in applied ethics;
4) Ecological biblical hermeneutics;
5) Re-visioning and searching Christian traditions for ecological wisdom;
6) Theological reflection on Christian beliefs and symbols;
7) Theological reflection on liturgical renewal; and
8) Christian earth-keeping projects and the greening of churches.

Conradie (2011a) contends that even though the breadth and depth of ecotheological literature has grown substantially, clarity within this broad field has not fully emerged. A number of works have been produced to map trends in ecotheological thought (Gustafson, 1994; Haught, 1993; Northcott, 1996; Ruether, 2000; Santmire, 2000). However, in agreeing with Conradie's suggestion that the explanations of different typologies have added the lack of clarity within ecotheology, I maintain it is advantageous to have a variety of views and typologies to convey a fuller picture of the complexity of the theological enterprise and physical world in which we live.

Nonetheless, there is broad consensus among the ecotheological literature, despite the apparent confusion over typologies, that the current issues facing earth are serious and widespread. Ecotheological consensus is also widespread over the critical position and reach of the worldwide church, that it is imperative for the church to be aware of the ecological situation, and that movement towards positive environmental engagement is widely endorsed and acted upon. To further understand the interconnectedness of theology and mission in ecological terms, Bernhard Ott (2001:84) proposes a two-fold understanding of the theological, and therefore ecotheological, enterprise: ‘The first task of theology is to make sense of the whole of life by reference to God’, and ‘the second task of theology is to be an agent of transformation, so that the whole of life may reflect God’s intention’ (my emphasis). Making sense of the whole of life is tied intimately with transformative actions. In other words, theology and mission are indispensable partners in the Christian life.

3.3.2 Christian Mission therefore Eco-mission

‘Mission’ is a central function of the Christian life, yet mission is also one of the many topics within Christian thought and praxis that has experienced fragmentation and division, particularly over the finer points of how mission should be enacted and what mission actually entails. Bosch (1991:9) assists in the reconciliation of this fragmentation
to some extent when he argues that a realistic approach is that Christians can only hope for ‘some approximations of what mission is all about.’ Hartenstein’s (1934) approximation of Christian mission as participating in the *missio Dei* (mission of God) has gained widespread support and use within Christian literature. Following Hartenstein, Langmead (2011:4) affirms that ‘Christian mission originates in the activity of God.’ So mission is not therefore, to use Salvation Army catchphrases, solely about ‘saving souls’, ‘growing saints’, or even to just ‘serve suffering humanity.’ Rather than understanding Christian mission as a concentrated effort on the spiritual and temporal needs of humanity, mission can be seen as covering an even broader scope. Holistic Christian mission can encompass all of creation, such that ‘participation in God’s cosmic purposes for a new order of relationships at all levels in the universe [is] governed by justice, love, peace and grace’ (Langmead, 2011:4). The Christian message, at its heart, is a combined personal and communal journey towards deeper relationship with the Creator and the creation, following Jesus’ life of justice, love, peace and grace. The knowledge that this journey toward holiness and wholeness is an ongoing process, if appropriately understood, leads away from arrogance and anthropocentricity towards humility and love. Moltmann (1977:64) adds this challenge of moving toward humility to the place of the church in the world, as ‘it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church.’ The church participates in the broader work of God’s mission, with the acknowledgement that God is at work beyond the boundaries of the church. To reiterate, the church is established through the wider *missio Dei* – the mission of the kingdom of God – rather than mission being established by the church (Bosch, 1991).

Rene Padilla (2010) perceives a major dichotomy between church mission and kingdom mission in some Christian expressions of mission. Padilla defines church mission as having an eternal focus, primarily on the saving of souls. Many Christians favour this approach to mission, seeing evangelistic mission as focused almost entirely on the human soul and its safe passage to heaven through the simple assenting to faith in the salvific work of Jesus Christ through his death on the cross (Dickson, 2003; Moyer, 1997; Schnabel, 2004). I certainly do not want to be understood as denigrating the importance and eternal significance of this vital and sacred event, the crucial position of the life, death and resurrection of Christ in the *missio Dei*. However, as Habel (1998) argues, the singular focus on saving souls as the only expression of Christian mission is a narrow reading of scriptures such as Matthew 28:19 (NIV translation): ‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’
This can also be translated as ‘baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ Instead of the baptism of new believers being a solitary action at a particular point in time, there is an inherent flow to the word into which speaks more of ‘becoming’ and of journeying into relationship with the triune Creator. This process leads to a broader understanding of the Christian life and mission within the kingdom of God. Kingdom mission takes on a far wider and holistic scope, where followers of Christ are encouraged to see partnering with the missio Dei on earth in relational, practical, inclusive and earthbound ways, in addition to attending to personal salvation and the wider spiritual state of humanity (Langmead, 2011).

Habel (1998) extends Padilla’s church and kingdom mission descriptors with the suggestion that Christian mission has over time encompassed three elements. Habel’s first element involves mission focused primarily on the saving of souls, echoing Padilla’s church mission. Padilla’s kingdom mission is then distributed throughout Habel’s next two elements. The second element broadens the idea of mission and includes bodily and community-focused evangelism (social justice). The third and broadest sense of mission takes the whole of creation as the focus of salvation, redemption and healing.

Historically, The Salvation Army, along with the vast majority of the wider church, has focused on Habel’s first two missional elements: the salvation of souls and a strong focus on assisting those experiencing suffering, poverty and hopelessness. The focus on the first two elements is certainly crucial to a holistic living-out of the faith. In fact, this Salvationist focus on human suffering and salvation has been, particularly during its early history, radical and progressive. Examples include the acknowledgement of the equality of women, appropriate cultural praxis, and ways the Army has brought extant human suffering and injustice to wider public attention. However, to a large extent, the focus on the first two elements of mission has sidelined a broader discourse around the value and care of non-human nature within the Salvationist movement.

At this stage of reflection on the activist nature of The Salvation Army and the various current environmental crises, it may be of relevance to revisit Hesselgrave’s (1978) statement, outlined earlier in this chapter. As originally quoted, Hesselgrave argues that mission and theology are deeply interconnected, yet the same can be stated of theology and mission in order to manifest ecological receptivity and praxis. Hence, to use and extend Hesselgrave’s comment with an ecological frame: ‘[Eco]-mission and [eco]theology go together. Without [eco]theology the [eco]-mission of the church dissipates. Without [eco]-mission the [eco]theology of the Bible stagnates’ (9).
Eco-mission, in all its various manifestations, is at best born out of a relationship and a desire to live faithfully as an appropriate and proper response to God for the benefit of all God’s creation. In contrast to the narrow, solely human-focused view of mission, taking the ‘kingdom of God’ as the heart of mission brings more width, depth and holism to mission. To clarify this point further, Ayre (2008:23) states that mission refers:

To the role of the Christian Church in the world in its wholeness, including worship and spiritual disciplines, pastoral care and a compassionate response to human need, in addition to social justice and ecological issues as suggested by Jesus’ use of the term “kingdom of God”

The open and inclusive nature of this view of the mission of the worldwide church is at the same time cosmic in its scope, yet intimately personal in its influence. It covers a range of actions that take place within the church, for the church. At the same time it looks outward to the world and seeks to provide motivation for engagement with the entirety of creation. Kerr (2009:16) argues that the church, as mission, and in living out this mission, is a ‘dynamic gift, to be received everanew in the mode of engaged and embodied action.’

The active and holistic nature of this dynamic gift of mission can also be expressed in its relationship to Jesus Christ as sharing in the ‘celebration of Christ’s lordship by sharing in his mission, by being broken for the world as he was broken, by being poured out in sacrificial love for others’ (Kerr, 2009:16). This dynamic and ‘everanew’ gift of mission can be enlarged to see ‘others’ (human and other-than-human) as contingent and inclusive of all of God’s loved creation.

To further the discussion toward holistic and holy Salvationist faith and praxis, taking into account Fowler’s claim that environmentalism within the Protestant tradition is ‘unclear about its “community” model of the ethical life’ (in Bakken et al., 1995:3), metaphors may be constructive conceptual tools. I suggest a metaphor that may be helpful towards the formation of holistic Salvationist models for all areas of community life on earth, based on the Greek roots oikeo (to dwell) and oikos (household).

3.4 Oikos: A Helpful Metaphor

Oikos is the etymological root for three English words: economics, ecumenics, and ecology. Economics (oikos-nomos) calls for wise management of the goods, services and organisation of the household. Ecumenics (oikoumene) calls for a unity within the
members of the household, with all residents (human and non-human) having a place and respect within the household. Ecology (oikos-logos) speaks of the interconnectedness and interdependence of life within the whole household of God. The persuasiveness of this metaphor is the way in which it integrates these three key areas into the conception of the ‘household of God.’ Furthermore, the oikotheological concepts of economic justice, ecumenical fellowship and ecological sustainability within the spiritual and physical house of God are of deep significance to Salvationists in the face of injustices within the current economic system, widespread environmental degradation, and the schisms, ruptures and divides that exist throughout the church and broader society (Conradie, 2011a; Rasmussen, 1994).

Conradie (2011a:115) provides the Greek for certain English words within Ephesians 2:19-22 which illustrate the key position of the related roots oikos and oikeo within this passage. It also indicates the deep-seated connections between the relationships between God and creation, and the relationships between the members of the household here on earth:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens (paroikoi); you are citizens and members of the household (oikeoi) of God, built upon (epoikodomethentes) the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole building (oikodome) is joined together and is built up (sunoikodomeisthe) as dwelling-place (katoiketerion) for God through the Spirit.

Warmback (2005:182) argues these oikotheological terms have wide consensus as to their meanings, however, are sometimes used in slightly different ways. For example, Raiser (1991:87-88) uses oikoumene as an alternative to oikos:

oikoumene, understood as the one household of life created and preserved by God, thus extends beyond the world of humankind, of the one human race, to creation as a whole. It reminds us that human history is bound up with the history of all living things and that the human household is incapable of surviving without being related to the other households which are its natural environment.

Raiser has succinctly captured the interconnectedness embedded within the oikos metaphor. I contend that human history is not separate from the history of all living things, or the history of the earth. Human life would not be possible in its current form if we were
not part of the natural environment. The household of humanity is not detached or isolated from the wider *oikos* of God. Assuming the interrelatedness between humans, earth and God, Warmback (2005:3) therefore asserts the *oikos* metaphor is indeed a helpful way to overcome perceived rifts between: 1) primarily earth-centred environmental work; 2) principally people-focused social justice work aiming for far-reaching reductions in the levels of human poverty; and 3) the chiefly spiritual focus of evangelistic mission. As interdependent parts of the whole household, *oikos*, it makes sense to reduce unhelpful divisions between various groups within the household of God, thereby finding a more complete way forward which aims for the health and well-being of the entire web of life.

There are other authors who develop and foster these themes of integrated and holistic approaches to living within the earth community without explicitly using the *oikos* terminology. Wendell Berry (1999:88), for instance, is deeply interested in the connectedness of land, humanity and economics, the associated actions required to cultivate life, and the profound idea to ‘practice resurrection.’ Berry speaks of the widespread ‘disease’ of displacement, dislocation, injustice and greed within modern Western culture, which stem from ignorance or dismissal of ideas such as ‘finitude, humility, localness, boundedness [and] particularity’ (Bonzo and Stevens, 2008:25) and the folly of addressing these ‘diseases... without acknowledging the crucial role of the wilderness, of the dirt, for healing’ (Bonzo and Stevens, 2008:97). Echoing the interrelatedness of the *oikos* movements of ecumenics and economics, Berry (2005:109) asks: ‘is our health in any way separable from the health of our economic landscape?’ Berry does not claim to be a theologian yet his writings articulate harmoniously with the concept of *oikos* and themes that have arisen in my research. The concept that all things in heaven and on earth are part of the ‘household of God’ connects strongly with Berry’s visions of whole communities and the knowledge of the importance of love within the household. Salvationists may affirm with Berry (2002:146) taking:

> literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world... I believe that divine love, incarnate and indwelling in the world, summons the world always towards wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God.'
3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly covered areas of conversation between environmental concerns, societal pressures, contours of Christian faith, theology and mission in regards to ecological theology and mission particularly in relation to the poor and vulnerable. It has also outlined the idea of *oikos* as a potentially significant framework for Salvationist thought and action. The next chapter will focus on examining these and other related environmental, social and spiritual themes within Salvation Army history and praxis.
Chapter 4

The Salvation Army and Ecology

4.0 Introduction

History informs tradition, and tradition shapes the form and function of organisations and the thoughts, beliefs and activities of individuals within organisations including The Salvation Army. Hence this chapter will focus primarily on Salvation Army history and traditions to further interpret the interconnectedness of the social, ecological and spiritual within Salvationism.

Tradition is an important element within The Salvation Army. However, as alluded to in Chapter One, there are internal Salvationist debates regarding certain traditions and rituals such as open air meetings, the use of brass bands and timbrels, the uniform, military-like paraphernalia and nomenclature, and the role and function of commissioned officers. These discussions have raised questions about the contributions traditions bring to The Salvation Army, whether these traditions are distracting Salvationists from more important social and spiritual issues, and what actually should be considered Salvationist traditions, traditional values and/or social and spiritual actions (Clifton, 2004; Davies-Kildea, 2007; Garland, 2004; Hill, 2004; Pallant, 2012). Nonetheless, relating current local Salvationist practice to Salvation Army history and tradition is a significant inspiration for many Salvationists and throughout many corps and centres around the world.

Hence, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the significant historical influence of the Wesleyan tradition on Salvation Army founders William and Catherine Booth. The second section provides a brief discussion of The Salvation Army which primarily examines social, spiritual and ecological themes within early Salvation Army history and important figures. The third and final section of this chapter observes the growth in Salvationist ecological concerns. To gain further understanding of the historical precedents for Salvationist theological thought it is necessary to mention the impact of John Wesley on the spiritual formation of William and Catherine Booth.
4.1 John Wesley and the Wesleyan Tradition

John Wesley (1703-1791) founded and led the Methodist United Societies, initially in Britain. There have since been many offshoots from Methodism. One such branch is The Salvation Army. The extent of Wesley's impact on William and Catherine can be appreciated through William Booth's statement (in Booth-Tucker, 1892(1):74):

I worshiped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life. No human compositions seemed to me to be comparable to his writings, as to the hymns of his brother Charles.

As a member of the Christian church through the Wesleyan tradition, The Salvation Army has theological commonalities with other Wesleyan-based movements. Outler (1964) claims John Wesley was more of a contextually and situationally reactive pastoral and practically focused theologian rather than a systematic theologian. In other words, his theology appeared to be formed contextually and as required, rather than taking time out to work through his theology in a cohesive fashion. Outler also argues that Wesley primarily used the four elements of Scripture, reason, experience and tradition in formulating his theology. Throughout his life of learning and living out his practical theology, Wesley came to hold progressive positions for his time, which are still considered particularly nuanced from ecological and health perspectives, and are valuable towards developing ecotheologies (Lodahl, 2003). As a practical example, foreshadowing the Booth family's vegetarianism, evidence suggests John Wesley adopted vegetarianism at roughly the same time he published his compiled volume *Primitive Physick: An Easy and Natural Method for Curing Most Diseases* in 1747 (Lodahl, 2005).

Wesley has many constructive contributions to make towards a Salvationist ecotheology. For example, Snyder (2004:11) argues that Wesley's thoughts broadened towards all of creation through writings on:

1) inward and outward holiness;
2) his key theme of 'justice, mercy and truth';
3) sensitivity to the created order;
4) concern for physical healing and well-being;
5) compassion for animals; and
6) his interest in gardens and gardening.
Snyder also suggests Wesley’s perspectives are constructive in creating a ‘vision for the restoration of the created order.’ Runyon (1998:10) supports this idea as the ‘harmony Wesley describes [regarding God’s original plan for creation] in terms of what today would be called ecological balance’ [emphasis in original]. From Wesley’s sermon ‘The Great Deliverance’, Snyder (2004:11) gleans three corollaries:

A) This illustrates God’s mercy to all his works.

B) It provides an answer to the problem of creature suffering.

C) It encourages us to show mercy to all God’s creatures.

Wesley is an important figure in the existence of The Salvation Army and for his ecological perceptiveness, yet his theology is not completely unproblematic. One such difficulty, as Snyder (2004:10) argues, is that John Wesley did not ‘fully overcome the spirit/matter dualism of classical Christian theology.’ The criticism that many are confined within a form of Platonic dualism can be brought against many other theologians, philosophers, the wider Christian church, and Western societies before and after Wesley. However, the spirit/matter dualism is an important influence on the nature of Christian and therefore Salvationist responses to environmental concerns.

In exploring the meaning of salvation within The Salvation Army today in an Australian context, Davies-Kildea (2007:45) contends ‘for most Salvationists, their concept of salvation is something which belongs to a spiritual realm connecting the believer to eternal life in heaven.’ He further argues that there is ‘an implicit, if not always explicit, dualism exists which clearly places these spiritual aspects over and against the physical or material world.’ Davies-Kildea questions what he regards as a narrow meaning of salvation in his exploration of a theology of social service and holistic mission within The Salvation Army. This is also an extremely relevant question for understanding and exploring ecological themes, perceptions and action within the Army. However, it is certainly true that spirit/matter dualism in regards to both salvation and mission is not unique to The Salvation Army, but is also part of broader evangelical Christian discourse, and of Western thought (Hay, 2002). Nonetheless, Pallant (2012:104) contends that the body/soul, spirit/matter dualism has, at least in The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine, moved towards the relationality of persons and the Trinity. This, Pallant reasons, is revealed through the inclusion of a clear dismissal of dualistic body/soul thought in the 2010 Handbook of Doctrine. Yet Pallant (2012:104) concludes that this dualism and priority on the soul has indeed impacted on praxis within The Salvation Army. This has led to a ‘greater separation between corps and social institutions’ and has contributed to the
‘fragmentation of Salvation Army mission.’ In whatever ways dualistic thought has impacted Salvation Army practice, from William and Catherine Booth’s humble beginnings as itinerant preachers in 19th century England, the Booth’s initiated a movement that has had profound and positive impacts for millions of people around the world.

4.2 A Brief Sketch of The Salvation Army

This movement within the Christian Church has gained widespread reputation and trust through faithfully providing a wide range of services, aid and care. These compassionate actions range from assisting those stuck in poverty and addiction, to courageous acts of bravery and kindness through times of war and peace. For example, The Salvation Army is generally known as a reliable first-responder and a dependable source of service and support in post-disaster situations (Dahlberg, 2002). Recent examples of disasters in which The Salvation Army partnered to assist in support and recovery include earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand (2010/11), the Asian tsunami of 2004, tornados and hurricanes in the USA, such as Katrina (2005) and Sandy (2012) (The Salvation Army, 2012 & 2013), cyclones in Australia such as Tracy (1974) and Yasi (2011), flooding in Pakistan (2010), Australia (2011, 2012, 2013), and bushfires in Australia (2009) to name but a few events. Whether natural or human-induced, The Salvation Army through its disaster and emergency services aims to bring honour to God via the ‘sacrament of service’ (Dahlberg, 2002:119). The importance of providing this sacrament of service was recognized even before The Salvation Army was established in 1878. George Scott Railton, the secretary of the East London Christian Mission (precursor of The Salvation Army) described the organisation as being:

managed upon the simple business-like principles of a railway, with all the cohesion and co-operative force of a trade union, formed of people whose devotion, determination and confidence are at least equal to that of the Jesuits, all of whom are left to enjoy and use that perfect spiritual freedom and independence which only the Holy Spirit can bestow (in Walker, 2001:110).

The Salvation Army has increasingly widened its scope of operations over the years with an aim to share the hope and love of Jesus to all, yet the bond of the spiritual and social within the Army has not been without controversy and division. In the United States, Watson and Brown (2001:3) state that after 120 years of social and spiritual service, The Salvation Army is ‘the most effective organization in the U.S.’ and that these ‘two
obligations [of the social and spiritual] are inseparable’ and ‘holistic ministry [is] soup, soap and salvation.’ However, George Scott Railton, only 16 years after his glowing report of the East London Christian Mission mentioned above, was seen dressed in sackcloth (a sign of mourning) ‘solemnly trampling underfoot an advertisement for the new Salvation Army Assurance Society.’ This was due to his belief that the primacy of Salvationist spiritual mission was being diluted with the addition of various social schemes (Coutts, 1977:23). Railton’s actions allude to the complex and contested nature of balancing social and spiritual work from the early days of this peace-loving Christian army.

Railton was also a supporter of the name change from the ‘East London Christian Mission’ into ‘The Salvation Army.’ Initially penned as being a volunteer army, the word ‘volunteer’ was thought to be best substituted by the word ‘salvation.’ This transformation from a mission to an army was, during this period in Victorian England, culturally conditioned and relevant, yet it caused controversy with other branches of the church. For example, in Ireland, the *Presbyterian Churchman* (1884:19) stated ‘of all the crude sensations passing current as religion… this seems to be the last and worst.’ Bale (1990:17-18) quotes *The Saturday Review* from July 1879 which illustrates the considerable amount of militaristic language Salvationists employed in the effort to save souls:

> The *fortresses* of Beelzebub are music-halls, penny gaffs, dancing rooms and the like; of these, in London and elsewhere, The Salvation Army has *stormed* no less than 100, and has turned these haunts of ribaldry into places of *divine service*… The strength of Mr Booth seems to be that he unites two powers: he preaches doctrines that fill the face of a believer with light and radiance, and he is no less thorough in *enforcing* a complete reform of life. (my emphasis)

As time marched on, the militaristic tendencies and vocabulary have become a point of debate for some Salvationists. Salvationists such as Clarence Wiseman (General of The Salvation Army, 1974-77) see ‘the early Salvation Army as jubilantly militant in mood, waging a vigorous warfare against sin, the liquor interests, destitution and injustice’ (Palmer, 1981:39). Likewise, Palmer’s (1981:39) description can be separated into a global ‘*crusade* … a non-stop, world-wide fight against evil in general’, and local ‘*crusades* – specific fights against particular wrong [sic] in a certain time and place.’ These representations are not based on military might but rather on love and hope grounded in the Christian gospel, where the ‘crusade *to* the poor [and] … *for* the poor’ is ‘an attempt to
alleviate the terrible condition in which thousands live.’ However, in a time when terrorism and war are not wholly positive associations, to state that ‘The Salvation Army is a crusade’ may seem not be entirely accommodating or helpful. Some even consider this as ‘a dead metaphor’ (Warren, 2012:278).

The militaristic traditions and broad anthropocentric focus of The Salvation Army could be perceived as being far removed from the ideals of ecojustice in the current social climate, yet at the same time a social climate in which one can justifiably ask ‘Are we at war with nature?’ (Haluza-DeLay, 2012:171). Nonetheless, promising and beneficial relationships between caring for human needs and a broader concern for the planet – the redemption or reforming of life in spiritual, social and ecological ways – are seen within early Salvationist literature. As an initial and simple example, In Darkest England and the Way Out, published by General William Booth (1942 [1890]:26) offered a ‘[plan, that] if realized would solve the worst problems of modern Society [sic].’ This plan includes the ‘Cab Horse’s Charter’ and contains a link, however tenuous, between animal and human welfare, with an identification and extension of care and concern to more than humans. It stated that the generic cab horse in London, the taxi of the day, could expect a better life than millions of men and women. Booth’s two main points were: when the horse is down, it is helped up without any questions asked, and while it lives it has food, shelter and work. With Booth’s orienting beliefs of the biblical mandate to share the gospel in word and deed, as spelt out in his famous tome In Darkest England and the Way Out, ensuing ‘battles’ for social justice were undertaken and continue today in various forms. An early example from the Salvationist mission to improve people’s living and working conditions is seen in the ‘Lights in Darkest England’ campaign (Myers and McGlothlin, 1996; Sandall, 1955).

This campaign developed in response to match production in the 19th century involving the handling of poisonous white phosphorus. This substance caused necrosis, commonly called ‘phossy jaw.’ This disease caused considerably high rates of disfiguration and death within the match-making factory workers community. A new non-toxic red phosphorous was available, but many match companies were not making the change to the healthier alternative. The campaign to eradicate the use of white phosphorous in the manufacture of matches involved The Salvation Army starting its own well-lit, well-ventilated match factory. In addition to paying fair wages to workers and using the non-toxic phosphorous, The Salvation Army called for other match makers to follow suit and for consumers to pressure companies to make the switch to healthier business operations.
The drive was successful in changing the business of matchmaking and provided healthier working conditions for many workers.

More recent examples of widespread Salvation Army forays into issues of social justice include supporting and raising awareness of the fair trade movement (Fairtrade International, 2013; The Salvation Army, 2013a), and continuing the fight against human trafficking (Stop the Traffik, 2013; UQ Human Trafficking Working Group, 2013). Through social justice engagement, positive impacts for humans and the natural environment can be observed, although in some cases it would seem as an inadvertent benefit. An example of purposeful rather than inadvertent benefit is found within the contemporary fair trade movement supported by The Salvation Army. The interrelatedness of social justice, economic development, and environmental protection are made clear for companies wishing to become fair trade certified, and steps are taken to make sure that certified products adhere to minimum social, economic and environmental standards.

As the fair trade movement highlights, economic, social and environmental factors are impacted by the global marketplace. In this increasingly connected world, another example of The Salvation Army’s embedded tradition of international work is the International Social Justice Commission, headquartered in New York. The Commission has continued The Salvation Army’s connection with the United Nations (UN) and has partnered with the UN since 1947 – only two years after the UN’s founding charter. Once again, the main focus of this Commission has been to alleviate suffering and support the UN to work towards ‘security, economic development, social progress, human rights and the achievement of world peace’ (Bailey, 2010:352).

In addition to international work on social justice issues, the Army has traditionally been at the forefront of a number of progressive socio-cultural developments. The movement was among the first to recognise the equality of women (Bennett, 2004; Eason, 2003), to promote vegetarianism (particularly within the Booth family) (Green, 1996; Iacobbo and Iacobbo, 2004), and to promote or enhance cultural sensitivity within international mission contexts (Booth-Tucker, 1930; Eason & Green, 2012).

Cameron and Jackson (2008:204) declare that The Salvation Army is in fact ‘unusual’ because its founding documents commend ‘equality for men and women in ordained ministry’, and that ‘over half of its ministers have been women.’ This is in large part due to the significant influence of Catherine Booth. For example, five years after Catherine had been ‘promoted to glory’ – a Salvationist term signifying the death of a
member and their hope in the life to come - the ‘Orders and Regulations for Staff Officers of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom’ dated 1895, (cited in Hill, 2004:312) states:

One of the leading principles upon which the Army is based is the right of women to have the right to an equal share with men in the great work of publishing Salvation to the world... She may hold any position of authority or power in the Army from that of a Local Officer to that of the General... Woman [sic] must be treated as equal with men in all the intellectual and social relationships of life.

However, as Eason’s (2003) study has shown, this equality has not always completely manifested in practice. Cameron and Jackson (2008:205) assert Eason’s ‘analysis suggests that it was… evangelical theology and Victorian cultural assumptions of sexual difference that led to… inequality in practice.’ Nonetheless, Catherine’s influence on the place of women in The Salvation Army was at the time quite a radical proposal, again showing the early Army’s counter-cultural tendencies.

These tendencies aided the movement’s rapid spread from the darkest and most neglected areas of late 18th century London, creatively and effectively modifying its methods for new cultures and climates with compassion and grace. For example, Frederick Booth-Tucker, taking charge of The Salvation Army’s arrival to India in 1882, held strongly that ‘the approach to Indians should be from the Indian standpoint and that it was no part of the business of a missionary to Europeanise Orientals’ (Sandall, 1950:272).

In addition to aiming for contextual relevance, the Army has a strong international presence and ethos. It is now in over 125 countries around the world in a wide variety of sectors. Internationalism can be considered one of the basic ingredients in the spirit of Salvationism (Clifton, 2004). This is an important dynamic in light of the global scale of environmental degradation and reach of potential changes in climate. International linkages, education and cooperation are affirmed both internally involving Salvationists in various cultures and climates. There is also affirmation of the need to serve in conjunction with other branches of the Christian church, extending to people of other faiths, people of no faith, governments, corporations and other non-government organisations, as evidenced by the International Social Justice Commission. However, what are the origins of these markers of Salvationism?
4.2.1 London, England: 1800s

During the 19th century, the area of East London was particularly noted as an area experiencing the devastating effects of the rapid growth of English industrialisation and urbanisation (Woodall, 2005). Human suffering, poverty, exploitation, starvation and concomitant impact on the natural environment could be seen here in its most unfortunate and unsightly forms. It was an area in which churches were ‘surprisingly scarce’, considering the generally high and noticeable status of the church in Victorian England (Needham, 1987:1). It was here in East London that The Salvation Army was birthed.

Particularly within England, the first half of the 19th century saw great technological innovations (railways, steam-driven machinery and other industrial advances), resource requirements increased (coal, iron, cotton), both the cost of goods and wages earned generally fell, there were increased tensions due to increased class differentiation, and increased population movement from the country to the city (Woodall, 2005:6-7).

Woodall contrasts the positive and negative effects of increasingly larger urban populations through the urban studies of Lewis Mumford and Asa Briggs. Mumford (1974:159) maintains ‘it was the change of scale, the unrestricted massing of populations and industries that reproduced some of the most horrendous urban effects,’ whereas Briggs (1990:71) gleaned positive effects from the large populations of poverty stricken people in the cities. The urban poor were substantially greater in number than in the country, therefore poverty and suffering were harder to be ignored by the broader citizenry and government. The sheer numbers of people in the slums, and the pollution of the East End affected some who visited the area, such as Jack London (in Woodall, 2005:46) who observed that:

as far as I could see were the solid walls of brick, the slimy pavements, and the screaming streets; and for the first time in my life the fear of the crowd smote me. It was like the fear of the sea; and the miserable multitudes, street upon street, seemed so many waves of a vast and malodorous sea, lapping about me and threatening to well up and over me.

The significant scope and intensity of the issues present in East London echoed William Booth’s younger years. Booth (1942[1890]:preface) was no stranger to the sights and sounds of those stuck in poverty. From an early age in his home town of Nottingham, he was attuned to the:
degradation and helpless misery of the poor Stockingers of my native town, wandering gaunt and hunger-stricken through the streets droning out their melancholy ditties, crowding the Union or toiling like galley slaves on relief work for a bare subsistence, kindled in my heart yearnings to help the poor which have continued to this day and which have had a powerful influence on my whole life.

‘Saving souls’ was always the primary objective for both William and Catherine Booth’s work, yet concern for the well-being of the whole person – the situation and state of a person’s existence, not just the soul – was planted through William’s early years in Nottingham.

4.2.2 Salvationist Responses

William and Catherine Booth’s attention to more holistic Christian praxis grew (Green, 1990) and took further shape through various defining events, such as William extending an invitation to underprivileged citizens to attend Methodist church meetings. The appearance of the poor in a predominately middle class church setting caused enough consternation from the congregation for William to move towards forming the precursory group to what is now known as The Salvation Army. To Roger Green (1990:85), the growth of Booth’s concern for both personal salvation and social reform was most ‘dramatic’ in his publication of In Darkest England and the Way Out in 1890. Keating (1978) and Murdoch (1992, 1994) have argued this change occurred in response to lower numbers of converts from sharing the gospel to the poor; however, Woodall (2005:148) characterises this argument as ‘too simplistic.’ Green (1990:85) maintains that ‘the central theological motif was clearly that of redemption.’ He proposes a tripartite model to synthesize Booth’s redemptive motif which include: 1) salvation, 2) sanctification, and 3) the kingdom of God, where all three redemptive categories are ‘interrelated’ (86). The importance of personal salvation was underscored through the view that ‘only a holy people could do a holy work’ in bringing sanctification to the corporate and cultural spheres towards the ‘establishment of a rightly ordered society’, with the hope of bringing the kingdom of God to Earth (Green, 1990:86).

As both personal and social redemption was crucial to this movement toward the kingdom, understanding the contemporary situation was essential to bringing about positive and holy change. Florence, the wife of the eldest son of William and Catherine Booth, discerned the contemporary social, economic and related ecological issues such as
pollution and poor working conditions that have become an important part of much of the Salvation Army’s work, described in Booth’s *In Darkest England*:

Alas! There are crowds of men and women, especially in our great cities, who are almost compelled to live very unnatural lives, herded together in factories, offices, mills or workrooms, breathing exhausted air through long hours of every day (in Bolton, 1980:144).

4.2.3 The ‘In Darkest England’ Scheme

This scheme set forth by William Booth was a far-reaching and comprehensive plan aiming to see people saved spiritually from sin and temptation, and saved physically from the pollution and poverty that pervaded the increasingly industrially-based English society. Basically, the scheme involved three phases. Phase one incorporated ‘city colonies’, to first give people hope and employment within the impersonalized towns through a variety of refuges and centres. Phase two included ‘farm colonies’, to give people opportunity to escape the city life. As the early Salvation Army leader Frederick Booth-Tucker, a firm supporter of farm colonies stated, the farms were to reunite ‘the manless land with the landless man’ (Winston, 1999:103). The third phase consisted of ‘overseas colonies’, to further expand the communal vision of hope to other lands including Australia (see Figure 1).

4.2.3.1 Phase One: The City Colony

Through his conversations with Salvationists, including William Booth, H. Rider Haggard (1910:200) was able to state that Salvationists involved in social work were ‘firmly convinced’ of two points in particular, 1) that ‘many of the great and patent evils of our civilization result from the desertion of the land by its inhabitants,’ and 2) that ‘crowding into cities which is one of the most marked phenomena of our time.’ Crowding within cities brought issues and opportunities that The Salvation Army was keen to solve, such as poverty, homelessness and unemployment. Assistance and ‘hope for all’ was to emerge through the city colony’s various refuges, workshops and other industrial or labour centres. After saving souls from any number of harmful or depressing situations via the city colony, Booth’s scheme then made provision for people to move and connect back with the land through farm colonies.
Figure 1: ‘In Darkest England’ Chart
4.2.3.2 Phase Two: The Farm Colony

William Booth promoted farming as a great means by which to alleviate many issues within the new industrialised, impersonalised and alienating society full of smoke, temptation and poverty. In a number of countries, including South Africa, the Netherlands, England, the United States and Australia, The Salvation Army acted upon the view of ‘farming as work which healed and made people whole and drew them into rhythm with God’ (Bolton, 1980:126). Farm colonies were planned and established in numerous areas, such as Hadleigh Farm in England, purchased in 1891, in order to give the unemployed new skills and become gainfully employed. In addition to larger farm colonies, the plan included small holdings farms or agricultural villages to be set up near farm colonies. This was to assist those who have moved from the city to the farm to take charge of their own plot of land. Schemp (2011:2) contends the farm colonies were ‘an attempt at a socialist means to a capitalist end,’ yet this description lacks reference to the divine purpose of the farm colonies as a journey to spiritual regeneration for those involved in the scheme. A number of these farms are still in use today and are also used as drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres. However, not all farm colonies were successful. Several farms, particularly in the United States, closed fairly quickly, partly due to poor land, lack of experienced workers, and funding issues (Winston, 1999:117-118). Sandall (1955:146) claims high rates on loans, unexpected drought, and the ‘Spanish-American war absorb[ing] public interest and funds’ as primary reasons for the three American land colonies being ‘liquidated.’ Antalek (1968:34) argues that both farm colonies of Fort Herrick, Ohio, and Fort Romie, California ‘failed to settle the poor on the land’ and did not fully realize the desired aims of the scheme. However, through these farm colonies many people were assisted by The Salvation Army (Antalek, 1968:83).

4.2.3.3 Phase Three: The Colony Over the Sea

Booth’s (1942 [1890]:151) ‘third and final stage of the regenerative process’ was to be the ‘colony over the sea.’ Land, most probably within the British Commonwealth, would be selected and provided for those who made the journey over the seas to settle in the Salvationist colony. While the entire scheme was never completely established, The Salvation Army assisted in migration programs to colonies over the sea. Esther Daniel (2007:33) claims that ‘support for British imperialism and expansion of the British Empire by populating its Dominions with large numbers of white British migrants’ was a key theme in The Salvation Army’s juvenile migration programs from Britain to Australia. Economic benefits to the British government, labour benefits to British colonies, were also touted as
a significant factor in defence of the programme (Daniel, 2007; Sandall, 1955). However, Daniel also maintains that the purpose of the training and migrant scheme was primarily aiming to restore a ‘Garden of Eden’ as it were, thereby leading the juvenile migrants towards God. Furthermore, Daniel (2007:47) contends that ‘Booth believed that life on the land would provide the physical, emotional and spiritual nourishment which they needed and one which would isolate them from the sins and degradation of the city.’ The Salvation Army is more well-known as an urban-based movement rather than a back-to-the-land organisation. As Schemp (2011:3) argues, the ‘agrarian experiment does not fit into the common historical perspective of… The Salvation Army.’ However, Booth’s scheme points out substantial connections to the wider creation, and to the social, physical and spiritual benefits that a closer connection with the land can produce.

In addition to William’s impact and significant influence on both the Booth family and the subsequent spiritual impact on the Army, Catherine Booth also provides a number of noteworthy and constructive points to the Salvationist social/spiritual/environmental nexus.

4.2.4 Catherine Booth: Eco-Salvationist?

Catherine Booth affectionately known as the ‘mother of the army’ is a prominent Salvationist who delights in nature and is a strong advocate for the protection and care of animals. In a number of her letters to William, Catherine writes of her love and joy at being in nature. During the spring of 1853, she wrote ‘I love nature, even what little of its beauties I have seen have almost enchanted me sometimes. I shall never forget the feeling of buoyancy and delight I experienced’ (Bennett, 2003:95). Also in the autumn of 1854, Catherine wrote to William of the beauty of a sunset she had experienced in overly descriptive and blissful prose. She noted it was ‘an enchanting scene’, one that ‘stirs strange feelings’, and ‘touches chords which thrill and vibrate through my whole nature’ (Bennett, 2003:228). In her letters to William, while echoing the ideas of countless others before and after her such as the American writers Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Aldo Leopold, Catherine does not subscribe to animistic or pantheistic approaches to nature. Rather, she notes her love of the natural world and often includes explicit reflections on these themes emanating from her profound thankfulness, deep love and gratitude to the creator, and the hope of a future perfect world:

It is one of the loveliest days the earth ever rejoiced in. The water is running up in dimpling ripulets just before me, and all nature seems to be luxuriating in the perfection of happiness. It is a joyous thought that altho’ the world is so marred and blighted by sin, there is still so much
of beauty and enjoyment in it left, as it were, as a type and earnest of its coming emancipation. (in Bennett, 2003:226)

Catherine’s love for both creator and creation has influenced to some extent the trajectory of The Salvation Army. William Booth spoke of his wife’s whole soul being ‘full of tender, deep compassion. [He thought] that she suffered more in her lifetime through her compassion for poor…animals than some doctors of divinity suffer for the…wide world of sinning, sorrowing mortals!’ (Bramwell-Booth, 1970:451). Catherine’s compassion for animals has been noted in a number of writings (Bolton, 1990; Green, 1996; Stead, 1979[1900]). It was said she was greatly pleased to discover ‘that Wesley and Butler envisaged the possibility of a future life for animals’ (Bramwell-Booth, 1970:28). W.T. Stead wrote of Catherine, ‘it is well to note with what passionate sympathy she regarded those who were suffering, whether they were drunkards or animals, so long as they were sentient beings’ (Bramwell-Booth, 1970:21). One assumes that it was Catherine’s love for animals that was partly the basis for both the value placed upon vegetarianism within the Booth family (Green, 1996; Iacobbo and Iacobbo, 2004) and also the inclusion of a section within The Salvation Army’s (1961:31) Orders and Regulations for Soldiers:

A soldier within the Salvation Army should be kind-hearted, and should manifest love and gentleness especially in their connection with the animal world. To inflict or to witness cruelty should be impossible. Not only should they avoid causing unnecessary hardship on animals, but should be willing aid or relieve any suffering creature.

The young Catherine Booth was also known for her action against animal cruelty. W.T. Stead (The Salvation Army, 1979:25) wrote that:

On one occasion, when she saw a donkey-boy strike his animal with a heavy-handed hammer, she leapt out of her carriage, and, notwithstanding a rather nasty fall on her face in the road, ran after the boy and succeeded in rousing him to some sense of his wickedness. She got the hammer, and then, overcome with excitement and exhaustion, she fainted away, and was with difficulty carried home.

Acting on behalf of oppressed and abused animals appears to also have been passed to the next generation of the Booth family (The Salvation Army, 1979:138):
When Emma [Booth] was a girl of thirteen, she was roused to wrath by the sight of a boy, who was cruelly beating the donkey he was driving. The impulsive child shook off her governess, pursued the cart, seized the reins, and when the boy jumped down she belaboured him with a stick, exclaiming: “There now! How do you like it?” She then burst into tears, and she and the donkey-boy knelt down there and then and asked pardon for his sin.

Catherine and her family’s thoughts and actions, are positive historical Salvationist precedents for vegetarianism and the deeper and more holistic relationships that can be formed to the entire web of creation through animal welfare, altruism and activism.

4.2.5 Other Salvationist Responses

Indeed, many other Salvationists around the world have demonstrated understanding of the close links between the spiritual, social and ecological. During The Salvation Army’s earlier years, as Winston (1999:8) illustrates in the New York context, the ‘cathedral of the open air’ was seen as ‘a figurative canopy spread over the city, [which] turned all of New York into sanctified ground.’ Competition for popular space to further the Army’s mission to ‘purify the moral atmosphere’ involved using a number of contemporary and radical mediums. To reach the wider populace in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Salvationists made use of brass bands, theatre and early adoption of filmmaking, especially within Australia.

The first company in the southern hemisphere registered to produce films was The Salvation Army’s Limelight Department based in Melbourne. The Limelight Department produced nearly 400 films between 1897 and 1909. The most nationally significant work the department produced was the filming of the Federation of Australia ceremonies that took place in Sydney in 1901. The department’s first films were focused primarily on the ‘horrors and human despair that the Army constantly struggled to meet’ (Cleary, 1993:57). The Salvation Army’s use of media has continued to document and alert the public to the shadowy side of the conditions for many within society. For example, the impact of a television advertisement for the 1988 Red Shield Appeal, a yearly fundraising period for the Salvation Army in Australia, is argued to have ‘boosted public awareness of the appeal and focused national attention on the plight of homeless children’ (Cleary 1993:55).

The overwhelming focus of The Salvation Army’s current work and use of media, specifically in the Australian context, is the plight of suffering humanity. The Salvation
Army is prepared to publically stand against issues that are adversely impacting on the poor and marginalised. As there are significant links between the spiritual and social work of the Salvation Army, and also substantial connections between social and ecological issues, is there then potential for Salvationists to support and become involved in environmental campaigns, particularly where there are documented and imminent substantially harmful effects on the health and well-being of the most vulnerable and marginalized across the world?

As greater numbers of people become more aware and are educated around environmental problems and possible solutions, there is greater potential for constructive action to develop. A precedent for Salvation Army environmental awareness and education is found in rural Queensland during the Second World War, a place which at that time lacked easy access to media, ‘Tickets were distributed... to see the cinescope films which were shown in a Salvation Army hall. Some were of scientific and environmental educational value such as ‘The Eclipse of the Sun’ and the ‘Life of a Spider’ (Nicholls, 1999:13).

The relatively down-to-earth and pragmatic approach of The Salvation Army in raising public awareness and its social work is certainly better known in its urban and suburban forms. However, the urban setting itself was also a target for Salvationists, as evidenced by the In Darkest England scheme. An understanding of humanity’s beneficial and reciprocal relationship with nature, and the implicit or even unintentional incorporation of eco-justice and social justice, is seen in a number of important Salvationist figures, and other general Salvation Army proceedings within the Australian context.

For example, James Barker, a Salvation Army leader in Melbourne during the 1890s, valued green space for recreation and pleasure particularly for children. Barker ‘lamented the building over of the [beautiful green] Collingwood Flat... leaving no more vegetation than a billiard ball.’ With the ‘consequent limitation of recreation space in the inner city [he mentioned] “what can you expect from the lads if you won’t give them any playground for their cricket?”’ (Bolton, 1980:114). This statement made over one hundred years ago foreshadows and alludes to contemporary thinking on healthy child development, such as Richard Louv’s (2005) description of the loss of interaction and connection with nature and its physical and mental effects on children as ‘nature-deficit disorder.’ Salvation Army work in this area continues with Summer Camps and ‘Fresh Air camps’ that embrace outdoor programs for all children, including those from dense urban environments and disadvantaged backgrounds.
Another historical example within Southeast Queensland is from the Christmas season of 1896, where Salvationists and others from the area now known as the Sunshine Coast, converged on Maroochy Heads (Gittins, 1994:14-15):

A sandy march to the music of two cornets brought us into camp amid tropical trees and shrubs and within easy reach of the shore, but protected by a ridge from the force of the sea breeze, where we found many canvas tents, native gunyahs constructed of bark, and edifices more European but not more beautiful composed of boards and iron.

During the encampment ‘Brother’ Arthur and ‘Sister’ Lizzie were married ‘with the evening sky for a cathedral roof, the roar of the breakers as an organ, for incense the soft breezes, and surrounded by a crowd of well-wishing comrades.’ Likewise, ‘the Barracks’ in which the meetings were held ‘consisted of the thickly-leafed and wide-spreading branches of a giant tree, which formed both roof and sides, the floor being carpeted with fresh green grass.’ This Salvationist summer tradition continued for over twenty years. An advert placed in the *Nambour Chronicle* in 1912 (in Gittins, 1994:15) for the ‘Christmas encampment’ celebrated the benefits of the camp:

Nature’s Pick-me-up. Think of it. With the crowds at one of the finest sea coast holiday Rendezvous for Surf-bathing, Boating, Fishing, Picnic Parties, etc…. Regain your colour. Add years to your life. Come to Tent Town, where the ocean breezes blow.

In many other Salvationist texts and sermons, references are made from nature towards a pertinent point or message within the Christian faith. Written and spoken analogies with reference to nature are not always pragmatic or aim to explicitly connect the listener or reader to an ecocentric respect for earth. Australian Salvationist Neil Young (2004) refers to Psalm 1:3: ‘and he shall be like a tree’ and relates this spiritual story to his early fascination with the life and growth of trees. In a similar fashion, Samuel Logan Brengle, an early Salvationist from the United States, writing in 1929 (Farthing, 2009:134-135) noted that:

Renewal… and awakenings… never begin in a great way. They begin the same way oak trees begin. There is nothing startling and spectacular about the beginning of an oak tree. In darkness, in loneliness, an acorn gives up its life, and the oak, at first only a tiny root and a tiny stem of green, is born out of the death of the acorn. In
a similar way revivals are born, souls are won, the Kingdom of God comes. Someone dies – dies to self interest, to the praise of men, to ambition – and lives for Christ, lives to save others.

Even though there may be no explicit attempt to move the listener or reader from anthropocentric action to ecocentric respect for earth, I argue there are still positive and beneficial reasons for invoking remembrance and acknowledging the natural order within writings and interactions. Furthermore, acknowledgement of the natural world through various Salvationist activities is also a seen from the early days of the Army. Brengle (1984 [1896]:ix), who in contrast to his ideas on slow, gradual renewals, had his own transcendent and dramatic experience of ‘pure love’ for people, animals and the entire world which he understood to be when ‘God sanctified [his] soul.’ The experience, initially on January 9th 1885, culminated four days later in:

A heaven of love that came into my heart. I walked out over Boston Common before breakfast weeping for joy and praising God. Oh, how I loved! In that hour I knew Jesus and I loved Him till it seemed my heart would break with love. I loved the sparrows, I loved the dogs, I loved the horses, I loved the little urchins on the streets, I loved the strangers who hurried past me, I loved the heathen – I loved the whole world.

Brengle’s ecstatic experience inspired a significant amount of Salvationist-based literature on holiness and holy living, to the extent that it is argued ‘no one outside the Booth family itself made a greater spiritual impact on The Salvation Army than Brengle’ (Farthing, 2009:xvi).

Yet these actions undertaken by Salvationists like Brengle and the Booth family in the late 19th century have the potential to be looked upon as radical and even as actions to be avoided by some current conservative Salvationists, in part due to the radicalised nature of environmental discourse surrounding these issues today. There is a diverse range of opinions around the issues of environmental justice within The Salvation Army. Nonetheless, there are a number of Salvation Army policies, statements and activities from a number of territories around the world that are cognisant of the impact of environmental issues and incorporate ecological attentiveness.
4.3 Current Salvationist Eco-Action and Eco-Mission

Literature connecting ecology and Christian mission from a Salvationist standpoint are relatively scarce in comparison to calls to action on social justice issues and encouraging the journey towards holiness. There are certainly various sections’ websites that provide affirm environmental care and protection, such as Australia Eastern Territory, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory, the International Social Justice Commission, UK and Ireland Territory, and Canada Bermuda Territory (The Salvation Army, 2011b; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d, 2013e). However, only a small number of articles have been located in Salvation Army journals and publications with specific reference on the environment and Salvationism thus far (e.g. Aitkenread, 2009; Buller, 2001; Ferguson, 2011; Gibbs, 2010; Hodder, 2009; Ramsay, 2011; Smith, 2013; Woodward, 2011 and 2012). Nonetheless, there is recent growth in Salvationist environmental writing. The major thrust of these writings is a call for Salvationists and The Salvation Army to increase their scope of mission to include the environment and related issues. As an example of the direction these writings take, resonating with the themes raised in this thesis, U.K. Salvationist Lucy Aitkenread (2009) contends:

I believe that if the Founder were here now he would give a big thumbs up to this new movement of the green variety. Rather than replacing 'Soup, Soap and Salvation' Salvation Army youth are simply fulfilling this mandate in a relevant, creative and much-needed way.

Climate change isn't just the latest trend. It is the social injustice of our generation or, as the UN Secretary General puts it, the 'defining issue of our era'. It is a crisis that The Salvation Army needs to help resolve.

Aitkenread calls on the spirit of William Booth’s concern for social injustices as part of Salvation Army mission to argue for Salvationist involvement in mitigating the impacts of climate variability on the most vulnerable. The thoughts of this individual Salvationist also resonate with policies and positional statements across a number of Salvation Army divisions and territories. These statements are, in part, responding to the environmental degradation evident around the world and sound a moral and theological call for Salvationists to ‘follow Jesus’ pattern of humility, service and sacrifice in relation to the world’ (The Salvation Army, 2009).
4.3.1 Position Statement on Responsibility for the Earth

Research to date has found the Canada and Bermuda Territory to be an environmentally innovative and progressive territory. The Ethics Centre within the territory has produced a ‘Position Statement on Responsibility for the Earth’ (The Salvation Army, 2009). In producing positional statements and raising ecological awareness, The Salvation Army within Canada and Bermuda is keeping in step with the emerging consensus among many denominations and ecumenical bodies throughout the world that a holistic mission of care for earth – not just humanity – is part of the Christian mandate. The Ethics Centre statement has been noted as one of the strongest Christian statements on this subject (Taylor, 2010b). The statement contains valuable biblical insights and is forward looking in its approach to the current state of God’s creation. I include it in full as it is a beautiful and practical exemplar of the themes covered in this thesis:

The earth is an interconnected whole, each part interdependent. As an intricately ordered system it must be kept in careful balance. Human sinfulness continues to contribute to destruction of the earth and cause significant degradations: increased global temperature, unnatural changes to biodiversity, air and water pollution, ozone depletion, land and habitat destruction. These imbalances have consequences for the poor, our global neighbours and future generations, as more and more people are unable to meet their basic human needs. Environmental concerns are part of the broader reality of injustice and economic inequity in our world. Individuals, communities, religious organisations, businesses and governments must work to change this.

The Salvation Army believes that God created the earth and all living things. We believe that God delights in each part of creation and fills it with intrinsic value, regardless of its utility. As such, caring for creation is an act of worship to God, while neglecting or abusing it is an act of disobedience.

The Salvation Army believes that degradation of the earth is in part the result of human activity which has not adhered to the rhythms and regulations of biblical stewardship. We believe that human beings,
created in the image of God, have a responsibility to care for all living things in a manner that reflects God’s own relationship to creation.

Humans are called to careful stewardship of the earth and its resources. The call to stewardship must be seen as an invitation to inhabit God’s garden, to tend to this bountiful planet, care for it and help it to flourish, joining with all creation in witnessing to God’s glory. Proper stewardship ought to follow Christ’s pattern of humility, service and sacrifice in the world.

The Salvation Army anticipates the day when God will make broken creation whole again, redeeming all created things and renewing the earth. However, this does not absolve us of the responsibility to be good earth-keepers. We believe that good earth-keeping is essential to the Christian faith. Salvationists as individuals and The Salvation Army as an organization resolve to accept responsibility for this world we live in by taking practical steps to conserve and regenerate creation.

This positional statement is wide in its scope, multifaceted and yet succinct in its coverage of many of the important issues involved in the formation of sound Salvationist ecotheology and eco-mission. It is an extremely important document for The Salvation Army in light of the current environmental and interconnected social concerns and deserves wider promotion throughout The Salvation Army worldwide.

4.3.2 Other Salvation Army Eco-Actions

The Ethics Centre in Canada also conducted surveys of ministry units within the territory (The Salvation Army, 2011a). It found a variety of pro-environmental actions are taking place: vegetable gardens planted on Army properties; volunteers, clients and staff encouraged to use bicycles; increasing building climate control efficiency, reducing water and energy usage; use of disposable and plastic utensils and water bottles has reduced, while using recycled materials has increased. This action is driven to some extent from the grass roots of the territory, however, it is also increasingly emerging from headquarters. Environmental policies are in place, ‘green toolkits’ with study and worship resources are available on a Canada and Bermuda Territory website titled ‘We Go Green’ (The Salvation Army, 2013h). These policies encourage and insist on increasing environmental awareness, engaging in sustainable practice, reducing the ecological footprint in line with
the belief that The Salvation Army is ‘called to be good stewards of the earth, every day, in all decisions, big and small’ (The Salvation Army, 2011a).

Other current positive action is seen in various locations across the world. A quick selection includes:

- The Salvation Army’s International Social Justice Commission has prepared papers under the title *A Call for Climate Justice*, and has publically engaged with providing a Salvationist basis for climate justice (August-September 2011b);
- The Florida Division held a Mission and Environment Conference titled ‘A Call for Imaginative Faith’ in March 2011, with the purpose of engaging the ideas of mission and environment within the USA Southern Territory (The Salvation Army, 2011c);
- Wind turbines have been installed in the India South Eastern Territory;
- Both the Australia Southern Territory’s new Headquarters (ISIS, 2012), and a Family Store in Alabama have been designed with sustainability in mind (Opelika-Auburn News, 2008);
- The Australia Eastern Territory established a Territorial Social Action Advisory Team sub-committee with its focus specifically on social injustice related to the environment (The Salvation Army, 2010);
- The Dooralong Transformation Centre in New South Wales (Australia Eastern) has volutily signed up for a Property Vegetation Plan, securing areas ‘of high quality vegetation for conservation and rehabilitation’ with the added benefit of supporting recovery program participants through learning opportunities and ‘a secure healing sanctuary’ (The Salvation Army, 2012a:40); and,
- 36 animals are kept across 17 Australia Eastern Salvation Army Aged Care facilities. Goats both help take care of mowing the grass, and along with other animals ‘combat loneliness’: ‘The way the residents’ faces light up when they pat one of our dogs or cats, it’s beautiful to watch’ (Brain, 2013).

### 4.3.3 Thrift/Family Stores

Mention must also be made of the widespread and well-regarded recycling centres otherwise known as Thrift, or Family Stores. Shim (1995:38) notes *The Recycler’s*
Handbook (Earth Works, 1990) mentions that in the USA ‘two million pounds of clothes are kept out of landfills every year by the Salvation Army alone.’ The original reasons for these recycling stores and the ‘Household Salvage Brigades’ (Sandall, 1955:122-123) that preceded them, would not have included an eco-friendly focus, rather the focus was – and still primarily is – to provide jobs for the jobless, cheap textiles for the poor, and funds with which to feed the hungry and keep the Army financially viable (Sandall, 1955; Cleary, 1993). Davies-Kildea (2007:7) argues the dispersal of or disengagement between the social and evangelical purposes of The Salvation Army, such as thrift stores, has caused an ‘organisational identity crisis.’ Issues raised from non-Salvationist writers appear to support this argument, not really understanding the evangelical tradition of The Salvation Army. Hence Schorey and Bradley (2005:63) suggest that ‘the Salvation Army is not simply a benign social charity, but rather is a religious sect which engages in various moral entrepreneurial activities for its own economic and political benefit.’ Even so, as the environmental benefit of the significant amount of recycling that takes place in Salvation Army thrift stores worldwide is considerable, thrift stores have by and large only been seen through green-tinted glasses over the past couple of decades (Henderson, 1997). An example of recent publicizing the environmental credentials and value of thrift stores comes from The Salvation Army in Canada:

> With a continued commitment to environmental responsibility, recent annual totals show that Salvation Army thrift stores have diverted 60 million pounds of materials from landfills across Canada. The Salvation Army is always striving for innovative ways to recycle, resulting in the creation of programs such as used jeans programs that prevents heaps of the torn garments from reaching landfill sites by re-using portions of the material to create quilts, purses, cushions, etc. (The Salvation Army, 2012b)

### 4.3.4 Community and Skills-Focused Gardens

Another area of missional and literal growth within some Salvation Army centres is in the introduction of community gardens and other gardening projects. The Salvation Army’s Westcare support service for younger people in the Melbourne suburb of Sunshine has begun a community garden project on an empty block near the centre. In addition to transforming the block ‘into a place of beauty, activity and community,’ it is hoped the garden project will support disengaged members of the community to give ‘a place for
them to chat, grow produce', and the sharing of knowledge between older and younger people in the area (Michelson, 2012:5).

Other community-focused gardens are appearing at Salvation Army centres. For example, in Queensland, community gardens are part of the program at a number of Youth Outreach Service centres in Brisbane, as part of the Tom Quinn Community Centre and program at Bundaberg Corps, the extensive farm and nursery at Riverview near Ipswich (see Figure 2).
Further afield, Bendigo Corps (Victoria) initiated a community permaculture garden in 2000. In other countries such as the USA, community gardens are part of Salvation Army work in Martin County Corps, Florida; Lincoln, Nebraska; McMinnville, Oregon. A blog entitled *The Salvation Farmy* (2010) notes community garden are also planned for The Salvation Army in Spokane, Washington. In Columbia, Missouri, a Salvation Army community garden is aiming to offer ‘a chance to play an active role in improving [people’s] physical health... because they will be consuming and partaking of fresh vegetables’ (Branco, 2009). The officer in charge hoped not only for physical health benefits, but also mental health outcomes. In a manner reminiscent of Booth’s hopes for the *In Darkest England* scheme, the officer states:

We want to sow salvation; we want to sow hope into them. We want to sow seeds of love and joy so that they will reap the harvest, which is a more productive life... We don’t want anyone to go hungry. We want them to learn to feed themselves and be free from starvation — that’s physically and spiritually. (Branco, 2009)

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of a range of historical Salvationist environmental beliefs and actions that have nurtured subsequent traditions found within The Salvation Army that encourage an expansive view of mission that integrates social, ecological and spiritual spheres. Support for the continuation and growth of Salvationist pro-environmental action and education has been located within Salvation Army history and important figures. The following chapter begins this new field of Salvationist research by describing major and sub-themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with Salvationists from the South Queensland Division of the Australia Eastern Territory.
Chapter 5

Results and Analysis: Grounded Salvationists

5.0 Introduction

Following the broad historical investigation of the interconnectedness of social, ecological and spiritual matters within Salvationism, this chapter examines the relationships between the spiritual, social, and ecological for individual Salvationists. The review of the findings from interviews with individuals who have significant connections to The Salvation Army within the South Queensland Division of the Australia Eastern Territory is organised into three major themes. These themes and subthemes emerged as the coded interview data underwent various structural iterations throughout the grounded theory-based research process. The themes are additionally titled using three participant quotes that relate particularly to each emergent theme:

1) Spiritual/The Economy of God: 'We have a responsibility to God'
2) Social/Ecumenics: 'We need to balance what we do'
3) Ecological/Nature: 'There really is a wholeness about the Earth'

There are a number of subthemes within each major theme that are clarified with representative quotations from research participants and are further analysed through engagement with applicable literature. Quotes from research participants are in italics for clarity, and an overview of the emergent major themes and subthemes are displayed in their grouping within Table 2.

It is noted that: (i) due to space constraints, all themes and quotes are not engaged with fully, and (ii) there are overlaps within themes and sections, following Johnson’s (2012:314) contention that ‘knowledge categories that are often viewed as separate from one another in a scientific or even religious context may be more fluid and dynamic than they appear on the surface.’
Table 2: Emergent Interview Themes

| 1) Spiritual/The Economy of God: ‘We have a responsibility to God’ | a) Stewardship/Dominion  
b) Nature Speaks of God  
c) Scriptural References  
d) Sin and Greed  
e) Christian Witness and Evangelism |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2) Social/Ecumenics: ‘We need to balance what we do’          | a) Knowledge of Historical Salvationist Actions  
 b) Current and Future Work of The Salvation Army  |
|                                                             | i) Awareness of ‘In Darkest England’  
 ii) Treatment of Animals |
|                                                             | i) Links between Social and Eco Justice  
 ii) Knowledge of Current Salvationist Pro-environmental Activities  
 iii) Outdoor Activities: Gardens and Camps  
 iv) Education  
 v) Thrift stores and Advertising |
| 3) Ecological/Nature: ‘There really is a wholeness about the Earth’ | a) Personal Experiences in Nature  
 b) Humanity’s Environmental Impact and Climate Change  
 c) Pro-environmental Attitudes and Actions. |
|                                                             | i) Growing Up: Childhood Experiences  
 ii) Still Growing Up: Adult Experiences  
 iii) Gardens and Gardening  |
|                                                             | i) Christianity and Science  
 ii) Sovereignty: God is in Control  
 iii) Climate Change and Biblical Prophecy  |
|                                                             | i) The Social Aspects of Nature |
Basic interviewee statistics are shown in Figures 1 and 2. Within the chapter, interviewees are referred to using unique codes in Table 3. The code format is: Interview-Location-Gender-Position. The following section begins reviewing the findings related to the first major theme, labelled: Spiritual/The Economy of God: ‘We have a responsibility to God.’

Figure 1: Participants by Age Bracket and Gender

Figure 2: Participants by Location and Gender
5.1 Spiritual/The Economy of God: ‘We Have a Responsibility to God’

This section examines a number of emergent subthemes that relate specifically to interviewed Salvationist’s ordinary theologies (Astley, 2002), spirituality, Christianity, the scriptures and the environment. The significant subthemes examined are: a) stewardship and dominion; b) nature speaks of God; c) scriptural references; d) rest and restoration; e) sin and greed; and f) Christian witness and evangelism.
5.1.1 Stewardship/Dominion

Awareness among respondents of a scriptural call to care for creation was widespread and consistent. The frequent word Salvationist respondents associated with this theme was ‘stewardship’, confirming in some measure Southgate’s (2006:185) statement ‘that human beings are called to be stewards of creation tends to be the default position within ordinary Christian groups.’ 6RMS ‘know[s] it’s there scripturally that we are to be stewards of the Earth’, while 23UMS agrees that ‘stewardship is definitely a big theme throughout the Bible. Looking after what God has given us.’ Yet it is also commonly indicated while humans are stewards, humanity has nonetheless abused the earth.

The distinction between sensitive dominion and selfish domination was voiced by a number of interviewees. As Grainger (2012:9) notes, the debate over whether Christianity’s relationship with the natural world should be regarded as ‘one of reverence or mastery’ is long running (see White, 1967). 26UFO stated that she has ‘pursued for many years... that sense of God calls us to have dominion over the Earth, as opposed to domination.’ She adds, this ‘contrast between dominion and domination’ has been ‘been significant in my thinking.’ In distilling her thoughts further on this contrast, she ‘see[s] in the concept of dominion, a call for respect and stewardship, and mentoring, and protecting and caring.’

Bauckham (2010:preface) reasons that while there are still difficulties with the concept of dominion, which he reads as stewardship, these difficulties can be surmounted through the understanding that stewardship ‘is a role within the larger sphere of community relationships, which it does not exhaust.’ 23UMS picked up a similar strain when he hoped for an enlargement of ‘connecting the environment with social justice’ such that it becomes ‘a hallmark of Christians to be green people in the sense that there is a biblical mandate for stewardship of creation.’ His vision of stewardship included practices that have seen increased communication as part of Salvation Army practice and publications, such as ‘issues like human trafficking and fair-trade products.’ He believes these issues ‘and looking after the environment should go hand in hand, as categories that surround the core message of the church, which is the gospel itself.’ He continued to explain, fitting in with the broad theme of stewardship, that ‘obviously, there’s a balance there… if you look at the holistic… understanding of life, the physical and the spiritual, then you really can’t separate them.’ This perceived need for balance in understanding the interconnectedness of the household of God within the church necessitated that it ‘should be promoting at
least, at the minimum, an understanding that this is God’s big garden, and we should look after it – we shouldn’t exploit it.’

Overall, participants view the exploitation of nature as undesirable, with careful stewardship as appropriate for the Christian life. Yet, responses also reflect Ayre’s (2008:227) contention that there are ‘many inherent contradictions in modern living,’ as today’s Western lifestyles are saturated with socially and ecologically exploitative behaviours, whether intentional or unintentional.

5.1.2 Nature Speaks of God

Following the common view that careful stewardship is a proper response to God, some interviewees noted that nature can enhance the relationship between humanity and God. Resonating with Winston’s (1999:8) description of Salvationist action within the ‘cathedral of the open air’, 2RMS:

*There’s a song that says ‘The place where I worship is the wide open spaces’… God’s everywhere, right? So why relate to the church? The church is only a building. Your body is the temple of God and the world is God’s temple, so God is everywhere.*

This interviewee also mentioned that living on a farm as a child, he has ‘always had a connection with [nature], but I was always brought up with that attitude that God is the creator and controller of the universe.’ Throughout the interview with 25RFV, several comments indicated that she finds nature speaks of the creator God. She recalled own ‘very pure experience sitting out in the bush’, and elaborated further, that:

*When I spent time just sitting, watching what was going on, taking in the sounds and the sights of nature before me… it struck me how nature just carries on. God has created it in a way in which the grass grows and thrives without any human manipulation, animals are able to reproduce, grow, feed themselves without humans. It made me realise that we’re only one of the creatures on Earth. In that moment I felt, not particularly small, but it humbled me… it affirmed that I don’t need to be so controlling of my own life, and to let God take control because he’s capable of it.*
Experiences in the bush, or wilderness have been described as playing a vital spiritual role (Backes, 1995) and can bring refreshment, transformation, freedom and insight (Lane, 2007). The interviewee also mentioned scriptural references:

Some Psalms talk about God’s creation saying how great is our God – look at this! In Romans it says everyone who has experienced God’s creation has no excuse, or no reason to say there’s not a God.

As a likely example of the interviewee’s scriptural references, Psalm 19:1-2 states: ‘The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.’

5.1.3 Scriptural References

Scripture knowledge once again varied between participants yet was a significant theme, echoing Bebbington’s (1989) declaration of Scripture as a fundamental evangelical priority. 14RMS who ‘stand[s] on the Word of God,’ and 12RFS who ‘know[s] a couple of scripture verses off by heart’, were both able to give examples where they felt the Scriptures referred to the land or environmental issues: ‘I’m very much for the biblical principle that you need to rest’ (12RFS), and ‘the Bible says... in Revelation that God comes down and deals with those who are polluting the Earth. He will judge them’ (14RMS).

When specifically asked whether they were aware of any Scriptures that related to care of creation or showed an interrelatedness between the spiritual, social and ecological, the majority of respondents answered much like 22UMA: ‘A few of them, but not off the top of my head.’ While 19UMO similarly stated ‘lots of Scripture… You’ve put me on the spot!’ the officer nonetheless described three common Scriptural responses: 1) Psalms: talking about nature; 2) Job: God as creator and is in control; 3) Genesis: the creation story, things were created good.

No respondent gave fully confident replies containing specific chapters or verses of Scripture. Answers were commonly more general and broad, picking up on the overall tenor of the Scriptures or certain passages, such as 26UFO: ‘I look at Scripture, I see God’s plan was actually a wholeness’, while 23UMS states: ‘Stewardship is definitely a big theme throughout the Bible. Looking after what God has given us... You also get a lot from the Psalms, a lot of the stuff on creation is very powerful.’
Scriptural references of providing rest and restoration for the land were also mentioned by some respondents. 16UFE maintains that: ‘in the Hebraic law, there were rules about giving your land a Sabbath rest. So I think there’s that idea of balancing both the needs of the man with the needs of the land.’ Likewise, Moltmann (1998:5) states ‘the Sabbath is wise environmental policy’, and Hartman (2011:47) argues that the Sabbath-keeping characteristics of ‘an altered, theocentric perspective, a slower, simpler style of living, and an eschatological encounter’, may provide a helpful path toward environmentally sensitive lifestyles, away from materialism, sin and greed.

5.1.4 Sin and Greed

Sin was raised as an important issue by some respondents, confirming Carr et al.’s (2012) findings of human sinfulness as a key evangelical belief and the identified potential for it to be a significant impact on the environment. A representative discussion on perceptions of current societal norms and reflections on scriptural stories comes from 14RMS: ‘we may be having an impact on the climate, I’m sure the biggest factor is the sin pollution.’ Carr et al. (2012:291) also found that the idea of human sinfulness and increased salience of the tension between the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of humanity can assist evangelical reflections on the causes and issues surrounding environmental degradation, and increase the perceived plausibility and seriousness of climate change. This concept was also echoed by 4RMS who establishes links with scripture and climate change, and also conveys in the significant theme of greed:

> Scripture would indicate that because of man’s greed and sinfulness, it indicates that unless God steps in, man will destroy the world. So you could argue that climate change and environmental destruction is part of the proof of the scriptures.

Similarly, 16UFE and 9RFE affirm: ‘I just see greed as behind a lot of pollution,’ and ‘having given us that responsibility [to care for creation.] he’s given us the brains to do it… we’ve got no excuse for not doing it other than greed, that’s the main reason.’ 22UMA notes the lack of concern for future generations: ‘No one seems to be caring about the environment, it’s all about there here and now, and not 500 years down the track.’ Schor (2010:27) describes this escalating over-consumption, or ‘symbolic consumption’ based on ‘fashion and novelty’, as the ‘materiality paradox.’ Wells (2012:46), following Debord (1994), terms this perceived need, particularly in the realms of buying ‘green’ products, aptly as the ‘spectacle of consumption.’ The spectacle of greed and extravagance
experienced by 22UMA who was struggling to find consistent work, saw the problems as being ‘all about money and power.’ Schor (2010:5) gives a simple remedy for the environmentally destructive tendencies of the spectacle of consumption: ‘the less one has to buy, the less one is required to earn.’ This point came through implicitly in one interview, where 27UFE, reflecting on the life of her grandparents and great-grandparents, stated ‘because they didn’t have much, they had to be wise with what they had.’ She then proceeded to contrast this with the current situation, where ‘we have too much. I think that’s our problem. That leads us to be complacent.’ This understanding of issues surrounding materiality connects closely with Cafaro’s (2005:153) claim that there is a lack of perceiving ‘our obligations to others or our own self-interest.’ Yet, for some, knowledge of the scriptural and ethical basis for creation care should be widespread among Salvationists:

Most soldiers are aware what the Bible teaches, that the Earth is there to be looked after, and we’ve got to do something about it. [We are] more aware of the possibilities of things going wrong, the injustices, the greed – and The Salvation Army has always been against greed and injustices... it’s all part of a bigger picture of doing God’s work – spread the gospel message and also to right injustices, whether they be spiritual or physical or mental, or environmental.

In 4RMS’s representative quote, firm links are made between the issues of greed, injustice and The Salvation Army’s and God’s ‘bigger picture’ of living, sharing and witnessing to the values of the kingdom of God.

5.1.5 Christian Witness and Evangelism

Evangelism, one of Bebbington’s (1989) evangelical priorities, was mentioned to some extent during data collection and was paired with Christian witness. 5RFS states that ‘as a Christian we should be the best we can be, in whatever field it is – to be a good witness for him, an example,’ and Christian witness is impacted when Christians ‘do something slap-happy [it] doesn’t portray [God] in a good light.’ These statements connect with the Salvation Army’s location within the Holiness movement, where Salvationists are called to aim toward the goal of living holy lives through the power of the Holy Spirit (Brengle, 1984[1896]; Coutts, 1957). 25RFV agrees that as ‘a lot of our witness is in our actions not just in our words’, a helpful direction toward further Christian witness is the Salvationist’s own lifestyle: ‘just changing the way we eat, and sleep and live. I think that
would also be a good witness to others.’ It is interesting to note that this same respondent did not initially see a ‘massive relationship’ between The Salvation Army and environmental awareness and action, however, the broader reality that if it is the case that: ‘The Salvation Army exists to bring glory and honour to God and expand his Kingdom to Earth [and doing] your part in bringing God’s Kingdom to Earth, then looking after the environment should be a priority as well.’

For most participants, environmental action was not seen as a disadvantage, or to be avoided. However, it was also not seen as a critical priority for church life or personal faith and praxis. An interviewee illustrates the helpful ‘witness’ through the primary Salvationist focus on humanity and the associated environmental extras:

There have been some very good achievements in what we might call the environmental sphere, whilst still chasing what you might consider our core business which is helping people, as a witness (20UME).

23UMS spoke of the potential relationship between green issues and spreading the gospel’s ideals of holistic and wholesome life through the Army:

I think The Salvation Army has always been… an organisation to mobilize people around a particular cause. If there’s a way that activism in the green things leads people to an understanding of God, then it actually becomes a tool for evangelism. Even though that might not be your central thrust – once upon a time brass instruments brought people to a wonderful God reality… they were using the cultural tool of the day. Green issues are quite cool to talk about today – if there is a way for The Salvation Army to harness the opportunity of the green movement I think there are wonderful opportunities for that holistic understanding of life, which includes not just the physical and the temporal, but the spiritual and the eternal.

In this statement, which reflects the stance of a number of interviewees, strong links are made between the ecological, the social and the spiritual within holistic Salvation Army mission.

5.2 Social/Ecumenics: ‘We Need to Balance what We Do’

Following on from spiritual themes, this section examines two subthemes that emerged within the major theme of people/ecumenics that relate specifically to the
relationship between Salvationism, The Salvation Army and the environment. The significant subthemes examined are: a) History and earlier work of The Salvation Army; and b) The current and future work of The Salvation Army.

5.2.1 Knowledge of Historical Salvationist Actions

A basic level understanding and awareness of broader historical Salvationist actions were revealed throughout the interviews. Awareness of William Booth’s *In Darkest England* scheme was one of the more well-known historical Salvationist links to nature.

5.2.1.1 Awareness of ‘In Darkest England’

14RMS knew of the land colonies that formed part of the scheme, and awareness of the *In Darkest England* plan was also closely linked with knowledge of The Salvation Army’s farm at Riverview, Queensland. A significant number of interviewees were aware of Riverview farm, although knowledge of the centre’s activities was not comprehensive. 20UME identified the close link between Riverview farm and the *In Darkest England* scheme:

> From the Salvation Army’s mission point of view, [Riverview] was right in the forefront, it was exactly what William Booth had planned, this was a key part of [the mission] – he visited here twice, planted the tree out the front, lots of history.

20UME was not aware of Booth-Tucker’s hope to ‘reunite the manless land with the landless man’ (Winston, 1999:103), yet he gave a positive and detailed response about the centre continuing in the tradition of balancing social and ecological issues through farming:

> I still can’t help thinking that it’s gone perhaps full circle a couple of times, but really the site is still fulfilling those ideas of Darkest England quite practically.

5.2.1.2 Treatment of Animals

16UFE was aware of Catherine Booth’s concern for both human and animal welfare. 18UFA was particularly strong in her views and action on animal welfare: ‘I did go to the school after hours once and let the rats out into the park. I know it was science, but I don’t find it really right that an animal should be...’ One comment from the same individual takes animal welfare seriously enough to consider undertaking daring environmental
activism to save sea creatures, and is reminiscent of such writers and activists such as Edward Abbey (1975), Foreman and Haywood (1987) and groups such as Earth First! (Taylor, 2002) and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society: ‘There’s people that just go and kill things… When they harm the seals and those sorts of things, I had this thought: what if you go and blow up that boat?’

Connecting with this interviewee’s concerns for animals, Snyder (2004:11) argues that John Wesley’s reflections on Romans 8:19-22 ‘is extending salvation to the whole created order.’ Wesley’s (1872:III.10) call to Christians to ‘imitate him whose mercy is over all his works’, as part of the journey toward holiness, requires us to ‘soften our hearts towards the meaner creatures, knowing that the Lord careth for them.’ Alluding to Matthew 10:29-31, Wesley maintains:

It may enlarge our hearts towards those poor creatures, to reflect that, as vile as they appear in our eyes, not one of them is forgotten in the sight of our Father which is in heaven.

Following Wesley’s path toward a broader view of holiness, 25RFV reflected on the treatment of animals, and links it to more general care of the Earth as ‘the way you treat dogs and cats and animals and things like that reflects how you treat other people… how you treat the environment also reflects how you treat other people.’ Likewise 26UFO indicated the holistic and far-reaching character of care and compassion:

If you’re not looking after the people, you’re not looking after the plants. And if you’re not looking after the people and the plants, and the animals, then you’re probably not looking after anything. Do you need to look after the people before you look after the plants, the animals, the sky, the seas and the rest of creation? Or is there in fact a oneness about it?

Echoing numerous writers, such as Wendell Berry’s broad call for the cultivation of life in all spheres of being-in-community (Bonzo and Stevens, 2008), the officer effectively brings together the interconnectedness of the spiritual, social and ecological within the historical, current and future work of the Army.

5.2.2 Current and Future Work of The Salvation Army

This section primarily reviews interviewees’ knowledge and awareness of current and future options for Salvationist integration of the spiritual, social and ecological.
5.2.2.1 Links between Social and Eco Justice

In addition to giving more depth to understanding the Australia Eastern Territory’s subcommittee of the Territorial Social Action Advisory Team (TSAAT) focusing on social injustices related to the environment (The Salvation Army, 2010:19), 19UMO expresses his awareness of the relationship between environmental concerns and disadvantaged communities, which led to personal pro-environmental action:

A couple of years ago, the Army set up a social justice working group… looking at all sorts of social justice issues, like homelessness, refugees, aboriginal issues and so forth. One of the issues that came up was the environment, because obviously the environment has an impact worldwide on the poorest communities.

The officer went on to state: ‘If ocean levels go up, it’s going to influence a lot of people’, reflecting indications that climate change can, both directly and indirectly, have long-lasting and negative impacts on individuals and communities (Myers and Patz, 2009; Nurse et al., 2010).

Responses from interviewees highlight that the Army’s work is primarily concentrated on anthropocentric issues. 9RFE remembers receiving emails from headquarters recommending lowering water and energy usage for both economic and environmental reasons, but says her position tends to focus on social issues rather than social and ecological issues: ‘certainly where I am, it’s people first.’ 7RMS recollected Salvation Army corps he had attended ‘haven’t been terribly attuned to the environment. That’s just something they’ve never seen in their repertoire.’ Generally, respondents did not dwell long on the poor or poverty, however, a number of Salvationists in officer or lay leadership positions were hopeful for solutions that melded spiritual, social and ecological in assisting the poor and the Earth:

What can we do to walk the way of peace, which may in fact not only address the relational stuff and the broken poverty stuff, but also might address global warming? (26UFO)

Ultimately, I think the best thing for the world is if we bring people closer to God and as part of that closeness to God they meet Jesus, their souls are saved, they develop a concern for the poor, they seek social justice and they develop a concern for the creation and the created world. (16UFE)
When questioned about the interrelatedness of social and ecological issues, 2RMS answered frankly: ‘No doubt it does cause it’s all the environment isn’t it? The world is the environment isn’t it? Well it must.’ Likewise, 1RMS states:

We’re showing people work skills, but also taking less waste to the landfill. So part of what we’re doing as helping people also helps our environment! Isn’t that amazing how God’s designed it like that?… It isn’t surprising that in helping the people we’re also helping God’s planet [or] by helping God’s planet we’re helping the people – it comes to the same point in the middle.

Salvationists were asked to comment on their perceptions of current and future environmental concern within the Salvation Army and how that might relate to the work of The Salvation Army. 16UFE states the important of balance, and that The Salvation Army:

Needs to be careful with what it does and seek not only to promote the well-being of the people and the communities but also to seek the Earth’s well-being, knowing that by balancing those two needs you’re providing the best long term future for the people that you’re helping anyway.

9RFE agrees, yet is cautious that as no ‘group or organisation can cover every aspect.’ She recommends ‘sticking with what you know and leave what you don’t know to someone who does know that area.’ Whereas, 20UME comments that The Salvation Army ‘doesn’t take stands as much as it should. I think we’re too worried about things [like] government funding,’ and supports The Salvation Army promoting pro-environmental activities such as recycling.

5.2.2.2 Knowledge of Current Salvationist Pro-environmental Activities

Responses from soldiers and adherents about their awareness of current pro-environmental activities included very general statements such as: ‘I suppose as Salvos, as part of the wider church, we’re called to look after the Earth’ (6RMS). 16UFE was aware of the Salvation Army planting trees at an unidentified location, and of the Territorial Social Action Advisory Team environment sub-committee. Two interviewees mentioned environmental design initiatives and planned use of solar photovoltaic panels in the redevelopment of an Army centre. Soldier interviewees with broader knowledge of Salvation Army environmental policies and actions generally hold leadership positions within Salvation Army centre or corps they attend.
Interviewee comments establish a relative lack of local awareness-raising of various Salvation Army environment-related activities, as well as a potential or perceived disjoint between local corps or centres and headquarters: ‘off the top of my head I can’t think of any explicitly environmental initiatives that the Salvation Army has taken part in, or that have been promoted to us’ (3RMS). Yet two participants diverged significantly in their perception of where Salvationist pro-environmental activities are developing. 25RFV noted she was aware of individual ‘Salvationists who are keen to take environmental action’, however, was not sure if it was an organisational or corporate priority. Contrastingly, 1RMS was ‘pleasantly surprised’ to see environmental initiatives coming from Territorial and/or Divisional Headquarters during a building project, however, he remarked there was a disparity in local building committee responses: ‘when I raise an environment issue with our fellows, they tend to sweep it to one side.’

In addition to extensive attentiveness that as The Salvation Army, ‘we’re not doing enough on that issue’ of environmental concern, 23UMS was representative of several interviewees when he stated: ‘I think we could probably do more.’

Transportation provided by the Army was also raised by a number of interviewees, and again indicated a variance in awareness. 15RMA stated The Salvation Army should be a role model for responsible resource stewardship through choosing more environmentally friendly cars. 19UMO discussed the recent change in Salvation Army fleet car policy as a ‘deliberate policy to reduce the size of our engines in our cars, so basically the fleet is now… smaller 4 cylinder vehicles.’ This change in policy is more financially responsible, however, it also goes some way to supporting Cahill (2010) and Melin’s (2008) contentions that there is increased awareness that the proliferation of mobility, namely road and air transport, has various undesirable consequences, such as: (i) environmental (pollution, carbon emissions, oil requirements); (ii) visual pollution (car parks, cluttered streets); (iii) health and well-being (obesity, reduced physical activity, higher risk of accident-related death and serious injuries).

During interviews with officers and employees, deeper knowledge of history and current policies, procedures and actions emerged. For example, 19UMO referred to a variety of current Salvation Army actions. These included: (i) higher levels of interest in water management, water tanks, conservation of water during a recent period of drought; (ii) increased interest in monitoring and reducing energy and electricity use; and (iii) implementing solar power and lower energy hot water systems at various centres, corps and other Salvation Army owned buildings. The officer described positive outcomes from
the installation of solar power and water tanks, yet was aware of a number of difficulties primarily related to complex government policies. The officer was also aware of the Booths’ *In Darkest England* scheme, and their positive views of natural therapies. Riverview farm and nursery was also mentioned, along with a number of Salvation Army centres providing care for the disabled and rehabilitation assistance where there are green spaces for residents and delightful gardens.

### 5.2.2.3 Outdoor Activities: Gardens and Camps

Gardens were noted, primarily by officers and employees, as a positive addition to social work undertaken or planned in various centres: ‘I’ve been very excited about producing a place where when you walk outside you’ve got greenery, you’ve got herb gardens’ (21UMO); and ‘we started the garden, and use the fruit and vegetables for the school lunches’ (27UFE). Reasons for gardening included: ‘just doing something positive and together’; ‘good as a distraction’ from negative thoughts and actions; a ‘good strategy if someone needed to blow off a bit of steam’; to give clients ‘a break’; and assist clients learn ‘new life skills’ while being ‘outside, in the fresh air – it’s a positive activity’ (27UFE).

Many participants expressed positive views on the benefits of community gardens as part of Salvation Army centres, however, soldiers were more likely to raise concerns about gardening initiatives, such as who would end up looking after the garden, rather than focusing on the benefits of the garden.

The positive social, emotional and mental aspects of gardening are also seen in other Salvation Army centres around the world, such as in Missouri, USA, where Major Kendall Mathews (Branco, 2009) states ‘gardening is nurturing and our work – Salvation Army work – is about nurturing people’s lives.’ Other denominations also have community gardening advocates such as Miriam Pepper (2011:1) from the Uniting Church in NSW and founding member of Uniting Earthweb, who also argues that there are numerous benefits to the church by engaging in community gardening. Community gardening can: (i) provide new ways to share and live out the gospel in local communities; (ii) bring together ‘several spheres of mission’ and increase ecological awareness; (iii) assist in the transformation of churches; and (iv) promote dialogue between different church groups and denominations.

Other Army activities such as Salvation Army Guarding and Legion Activities (SAGALA - groups similar to Scouts or Girl Guides), camps and retreats have given many Salvationists an opportunity to share in community in rural settings. 27UFE explained how their centre took:
Young people away from the city, and we’d camp. The facilities were basic. But the young people loved it. They loved being out in the middle of nowhere. Some would get back in touch with their culture. We’d lay out at night, sit around the fire, we’d look at the stars... they’d love it. For some, that reminded them of what they grew up with, for others it was a new experience.

This comment reflects findings that experiences of nature as part of a summer camp ‘increased children’s emotional affinity towards nature, their ecological beliefs, and willingness to display ecological behaviour’ (Collado et al., 2012). The positive time spent out in a rural setting was contrasted with the urban scene, where even the journey back toward the city became unpleasant:

You always noticed when we started to drive back into the city, they’d start to get narky and cranky because they just didn’t want to go back to their life, back into the city, and the hustle and bustle.

It was generally a positive experience for many who took part in the camps, by ‘just taking people away from mod-cons, technology and distractions’ which reflects a number of studies noting transformations that can occur from time spent in wilderness areas and the changes when returning to urban areas (Greenway, 1995; Pitstick, 1995). However, 27UFE states that breaking the cycle of harmful life choices, ‘to get them out of the house, just enjoying life’ might involve ‘a day trip to the park or the beach’, where ‘most of the activities we try and do would be outside.’ She maintains that ‘people get that [outdoor experiences] have an impact, or gives people a space to be where a number of things can happen.’ The interviewee professed that she did not think these experiences were ‘that intentional’ about ‘connecting with the environment’, rather they were more focused on promoting and educating those involved about ‘healthy lifestyles’ to as ‘we recognise that in terms of your health and well-being, that’s important.’

5.2.2.4 Education

Looking for practical and theological regional responses to global environmental issues, Ayre (2011:9,11) argues that while eco-mission rises out of sound eco-theology, ‘realistically there is a prior step, and that involves education... The Church needs to be educated about eco-mission from the ground up, and to have the necessary resources to make a start in this mission.’ Largely, interviewees’ views appear to support Ayre’s claim. 21UMO explained how his personal awareness of the value and sanctity of nature has
grown and has had an impact on his spiritual journey. He contrasts this ‘new’ perspective from his time spent at a retreat centre with his experience as a Salvation Army officer:

There’s a very strong spirit of ecology there… a respect and a value of the land. Thinking more respectfully and reverencing the Earth a lot more is part of that culture. That hasn’t been a strong theme in my experience as a Salvation Army officer. Yet, I don’t think there’s opposition to it within The Salvation Army – [eco-justice is] just not a focus.

23UMS broadly supports education and raising awareness of ‘biblical mandate for stewardship of creation’, with the aim of it being ‘a hallmark of Christians to be green people.’ In this regard he ‘think[s] we can do a lot better in terms of awareness.’ 25RFV agreed that learning in a wider context is significant for environmental issues, that ‘there’s got to be a lot more education for people to change their attitudes.’ Considering the impact of education on personal environmental behaviours such as recycling, 1RMS mentioned, ‘whereas years ago, we would have just thrown it all in the landfill. So, that’s where I say education is big.’

Respondents generally agree education is a significant factor in ‘going green’, though as Kollmuss and Agyeman (2010:250) argue, based on current research, environmentally responsible behaviours do not appear to inevitably emerge from increased awareness of existing and future environmental problems and potential solutions. Fliegenschnee and Schelakovsky (1998) claim less than 20 percent of environmental behaviours stem from environmental knowledge, while Kempton et al. (1995) suggests environmental knowledge is not necessary for pro-environmental behaviours, for example, recycling via thrift stores.

5.2.2.5 Thrift Stores and Advertising

A majority of interviewees positively correlated Salvation Army thrift stores with socially and environmentally friendly action. Interviewees corroborated Henderson’s (1997) claim that thrift stores have by and large only been seen through green-tinted glasses over the past couple of decades. Interviewees generally concurred that the ‘eco-friendly’ status is probably just a by-product of thrift stores rather than purposeful eco-planning on the Salvation Army’s behalf, as the main foci of the thrift stores is to assist the poor and raise funds for Salvation Army work:

I think the Salvation Army’s priorities are social justice – providing cheap clothing. Second goal is economic gain – make money out of it, and the
Nonetheless, even if the ecologically friendly work of the thrift stores is only a by-product, it is still seen by interviewees as beneficial. Recent Salvation Army Territorial thrift/family store marketing, particularly within the Southern Territory, have given the eco-credentials of Salvation Army thrift stores a more prominent position. Some recent examples from Salvation Army websites (The Salvation Army, 2012c) include:

(i) ‘Help the environment and your community by donating your quality used clothing, furniture and homewares to Salvos Stores.’

(ii) ‘Sustainability is high on Salvos Stores’ agenda. Salvos Stores considers the environment in everything it does, in order to minimise waste and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Salvos Stores has a number of Hybrid trucks in its fleet.’

These diesel-electric hybrid power trucks are decorated with both Salvation Army and environmentally-themed text and images. The Salvation Army makes use of many forms of advertising and publicity for various campaigns, events or schemes. Public spectacle, sensationalism and information sharing has been linked with Salvation Army endeavours from its early days (Winston, 1999; 2002). The Salvation Army brand continues to be well regarded and trusted within Australian society. Research has found The Salvation Army was the most trusted organisation/brand within Australia (Cavill + Co, 2011; The Salvation Army, 2013g). A report by Cavill + Co (2011) identified the most trusted charity in Australia as The Salvation Army with 25 percent of consumers trusting The Salvation Army by a margin of 12 percentage points to the next ranked charity. Using The Salvation Army as an example, the report also states that advertising and communication are important to increase brand trust, however, visibility is also an important factor: ‘The Salvos simply do fantastic work, they do it visibly, day in day out, and this is a powerful combination when it comes to awareness and trust’ (Cavill + Co, 2011:2). The ecological significance of this awareness and trust was referred to by 15RMA who remarked that if environmental concerns became part of the ‘noticeable’ service offered by The Salvation Army, there could be many positive outcomes for all involved, including for the environment.
5.3 Ecological/Nature: ‘There Really is a Wholeness About the Earth’

Following the previous sections reviewing significant findings related to spiritual responses and social aspects associated with environmental issues, this section examines important findings associated with interviewees’ personal perceptions, affinities and relationships to the environment. The significant subthemes in this section that arose from the interview data relate include: a) personal experiences in nature; b) humanity’s environmental impact and climate change; and c) pro-environmental attitudes and actions.

5.3.1 Personal Experiences in Nature

This section explores the role of nature in the interviewees’ lives from childhood on, and presents relevant and notable personal stories and recollections from interviewees.

5.3.1.1 Growing Up: Childhood Experiences

The majority of Salvationists interviewed had positive recollections of nature from their childhood, resonating with studies that suggest childhood experiences in nature form the basis of adults’ sense of place, and environmental attitudes and behaviours (Chawla and Cushing, 2007; Collado, et al., 2012; Hinds and Sparks, 2008; Morgan, 2010; Wells and Lekies, 2006). My findings also generally support the study by Thompson, Aspinall, and Montarzino (2008) which indicates that adults are more likely to visit green spaces if they did so as a child. A significant number of regional and urban Salvationists recalled either growing up on a farm, in a farming community or visited relatives who owned farms. For many interviewees, awareness of frugality, recycling, ‘not wasting things’, care of nature and other pro-environmental perceptions and actions appear to be closely correlated to ‘the farm’ or the rural lifestyle. Recollections of farming experiences by interviewees were overwhelmingly positive. For 3RMS, it was ‘not necessarily a distinct environmental connection or a spiritual connection with the land, but there certainly was a connection with rurality, and the kind of ‘landedness’ that a rural lifestyle brings.’ 2RMS’s childhood was permeated with family, fatherly role models and positive experiences though simple access to nature:

When I was a child, we lived on a farm… I was surrounded by creatures of nature – God’s animals – God’s creation, on a farm – it’s a good place to grow up on… I believe that my father gave me a connection with creation from my boyhood.
In addition to farming and the rural life informing and increasing awareness through childhood, bushwalking and spending time with family in nature was another significant subject. 25RFV mentioned bushwalking was common during family holidays and it ‘taught me to appreciate nature.’ 3RMS contemplated his time spent in nature during his formative years before becoming a Salvationist, again with a family member who took on the role of introducing connections with nature:

_We used to go on bushwalks with [my grandmother] and I developed a strong appreciation of the aesthetic of nature, and the beauty of creation. I’ve always enjoyed that kind of openness, that pristineness, I know that’s not a realistic belief that it’s totally pristine, but there is that sense when you go there it is pristine._

Participant recollections corroborate Cheng and Monroe’s (2010) findings that connection with nature and family values toward nature in childhood can influence future participation in nature-based activities. This contention also supports the continuation or reintroduction of both nature-based and family activities within Salvation Army centres and corps.

1RMS spoke of his powerful, transcendent experience as a 14 year-old riding a horse near Cania Gorge, a rural area in Queensland:

_There was something about that place, and the connection with that place, it was a strong… spiritual experience from the land… it was Australia, you know. Dry grass, and gum tree and I don’t know why it was there, it was just this overwhelming feeling... I can still feel that._

This experience came at a time before the interviewee began to seriously engage with the Christian faith in a personal way. Yet, this childhood experience in nature continued as significant event throughout the following 58 years of his journey through life, echoing studies linking transcendental experiences in wilderness and beneficial physical and psychological changes (Davis, 2003; Heintzman, 2009).

5.3.1.2 Still Growing Up: Adult Experiences

For a number of participants, adult experiences in nature also stood out in terms of their impact at the time and their lasting emotional influence, again echoing numerous reflections on the value of spending time outdoors and in wilderness settings, whether intentionally seeking spiritual encounters or inadvertent experiences (Backes, 1995;
15RMA told of his experience of God in nature within the last 10 years was ‘a turnaround’ in bringing balance to his life and removing his addiction to smoking tobacco and marijuana:

_I went outside... and I looked up into the stars... and I went ‘Lord, take this want from me.’ And I felt this sort of warm feeling... brings a tear to the eye thinking, remembering that... I've never smoked tobacco or anything since that day._

5RFS spoke of her strong emotional connection to place at home and during her travels. The rendition of both stories evoked a significant emotional response during the interview itself:

_Having lived here for 37 years... there’s a connection to this particular plot of ground... It’s very satisfying to think that there was nothing here when we came, and we’ve been able to try and make something of it._

_We were walking in the grounds of the Christian retreat... Just walking through and seeing the beautiful colours of the leaves on the ground... being there with [my husband] made me have a special kind of moment. Thanking God for not only for the special timing, but it was also an answer to a longing._

21UMO described bushwalking experiences in his teenage years. He ‘found it to be better than most things [he’d] done.’ He also remembered ‘camping under a huge fern tree in a forest and thinking ‘this is heaven.’ However, communal experiences were also a focus of the interviewee’s connection with nature and spirituality:

_I take people… to have a day up in nature, to be in solitude and silence, and to let that sense of God’s beautiful workings in nature impact on your worldview. When you’re in a rainforest, there’s nothing wrong here. This is just perfect. This is the way things are supposed to be. Things die, things grow, things are beautiful, this tree is magnificent._

26UFO spoke of rural time spent with clients. This officer recounted other experiences working for The Salvation Army where there have been ‘magical moments that are incredibly spirit led’ during spending time with people in her role, ‘whether that’s out at a campfire, out fishing, out in the bush, at the beach, or whether that’s here in the office.’ She stated through supporting people pastorally there can be ‘incredibly draining
times as well, because horrible, ugly stuff happens to those people.’ The subsequent need for balance, to take time ‘to regroup’ in order ‘to maintain this type of ministry’ provided very positive recollections of time spent in solitude in nature:

The time comes when I think, ‘ok, I actually need some campfire time.’ And that’s my mental health break… If I can jiggle my day so that I can get a sunset and a sunrise in, and a campfire in between – then it’s alright. The world turns. And you just.. [sigh.]

I asked for some further clarification on what ‘campfire time’ meant to her and what happens as part of this time of solitude:

Campfire time for me is about time with nobody else. It’s a time with me and God. I write, journal, poems, pray, sing… I always make a point of going to a place where there’s no telephone contact… stay removed entirely from it all, and allow that to just be a cleansing, healing, refining time. It’s a time for honing my relationship, polishing my relationship with God… campfire time, it’s retreat time, it’s God time… it’s a time of meditation; a time of being, as opposed to doing.

In my own experience growing up within The Salvation Army, taking time out to rest and restore through solitude in nature has not been as strongly emphasized as the activist character of the Army. This observation resonates with Bolton (1980:253) who states, ‘perhaps, above all things, the Salvationist is an activist. That is to say [they are] happiest when… doing something. [The Salvationist] is rarely a contemplative, a scholar or a social analyst [but rather] a practical [person].’ Nonetheless, times of rest and restoration spent outdoors were also touched on by other interviewees, such as time spent in gardens or gardening.

### 5.3.1.3 Gardens and Gardening

A number of respondents described their interest and love of gardens and gardening. A sample quote from 8RFS recollects her love of gardening and of her husband’s experience in the garden:

You’re just so close to God when you’re in the garden. I remember [my husband] going out to the Easter dawn service and coming home and wanting to work in the garden before he went back to church, because it was a place to be next to God.
Her 2RMS husband substantiated this story adding he had been invited to learn about permaculture (Mollison, 1988). He stated ‘I haven’t got it all into practice, but it’s interesting. I’m all for doing it the natural way.’ His new gardening knowledge ‘adds to the interest of the earth, and God’s creation, to know a bit more about it.’

The theme of meeting God in the garden was emotively described during the interview by 5RFS:

*Often times when I’ve gone out into the garden at our place, or early morning when you’re walking, that [song about meeting God in the garden] often comes back. It’s a time when you can thank and praise God.*

Feelings of self-conscious moral emotions (Harré, 2011) emerged when actions such as gardening or being more ‘green’ were not being taken. For example, 27UFE remarks ‘I feel guilty sometimes that I don’t have a vegetable garden. I’ve tried, but I’m not very good.’ Even so, she balanced this perceived lack of gardening skills by mentioning other pro-environmental actions she carries out and other positive communal experiences in nature, such as taking part in Salvation Army camps and her childhood experiences in nature.

The majority of participants expressed positive perceptions and affinities with nature – whether through gardening, bushwalking with family, or in times of solitude, throughout the lifespan. There was also substantial agreement that humanity has impacted the earth in destructive ways.

### 5.3.2 Humanity’s Environmental Impact and Climate Change

All participants admitted in some way that humanity has had a negative impact, or unbalancing effect on the Earth and ecosystems to some extent. Negative impacts ranged from smaller local to larger global issues. There was consistency throughout the responses that pollution and environmental issues are generally ‘part of us being fallen, and messed up... the result is not just that the human race is fallen, but we’ve messed up a lot of creation’ (25RFV).

Climate change was a topic that widely dispersed Salvationist interviewees, supporting both Carr et al. (2012) and Wilkinson’s (2010a:53) conclusions that even though there is considerable climate scepticism within the evangelical Christian community, the group as a whole is ‘by no means monolithic in their opinions on the topic... rather, they encompass a full spectrum of opinions.’ There also appears to be
some scepticism, confusion and a lack of clarity in the area of climate change (McCright and Dunlap, 2010). 6RMS states his confusion over climate change is ‘because you’re getting so many different opinions from so many different people.’ He finds it is ‘hard to decipher who’s right, who’s wrong, who’s giving an opinion, who’s giving a fact.’

The majority of respondents accept that climate has changed over the Earth’s history and also that humans have impacted the planet with sometimes disastrous outcomes. For some, changes in climate are occurring due to predominately human causes. 12RFS, whose ‘honest opinion of climate change is we have missed the boat. We should be looking at the impact we’re making as our Earth changes,’ looks toward minimizing and mitigating future risks associated with climate variability. Likewise, 19UMO gave a ‘personal view’, that:

\[
I \text{ think there’s enough concern within the Salvation Army as a whole that [humanity] has contributed to something – climate change. Whether it can be proven definitively or not – that’s irrelevant in a way! If we’ve made a contribution to it, we’ve got to look at how we minimize that, or how do we reduce it. It’s not only about warming up the atmosphere it’s about our children breathing cleaner air.}
\]

However, for a number of respondents, caring for the Earth does not automatically equate with agreeing that anthropogenic climate change is occurring, or their endorsement of current scientific data (CSIRO, 2012; IPCC 1990, 1995, 2001, 2007). For example, 7RMS thinks climates have changed ‘from time immemorial’ yet concedes climate change could have ‘been accentuated by humans.’ Two interviewees mentioned their belief that there is a forty-year climate cycle, and 20UME states:

\[
I’m a sceptic. I think it’s obvious that the world that we have inherited and need to look after absolutely has to be affected by what we do – no doubt about that. I can go fishing in the most remote place up Cape York and come across a coke can. I think we should do all we can about that. Am I convinced about all this political argument that goes on? No I’m not.
\]

For 2RMS, evaluation of seemingly contradictory evidence, such as ‘Northern Europe has had three winters, probably the worst winters they’ve ever had - and we’ve got global warming!’ is linked with what is seen as a subtle change in the ‘talk about global warming, they’ve had to change it to climate change.’ This led to the conclusion that ‘it’s a hoax... it’s a lot of rubbish.’ For people not well versed in scientific method the debate
between sceptics, deniers and scientists can cause significant confusion. Nonetheless, for some interviewees, predominantly those with tertiary education, misunderstanding the scientific method is not unexpected or particularly tolerable, in that some climate change denialist views are ‘classic misunderstandings of how weather patterns happen, expecting consistency and a steady continuation of trends over short periods of time, rather than over geological time’ (3RMS). Lewandowsky et al. (2012) argues ideology is a major driver of climate change denial. Likewise, Kahan et al.’s (2012) study on climate change risk perceptions suggests that whilst climate change and scientific education is valuable, cultural preferences and worldviews may better predict opinions on climate change than scientific knowledge.

5.3.2.2 Christianity and Science

In response to a question about observations of the relationship between science and Christianity posed during her interview, corroborating opinions on the evangelical distrust of science from Ackerman (2007), Larson (2007) and Nagle (2008), 16UFE stated:

There are more Christians who are climate change sceptics than non-Christians, it seems to me. It’s because Christians are sceptical of the evolutionary account of creation. They start off from a position of scepticism when interacting with the scientific community. I think they think ‘If science has got creation so wrong, how do we know they have got climate change right?’ So I think there’s more of a distance.

This interviewee’s thoughts were supported by a number of other participants. For example, when talking account science and scientists 10RMS declares:

I don’t trust them. Once they start talking about something 40000, 60000, 80000 years ago... it doesn’t correspond with my interpretation of the Bible.

These sentiments support findings by Carr et al. (2012) and Wilkinson (2010b) that correlate scepticism of certain scientific theories, specifically evolution, with scepticism on other scientific findings or theories, such as climate change. Yet for others, scepticism of science arose through personal experience of warnings broadcast to the public in the 1970s that now appear to them to have been incorrect: ‘we were all told the world would be out of oil within the next so many years... it didn’t happen. It doesn’t mean that anything predicted won’t happen, but you cannot just take everyone’s word for it’ (9RFE).
contrast, 23UMS whose work in government takes future climate variability into account, has climate change as part of his broader discourse:

The impact of climate change and sea levels rising is very much at the forefront of things that I’m involved in [at work] at a number of levels… We’re even working towards the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is talking about a 0.8 metre sea level rise by 2100.

5.3.2.3 Sovereignty: God is in Control

Regardless of their view on climate change, the vast majority of participants agree there is a scriptural imperative to care for creation. Yet for many respondents across all age ranges, levels of pollution, environmental degradation and/or climate change does not necessarily cause excessive concern or worry. For instance, ‘It doesn’t concern me cause I know God’s in control. He’ll only let it go so far’ (2RMS); and ‘above all, I believe that God’s still in control of the Earth’ (9RFE). 22UMA was confident and hopeful that ‘it’s all part of God’s plan’, linking biblical stories to the current situation, ‘when Noah was told to build the ark, God was in control then and he knew what he was doing, so I think he knows what he’s doing this time.’

Some interviewees acknowledged that declaring ‘God is in control’ could be used as an evasion of responsibility. Yet, interviewees who were not concerned because they believe God is in control often remarked that they could and should still act responsibly. For example, 25RFV states:

You can see it getting worse… it does worry me, but… I still know that God’s in control. I know there’s things I can do and I know there’s things that everybody in our country and in our world can do.

This respondent shows some signs of concern and worry over the worsening situation, yet she has a balanced hope placed in the dual understanding that humanity has the opportunity and ability to act, even as God is sovereign.

5.3.2.4 Climate Change and Biblical Prophecy

I posed the question to some respondents that if climate change was actually happening, could they see aligning with biblical prophecy (Woods, 2008), following Agnew’s (2006:186) claim that ‘even global warming may serve a Divine purpose by its hastening of the melting of the polar icecaps that, in this account, will be an important part of the Tribulation.’ Responses to this question were fairly consistent that the ‘end times’
could potentially fit satisfactorily with climate change predictions. For example, 5RFS responded she was ‘not fully convinced that it’s not related to the end of time situation.’ Likewise, 15RMA who was aware of ‘end times’ prophecies, was unsure whether better data collection and communication were fuelling climate narratives, or it was actually occurring.

Overall, participants differed most on their perceptions of anthropogenic climate change. Yet, even for those who do not agree that climate change is occurring, there is acknowledgement that humanity has to varying extents damaged the planet. The next section follows on from this to review the perceptions and attitudes of people involved with The Salvation Army towards taking personal and communal pro-environmental actions.

5.3.3 Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Actions

In their review of literature on the factors that shape pro-environmental behaviours, Kollmuss and Agyeman (2010:239) state the relationship between factors ‘is such a complex one that it cannot be visualized through one single framework or diagram.’ Based on existing literature, they argue that environmentally responsible behaviours do not appear to inevitably emerge exclusively from increased awareness of existing and future environmental problems and potential solutions, rather they envision a complex interweaving of ‘demographic factors, external factors (e.g. institutional, economic, social and cultural) and internal factors (e.g. motivation, pro-environmental knowledge, awareness, values, attitudes, emotion, locus of control, responsibilities and priorities).’ Participants to varying degrees touched on these complex interconnected factors in their responses.

Interviewees, regardless of age, gender or role, are aware of, and acknowledge the importance of a wide variety of pro-environmental actions and stated they undertook these behaviours to varying degrees throughout their daily activities. 25RFV’s response is representative of a number of participants in her awareness ‘of the finite nature of our planet and its resources’, of ‘all the things that we use. It hasn’t just come out of nowhere.’ She is actively engaged in environmentally sensitive personal actions ‘in my work and in my buying’, and aims to act responsibly in ‘trying to recycle as much as we can’; trying ‘not to buy too many clothes’, fixing things when possible, and to ‘buy foods with less packaging.’ She also reflects on the tensions and barriers to some pro-environmental behaviours at home: ‘if I could afford it and if I had more time’, and at work: ‘our paper use… I hate the fax machine, everything that’s faxed is duplicated.’ She felt that she was
'probably not doing as well as I could be', however was positive about her current behaviours.

One interviewee discussed a number of pro-environmental actions she undertakes such as: never littering 'simply because I think that’s wrong'; not applying harmful chemicals on her property; using solar hot water and home insulation; making use of a 'blanket or a jumper before I’d use a heater' and ‘I don’t use air-conditioners.’ Others picked up on things learnt earlier in life that they now link with positive environmental behaviours. When moving house, 2RMS declared he ‘even bought the wire from my chicken coup up here and it’s on this one. So I’ve been a recycler since day dot.’

Participation in environmental groups was not part of most interviewees’ experiences. However, 1RMS and his wife were ‘involved with [a local] wetlands project. Friends of ours were involved in that, that’s how we became involved.’ Their voluntary participation was ‘before rebirth’ into the Christian faith. The soldier could not recall taking part in any specific environmental group action ‘since becoming a Christian.’ Nevertheless, he was quick to point out ‘that’s not to say it’s diminished in importance.’ Some interviewees also distanced themselves from groups that are focused solely on environmental issues, echoing Carr et al.’s (2012) findings of evangelical caution toward environmental groups. A representative statement comes from 12RFS, who also strongly supports caring for God’s creation:

While I’m not a greenie, I think our Earth is important and I think that God’s given us a responsibility and we have a responsibility to God above everything else to tend his land with care.

Overall awareness of environmental issues varied between respondents, yet the general outlook toward environmental concern was implicit and progressive even though it was not always explicitly searched for or acted upon.

5.3.3.1 Social Aspects of Nature

3RMS gave a brief explanation of his perceptions of societal influence on his understanding of his place within the created order:

I think we as humans tend to see ourselves as distinct from nature and we tend to see nature on one side and man on the other. And I think for me growing up, that was indelibly how I saw it. I was socialized into that view and the purity of nature.
Another interviewee echoed the notion of the ‘mainstreaming of wilderness’, particularly within Western society (Lester, 2005). This mainstreaming, Lester argues, is strengthened by Pakulski et al.’s (1998) claim ‘that environmental issues in Australia have become ‘routinised’ as radical new issues and ‘unconventional’ forms of political participation enter the political mainstream’ (Tranter, 2012:3). 19UMO contrasted the heightened awareness of issues such as the Vietnam War and the perceived ‘responsibility we had as members of the public, even as high school kids, to challenge things like the proposed hydro-electric schemes down in Tasmania… don’t dam the lower Gordon/Franklin river.’ Her perception that significant protests over environmental issues ‘was what happened in the 70s, and you became incredibly passionate about it’, coupled with increased public awareness and responsibility caused ‘everybody got involved in everything, and en masse… involving the churches, involving The Salvation Army, involving the schools, involving lots of people.’ The officer then compared that situation to today where ‘people who have a say now are probably more in the minority. My observation is you’ve got a smaller group of agitators now.’

Both Pakulski et al.’s (1998:239) notion of ‘routinisation’ which encompasses the ‘absorption of social innovations into the established, and typically institutionalised, ways of doing and experiencing things through repetition and habituation,’ and Tranter’s (2012:3) comments on the ‘shift from new, unusual and unique’ (e.g. the environment as a ‘new’ political issues) ‘to old, expected and familiar’ (i.e. environmental issues are absorbed into the platforms of political parties) are also of relevance to the Salvation Army as a movement. These issues are echoed by 12RFS’s statement that:

I don’t think we are focused on humanity like we used to be… we’ve become very inward focused… “I agree with it, but somebody else should deal with it.” While The Salvation Army movement has the humanity side of it, the people in The Salvation Army don’t live it, don’t live the mission of the Army, and I include myself in that.

The interviewee’s perception of what could be called a ‘mainstreaming’, or ‘routinisation’ of Salvation Army mission, also resonates with the slight divergence that emerged between the responses from soldiers/adherents and officers/employees. All groups recounted personal stories, however, officers and employees emphasised their Salvationist community and social work clients in their experiences in nature. As leaders of communities, corps or centres, officers are in a full-time role that is generally more attuned to pastoral care and inclusion of their community members in activities. Thus, finding an
increased emphasis on those within their Salvationist community during officer interviews is not surprising. However, the officer/employee accent on the wider Salvationist community may highlight two potential issues that may impact levels of community engagement and awareness within soldiership. First, clericalisation, – where the initial endorsement of the equality of all members as the priesthood of all believers – morphs into a significant distinction between clergy and laity (Hill, 2004), and second, the mainstreaming or routinisation of Salvationism, where initially radical movements soften and gentrify (Hill, 2008), are both issues that have been raised from within The Salvation Army ranks.

5.4 Conclusion

This research has identified a number of key findings. The interviewed participants associated with The Salvation Army all admitted in some way that humanity has had a negative impact, or unbalancing effect on the Earth and its ecosystems to some extent. Interviewees are concerned, but not overly worried about the state of the planet and are aware of and acknowledge the importance of a wide variety of pro-environmental actions. They stated they undertook these pro-environmental behaviours to varying degrees throughout their daily activities. They see numerous benefits to caring for the planet; they do not support the exploitation of Earth, and endorse further education and awareness-raising around these issues. A majority had positive childhood and/or adult experiences in natural surroundings and enjoy spending time involved in outdoor activities such as gardening, bushwalking with family, spending times in solitude, throughout their lifespan. The most significant variations in opinion were predominately centred on climate change, yet nearly all participants stated there is a scriptural imperative to care for creation. Careful and responsible stewardship of resources are seen as the proper response to God’s provision, whereas sin and greed are linked with irresponsibility, pollution and social and environmental injustices. The Salvation Army is perceived as taking part in some environmentally responsible actions, yet more could be done in explicitly linking ecological issues into the current social and spiritual work of The Salvation Army.

This examination of Salvationist interview data has corroborated a number of other research findings in non-Salvationist literature and research, and has also brought to light some particularly Salvationist-related themes. For example, although The Salvation Army is a movement within the Holiness tradition, it is notable that the term ‘holiness’ was not mentioned during the interview process. There was also variance in the knowledge and
focus of responses between officers/employees and soldiers/adherents. This may highlight the potential that clericalisation within The Salvation Army (Hill, 2004), and the ‘mainstreaming of Salvationism’, may impact levels of community engagement and awareness within soldiership.

To conclude this examination of interview data, a significant quote from 26UFO:

*I see my social, humanitarian, social justice world integrated so closely in my sense of where the environment, the planet, ecology… link. They are so tightly webbed there isn’t a separation between how you care for people and how you care for plants. There really is a wholeness about the Earth. If I look at Scripture I see a wholeness and that God’s plan was actually a wholeness… What I read all the way through the Scriptures – caring for the orphans, caring for the abused, caring for the underdog, justice, mercy, kindness and grace are what God demands of us for people, but that should also be part of our connection with creation. We need to connect with creation in a way that is just as merciful, kind and gracious… If I can't connect with the planet in a gracious way, I'm probably not going to connect with people in a gracious way. If I'm dominated by the need for power, and money, and product – consumerism – that doesn't create space for people either.*

This noteworthy statement brings together many of the strands that have appeared throughout this project, such as the strong links between spiritual, social and ecological care and justice, and that the scriptures speak of our response to God as a gracious journey toward wholeness, holiness and balanced living - a journey with and within creation.
Chapter 6

Reflection and Conclusion: Toward Holistic Salvationism

6.0 Introduction

The final chapter of this examination of the relationships between the spiritual, social and ecological within The Salvation Army contains personal, practical and theological reflections that have emerged from the project. Firstly, the main findings from the historical, current and grounded theory-based sections of this practical theological study are outlined. Potential directions for future research are then presented, followed by some pointers toward practical Salvationist eco-mission. The chapter concludes with a major observation from this practical theological project, that of balance.

6.1 Research Findings

The investigation of the early Salvation Army shows genuine care and concern for more than just the spiritual state of people. William and Catherine Booth, among others, increasingly recognized the theological and practical interconnectedness of the spiritual, social and ecological within the Salvationist movement. For example, William Booth states the spiritual and social are ‘joined together like Siamese twins – to divide them is to slay them’ (Needham, 1987:62-63), Booth-Tucker hoped to unite ‘the landless man with the manless land’ (Winston, 1999:103), and Catherine was known for her compassion for animals and love of nature (Bramwell-Booth, 1970). Even though early Salvationism predates the term ‘ecological’, there are strong historical Salvationist precedents for the integration of environmental concern along with spiritual interest and social involvement within Salvationism.

There is also a solid precedent for reading the signs of the times. John Wesley, William and Catherine Booth, and many other Salvationists read the Bible and the contemporary culture together. They undertook, in practical theological terms, mutual critical correlation between various sources of knowledge. Context and praxis went hand-in-hand in early Salvationism – what were the current needs of society? How can the
gospel message of the hope and love of Jesus become tangible? These same questions are still pertinent today for The Salvation Army and Salvationists.

As this thesis has argued, broadly speaking, environmental issues and the close association between social and environmental concerns, are of increasing importance across a wide range of organisations, governments, individuals, movements and churches across the world. In light of social, spiritual and ecological crises the world over, what are the local and global needs of today? How can the gospel message of the hope and love of Jesus become tangible in practical ways that are theologically and ecologically sound?

Through the study's practical theological-inspired interviews, clear links appear between increased pro-environmental thought, action, and understanding of the biblical imperative to care for creation with a wide range of beneficial outcomes for Salvationists, The Salvation Army, its clients and the Earth. Three major themes emerged during the interviews. These three themes: 1) nature/ ecological; 2) social/ecumenics; and 3) spiritual/the economy of God have been elucidated in Chapter Five. There are prominent parallels between the themes that were developed through the research and the metaphor of oikos, identified in Chapter Three.

As I have argued, humanity is not detached or isolated from the wider oikos of God. Noting that the findings from this research only apply to the participants, and their views should not be generalized beyond this study, overall, participants appear to be considerably aware of the substantial interconnectedness and interdependence of the entire household of God. There is both agreement that the social, spiritual and ecological are important, yet there also exists some variance in the levels of concern across these three oikotheological areas of economic justice, ecumenical fellowship and ecological sustainability. There was widespread acknowledgment that humanity has adversely impacted the Earth. Overall, participants are concerned about the state of the Earth, societal situations and spiritual conditions. There is hope placed in the sovereignty of God, and that through education, evangelism and Christian living beneficial personal and communal choices can improve social, spiritual and ecological conditions.

This project has corroborated a number of other research findings in non-Salvationist literature and research. Many participants recalled childhood and/or adult experiences in natural surroundings that affirm and encourage environmental attitudes and behaviours. The most significant variations in opinion were predominately centred on climate change, yet the vast majority of participants agree there is a scriptural imperative to care for creation. Responsible stewardship is seen as the proper response to God’s
provision, whereas sin and greed are linked with irresponsibility, pollution and social and environmental injustices.

The research has also brought to light some particularly Salvationist-related themes. Participants perceive The Salvation Army undertakes some environmentally responsible actions, yet further action, education and explicitly linking ecological issues into current social and spiritual work was suggested. There was variance in the knowledge and focus of responses between officers/employees and soldiers/adherents. This may highlight the potential that clericalisation within The Salvation Army (Hill, 2004), and the mainstreaming of Salvationism, may effect levels of community engagement and awareness within soldiership.

The Salvation Army has roots in the holiness movement, yet at the end of the interview process, I noticed the absence of conversation on the topic of holiness, or holy living. Only 25RFV mentioned she thinks ‘we have the capability to be holy.’ Drury (2011) contends that although the holiness movement is dead, the message of holiness is not dead, but supressed. I contend this message of holiness, of wholeness and holistic living in light of the kingdom, is potentially an important area for the rediscovery of care and compassion for all of creation.

I argue, based on interviewee responses, my own perceptions and readings, that there are financial, evangelistic, mental, health and spiritual benefits when spiritual, social and ecological matters are united:

1. Financially: being more responsible stewards of resources, energy and materials can improve financial situations.
2. Practically: to be increasingly seen as a movement of people that care and are aware of our relationship and environmental impact in today’s society could increase community support for The Salvation Army.
3. Evangelistically: an increased awareness of environmental issues within The Salvation Army may be a positive point of resonance with many in today’s society. To share a common concern for Earth with those who are not Christians, and bring the message of love and hope that Jesus has for all of Earth has great potential for growth for the kingdom of God.
4. Psychologically: Many interviewees express contentment and feeling closer to God when spending time in nature, away from the distractions of current lifestyles.
5. Health and Wellbeing: raising awareness of positive lifestyle choices, such as food choice, consumption, exercise can be beneficial.

6. Spiritually: an increasingly holistic view of God’s web of life and our place within it brings an increased sense of wonder and praise, giving of glory to God through worship and holy living, reflecting early Salvation Army leadership, particularly Catherine Booth.

6.2 Limitations and Further Research

This research project has definite limitations on its geographical scope within the household of God. The international reach of Salvationism signifies that there is abundant scope for further localised research across the Salvationist world on the intersection of the social, spiritual and ecological.

As this research study is one of, if not the first, that focuses on The Salvation Army and ecology, this area of research is relatively undeveloped. Future research could also extend into areas such as: deeper analysis of Salvation Army environmental positional statements and policy formulation; further examination of historical leadership views, such as those of William and Catherine Booth; reflection on the scope and focus of the ‘norms’ of Salvationism such as holiness in light of the global environmental situation; and exploration of oikotheology within Salvationist contexts.

To further reflect and improve Salvationist praxis in relation to the entire household of God, future research utilising insights and methods from the field of action research could be quite fruitful. Action research can be understood as ‘a flexible spiral process which allows action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same time’ (Dick, 2002). Potential projects include community gardens, or edible garden patch projects which could holistically connect ecological education and concern, social justice based initiatives, and spiritual restoration.

The radical history of The Salvation Army, in matters spiritual, physical and even ecological and the current levels of radical Salvationist actions are also worth further exploration. To quote an early Salvationist, George Railton (1873):

With cries of ‘Death unto sin’ and ‘Life unto righteousness,’ we go on, determined to turn the world upside down. We are not philosophers or the theorists of revolution; but its agents. Merely to recommend revolution is contemptible. We must make it.
There has been a general shift from the radical spiritual revolution and social regeneration espoused by Railton toward more conservative social and spiritual work within The Salvation Army. Reflecting Railton’s hope to bring holy change to the household of God, Bouma-Prediger (2010:180) calls for a ‘radical faith in a troubled world.’ Can or should Salvationist radicalism resurface or be reignited toward holistic spiritual, social and ecological health and well-being for all of God’s troubled creation? What are the barriers? Are there more relevant ways for Salvationists and The Salvation Army to encourage and cultivate holy, sacramental and holistic life within the household of God? Further research into these areas could assist Salvationists to consider how their faith and their movement can be an active source of hope and positive change to bring healing and wholeness to the entire oikos.

6.3 Toward Balanced and Holistic Salvationism

There are many practical tips that could be put forward for Salvationists to action. Yet as each Salvation Army centre has its own context and its own situation, it is important to note that practical ecotheologies and eco-mission may look different in each centre or corps. There are numerous books, websites and other ecological and ecotheological literature available from a variety of viewpoints that cover many more areas of practical care and concern for the Earth in more depth than is possible here (e.g. Bookless, 2008; Ha, 2007; Ivanko and Kivirist, 2008; Kellogg and Pettigrew, 2008; Phillips and Phillips, 2011). Nonetheless, a few ideas to continue Salvationist conversations on ecotheology and eco-mission are found in Ross’ (2011) recommended actions that Christians could undertake in order to include environmental care in the church’s local and worldwide missions. Ross’ four modified principles to rate current and future action are:

1) Recognise the biblically announced mandate to care for creation and develop policies, structures and aims that characterise a culture of earth-care.

2) Model personal lifestyles of simplicity and earthkeeping, living as Christ would among us today.

3) Provide environmentally-sound development programmes among the poor with ecological awareness, procedures and actions.

4) Train ministers, missionaries and church members in the principles and practice of Christian ecology, as well as encouraging them to reproduce the message.
These four goals may be useful to move Salvationists toward embracing social, spiritual and environmental issues within The Salvation Army for the entire household of God.

Finally, to condense the project into one word, it would be: balance. Balanced thinking, theology and praxis in areas of the spiritual, social and ecological emerged as a theme from respondents and from my own perceptions of the research process to date. From negative statements that underline the imbalance in situations where, ‘There’s something wrong. Something is out of balance’ (8RFS), to more holistic understandings of the Bible, in that ‘It needs to be considered more in its wholeness and entirety to bring that balance back’ (16UFE), the notion of balance was a commonality. Two further interviewee quotes and a section from a Salvation Army statement underline the importance of personal balance, and the human/earth balance that undergird the work of The Salvation Army:

I think you’ve got to have a balance. A balance in Christian experience, a balance in friendships outside the church, and a balance in lifestyle – the whole of your lifestyle is a balance. (8RFS)

The Salvation Army… needs to be careful with what it does and seek not only to promote the well-being of the people and the communities but also to seek the Earth’s well-being, knowing that by balancing those two needs you’re providing the best long term future. (16UFE)

The earth is an interconnected whole, each part interdependent. As an intricately ordered system it must be kept in careful balance. Human sinfulness continues to contribute to destruction of the earth and cause significant degradations... These imbalances have consequences for the poor, our global neighbours and future generations (The Salvation Army, 2009).

Balance, in this instance, is a fluid and contextual concept that aims for harmony and equilibrium between competing social, spiritual and ecological interests, where love, wisdom and humility are drawn on to connect with peaceful visions of the whole Earth community – the present and future oikos. It is through listening to other voices, such as the diverse voices considered throughout this thesis, that humility and empathy, love and compassion in all matters of the spiritual, social and ecological can be conveyed for the enrichment of the household of God.
My hope is that my voice, and engagement with other voices within this thesis may play a small part in The Salvation Army, as a community, and Salvationists individually, reconsidering their place within the web of life, and to consider innovative and exciting ways in which they can partner to bring healing, health and salvation to all of God’s loved creation.
7.0 Appendices

7.1 Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Do you feel a connection with nature, now, or did you earlier in life?
- Did you grow up in an area where you had time and opportunity to experience the outdoors?
- Do you now, and/or were you encouraged to spend time in the outdoors, e.g. going camping, exploring and so on?
- Have you had any experiences of God when spending time outdoors?
- Did you then and/or currently connect the outdoors environment to your faith and spiritual practice?
- Do you take part in any specific social justice activities or community action groups?
- What environmentally-related activities do you participate in personally?
- Where did the motivation come from for your environmental engagement?
- Does pollution, oil spills or other environmental degradation worry or concern you? Do you see any link between these events and your faith?
- During the spring of 1853, Catherine Booth wrote ‘I love nature, even what little of its beauties I have seen have almost enchanted me sometimes. I shall never forget the feeling of buoyancy and delight I experienced.’ Does your observation and being part of God’s creation enrich your understanding of the Creator?
- From the Scriptures, do you see any potential links to environmental care and concern? Any particular verses?
- James Lovelock said that ‘those with faith should look again at our Earthly home and see it as a holy place, part of God’s creation, but something that we have desecrated’. Your thoughts?
- How do you understand the relationship between Christianity and the environment?
- How do you understand the relationship between The Salvation Army and the environment?
- Do you know of any Salvation Army initiatives to care for God’s creation, or any Salvationists who are keen to take environmental action?
- How significant are issues like climate change or environmental degradation to you; your relations; your community; those who might rely on The Salvation Army – now and in the future?
- Norman Habel suggests Christian mission has over time progressively encompassed three elements. The first element involves mission focused primarily on the saving of souls. The second element broadens the idea of mission and includes bodily and community-focussed therapeutic evangelism (social justice). The third, and broadest sense of mission, takes the whole of creation as the focus of salvation, redemption and healing. What are your thoughts on these three elements of Christian mission?
- Did you know that Frederick Booth-Tucker looked upon farming communities as uniting ‘the landless man with the manless land”? And there was also the view of farming as work which healed and made people whole and drew them into rhythm with God.’ Your thoughts?
- What practical things can The Salvation Army do to ensure that it is a wise steward of the earth’s resources?
- From a scientific perspective, do you see any potential links to environmental care and concern?
- Do you have any qualms regarding scientific advances or theories?
- ‘Climate change’ – your thoughts and reactions?
- Hypothetically: what if climate change was happening and was due to us humans: would it change your current actions?
- Do you have any thoughts on popular culture and environmental concerns for example the recent movie Avatar?
7.2 Ethics Clearance

18 July 2013

Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants

Dear Matthew,

Please be advised your Application for Ethical Clearance has now been approved by the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics.

Your Application was approved January 2011.

Regards

[Signature]

Dr Patrick Jory
Postgraduate Coordinator
8.0 Bibliography


Branco, A. 2009. ‘Creators of New Salvation Army Garden Want to Inspire Residents’. 
*Columbia Missourian* 14 May. Accessed at: 


The Frederick Coutts Memorial Lecture, given at Carindale Salvation Army, 
Brisbane.

Burrows, E. 2006. ‘Climate Change: Love of Poor Means We Must Speak Out’. *Common Belief: Australia’s Faith Communities on Climate Change*. The Climate Institute, 
Sydney:32-33.

Cafaro, P.J. ‘Gluttony, Arrogance, Greed, and Apathy: An Exploration of Environmental Vice’ in *Environmental Virtue Ethics*. R. Sandler and P. Cafaro (eds.). Lanham, MD: 
Rowman and Littlefield.


Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image.


Hodder, K. 2009. ‘Yellow, Red and Blue... and Green – A Call for Imaginative Faith’, The Officer (May/June):4-5.


Larsson, J. 2004. ‘From the Top: Christianity with its Sleeves Rolled Up’, *All the World* 42(4).


*Presbyterian Churchman*. August 1884. Dublin.


Taylor, B. 2010b. Personal Communications.


Tranter, B. 2012. ‘Searching for ‘Wilderness’: Environmental Protests in The Mercury and The Age’, TASA Conference Proceedings. The University of Queensland,


Wells, P. 2013. Personal Communications.


