Hallelujah in the Hush Harbor:
Examining the Experiences of Black Salvation Army Officers in the United States

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It is a fact, however little known, that early Salvation Army leaders openly contended with the sin of racism so ubiquitous in America. Commissioner George Scott Railton, the first Salvation Army officer appointed to the United States, hoped that the “Army [would] remove white man’s prejudice against those who are not white.” Together with other early Salvationists, Railton coveted for the Army “the glory of leading the world in the practice of truly divine love to men who have not white skin.” In many ways by then, the early Salvation Army had already been identified with black Americans. James Jermy, a fair-skinned Englishman, had introduced the Christian Mission to the United States nearly a decade before Railton’s arrival from England. Jermy is known to have drawn the interest and involvement of black communities in Cleveland because of his spirited preaching, work among the poor, and missional partnership with a black Methodist minister named James Fackler. Though Jermy’s work came to an unfortunate end due to the lack of International Headquarters financial support, a few years later Eliza Shirley and her family began opening mission stations in Philadelphia.

The work of James Jermy and Eliza Shirley had indeed been significant, but it was Commissioner Railton’s arrival in 1880 that provided the momentum needed for the Army’s expansion into the United States. Much of Railton’s ministry began among poor black communities, where he asserted that the Army was “...The only white people in whose company, whose platforms, whose operations, colored people have the same welcome as others....” As if to provide proof of Railton’s proclamation, an 1880 Harpers Weekly article featured artwork in
which black people were depicted among those attending the first official Salvation Army meetings in New York City.7

The Salvation Army’s theological distinctives are derived from the Wesleyan Methodist tradition, founded in the 18th century by Reverend John Wesley. Wesleyan theology emphasizes the essentials of the Christian faith as informed by at least scripture, reason, experience, and tradition8 – and the earthly evidence of Spirit-empowered social action.9 John Wesley was a noted vocal prophetic critic of the practice of slavery, and under the influence of his theological approach, early Methodists were active in the movement to abolish slavery.10 Many of the enslaved Africans adopted Methodism as their path of entry to the Christian faith, with which they combined their African traditions and prayed and sang, unsupervised by whites, in secret “Hush Harbors”11 beyond the plantation.

While other well-known religious leaders either capitulated to the dominant culture’s defense of slavery or participated in it12, Wesley strongly contended that slavery was neither compatible nor consistent with the historic Christian faith. In his pamphlet entitled Thoughts Upon Slavery, Wesley challenged his readers to “Have no more any part in this detestable business [of slavery]. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches.”13 By the 1830s, many Methodist churches in the United States served as “stations” along the Underground Railroad in America. Eventually “…it came to be said of the Wesleyans, as of the Quakers, that almost every neighborhood where a few of them lived was likely to be a station…”; as a result many Methodists were terrorized due to their anti-slavery posture and abolitionist practice.14

To this day, an observant theologian can detect the Army’s Wesleyan heritage in its love for music and evangelism, and also in its mostly inclusive interpretation and pragmatic implementation of the Gospel message. Just over 100 years after Wesley’s Thoughts Upon
Slavery was published, General William Booth, whose theology had been shaped by Wesley’s writings, would proudly dedicate a black baby under the flag of The Salvation Army at a rally in Boston. By that time, the Army’s interest in racial equality was an important part of the American Christian narrative. In his paper entitled *The Salvation Army as a Christian Church with a Social Conscience*, Reverend Dr. Robert K. Lang’at writes:

> From its inception, The Salvation Army purposed to fight injustices against black Americans. …Blacks were accepted ...and participated in various gatherings. This acceptance was inspired by the Army’s holiness theology of love which encouraged equality of all persons before God.  

Lang’at is likely referring to Commissioner Frank Smith’s “Great Colored Campaign and Combined Attack Upon the South.” As the Army’s national commander, Smith asserted in an 1884 War Cry article that:

> Our colored brethren have been very much wronged, the victims of a cruel avarice, their bodies turned into merchandise...; their most sacred affections trampled upon. ...We of The Salvation Army have a holy ambition to be among the first Christian community of America who will faithfully and wholly break down the wall of partition...  

By the time The Salvation Army was founded in London, American Christians had split into factions over the question of slavery. Long before Smith’s “Colored Campaign,” the Baptist church, the Presbyterian church, and even the Methodist church had wrestled with and officially divided over the question of whether slaveholders could remain as members in good standing or not. Baptists formed the *Southern Baptist Convention* over conflict concerning whether slaveholders could participate in international missions; Presbyterians formed the *Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America* (now known as the PCUS) rather than “perpetuate the integrity of [the Union]” and its anti-slavery sentiment. Even Methodists in the Southern States formed the *Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, so as to allow their clergymen to own African slaves.
The Salvation Army expanded into the United States during the Reconstruction era, and managed to mostly maintain its commitment to racial diversity and equality. However, it could not completely withstand the shifting cultural views in post-Civil War America; its own organizational schism of 1884 displayed that the Army had trouble maintaining unity (perhaps even regarding race and equality). For though officially it was in the interest of “financial independence” that Major Thomas Moore led the “Salvation Army of America” away from the international Army,\textsuperscript{21} it cannot be ignored that in those years, according to their bylaws only racially segregated worship meetings were acceptable in Moore’s movement.\textsuperscript{22} It was through strategic “inclusion campaigns,” especially among black people in the South, that the international Salvation Army would survive its schism and preserve denominational unity. Yet as the culture grew more socially conservative, views about race shifted in America. In her work entitled \textit{The Black Salvationist}, Major Norma Roberts (R) states that “as nonconformist as the Army had been - even willing to face persecution and jail for its convictions - it could not, apparently, withstand the pervasive public sentiment of the day.”\textsuperscript{23}

During the Civil Rights movement, Salvation Army officers serving in the American South witnessed the impact of Jim Crow laws up close, at times acting against social conventions by integrating programs or unofficially supporting Civil Rights measures. One such officer was Luther Smith, who in 1961 welcomed Freedom Riders to rest and recuperate in The Salvation Army’s facility in Birmingham on their way to Jackson.\textsuperscript{24} Unfortunately, other than a few notable examples like that of Brigadier Smith (OF), the Army remained mostly moderate in the face of racially oppressive American laws and atrocities. Even so the Army yielded to this kind of cultural pressure only when “local law dictated” and, according to historian of the US Southern Territory Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee, the Army acquiesced with an “uneasy
conscience.” But in 1954, when segregation was outlawed by the United States Supreme Court, the Army “welcomed [integration] and was quick to comply.” It was then that the Salvation Army Commissioner’s Conference quickly adopted a resolution that asserted “We accept full Christian responsibility to work earnestly and sympathetically to the end that a practical implementation of [desegregation] may be successfully effected.”

Near the end of the American Civil Rights era, the remaining two of four Salvation Army Schools for Officer Training were integrated. The Southern Territory commissioned its first black cadet, Maurice Smith, as a lieutenant in 1968; the Western Territory commissioned Gwendolyn Holman as a lieutenant in 1974. Since then, black Salvation Army officers have come to represent as much as 12% of the officer population in an American territory. “The work of an officer,” as one colonel wrote, may seem like “a sentence of hard labor for life,” because Salvation Army ministry places significant demands upon one’s physical, intellectual, and emotional energies. An officer’s daily responsibilities often consist of evangelism, congregational care, social service administration, fundraising, financial management, grant supervision, facilities management, public relations, advisory board development, program administration, and community activism. Faithfully discharging these duties while also facing the potential of racial discrimination from one’s appointed community, corporation, and culture is the burden which officers of color often silently bear.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question “How do black Salvation Army officers in the United States describe and interpret experiences of racism, bias, and discrimination?” As researcher I developed an approach which included interviews, surveys, and online group discussions in order to assist in understanding and categorizing the experiences and
interpretations of 25 participants. Scholarly literature related to racism, implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion was examined through the lens of Army theological and leadership statements. Six recommendations were made for the consideration of Salvation Army leaders who have expressed a burden for the morale and mobility of commissioned minorities.

**Racism**

Traditionally, racism has been understood to involve a single, overt, intentional action against a person or group of people because of race. In the modern setting, racism is better defined as a deeply embedded system of institutional power, founded on the belief that people of certain physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, or ethnic classification have intrinsic superiority over others. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, The Salvation Army then issued the following position statement of opposition to racism:

> The Salvation Army, as a branch of the church, opposes discriminatory practices related to race or national origin at all levels of operation and ministration, and seeks to promote intergroup understanding and give full support to be inheritance of human civil rights, not only at the levels of housing and education and employment, but also in the areas of culture and religion, sharing that spiritual affinity which makes all men brothers.

More recently, the Office of the General released a statement which both identified racism as “a wrong that needs to be countered,” and called “for truthful acknowledgment.” Furthermore, the report announced that The Salvation Army will “…continue to make efforts to ensure ethnic diversity in international and territorial leadership,” and encourage all “…to recognize the negative effects of racism in society and rid the world of this injustice.”

**Implicit Bias & Discrimination**

Implicit bias is a phenomenon in which one’s perceptions about race have been shaped by experiences that potentially generate discriminatory feelings and actions. Most often, implicit
bias goes undetected by those acting on the basis of racism. Subsequently, discrimination refers to any overt or subtle action informed by implicit or explicit bias. Discriminatory activities include ignoring, exclusion, threats, ridicule, slander, or violence - and can be either intentional or unintentional.

**Diversity**

Diversity is the collective mixture of differences and similarities that include individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behaviors. Concerning the Biblical imperative of diversity, the Salvation Army Commissioners Conference released a statement which affirmed that it “…strengthens [Army] ministries” and that “Christ brings unity within diversity.” Further, the statement declared, in the spirit of Railton, that

> All Salvation Army worship services are open to everyone. We affirm that racial and multicultural integration of believers is desirable and feasible within a local body of Christ because the gospel transcends human culture. “Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman” (Galatians 3:28 CEV).

**Inclusion**

Inclusion is defined as the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement effort to achieve an environment in which all individuals are empowered and can contribute fully to the organization’s success. During a 2019 podcast, The Salvation Army’s United States National Commander spoke frankly about leadership inclusion

> ...We have got to do a better job of showing diversity at the highest levels of The Salvation Army in the United States. It has got to be a priority. ...To some extent we’ve failed in this area, and we’ve got to do better.
After further discussion, Commissioner David Hudson pressed his point more specifically and further: “I am encouraged when I see that we are giving people of color opportunities. I’m saying that we just need to speed up the process. *It needs to be a high priority.*”

**Methodology & Participants**

Twenty-five participants of this study met the following criteria: (a) each was a commissioned Salvation Army officer, who (b) assumes African ancestry, and (c) who at the time of the study served in a Salvation Army appointment located in the United States of America. Invitations to participate in the study were extended through social media and official email; research participants were also invited to recruit other participants. Seventy-two percent of the participants had served between one and 15 years of officership, the remaining 28% had served over 16 years. At least two participants had served over 25 years. Thirteen participants were female, 12 were male, and while all Salvation Army US Territories were represented, 60% of participants were from either the Southern or Eastern Territories. Seventy-six percent of the participants were married. Though divisional and territorial officers participated in the study, most served in a local corps or command. Each participant was invited to respond in long form to a survey which included five open-ended questions related to interpretations, interactions (with leadership), and coping strategies after experiences of racism. A private chat group was created as a means of discussing and interpreting those experiences, and participants were also invited to share insights and discuss other relevant experiences. Most notably, a great spirit of praise, solidarity, and encouragement emerged among those in the participation group. As the researcher I viewed my position as an unbiased observer although it must be mentioned that I too, am an officer of African descent serving in the Southern Territory of the United States.

**Data Analysis, Results, & Discussion**
In order to interpret the data, I familiarized myself with participant responses through focused reading, re-reading, and reflection. Significant statements related to participant experiences with racism were identified and, after careful consideration, were assigned to themes and descriptions. Once the themes were identified, an abstract statement was shared with participants to ensure they accurately described their experiences. Once thematic accuracy was confirmed, minor changes were made based on participant feedback.

Results & Discussion

Four themes emerged from the research, and were identified as (a) covenant, (b) cultivation, (c) silence, and (d) sidelined. The order of the themes as they are displayed in the table below is neither suggestive of thematic priority nor significance and have been alliterated for memorability and ease of understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covenant</td>
<td>Refers to participant belief in the calling of God to Salvation Army ministry and of His “keeping power” in the face of adversity, racial or otherwise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivation</td>
<td>Refers to the refinement of ministry competencies and the acquisition of education as preparative and personally important to the participant.</td>
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Silencing  Refers either to participant perception of the pressure to remain silent during discussions about race, or to occurrences of subtle or overt “hushing” by leadership figures.

Sidelining  Refers to participant acquiescence to the likelihood of being ignored, passed over, or excluded from consideration for Salvation Army appointments, apparently due to race or ethnicity.

Theme 1: Covenant

A key understanding to Salvation Army ministry is that officers are “called” to service and understand their work as covenant rather than career, vocation rather than occupation. An Officer’s Covenant, signed by every Salvation Army cadet just prior to his or her commission to officership, is a declaration that he or she is “called by God to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as an officer of The Salvation Army”, and as such they bind themselves

To Him in this solemn covenant:

to love and serve Him supremely all [their] days,
to live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of [their lives],
to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unloved, and befriend those who have no friends,
to maintain the doctrines and principles of The Salvation Army, and, by God’s grace to prove [themselves] worthy officer[s].

The most common response from participants, when asked about resiliency and their ability to transcend instances of racism was that they “remembered their calling” or were inspired by others who had remained faithful to the implications of an Officer Covenant.

 GOD called me to officership at a very young age and I knew I would be committed to God, no matter what may come.

What has helped me personally is remembering [my] calling, prayer, and [the support of] my family.

It is likely that most any Salvation Army officer, of any ethnicity, would be able to identify with this sentiment. Yet it is significant that black Salvation Army officers draw from their sure
calling to officership the strength to, even in the face of subtle or overt racism, “…press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God” (Philippians 3:14).

**Theme 2: Cultivation**

In the early 1900s, only one in 1000 black Americans were college educated. Today, well over 4.5 million of this population hold at least a four-year college degree. Though Salvation Army officers are often reminded that appointments are not made based on formal education, the value of personal mentoring, formal education, and vocational preparation for greater effectiveness was prominent among participants in this study; The Salvation Army’s commitment to providing educational opportunities for officers is key to this group.

*Education really opened my eyes [to see] unending ministry opportunities.*

*Education …helped form my character and build [my] self-confidence.*

*Education is very important for black officers. …Rarely do black officers get promoted without education.*

At the same time, issues related to education can lead to frustration. In 2019, the Pew Research Center found that formally educated black people are most likely to say they’ve faced discrimination. Another study found that well-educated blacks were often “treated with suspicion because of their boldness, self-assuredness, and confidence.”

*I always feel black officers have to work 10 times harder …just to be recognized.*

*We are asked to do more and be more just to be able to have a seat at the table.*

*…In our territory, officers of African descent are more educated and qualified for leadership positions than [others].*

The institution of American chattel slavery was built on the ideology that African slaves were, *and were to remain*, ignorant. The practice of withholding education from black people was due to the belief that education had the potential to destroy the institution of slavery, and cause
African Americans to be raised above their status. Thus, in many black communities, the attainment of education is among the fullest expressions of freedom, achievement, and mobility.

**Theme 3: Silencing**

While research has proven that telling others about experiences of racism reduced stress responses, an important and noteworthy finding among participants was the pressure to remain silent rather than discuss race or racism in “mixed company.” In *Race Work & Leadership*, the authors found that people of color often find the explicit discussion of race as taboo. Thus, rather than share negative experiences, participants indicated that it is much safer to remain silent than to risk rejection and potential “agitator labeling” by leadership. A 2017 study showed that nearly 40 percent of black employees feel it is never advantageous to speak openly about their experiences.

*I opted not to share because... I knew my concerns would not be met with sympathy or understanding.*

*I asked ...about racial issues and I was made to feel as if it didn't exist. Other times [I was] ignored.*

*I opted not to share my concerns because I have witnessed how fellow officers who have addressed these same concerns were treated and retaliated against.*

Participants who shared their concerns were met with various responses.

*Our exchange gave opportunity for me lay out the mental gymnastics my family has had to create in order to smooth the transition.*

*I just could not stay quiet after being treated like I was stupid, [but my] DC was very supportive.*

*[They were] not able to see the uniqueness of the African American experience and equated my concerns with the concerns of other minorities.*

While silence should be considered a key finding of this study, it should also be noted that participants occasionally find inspiration and opportunities to “exhale” to a small community of
elder statesmen and women (retired black officers), as in the case of the officer who, after mentioning their beloved mentors, added

What I learn from them, I turn around and pour it out on the young officers who are struggling in silence.

Theme 4: Sidelining

A recent study showed that though there is a lack of racial diversity among nonprofit leaders, people of color are more likely to aspire to leadership. Nevertheless, “…people of color continue to be underrepresented at the senior, executive, and corporate board levels of leadership,” even though minorities are well represented within the working population.49

Though the Salvation Army soldier and employee base is notably diverse, the leadership optics, as one Western Territory soldier opined in a controversial Facebook post, “…doesn’t pass the 2018 eyeball test.”50 This is in stark contrast to the optics of the 19th convening of The Salvation Army’s International High Council, where nearly 50% of the 111 territorial leaders were black or brown-skinned.51 Yet in the “melting pot” of the United States, there are currently no officers of African descent serving on any of The Salvation Army’s Territorial Cabinets or Boards of Trustees.52 As of 2019 in the United States, only four people of African descent are appointed as Salvation Army divisional leaders, and only one active couple holds the rank of lieutenant colonel. It should be noted that more than any other issue discussed among the study participants, lack of inclusion at leadership levels caused the deepest grief, frustration, and lament.

It is not the hard work that causes fatigue among minority officers; it is the constant reminder …that there are certain appointments you will never be called to…

[The Army should]…remove the appointment ceiling so as to reflect the ethnic makeup of the country.
This is the greatest issue for me, because it shows that our issues are not important, and that we are not considered quality leaders.

**Recommendations**

Research has long confirmed the psychological distress caused by racism and has found correlations between these experiences and higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and hostility. Salvation Army leaders who are concerned for the morale and mobility of Salvation Army officers of African descent may find value in the following recommendations as they seek to shepherd minorities in their flock well, and to show “diversity at the highest levels of The Salvation Army in the United States.”

1. Since the absence of minorities in command-level and cabinet appointments in America has been identified by the National Commander as an issue that deserves priority attention, create and empower a commission to examine and implement measures to quickly correct the problem.

2. Place an expectation on command heads that they will, as much as possible, find ways to demonstrate commitment to eliminating personal and corporate bias in their commands.

3. Appoint a “Territorial Diversity & Inclusion Secretary” to each territory’s cabinet. This officer will work closely with the International Social Justice Center, have empowerment to lead towards compliance with The Salvation Army’s accountability movement, and advise territorial leadership concerning “inclusive messaging.”

4. Create a high-potential diverse leaders’ development track which specifically aims to prepare minority officers for greater organizational awareness and higher-level leadership.
5. Create space for officers of African descent to find solidarity and support, and to receive encouragement and affirmation from Army leadership.\(^{61}\)

6. Equip and empower officers to speak out and engage racial injustices, however deeply embedded in the culture (i.e. police brutality, mass incarceration, mortality rates for black mothers, etc.).

**Summary and Conclusion**

In this study, The Salvation Army’s apparent contemporary disengagement from anti-racist messaging was considered against the backdrop of its early campaigns for racial justice in the United States. Literature related to racism, bias, discrimination, diversity, and inclusion was included in the study, along with a detailed description of the methodology and data analysis procedures. The rich participant narratives reveal the commonality and generalizability of racism experienced by black Salvation Army officers, and also discloses the impact of racism, bias, and discrimination upon officer morale and mobility. Organizational leaders who are interested in the findings of this study may be prompted to refine their ability to effectively identify and address the challenges faced by officers of African descent. Moreover, Salvation Army leadership may consider implementing any or each of the recommendations as a means of compliance with, not only the Army’s theological inheritance and Kingdom values, but also its International Position Statement on Racism which asserts that it will “promote the value of ethnic diversity and inclusiveness in all expressions of Salvation Army life...”\(^{62}\)

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5 Allen Satterlee, *Sweeping Through the Land* (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1989), 15


8 I included the words “at least” here, as an acknowledgment that recent scholarship prefers to include “creation” as a Wesleyan Distinctive, thus converting the ever-familiar Wesleyan quadrilateral into a de facto pentalateral. For more information, see Dr. Howard Snyder’s article entitled “The Babylonian Captivity of Wesleyan Theology, *The Wesleyan Theological Journal* (39:1, Spring, 2004), 7-34.

9 In his sermon entitled *On Loving without God*, Wesley proclaimed “...Nothing can be more sure than that true Christianity cannot exist without both the inward experience and outward practice of justice, mercy, and truth.” This sermon can be found in John Emery’s *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A. M. Sometimes Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford* (New York: Waugh and Mason, 1833), 485.


12 George Whitfield, for instance, considered the keeping of African slaves as lawful and necessary. He advocated for the legality of slavery to the Trustees of [the colony of] Georgia: “Hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes.” Samples of Whitfield’s letters advocating a pro-slavery stance (and his unease in later years) can be found in Alan Gallay, *Jonathan Bryan and the Southern Colonial Frontier: The Formation of a Planter Elite* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 49.


15 Edward Carey, “Vignettes of Army History: Red or Yellow, Black or White,” *The War Cry*, April 12, 1980, p. 5
16 Dr. Lang’at has served as head of the Education and Theology Department at Kabarak University in Kenya. He was invited to present this paper at The Salvation Army’s 2006 International Theology and Ethics Symposium held near Johannesburg, South Africa. More information can be found at https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/BD67ECD07F309379802571E0003D80B8. Robert Lang’at, “The Salvation Army as a Church with a Social Conscience,” Word & Deed, Volume 9, Issue 2, (2007): 6

17 Frank Smith, “Christ or Color,” The War Cry, July 18, 1885.


20 Charles Elliott, History of the Great Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Year 1845 (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1855), 630

21 Henry Garepy, Christianity in Action: The History of the International Salvation Army (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1990), Kindle Location 1481


25 Allen Satterlee, Sweeping Through the Land (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1989): 180

26 Maurice Smith, My Song of Songs (Atlanta: Maurice Smith, 2018): Kindle Location 1024


28 As of 2018, there were 1,027 officers in the Eastern Territory; 128 are officers of African descent. This information was confirmed in a personal conversation with a study participant and using The Salvation Army Yearbook (London: The Salvation Army 2018).

29 Madge Unsworth, Mildred Duff (London: The Salvation Army, 1956): 112


34 Implicit Bias,” Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2015: 56


39 “Awake to Work to Woke,” Equity in the Center, 2017: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910cbb6a60c971d5f98a/t/5adf3de1352f530132863c37/1524579817415/ProlInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf

40 Andrew Miller, “Commissioner David Hudson”. Captain's Corner Podcast audio, June 2019: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/tampa-salvation-army/id1438523079?i=1000442900558&fbclid=IwAR1hWc8xTs2VJy0Tn_j7ZVgiK2LeImomgVyKQLnFnRnXq1p000j8CRg5GJU


43 Monica Anderson, “For Black Americans, Experiences of Racial Discrimination Vary by Education Level, Gender,” Fact Tank, May 2, 2019


48 University of Waterloo’s Christine Purdon asserted in an essay published by Behaviour Research and Therapy (1999) that thought suppression (i.e. silencing) has been implicated as a maintaining factor in depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and other significant stress responses.

49 “Awake to Work to Woke,” Equity in the Center, 2017: Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56b910cbb6a60c971d5f98a/t/5adf3de1352f530132863c37/1524579817415/ProlInspire-Equity-in-Center-publication.pdf


51 19th convening of The Salvation Army's International High Council, London England
It is worth noting that at the time of this study, black officers were in leadership of three Salvation Army divisions in the United States (two in the Eastern Territory and one in the Central Territory). Additionally, officers of African descent have had several historic and significant achievements in the United States. For instance, Commissioners David and Doreen Edwards (R) served as Territorial leaders of the US Western Territory from 1997 to 2002; Commissioner Israel Gaither (R) served as National Commander of the United States from 2006 to 2010; and the late Colonel Dorothy Purser served as Chief Secretary in the Caribbean and Central American Territory in 1997. A well-documented listing of other black officer ministry milestones can be found in Warren Mayes’ Soldiers of Uncommon Valor: The History of Salvationists of African Descent in the United States (West Nyack: Others Press, 2008): 208-212.


Though I must concede the political reality that the National Commander has very little ability to influence appointments, this statement was made by Commissioner Dave Hudson in the aforementioned podcast.

I add emphasis here because over the last half-century, many commissions have been formed and scholarly papers (like this one) have been presented to Salvation Army leadership. The apparent lack of progress in this area leaves the Army socially vulnerable, as in the case of the United Way executive in a mid-sized Southern city who asks the corps officer each year: “Have you noticed that your board of trustees in no way reflects diversity? Captain, each of these persons is white and male."

According to Jeff Hitchcock in his book Lifting the White Veil, (Roselle: Crandall, Dostie & Douglass, 2002): 69, only one organization has made sustained and significant progress in the area of diversity and inclusion, and that is the US Armed Forces. According to the Military Leadership Diversity Commission’s Report entitled From Diversity to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military, (2011) effectiveness in this area requires the personal and visible commitment of top leaders. The Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Service Secretaries and Chiefs, and senior enlisted leaders are critical to implementing the kind of change needed to inspire and manage reform. Without the clear support of Salvation Army leadership at every level, no momentum will be gained in this important effort. The MLDC’s document, which I highly recommend, can be reviewed at: https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Special%20Feature/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf

The “corporate diversity officer” concept is now very common and considered a corporate best practice. More information can be found on page 13 of this pdf produced by National MultiCultural Institute: https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/import/embedded/anchors/files/diversity_primer_chapter_01.pdf
This position could conceivably be an “additional responsibility” given by the Territorial Commander, and the incumbent (who would not necessarily need to be a minority officer) would be expected to attend and participate at regular cabinet meetings.

The Accountability Movement of The Salvation Army’s “Journey of Renewal” publication can inform the framework for change related to this effort.

This measure involves creating a course for the development and refinement of competencies to ensure participant success when selected to assume command and cabinet level appointments.

While historically The Salvation Army has provided space for events such as “African Heritage Leadership” or “Empowerment” Conferences, such events have become rare in the 2000s. It may be time to reexamine the need for this kind of opportunity due to the resurgence of hate related activity in America: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/hate-groups-in-the-us-remain-on-the-rise-according-to-new-study/2018/02/21/6d28cbe0-1695-11e8-8b08-027a6c8eb38eb_story.html