
How are we doing/will we do/will we reimagine mission differently as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Executive Summary

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1. Introduction

In order to answer the research question ‘How are we doing/will we do/will we re-imagine mission differently as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?’, The Salvation Army’s Research and Development Unit (RDU) have undertaken a range of research activities. The findings and implications from three of these papers are collated in this summary:

- Emerging Missional Trends during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Literature Review
Author: Amy Quinn-Graham - Action Researcher
- Frontline Phone and Online Surveys Report
Authors: Major Pam Knuckey - Assistant Director (Research);
George Mitchell - Researcher (Project Support);
Michael Ojo - Impact Measurement Specialist;
Amy Quinn-Graham - Action Researcher;
Curtis Sinclair - Researcher.
- The External Environment: PESTLE[S] Report
Authors: Prof Adrian Bonner - Professor of Community Research;
Heather Hooper - Knowledge Management Specialist;
Robert Jones - Development Manager;
George Mitchell - Development Manager and Researcher (Project Support);
Amy Quinn-Graham - Action Researcher;
Nick Redmore - Director R&D;
Olly Thorp - Assistant Director (Development);
Graham Wheeler - Development Manager;
Martin Williams - Development Manager.
Editor: Adrian Bonner - Professor of Community Research

Executive summaries for each of these individual papers are found below, followed by a summary outlining some of the cross-cutting themes and their implications for The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom with the Republic of Ireland Territory (UKIT).

2. Executive Summary: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This paper reviews 207 pieces of literature in order to identify missional trends that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. 153 of these papers form what is known as the ‘formal theological voice’, representing academics and published theologians writing about mission, the church and pandemic, while the remaining 54 papers form what is known as the ‘espoused theological voice’. This espoused voice is external to The Salvation Army (TSA) and refers to the views of groups, denominations and individuals within the church but outside of academia and publication. The prophetic voice is not limited to academia; therefore, it is important to capture the views of others within the church who feel they have a sense of what

mission should look like at this time. Throughout the analysis implications have been highlighted for The Salvation Army and the views of key missional thinkers have been separately drawn out. Additionally, reflections on online church that came up within the context of the church's mission are also discussed towards the end of this paper.

2.2 Findings

The formal literature frequently referenced the Old Testament stories of Job and the Israelites living in exile before returning to the Promised Land in order to make sense of the new context we find ourselves in. Job was highlighted as a challenge to those who were saying that COVID-19 is punishment from God while exile was presented as a parallel situation - one where everyone, including the church, is disorientated, has lost rituals that give structure and meaning and are having to learn to rely more completely on God's provision. These 'Biblical Touchpoints' helped to give framing within the literature to the discussions that followed on mission at this time.

Eight overarching themes were found to be prominent in the formal literature, and these shared many similarities to those found within the external espoused literature. First and foremost, authors emphasised the need to love and serve your neighbour. Beyond the call to love each other by socially distancing and following government guidelines, there was an emphasis on sacrifice and risking self in order to properly support those in need. The example of Christians in the Early Church risking their lives, and often dying as a result, during 2nd Century plague in order to love and serve their neighbours was frequently held up as an example that should be followed by the church during COVID-19.

Beyond loving and serving your neighbour, mission looked like the following:

- Challenging inequalities.
- Pointing people to the promise of a New World, whether that is by demonstrating how God's Kingdom is already here with us or by letting people know that there is a better world on its way.
- Bolstered by constant prayer, especially that which creates space to listen to God and discern God's desires and direction.
- Taking time to lament the pain and suffering of the pandemic. This call was particularly highlighted by N. T. Wright, and as is the case with Biblical lament, this lament should result in the church articulating a hope centred in Jesus.
- Being present - as God's presence - in local communities, getting out of buildings and challenging the individualism that strongly defines Western culture.
- Being imaginative and innovative in mission, allowing the Holy Spirit to move the church out of its comfort zone.

Within the formal literature, the call to use this time to ‘proclaim the Good News’ was not as prevalent as the other themes, at least not in the transactional sense of evangelism. Conversely, this did come up strongly in the espoused literature, especially from the Evangelical Alliance who have been publishing guidance on how to evangelise during this time.

This review also highlights what TSA can learn from churches delivering mission within the Ebola epidemic and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as how the church survived under oppressive Soviet Union rule when isolation was even more prevalent than it is for us now. Churches operating during the Ebola epidemic highlighted the importance of challenging harmful theology about the origins of the virus while the churches in HIV/AIDS contexts spoke a great deal about the danger of allowing stigma to seep into the church’s mission. The church must remember COVID-19 does not affect people equally (due to their social location, race, class status and other factors), and therefore the church must always be the church of the most vulnerable.

2.3 Implications

Implications that came up for TSA throughout this paper cover a range of themes:

- First and foremost, spend time in prayer and reflection with God before making any missional decisions;
- Find a balance between the need to take risks when loving and serving others and the need to protect and safeguard those most vulnerable to the virus;
- Listen to the voices of those usually ignored and silenced and take the lead from them on what is needed within communities;
- Adopt a trauma-informed approach in congregational life;
- Create space for testimonies that acknowledge pain and loss;
- Support communities and congregants to process and form a collective memory of this time;
- Learn to apply an abundance lens to reimagining mission.
- Maintain visibility beyond just the offering of practical assistance;
- Work in partnership for the transformation of society, trusting that God will ensure TSA doesn’t lose its unique Christian identity;
- Invest in leaders to ensure the continuation of discipleship;
- Speak out against harmful theology;
- Take the virus seriously and support government safety measures;

- Don't forget those still vulnerable to COVID-19, adopting language such as, 'the body of Christ has COVID-19, and therefore we must make our mission work for everyone, as if everyone is as vulnerable as the most vulnerable among us'; and
- Focus on developing small groups.

3. Executive Summary: Surveys Report

3.1 Introduction

In order to answer the research question 'How are we doing/will we do/will we re-imagine mission differently as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?', this research activity involved both a set of 529 phone survey interviews and a set of online surveys (314 complete responses) undertaken in the summer of 2020 with frontline leaders/managers to understand frontline experience and thinking during lockdown. This report discusses the findings and aims to inform organisational learning and decision making.

3.2 Headline findings: Frontline phone survey interviews

Corps/pioneer settings (fresh expressions of church)/divisionally managed centres - referred to as 'corps' in this section

- 99% of respondents (399 out of 404) undertook outward facing activities (ie, activities that mostly address the needs of community members) such as food parcel distribution, meals distribution, shopping, crisis support, schools ministry, drop-in, Employment Plus (supporting people to become job-ready) and pastoral support-external, since the lockdown started. Only five respondents didn't provide any form of external facing activities in the period under review.
- Only one of the respondents did not provide any inward facing activities (ie, activities that mostly address the needs of corps attendees) such as pastoral support-internal, online worship, wellbeing, children's work, online social events, music ministry, training, resource distribution and online small groups since the lockdown started.
- Pastoral support provided by the leadership of corps to regular attendees including those not on a formal roll, as well as staff and volunteers within the corps (Pastoral support - Internal) was the most cited activity undertaken by corps/pioneer setting/divisionally managed centres as reported by 99% (399 out of 404) of the respondents from these settings.
- 89% (358 out of 404) of the respondents reported distributing food parcels since the lockdown started.
- 73% (296 out of 404) of the respondents reported that their respective settings undertook online worship using various platforms.



- The top three drivers of activities within corps/pioneer setting/divisionally managed centres were 'my own sense of mission', 'The practical needs of people in my community' and 'TSA's mission' as reported by 94%, 86% and 78% of the respondents respectively.
- The most cited type of collaboration taking place at corps/pioneer setting/divisionally managed centres was at the 'divisional level' (ie, with Divisional Headquarters (DHQ) and/or other corps) as reported by 90% of the respondents.
- When asked, in an open question with no prompts, what mission means to them at this time, 42% of corps officers (COs) described some form of 'responding to need', with 24% of those officers emphasising the responsibility corps have to know the specific needs of their community, rather than just offering generic support.
- 'Responding to need' was closely followed by 23% of corps officers who described mission as 'extending Jesus to everyone', 16% who described the need to 'proclaim the Good News' and 12% who were more inward-looking, articulating mission as 'pastoral care to their current congregation'.
- COs also described what makes for effective mission. 18% felt that mission hadn't changed as a result of COVID-19, with more male than female COs describing mission as having always been the need to 'proclaim the Good News', compared to more female than male COs describing mission in more relational terms - that of 'extending Jesus to everyone'. This trend also reflected the general gender composition of 'proclaim the Good News' as an answer to both Q4 on mission and Q5 on the prophetic voice - more male COs described more transactional processes, such as 'preaching', 'proclamation' and 'spreading', where female COs tended to describe more relational ways of 'being' Jesus with people.
- COs also felt that partnership working (including with God) was vital to effective mission (14%), that there was a need to reach people where they are (both to meet need and for evangelism purposes) (10%) and that mission happens where you are (5%), no matter how small your area of influence.
- When asked, in an open question with no prompts, what they felt God was saying to them about TSA's mission in the future, 23% of COs felt God was telling them to 'reassess, slow down, reflect and listen to Him'. This reassessment process was not just about effectiveness, but also to discern if what had always been done was still pleasing to God, or even still missional.
- There was also a sense in the prophetic voice of needing to get out of buildings and into the community (16%), to focus on building relationships (9%) and to be brave (7%) and creative (7%). The top ten responses from COs on what they felt God was saying to them were reflective of the need to 'change', either partially or completely.
- The focus on building relationships was more of a priority to male COs within the prophetic voice than female ones. This is interesting considering the more 'transactional'



nature of the way male COs were describing their desire to 'proclaim the Good News'. Consequently, God could be calling them to focus more on relational approaches.

Contracted services - Homelessness Services (HSU), Older People's Services (OPS), Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery services (ATMS), Employment Plus

- Chaplaincy/pastoral care and support work (activities to help people live independently) were both the most cited activities undertaken within OPS as reported by 100% (19) of the respondents within the service.
- Wellbeing/welfare checks and staffing activities (such as staff meetings and performance reviews) were both the most cited activities undertaken within ATMS as reported by all (10) of the respondents within the service.
- Wellbeing/welfare checks, and support work were both the most cited activities undertaken within Employment Plus as revealed by 100% (11) of the respondents within the service.
- Both support work and wellbeing/welfare checks were the most cited activities undertaken within HSU as reported by 94% and 92% of the respondents within the service respectively.
- In no particular order, the top three drivers of activities within HSU, OPS and Employment Plus were 'my own sense of mission', 'TSA's mission' and 'current or former service users'.
- The top three drivers within ATMS were 'TSA's mission', 'current or former service users' and 'local authorities and/or government agencies'.
- The most cited type of collaboration taking place within ATMS, Employment Plus and HSU was with 'community organisations' (ie, charities, churches/other denominations, community centres, community groups, food banks, homelessness agencies, refugee agencies and volunteer agencies) as reported by all respondents from ATMS and Employment Plus and by 91% of the respondents from HSU respectively.
- The most cited type of collaboration within OPS since the lockdown started was with health services as reported by all the respondents from the service.
- When asked, in an open question with no prompts, what mission means to them at this time, contracted services' staff most commonly responded that it was 'supporting people' (46%). While this is very similar to the top answer given by COs, these staff overwhelmingly used language of 'supporting people' rather than 'meeting need'.
- 17% of contracted services staff articulated a need to 'keep people safe' as key to mission at this time, while 23% described it as 'being there' for people, journeying alongside them and being available as a consistent presence at a difficult time. 'Keeping people safe' was

articulated by only two COs, so was almost unique to contracted services staff. This is unsurprising given the nature of the services based in residential settings.

- When asked, in an open question with no prompts, what they felt God was saying to them about the future, contracted services staff also felt God was telling them to ‘slow down, reassess, reflect and listen to God’ (18%). They felt God was telling them to be adaptable (7%), to be creative (7%) and to share the love of God with others (6%), especially through loving their neighbours. This language of ‘love’ was not as prevalent in the COs’ articulations of the prophetic voice (not featuring in the top ten themes), and the majority of those in contracted services who shared it were chaplains.
- Finally, while the most common answers to what God was saying about TSA’s mission for the future from COs all reflected the need to ‘change’ in some way, 13% of contracted services staff also felt God was telling them to continue doing what they do best, to ‘keep calm, it’ll be okay, and to keep going’.

3.3 **Headline findings: Anonymous online survey**

Impact on SA services

- 60.4% of respondents stated that their workload had increased, even though 80.3% reported that programme had reduced.
- Online worship activities in some settings were attracting a wider audience than reached previously in worship prior to lockdown.
- Over 50% of respondents found preparation of online worship challenging.
- Most leaders were exploring different ways of worship after the pandemic.
- Congregants’ lack of online access or knowledge was challenging in over two thirds of corps/pioneer settings/divisionally managed centres.
- Poor internet connectivity was challenging for over half of corps/pioneer settings/divisionally managed centres.
- More than half of respondents felt sufficiently or abundantly equipped with regard to video conferencing.
- Provision and demand for food support had increased in some settings according to comments from respondents.
- Staff being furloughed and volunteers shielding had reduced people resources in some settings, with many reporting a reduction in staff and/or volunteer resources.
- Wellbeing, particularly mental health, is a concern - for leaders and managers, staff, congregants and service users. Most leaders and managers found dealing with their personal response to the crisis challenging.

- Only a small number of respondents said that they have accessed the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service, Salvation Army (SA) Counselling Service and/or Employee Assistance Programme. There had also been a low level of satisfaction amongst those respondents with these services, whereas support from family and spouse/partners had been both widespread and very highly appreciated.
- Divisional Head Quarters (DHQs) and line managers mostly provided a good level of pastoral care.
- Over half of respondents felt they had sufficient or abundant training resources, but almost a third felt they had insufficient or little/no training resources. Lack of training resources was felt most keenly in corps, pioneers and divisionally managed centres.
- Half of respondents found it challenging to innovate.
- Almost half of corps and pioneer settings found financial resources challenging, and where contracted services experienced pressure of finance and furlough, they reported this as challenging.
- Some respondents reported using personal finance and resources to provide online worship.
- Information dissemination and understanding was challenging for over half of respondents in divisionally managed centres/contracted services/Employment Plus.
- Building relationships with service users and meeting their unmet needs was challenging in contracted services.
- Government policies were challenging in contracted services.
- Over 80% of contracted services found it challenging to use their building space during lockdown and there have been significant impacts across the wider respondent group of buildings being closed.
- Many contracted and Employment Plus services are finding it challenging to support service users with life skills and maintaining a sense of safety.
- PPE has not been a major challenge within most contracted and Employment Plus services.
- Priority areas for frontline leaders as we emerge from lockdown were guidelines on what to do next and support on how to imagine mission.
- Practical support needs were more a priority for frontline leaders than training support needs.

Quality of life

- Domain scores for physical health and psychological fell below that of pre-pandemic normative scores. The greatest difference from norms was observed in the physical health

domain across the different respondent groups. A decrease in domain scores is comparable to other research of frontline staff during the pandemic.

	Physical	Psychological	Social Relationships	Environment
Normative scores	73.5	70.6	71.5	75.1
Male Corps Officer	62.6	56.8	66.9	65.5
Female Corps Officer	62.2	56.5	76.2	70.5
Officer	62.4	56.5	71.5	68.0
Employee	68.0	63.6	79.1	70.4
Corps	62.6	56.8	72.5	68.5
Pioneer	66.5	58.8	68.5	68.8
HSU	65.2	64.3	76.8	68.6
Employment Plus	69.5	60.1	80.5	77.9

Domain scores for the World Health Organisation Brief Quality of Life scale for corps officers, employees, and a range of frontline services. Typical scores (ie, normative scores) are also presented, that provide a comparison to domain scores found in the general population pre-pandemic.

- Those aged 65 or older were the only group to exceed pre-pandemic norms in two domains: social relationships and environment. Additionally, physical health and psychological domain scores were also better than younger respondents.
- Social relationships was typically the only domain score to regularly exceed the pre-pandemic norm when looking at particular respondent characteristics such as setting or age.
- Significant differences in domain scores for social relationships and environment were observed for gender of corps officers, with females scoring more highly. Scores in other domains almost identical.
- Significant differences in domain scores for physical health, psychological, and social relationships were observed between officers and employees, with the latter scoring more highly in all four domains.
- Environment domain scores were correlated with helpfulness of support from line management, Territorial Headquarters (THQ)/DHQ, peer-to-peer networks, other church leaders/services, spiritual director/mentor, Wellbeing Unit, Employee Assistance Programme, congregants/staff, and family/friends.

- Domain scores for psychological were significantly correlated with support from congregants (ie, corps/pioneer settings) or service staff (ie, contracted services).
- On average, ratings of quality of life, satisfaction with one's health, and frequency of negative feelings were above the mid-point score of 3, where a higher score is indicative of better experiences of wellbeing.
- Respondents from corps overwhelmingly accounted for endorsements of lower rating scores (ie, 2 or lower) on ratings of quality of life, satisfaction with one's health, and frequency of negative feelings. Although, respondents from corps constituted the largest proportion of completed surveys (ie, 245 of 314 total respondents).

3.4 Implications

Three implications were highlighted in particular (others are referenced below in the light of cross-cutting themes):

- Innovation and creativity need to be supported going forward whilst having regard for wellbeing at the frontline.
- Ministry to and by older people needs to be appropriately supported and resourced.
- Further analysis of Q4 and Q5 from the frontline phone survey interviews should be undertaken, including to understand any differences in responses based on job roles, in particular between service/centre managers and chaplains for contracted services staff.

4. Executive Summary: PESTLE[S] Report

4.1 Introduction

This Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Spiritual (PESTLE[S]) analysis has allowed us to consider the impact of COVID-19, the resulting lockdown and the responses of individuals and society in the UKIT. As this report is written, further enforcement is being put in place regionally and nationally in response to COVID-19, meaning that TSA continues to be part of an ever-evolving picture.

The impact of COVID-19 is of concern to TSA in terms of its function as a church, as a charity and with regard to our members and those with whom TSA seeks to work. The PESTLE[S] analysis helps with the articulation of the opportunities and threats that present themselves at this time in relation to the movement. Considered alongside an understanding of TSA's organisational strengths and weaknesses identified from an assessment of the internal landscape, conclusions can be drawn on suitable actions to mitigate the risks presented, while embracing innovation and change.

'For years we have been told that if we really want to change, we have to imagine we have a burning platform beneath us. Now we don't have to [imagine].' (John Kotter, 1996, cited in Impact International, 2020).

The PESTLE[S] snapshot is taken in the context of ever-evolving social policy landscape and the publication of the Kruger Report (Kruger, 2020). All areas of life have seen change and a demand for innovative responses. Latterly, there has been a drive to return to life as ‘normal’ by some in society.

4.2 Key Issues

The outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic response captured in the analysis are many and complex. As a *Wicked Issue*¹ it is confounded by other *Wicked Issues* such as climate change, homelessness, domestic violence, unemployment and other socio-economic drivers, which often contribute to or perpetuate one another and are, themselves, interlinked. This overarching report focusses on the key issues that emerged from the PESTLE[S] summaries:

- Geographic, socio-economic, gender, age, ethnic, digital and environmental inequalities have been compounded or exacerbated, with long and short-term contributors to inequalities such as domestic violence increasing in their prevalence
- A shift from volunteering to mutual aid schemes has been noted and requires monitoring with regard to its long-term impact with regard to how people give their time
- Both the long and short-term impact of Brexit are unknown, but analysis suggests that potential challenges mirroring some of those resulting from the pandemic will emerge, increasing the extent and scope of the issues
- Public trust in charities remains, and is potentially increasing, but overall financial giving is down
- Rough sleeping figures are rising again after a significant initial effort to move people off the streets
- The environmental gains of lockdown have been a real positive - there is an opportunity to change organisational behaviours to capitalise on these
- The pandemic has impacted people’s mental health in a range of ways, with anxieties over contracting the virus, as well as varying responses to lockdown and the impact of the social and financial stressors that have been felt as a whole. Church leaders are cited for particular note to TSA, having provided care and support in stressful times, and could see a delayed impact in this area
- The chaplaincy role emerged as a key engagement point with the public during the crisis, bridging a gap between individuals and institutional church
- Many church services have moved to provide online services and small groups due to Government restrictions. Some now have now begun to reopen physical services but demand for online provision remains.

¹ Wicked Issues are difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize, see Rittel, W.J., and M.M. Webber, 1977. Dilemmas in a general Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, vol 4. (Jun, 1973) pp 155-169

Thought and planning will need to be given to the contributing impacts of Brexit and the transition to the Job Support Scheme on the UKIT, but the understanding and analysis of the impact of both is outside the scope and timing of this report. Policy formation post-COVID-19 needs to factor environmental measures in as a priority to ensure positive advances and changes in behaviour seen during the pandemic are capitalised upon.

With significant transitions in how the church engages people face to face and online since March 2020, consideration will need to be given to the transition out of the pandemic, and how it maintains accessibility and maintains opportunities for communities to engage.

The many and interconnected inequalities that this report has highlighted would traditionally be of greatest interest to TSA, and there is no apparent reason for this to change. In terms of a response, the historical analogy of a cliff fall to illustrate the model for social intervention to these inequalities may require further reflection, however². While both the saving of the man or woman who have fallen into the seas in the illustration, and the tackling the roots of the person's problems that caused them to fall from the top of the cliff, remain entirely appropriate, the interconnected nature of the root issues that caused the fall, and the nature of the persons fall, must also be considered. The *Wicked Issues* causing the fall necessitate interconnected responses to ensure they are suitably addressed. The nature of the fall is equally shaped by these interconnected issues: they form ledges and outcrops that add to the impact and injury on the person's way to the sea below. The dynamic nature and multiplicity of these issues complicate what could be seen as a linear cause and effect situation. Responses to the issues require good planning, partnership working and a consistent approach and tools for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, a total response is beyond the scope of TSA as a lone entity, but the movement will certainly have a part to play and review collaborative partnerships with other Third Sector organisations working in relational partnerships with the public and private sectors.

4.3 Implications

As TSA aims to help in the very crisis that impacts the movement so significantly. It therefore can be difficult to frame these external issues as 'opportunities' and 'threats'. As a result, this report concludes by identifying the key issues of note and recommending that they are considered in a SWOT and TOWS³ analysis exercise, with information from the internal landscape used as context to frame the issues in preparation. Due to the complexities of the wicked nature of the impact of COVID-19, it is essential that the interconnected nature of any TSA actions is considered and is subject to ongoing review.

² In the late 19th century William Booth, the Founder of The Salvation Army, drew on the analogy of a cliff fall to describe his understanding of social intervention. While it is entirely appropriate to rescue the man or woman who has fallen into the sea, it is much better to tackle the roots of the individual's problem at the top of the cliff from which they fell (Bonner and Luscombe, 2008).

³ SWOT analysis allows the articulation of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to a situation, organisation or product. TOWS analysis allows these points to be considered in relation to one another, helping form a strategic response, through the articulation of a series of actions

5. Cross-cutting themes and their implications

This section outlines some of the cross-cutting themes that emerge from consideration of two or more of three papers, and their implications for UKIT.

5.1 Prophetic voice

The voices of over 500 frontline leaders/managers et al have been presented as well as the voices of theologians and Christian leaders from outside TSA. However, discernment is required as to which voices constitute the truly prophetic voice. This requires the creation of time and space to reflect on the research findings, particularly in this area ensuring that TSA is a 'being' church, not just a 'doing' church.

5.2 Salvation Army 'DNA' (founding charisms)

There is not a uniformly held understanding amongst frontline leaders/managers as to what constitutes SA 'DNA'. However, if UKIT is to remain good news for people at the margins, it needs to develop an appropriate set of responses to the exacerbation of multiple pre-existing inequalities as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. These need to be communicated effectively across UKIT, so that they are widely owned eg, by frontline staff and congregants.

5.3 The future of corporate worship

There is a need for a strategy to provide direction regarding this. Whilst there are clear benefits to the adoption of online worship, there is concern that the majority of online worship being provided during lockdown has been on static or unidirectional platforms, limiting the capacity of congregants to respond. It is not clear how appropriate online worship has been to those beyond the pre-existing congregation, or the extent to which online worshippers have been genuinely engaged.

5.4 The future of discipleship & leadership

This was one of the lesser-mentioned themes emerging from the phone interviews ('proclaiming the gospel' and 'responding to human need' were more strongly represented in respondents' current articulation of mission), whilst investing in leaders to ensure continuation of discipleship was a theme in the literature review. Taken in conjunction with the move towards online worship, and the limitations on physical gatherings, investment needs to be made into small groups that nurture disciples and emerging leaders and provide opportunities for congregants to engage in responding to human need sacrificially with an emphasis on 'being with' people whilst not engaging in unmanageable risk.

5.5 The future of SA programme at corps/pioneer settings

It is evident from the combined research findings, that there is a trend towards a micro-local approach, aligned with Fresh Expression principles⁴ and LICC Whole Life Discipleship⁵, in which

⁴ Fresh Expressions are new forms of church that emerge within contemporary culture and engage primarily with those who don't 'go to church' – more information can be found [here](#)

there is less focus on service delivery from a building, chaplaincy forms a bridge between the church and the wider community, and the voices of marginalised people are authentically listened to and heard.

5.6 Wellbeing

This is a strong theme in all three executive summaries. There is some concern with regard to the level of wellbeing of frontline leaders/managers, particularly officers, and the low level of take-up of formal wellbeing support and associated satisfaction rates. Church leaders are recognised to be particularly vulnerable to stresses brought about through responding to the pandemic.

5.7 Digital Inclusion

It is clear that issues in relation to SA provision of hardware, Wi-Fi and video conferencing had a negative impact on the frontline's ability to respond appropriately to the changed environment under COVID-19 restrictions during the first lockdown. Digital exclusion within society more broadly has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

5.8 Partnership working

The combined research findings strongly suggest that engaging in partnership working going forward will be increasingly important - the church cannot address the Wicked Issues created and exacerbated by COVID-19 on its own.

5.9 Dissemination

It is clear that the data gathered and analysed represents a rich source of learning that should be widely shared and could support the implementation of UKIT's responses to the research.

5.10 Further research

These papers outline the formal, espoused and operant voices within the '4 Voices' model⁶. However, further analysis of the existing datasets is required to understand the interplay between the espoused and operant voices ie, to what extent do frontline leaders'/managers' stated beliefs about mission match their missional practice?

⁵ LICC is the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity – more information can be found [here](#)

⁶ The Four Voices of Theology is a working tool created by Dr Helen Cameron and colleagues in the Action Research - Church and Society project team to better understand the interplay of various 'voices' in theological reflection and research (see Cameron, H.; Bhatti, D.; Duce, C.; Sweeney, J. and Watkins, C. (2010) *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*. London: SCM Press). The tool acknowledges that theology is complex, drawing together Christian practice ('faith seeking understanding') and different theological influences that shape that practice. The tool calls this Christian practice 'operant theology' ('the theology embedded within the actual practices of a group'), and the three other voices are as follows: 'formal theology': 'the theology of theologians and dialogue with other disciplines', 'normative theology': 'Scriptures, the creeds, official church teaching, Liturgies', and 'espoused theology': 'the theology embedded within a group's articulation of its beliefs'.