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Anti Human Trafficking

The Salvation Army and Advocacy

Abstract:

This article explores The Salvation Army's (TSA) faith-based modern slavery and human trafficking work by reviewing TSA's foundational and strategic documents, with a particular investigation of the TSA's "theology of holy life". This article explores how TSA conducts its work and how theology and social actions, in this case anti human trafficking work, are interconnected. Using document analysis on theological documents, practice guiding documents and strategic documents from the TSA, the article presents a case study on two levels: TSA as a case and TSA in Norway as a case within a case. The article enables better understanding of the link between TSA's theology and the consequences of the integrated mission of TSA.

Keywords:

Salvation Army | anti-trafficking | advocacy | diaconia | social justice | theology of holy life

1. Introduction

The Salvation Army (TSA) is a church operating at several levels (locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally), with a strong focus on "uniform" expressions – including ways of organizing service and promoting statements from central headquarters. We explore how TSA organises its work and how theology impacts its social actions, in this case efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) are interconnected. Building on previous studies on TSA, this article analyses TSA's theological documents, practice guiding documents and MSHT strategic documents. The overall research design is a case study on two levels: TSA as a whole as a case and TSA in Norway as a case within a case. While other concepts are brought into the analysis, this article will primarily analyse how the TSA's theological concepts of "holy living" (TSA International: 2010a) influence TSA's integrated mission, hence seeking to answer the following research question: *How do the theological concepts of "holy life" inform TSA MSHT work?*

We proceed as follows: Part 1 provides a background on TSA and the legal context for combatting MSHT, part 2 introduces a theoretical framework, part 3 elaborates

on methods, part 4 describes TSA documents including the analysis, part 5 presents the main findings from the documents analysis, part 6 is a wider discussion of the findings, and part 7 concludes.

2. The Origin of TSA's work and the International Legal Framework

The Christian church has a mixed history regarding anti-trafficking efforts. There is historical evidence of not condemning slavery within Christian churches (Zimmermann: 2011), but there are also stories of initiatives from church persons forming movements to abolish this practice (McKivigan: 1980). William and Catherine Booth, founders of TSA and both from a Wesleyan Methodist tradition, understood caring for the marginalized and fighting for justice as part of leading a holy living. Justice is a wide term, and we understand that justice as a foundation for TSA's work has primarily been about restoring dignity for everyone living in precarious situations (TSA International: 2010a, TSA International: 2020a, TSA Norway: 2016, Winship: 2016). This will also involve seeking to change the societal and political structures that have led to these precarious situations in the first place. Methodist founder John Wesley opposed slavery his whole life, but only in the last 20 years of his life did he voice active opposition. Some Methodists in America like Coke and Ashbury practiced a less confrontational way to relate to slavery, emphasizing the possibilities for mission and showing compassion in the treatment of the slaves. In contrast to the Quakers, the Methodist Church did not exclude members who were slave owners though there were heated internal discussions about the moral and Christian responsibility (Brendlinger: 2006).

William Wilberforce was the driving factor during the final phase of ending the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. As a member of a small group of committed Christians, the Clapham Sect, he argued for decades against any form of injustice, and especially the slave trade, before the UK Parliament. The ties between William Wilberforce and the Methodist influence are many and strong, inspired by Wesley and other influential Methodists at the time (David: 2007). Today, there is no disagreement within churches regarding the immorality of modern-day slavery or whether the church should support antitrafficking initiatives. However, questions remain regarding the level of political involvement of TSA, since modern-day slavery is often connected to organized crime. Safety, knowledge, experience, and the resources to respond are all topics for conversation within the church today.

TSA's MSHT efforts can be traced back to 1885, when Catherine Booth and the reformer Josephine Butler started a campaign against child sex exploitation. Using newspaper advertisements to portrait how easy it was to buy a child in the streets of London they raised awareness and rocked the British establishment of the day. Petitioning Queen Victoria and the British Prime Minister and explaining TSA's

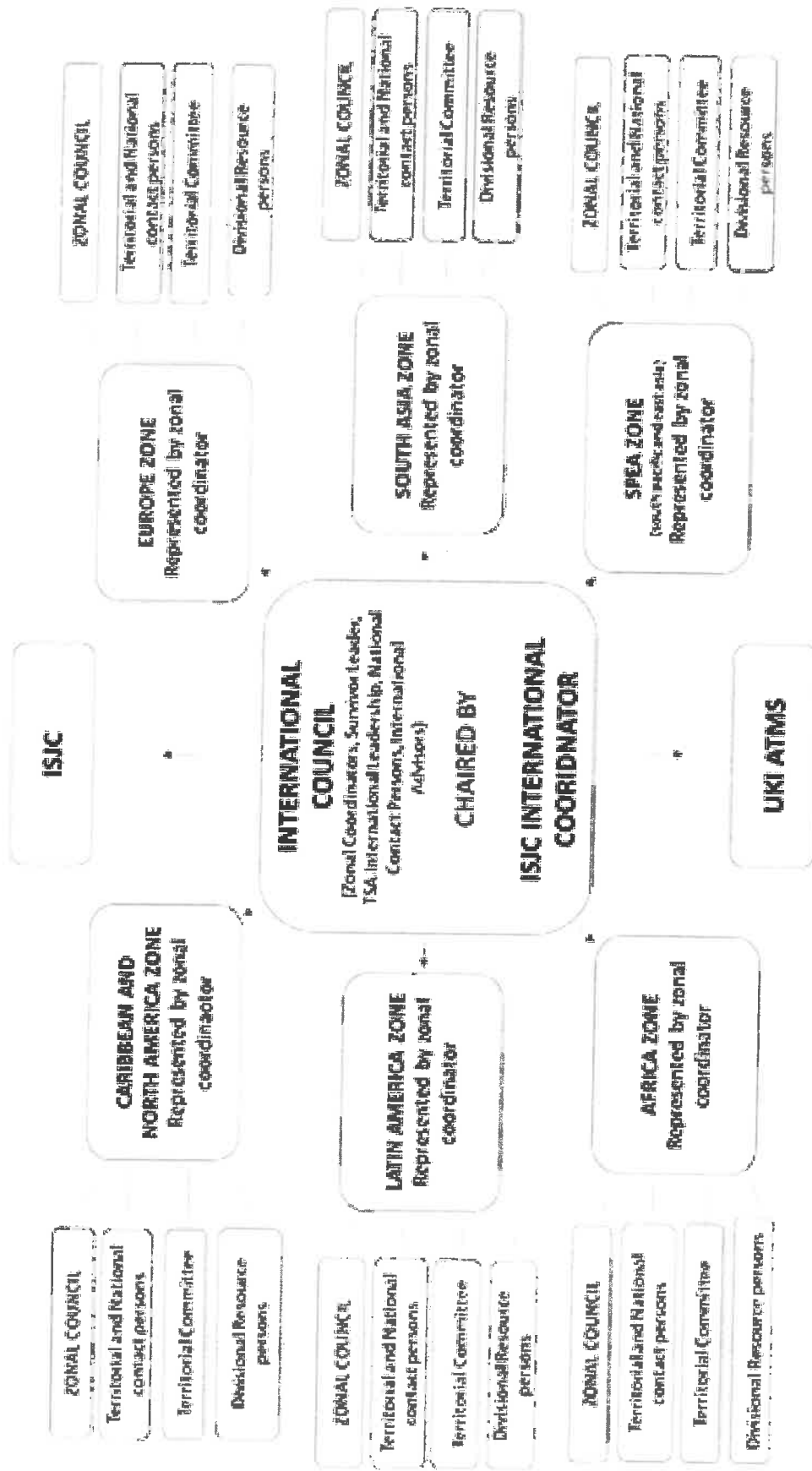


Figure 1 TSA's international organisational charter for MSHT work, note that UKI ATMS stands for United Kingdom and Ireland Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery (TSA International: 2020a).

and others' observations of child prostitution in the streets, TSA criticized the lack of engagement from politicians. TSA organised a direct action on Parliament with the outcome that the UK Parliament raised the age of consent to sixteen, outlawed child abduction and gave the police greater means to search for kidnapped girls (Clifton et al: 2015).

In recent years, TSA has built on the early tradition of anti-slavery and anti-exploitation work and adopted three MSHT documents to guide their work: an international strategy (TSA International: 2020a), a guide (TSA International: 2020b), and an international statement (TSA International: 2020c). It is relevant that TSA's MSHT documents were developed with input from both practitioners and survivors.

The inspiration for much of the early, but also present-day advocacy, done by TSA can be traced back to what is referred to as "holiness theology" in TSA. "Holiness" and "perfect love" are terms first used by John Wesley, later inspiring TSA theology to include social ministry, as specified by William Booth:

But what is the use of preaching the Gospel to men whose whole attention is concentrated upon a mad, desperate struggle to keep themselves alive? [...] The first thing to do is to get him at least a footing on firm ground, and to give him room to live. Then you may have a chance (Booth: [1890] 2014, 45).

William Booth's social charter [1890], *In darkest England and the way out*, advocated for and suggested several changes in British society at the start of the 19th century.

To analyse the theological foundation, it is necessary to have an understanding of the comprehensive and complex legal framework regarding human trafficking. Rather than having a separate section on clarifying concepts, we seek to explain the relevant concepts and the complex relationships between them by referring to the most relevant international instruments. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) presents its efforts under a joint heading: forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking. A definition of forced labour is found in ILO's Forced Labour Convention No. 29, adopted in 1930, emphasizing involuntariness and risks of penalty for the victim of forced labour. Also predating the establishment of the United Nations (UN) is the 1926 Slavery Convention, whose Article 1-(1) defines slavery as "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised" (League of Nations: 1926). The Preamble to this Slavery Convention says that it is necessary to "prevent forced labour from developing into conditions analogous to slavery." The European

Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms regulates slavery and forced labour in the same provision, i. e., Article 4.

Human trafficking became subject to international regulation much later, most notably the 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime' (UN Trafficking Protocol, also termed Palermo Protocol; UN: 2000), and this binding protocol has now 178 state parties. Article 3(a) defines human trafficking – in addition to prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation – as “forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” This definition is also applied in the 2005 'European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings,' though the European Convention has a wider scope, as the UN 'Trafficking Protocol' applies only to offences that are transnational in nature and involve an “organized criminal group...” as specified by Article 4 (UN: 2000). None of these regulate the selling of human beings, unlike the 2000 'Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child' on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, with 178 state parties. The 'Optional Protocol' also prohibits forced labour.

Whereas the Slavery Convention is almost 100 years old, conventions prohibiting human trafficking have been subject to international regulation only relatively recently. Nevertheless, the high number of ratifications demonstrate that fighting such practices is a political priority in many countries. Moreover, there are overlaps between human trafficking and slavery/forced labour. Finally, more attention is given to women and children victims as compared to male victims, but domestic legislation, like the one in Norway, does not distinguish between women and men (Lingaas et al: 2020).¹

The term “modern slavery” does not appear in international treaties but is used in two national legislations: The United Kingdom's and Australia's Modern Slavery Act, of 2015 and 2018, respectively. The definition of the 1926 Slavery Convention, however, is broad enough to encompass modern forms of slavery.

Norway's legislation is built on international conventions. This gives the legal framework an international coherence, although there are differences in how this framework is interpreted and turned into a practical support system. In Norway the so-called “Transparency Act” was adopted in June 2021 and has entered into force 1 July 2022, with the purpose of promoting corporations' respect for human rights and fundamental labour standards.

Turning back to TSA, its MSHT organization consists of mainly officers, who have graduated from TSA's College for Officer Training, and lay staff. The goal

¹ It is noteworthy that human trafficking for the purpose of begging is prohibited in Section 257 in the Norwegian Penal Act, as begging falls within the definition of forced labour or services.

is that there will be a national contact person in all 132 countries where TSA have activities². Most of these, however, have MSHT work as only part of their workload in addition to many other roles and responsibilities. Figure 1 shows TSA's international organisational charter for MSHT work. The International Coordinator is situated at the TSA International Social Justice Commission (ISJC), which was established in New York in 2007. The head office of TSA International is based in London. The International Social Justice Commission coordinates advocacy efforts on UN and regional levels.

From the historical overview, we can conclude that TSA was a pioneer in supporting workers in harsh working conditions and has recently strengthened its work to be better able to come to grasp with these severe problems.

3. Theoretical Approach: "Holy Life" and Advocacy

Studies on TSA theology have introduced theological concepts such as "holiness" and "holy living" (Booth: 1895, Brengle: 1918, Clifton: 1999, Coutts: 1957), hospitality (Miller: 2015), holy protest (Swan: 2017), and a faith based identity (Pallant: 2012). When Booth used the term "holy living" he also emphasized the need for "penitence" or repentance. He then emphasized that what matters is "keeping the commandment of God" recalling "that wonderful statement of John the Baptist, 'I indeed baptize you with water ... but ... He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire'" (Booth: 1895). Hence, we understand the core of "holy living" or "holy life" is receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit and being willing to live in accordance with God's commandment in all relationships. The focus on "holiness" and "holy living" was taken further by Brengle (1918) who embraced an understanding of holiness as purification of the heart by God filling it with love for God and fellow humans. Building on Brengle's view and in addition offering a somewhat different aspect on "holiness" came from the eighth General of TSA, Samuel Coutts. His idea was that holiness was built on the example of Jesus. Coutts emphasized the strive to become more and more like Christ. Holy life in accordance to Coutts, emerges as a life of love, joy, peace and other fruits of the spirit (Coutts: 1957).

The "holy life" and holistic responses are also encompassed by TSA researcher Helen Cameron (2015), who has created a justice seeking cycle that emphasizes the sharing of reflections over biblical texts and how these texts challenge TSA to act. To answer the research question "How does the theological concepts of

2 An updated list of countries where TSA has active work can be found in the TSA Year Book 2023, available at <https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/yearbook>

‘holy life’ inform TSA MSHT work?”, we contextualise the analysis with theological discussion about advocacy in the field of diaconia.

Schneider and Lester (2001, 65) define advocacy as “the exclusive and mutual representation of a client(s) or a cause in a forum, attempting to systematically influence decision-making in an unjust or unresponsive system(s).” The intentional influencing of decision-making can be controversial among churches and Tveit, former Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches (WCC), acknowledges tensions over the role of political advocacy among churches and within the WCC (Tveit: 2016, 14). However, due to financial crises, climate change, increased global mobility, and global inequality, churches have become engaged in social action, motivated by a vision to affirm human dignity and fight unjust structures, which cause human suffering or lead to marginalisation and exclusion (Tveit: 2016; see also Haugen: 2016, Cameron: 2015, Nordstokke: 2011), on various levels (locally, nationally, regionally and globally). Tveit also acknowledges the potential for abuse of Christianity, such as legitimizing control, intolerance, suppression, and discrimination (Tveit: 2016, 22).

A framework introduced in the foreword to a WCC and ACT (Action by Churches Together) Alliance study document on diakonia is termed “*vocatio, ad-vocatio, pro-vocatio*” (2022, 15; see also Bueno de Faria: 2022, 8).³ Whether this framework relates to TSA theology of “holy life” and clarifies the links between “holy life” and advocacy is addressed in the discussion.

In our analysis of the “holy life” concept as the basis for TSA MSHT work, we draw upon Nancy Fraser’s framework of “participatory parity” (2005, 2008a, 2008b; see also Fraser and Naples: 2004). Here, participation through distribution is focussed on fair allocation of goods capable of being divided (economic realm; substantive equality). Recognition is according to Fraser an essential part of how individuals are acknowledged as equal peers and develop a sense of self (cultural realm; formal equality). Representation inherits two parts, the “who” that is the social belonging that creates a way to participate in decision making processes and the “how” that represents democratic processes and structures in a society (legal-political realm; equality of opportunity). Fraser argues for a shift away from focusing primarily on passive recognition and toward facilitation for equal participation and policies that promote substantive equality as a normative reference point (Fraser: 2008a). For advocacy, this framework is interesting for its representation aspect, i. e., who and what shapes the advocacy efforts and how this affects decision-making and social structures. For representation to be just, the relationship between distribution and recognition has to be just. Those who are affected by injustices need to be included and given access to discussions. Knowledge created in this way will empower

3 Note that the originator of the framework is Kjell Nordstokke.

individuals and inform structures (Von Heimburg & Ness: 2021). Although not developed specifically for church-based advocacy work, the framework highlights aspects such as empowerment and inclusion of individuals in marginalised situations. Fraser's theory on the three dimensions of redistribution, recognition and representation (Fraser: 2008a) is relevant for our purpose as it identifies various realms and various ambitions for advocacy work that TSA MSHT work is part of. We will seek to identify whether and in what ways the three dimensions are expressed in TSA documents and how they are eventually related to a "holiness" perspective.

4. Methodology

For this article we have selected relevant diaconal, historical, theological, and human trafficking TSA documents to shed light on and describe specifically TSA strategy and advocacy efforts in a larger legislative, NGO, and FBO landscape. Documents relating to TSA MSHT work on an international and national level, as well as documents describing TSA practice as they support people in vulnerable situations were selected as a starting point. Analysing these documents, it became clear that to gain a full understanding of the theological motivation for TSA human trafficking work, core documents describing faith and faith-based practice were also necessary. For background and context purposes, historical narratives and documents relating to the international human trafficking legal framework were chosen. Table 1 illustrates and explains the main content of the various documents.

Table 1 Overview of sampled documents

TSA Document category	Number of documents analysed in the article.	Numbers of overall documents sampled.	Relevant document topic/s	Level
MSHT Strategy and positional statements	3	3	Anti-trafficking/ justice actions/ congregational level/theological framework.	International
Organisational governing documents	2	5	Organisational structure and governing/ national guidelines for social justice actions on congregational level.	International / National
TSA theological documents	7	8	TSA International theological/ strategy and mission documents.	International
Historical documents	2	3	TSA International history explained and commented.	International
Early documents on MSHT	4	4	Reflecting on early TSA International MSHT efforts.	International
MSHT legislations and protocols	4	4	International legislative protocol and guidelines. International protocol explained and instruction for national use.	International
Faith based MSHT documents and articles	3	5	Religious organisations role as anti-trafficking actors.	International/ National

26 documents were eventually chosen to be part of the document analysis; however, it is important to mention that not all 26 turned out to be equally relevant for the analysis. Some historical documents are only mentioned one or two times, while some of the core MSHT and theological documents dominate the analysis presented in the article.

Interpretations of the documents were done by using a framework-based synthesis analysis. This is a matrix-based method involving the construction of thematic categories into which data can be coded and new data can emerge (Dixon-Woods: 2011). After reading the documents, NVivo 12 was used to code and sort the material, which was then interpreted based on concepts from the theories and models, mainly Fraser's theory of distribution, recognition, and representation (Fraser: 2008a, Fraser: 2008b).

The first author has worked at TSA Norway's headquarters as an advisor in the department mandated to support the social work of the congregations (corps) and has, since 2012, been assigned a coordination role for MSHT work. This work also involves extensive contact with TSA's international network. The potential bias in relation to the material and its analysis was consciously handled in several ways, for example by involving a second author with a critical perspective. At the same

time the practice knowledge provided from various levels of the TSA structure gave relevant insight into TSA decision-making and receptivity of MSHT strategies.

5. Presentation of the Documents

In addition to the 2020 documents on TSA's MSHT work (TSA International: 2020a; 2020b; 2020c), several other documents guide and inform TSA social outreach. Therefore, the Platform for corps based social work (TSA Norway: 2016) and a comprehensive booklet on TSA's Accountability Movement (TSA International: 2017) are included in the analysis. The section below presents TSA theological documents (TSA International 2011; 2010a; 2010b).

The international strategy highlights the eight action points for TSA anti-trafficking response: prayer, protection, prosecution, prevention, policy, partnership, proof, and participation. A visualisation of the strategy places prayer at the centre as the action points are presented in a circle (TSA International: 2020a, 5). This framework explains how TSA MSHT efforts are related, with prayer being in the centre.

The main strategy document titled 'Fight for Freedom, The Salvation Army Guide to Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking' (TSA International: 2020b) addresses corps-based social work and street-based outreach. This Guide opens with a reference to Luke 4:18–19 with an encouragement to proclaim the good news to the poor and thus connects advocacy and Christian mission. It is a practical guide for anti-trafficking responses on the local level. The Guide provides background knowledge and cases to build competence as well as Bible references and proposals for Bible study to enhance the connection to TSA's Christian mission. In the Guide, 18 pages are dedicated to the two sections Theological Reflection and Prayer Response. Extensive Bible study material is found in the other sections as well.

The International statement on MSHT outlines TSA's theological motivation for working against this injustice (TSA International: 2020c). It is one of several statements written about various ethical and social justice topics.

In the Accountability booklet (TSA International: 2017) seven elements are highlighted and explained. These are people, purpose, plan, progress and procedures / systems, passion and spirit. These seven elements are meant to guide systems and procedures as they are developed to ensure accountability and transparency. All the elements are explained and made relevant by comprehensive Bible and TSA's Song Book references as they are presented as ways to increase accountability to God and

others as well as to learn and improve. This is further emphasized by describing TSA's purpose as participating in God's mission for this world.

In comparison, TSA International is more explicitly Christian than TSA Norway. Efforts to establish a diaconal profile are expressed in the Norwegian Platform for corps based social work, which outlines theological and social work principles for local social outreach in the Norwegian territory (TSA Norway: 2016).⁴ This document confirms TSA Norway's identity as a church and that all activity is done in the framework of being a church. Hence, the theological self-understanding of TSA integrates social justice efforts, such as advocacy, with the ordinary proclamation and liturgical activities that take place in the church buildings. We will explore whether the concept of "holy life" can be used to explain more of the various encounters at TSA's corps.

The overall agenda for these strategic documents are to guide all such encounters and what comes out of such encounters, that we term "practice". The MSHT documents are rich in descriptions, both on trafficking information and theological learning. They are practical and give examples, not just of actions that can be taken, but of cases of victims, or "survivors", as they are often called by TSA, who get support from TSA services on different levels. While the MSHT documents are explicit in their direction and guidance towards a specific practice if one has reason to believe that the person is a victim of MSHT, the Platform documents (TSA Norway: 2016) and Accountability booklet (TSA International: 2017) are more general and include MSHT as part of a wide range of social injustices that TSA responds to.

TSA International made MSHT a priority already in 2004 (TSA International: 2020a, 2; 2020b, 16). The strategic documents do not provide any more background information of why this decision was taken. The MSHT documents use easy language (the English versions are used for analysis) and are full of pictures and designs. The same applies to the two earlier documents, but to a lesser extent (TSA International: 2017; TSA Norway: 2016). All strategic documents include an extensive use of bullet points to list both actions and facts. The MSHT strategy and the international statement are relatively short documents, consisting of 7 to 12 pages, while the 'Fight for Freedom' guide is a more comprehensive read with 66 pages. The documents highlight interaction and reflection. The aim is to inform practice on MSHT specific actions and facts and thus to strengthen the whole organization's MSHT response. All these strategic documents intend to inform corps-based

⁴ A territory is when more than one country is under the same administration. The Norwegian territory consist of Norway, Iceland, and the Faroe Island, with the main administration in Norway.

work and efforts in specialized institutions. Most notable in Norway is Safe House Filemon,⁵ that receives financial support from the Norwegian government.

While all five documents are overarching and general in their approach, efforts can be traced to make them practice-relevant by adding reflection questions for individuals or groups that address all levels of the work in the corps, from the officers to lay staff and volunteers.

6. Results of the Document Analysis

By analysing the documents relevant for this article, we seek to understand and explain how TSA's theological foundation is expressed. All the documents are rich in biblical references. They quote biblical passages in full and contextualise them afterwards. TSA's 'Handbook of Doctrines' asserts: "What Salvationists believe has never been incidental to how we live our life in Christ as individuals, or as a global spiritual movement ..." (TSA International: 2010a, 13; foreword by General Rader).

The overall analysis of all the documents shows that TSA's services are specified as being both social and missional, seeking to reach out. On a national level, this is described in the 'Platform for Corps based social work' (TSA Norway: 2016), emphasizing the facilitation of processes of empowerment and connecting faith and actions to the concepts of hospitality.

Beyond identifying the use of the terms "holy life", "holy living" and "holiness" we also identify phrases that clearly give similar connotations. Among TSA's strategic documents on MSHT, the Guide reads: "How can the passion for your response be sustained through faith and worship?" (TSA International: 2020b, 65). A direct link is made from faith and worship to "passion for your response". According to TSA theology, humans are free through the Holy Spirit and able to live as disciples. According to TSA's 'Handbook of Doctrines,' God sanctifies persons, highlighting five practical implications of holiness: (i) direct involvement with people's spiritual and practical needs, (ii) advocacy for social justice and human rights; (iii) awareness of the importance of an ecological balance; (iv) global sharing of resources; and (v) responsibility for the vulnerable and the marginalised (TSA International: 2010a, 220). Driven by such holiness theology, the TSA fundamental mission is expressed as "saving souls, growing saints and serving suffering humanity" (TSA International: undated1). This represents a radical acknowledgment that the salvation of society must include both the salvation of the individual and all society, and that one is

5 See <https://frelsesarmeen.no/sarbare-grupper/safe-house-filemon>.

never accomplished without the other. The “dual” salvation points toward a holistic and integrated ministry, expressed in social action.

Guided by Fraser’s (2008a) three dimensions of redistribution, recognition, and representation, we will now analyse how the TSA strategic documents describe the connection between holy life and the response to human trafficking.

Redistribution encompasses equal sharing and equal participation, as well as achieving substantive equality (Fraser: 2008b). Fraser identifies broad-based efforts for change and transformation of people, societies, and systems. TSA documents address underlying inequalities and describe transformation of individuals and societies in theological terms, explicitly referring to the Gospel to build a new life with the support of faith. In the international strategy, TSA connects such processes of transformation to its identity as social actor, explicitly arguing against a status quo:

Salvation Army co-founder Catherine Booth said: ‘If we are to better the future, we must disturb the present.’ In that same spirit, we are dedicated to partnering with God to work towards a world filled with justice and freedom (TSA International: 2020a, 2).

To “disturb the present” is going beyond merely calling for transformation. While the term justice is not defined by TSA in the analysed documents, we specified in the introduction two essential elements of justice in an historical TSA understanding: restoring the dignity of everyone and seeking to change the societal and political structures (TSA International: 2010a, TSA International: 2020a, TSA Norway: 2016, Winship: 2016). Applied on the MSHT work, this encompasses efforts to hold the offenders of MSHT accountable for their exploitations and harm afflicted on victims and survivors of MSHT, so that neither they nor others are motivated to continue such harmful practices. Holding offenders to account is the responsibility for the police, prosecuting authorities, and courts. TSA can report and document, hence contributing to police and judicial efforts. The term freedom implies, in the understanding of the authors, that nobody is subject to the control of others. This implies that all persons shall have freedom of movement when the working day or the contract term is over.

TSA Norway’s ‘Platform for corps based social work’ uses terms like liberation, healing, and wholeness:

Our theology reaches out to the individual through personal relationships and beyond. This is based on our beliefs that salvation and sanctification are real and obtainable for every human being on our planet, and for the entire world in which we live. Salvation and holiness make up a comprehensive whole and have liberating effect on all aspects of life (TSA Norway: 2016, 8).

The connection between theological understanding and motivation for social action is important throughout the documents. The international statement says: “The Christian conviction is that the present broken and sinful state of the world is not the last word” (TSA International: 2020, 5). The MSHT documents are especially pointing towards participatory elements by making the fight against human trafficking not just a specialist field, but something everyone everywhere can be a part of (TSA International: 2020b, 62), highlighting “prayer and raising awareness”. Prayer is accentuated as the “essential practice” and placed in the centre of the international strategy, where it is surrounded by seven additional action points (TSA International: 2020a, 5). Hence, redistribution as sought to be implemented by TSA’s corps is about empowering those who have been victims of MSHT – in other terms more equality in power – and not economic distribution.

Fraser was partly critical of the *recognition* dimension in her own approach, as it had become too prominent, particularly to the detriment of redistribution. This criticism cannot be understood as not considering recognition crucial for marginalised persons in the sense of restoring their dignity. In TSA documents, this is specified in the international statement as “restoration of choice and control of their own lives ...” (TSA International: 2020c, 2). Another aspect of recognition is the way TSA claims to support the marginalised groups without discrimination and with love. In this context, the Accountability booklet refers to TSA’s Handbook of Doctrine:

Our doctrine reminds us that salvation is holistic: the work of the Holy Spirit touches all areas of our life and personality, our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, our relationships with our families and with the world around us (TSA Norway: 2016, 10 emphasising “complete transformation”).

By highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in all areas, this gives strong connotations to holiness or holy life. Another aspect of recognition is how TSA facilitates empowerment:

From the earliest days, there were concerns when Salvation Army ministry focused on ‘serving’ people without ‘solving’ the underlying issue. [...] We must reduce dependency and empower people to take greater responsibility for their attitudes and actions (TSA International: 2017, 25).

Important in these efforts is a better understanding of the MSHT context, including what is required for victims of MSHT to be actually free from their dependencies. The opposite of this situation of dependency we understand to be a situation characterised by values derived from the Kingdom of God and outlined by Jesus as

hospitality, love of neighbour and peace (Gushee: 2016). We will come back to the “kingdom ethics” in the discussion.

The *representation* dimension was seen by Fraser as crucial for both redistribution and recognition. Understanding that politics and legal frameworks impact how individuals can access justice, TSA has a comprehensive advocacy emphasis in all the analysed documents. This is also illustrated by “policy” and “partnership” being two of the eight action points in the international strategy (TSA International: 2020a, 5; TSA International: 2020c, 7). The Guide seeks to foster an attitude of courage among all Salvationists, by highlighting the ability to speak up for those who are victims of MSHT, but also facilitating for them to speak on behalf of themselves. The story of Jonah, who first resisted God’s calling, due to lack of courage, but later does what God requires, is highlighted (TSA International: 2020b, 56–57).

We saw above that the Accountability booklet emphasises not merely serving but “empower people to take greater responsibility...” (TSA International: 2017, 25). There is, however, no explicit emphasis in the three TSA strategic documents on how to facilitate stronger participation and representation by survivors. The international strategy specifies as one effort under the action point “prosecution” to “work with offenders to restore relationship with God and society” (TSA International: 2020a, 5). The most specific wording in the international strategy is surprisingly passive, namely that TSA “seeks to assist survivors regain their physical, mental, emotional, relational and spiritual health” (TSA International: 2020a, 5). The term “seeks to assist” is rather passive.

Those who have lived in precarious situations, with offenders consciously seeking to foster survivors’ “disempowerment”, understand that enabling survivors’ participation and representation will require facilitation and guidance. Nevertheless, the fact that no explicit wording on empowerment among survivors is included in TSA MSHT strategic documents (TSA International: 2020a, 2020b, 2020c) is somewhat surprising.

7. Discussion

The research question for this article is: How does the theological concept of “holy life” inform TSA MSHT work? Three distinct issues have emerged from the document analysis. (i) TSA’s faith basis concerning structural issues; (ii) the application of TSA’s international documents on MSHT at the local level; and (iii) the traditional non-political mandate of TSA. Each of these will be elaborated below.

We saw above that TSA advocacy is rooted in the Bible and its message, The sanctity of life and the equal dignity and worth of everyone that TSA promotes are embedded in the Gospel. The international mission statement states this embeddedness by highlighting the biblical root (TSA International: undated1):

Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

The former General (TSA world leader) John Gowan (1934–2012) illustrated Salvationism as a three-legged stool, with “saving souls”, “growing saints”, and “serving suffering humanity” as the three legs supporting the seat, “Salvationism”. The three legs are explained as follows:

No Salvation Army program can remain faithful to God’s purposes if it relies on one or two legs of the stool [...] The word ‘integrating’ is a reminder that the task will never be fully complete – it is an ongoing process (TSA International: undated2).

TSA seeks to align their mission with biblical values such as hospitality, love of neighbour and peace, also called “kingdom ethics” (Gushee & Stassen: 2016). The terms “perfection” and “sanctification” are understood as seeking to mirror God’s love and thus seeking to identify a certain quality of what constitutes a “true church”. When identifying the core of the reign of God, Swan asserts:

Holiness here has very little to do with asceticism, otherworldliness or superhuman perfection. Rather, holiness refers to the persistent discomfort of its members with the unchallenged existence of oppression and exploitation in the world and an understanding that the church is holy (Swan: 2017, 45).

Even if this quote cannot be taken to represent a TSA position, it reflects an understanding of holiness that is promoted in various ways at various levels in TSA.

Understanding holiness as being about discomfort might seem surprising. However, God’s reign is understood as engaging in and challenging the existence of oppression and exploitation, as well as considering concrete issues of injustice. It is therefore argued that one’s living testimony, where your life reflects your faith, should be consistent with the whole tenor of the Bible. “For example: to engage in human trafficking or oppressive actions against people is inconsistent with loving God with one’s whole heart and one’s neighbour as one’s self (Mt 22:39). The entire tenor of the Bible (love of God and neighbour) must inform one’s experiences not only in terms of how they relate to God but also how they relate to others” (Swan: 2017, 40). From this understanding, a human trafficker claiming to be a Christian is an inconsistent claim.

While TSA tends to highlight human dignity, the Christian development umbrella organisation ACT Alliance, of which TSA is a member, emphasizes the rights-based approach and the faith-based approach (ACT Alliance Rights and

Development Group: 2015). The framework of “vocatio, ad-vocatio, pro-vocatio”, appear in a joint WCC/ACT Alliance publication (2022, 15; see also Bueno de Faria: 2022, 8). We will explore whether the theology of holy life can be developed with the help of the framework of “vocation, ad-vocatio, pro-vocatio”.

The term “vocatio” has a Christian connotation, with intuitive appeal among TSA employees and volunteers. Recognising the increasing support of advocacy work among the WCC and ACT Alliance member churches (Tveit: 2016; Nordstokke: 2011) it is also reasonable to understand “ad-vocatio” as a meaningful term for TSA employees and volunteers seeking to change oppressive structures. Finally, regarding “pro-vocatio”, the link between holiness and discomfort as identified by Swan (2017, 45) does at least indicate that TSA employees and volunteers are prepared to be exposed to unpleasant situations, being committed to work for transforming the structures that lead to such unpleasant situations.

For each TSA member a sanctified life as a Christian is explained as a sign of God’s grace. The result of that life are acts of goodness and love. This is further strengthened by the use of the “Faith Based Facilitation” model, being an action framework for deepening relationships in one’s community (TSA International: 2010b) and in the term “covenant partner”, operationalised as “everyone to build relationships of equality; ... out of the buildings and into the communities ...” (TSA International: undated2; see also Dalton: 2007).

When it comes to MSHT work at the local level TSA’s overall MSHT response is common across continents to ensure quality regardless of the local context. The language in the strategy documents provides practitioners with both spiritual and factual reasons for their service and practice in TSA. The Accountability booklet highlights awareness, operationalised as “taking a message out to the community” (TSA International: 2020b, 56). This awareness does not, however, explicitly link to participation or representation by survivors, being identified as a problem above. This concern is reflected by Fraser and Naples (2004), who emphasise that the fundamental subject for justice is the individual and the individuals’ access to participation.

There are potential tensions between a theological understanding of calling and service expressed as “holy life” as expressed in the analysed documents and adherence to social work principles, including advocacy and seeking justice, but it is not the task of this article to find out if this is an actual problem. One could assume that in a liberal and secular context, as the Norwegian one, persons who do not share TSA’s theological position might rather apply for jobs or become volunteers in other, less theological organisations.

An additional challenge is that while the international strategy includes “advocacy for... external policies which reduce [MSHT]” (TSA International: 2020a, 5), TSA does not have a definition of advocacy. This can become a pitfall as TSA seeks to approach MSHT issues on all levels. Moreover, even if the MSHT strategic

documents do not explicitly build on the human rights agenda, the MSHT strategy implicitly builds on human rights, and there are different approaches to human rights in the 132 countries where TSA operates. These differences are thus not taken into consideration in the documents.

A broad-based effort within TSA is its “Accountability Movement” (TSA International: 2017; 2016), seeking to strengthen TSA’s governance, finance, (child) protection,⁶ and values” (TSA International: 2017, 83). This international focus on accountability could be interpreted as streamlining of how to make public statements and a pressure to deliver a suitable theological and practical expression, which in turn can affect local creativity and initiative. Complying with both internal and external requirements might put the development of vibrant local social justice expression and advocacy for change at risk. Transforming lives take time, transforming societies takes even longer, and both are difficult to report or measure.

However, formal requirements relating to streamlining, reporting, transparency, and accountability must not go at the expense of participation and deep relationships and knowledge at all levels. Nancy Fraser’s framework is helpful to bridge the gap between formal organizational requirements and grassroots engagement. A justice-seeking aspect of representation includes membership, decision-making and rule-making abilities. At the core is whether the relationships in the representation are just (Fraser 2008a, 2008b, 2005). As seen in TSA’s organizational charter for the MSHT work (Figure 1), the national coordinators and practitioners are often employees, either officers in charge of a corps or a lay staff with many other responsibilities. Despite the ISJC having strengthened the international council with survivor experts in the last two years, and by this providing competence to coordinators and practitioners, it is crucial for advocacy to reflect practice (Fraser: 2008b; Von Heimburg and Ness: 2021).

As TSA International emphasizes prosecution, prevention, policy, partnership, proof (TSA International: 2020a, 5), in addition to prayer, protection and participation, TSA’s strategic documents clearly express that MSHT has political implications. TSA’s experience and overall standing can reduce the trust gap between survivor and authority (Graw Leary: 2018). New forms of representation enable problematising governance and decision-making structures (Fraser & Naples: 2004), fostering advocacy work (ACT Alliance Rights and Development Group: 2015; for a critical analysis of the terms “faith-based”, see Haugen: 2019). One example of advocacy is the Pan European Campaign Against MSHT, focusing on too cheap labour and services.⁷ TSA has traditionally feared being too political. TSA withdrew its mem-

6 On the priority of children: “While [TSA] recognises its duty to safeguard every person under its influence, the Accountability Movement is initially prioritising the protection of children” (TSA International: 2017, 83).

7 For reports on advocacy efforts at the EU and UN, see <https://www.salvationarmy.org/euaffairs>.

bership of the WCC in 1981, based on the WCC grants given to Patriotic Front guerrilla groups (ZANU and ZAPU) in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). TSA argued that this grant was motivated by “politics rather than the gospel”, something TSA strongly objected against (Taylor: 2014). Nevertheless, drawing on the holistically influenced theological tradition, advocacy seems to be an integral part of TSA’s involvement in MSHT.

To conclude, TSA’s emphasis on “holy life” that has its most visible expression in TSA’s MSHT strategic documents by prayer being at the core (TSA International: 2020a, 5; TSA International: 2020b, 62; TSA International: 2020c, 6) operates in practice to bridge between TSA’s faith-based actions, and TSA’s advocacy work. The phrase “disturb the present” (TSA International: 2020a, 2) was identified as a noteworthy approach, also acknowledging that it originates from Catherine Booth.

We find that there are complex negotiations regarding MSHT efforts in TSA in at least three ways: theology versus social work principles, global versus local knowledge and experience as guiding specific advocacy efforts and facilitating better participation and representation versus streamlining reporting for enhanced organisational transparency and accountability. We find, moreover, that TSA’s internal demands and emphasis on theology are not sacrificed in the process of seeking to be relevant in the overall MSHT efforts in Norway.

8. Conclusion

In order to answer our research question, we have analysed TSA documents and discussed the selected documents by applying relevant theories. We conclude that TSA holiness theology, expressed as holy life serves as *guidance* for overall structures and strategies and as a basis *for communicating* and as *linkages* between theology and advocacy. We find that TSA documents on MSHT explain the core challenges, particularly the seven action points in addition to “prayer: protection, prosecution, prevention, policy, partnership, proof, and participation” (TSA International: 2020a, 5). The strategic documents are surprisingly explicit in their theological embedding, not only by the central place of prayer.

As regards theology in the documents, we have elaborated the “holy life” theology with the help of authors with a TSA affiliation (Swan: 2017, Cameron: 2015, Pallant: 2012). We have discussed how the holy life theology that implies societal involvement and committed action can learn from the recent theological debate about the framework of “vocatio, ad-vocatio, pro-vocatio” that has elements that can facilitate a link between theology and advocacy.

On the one hand, the documents refer to strong inspirational texts from TSA founders, and on the other hand, the documents reveal the importance of the communication, renewal, and affirmation of the faith basis for social work. Early

narratives are actively used in TSA's justification for its present work. We have not found that the emphasis on "holy life" results in a tension with social work principles. Nevertheless, it might be that the recruitment basis for TSA Norway is narrower than for other diaconal organisations due to TSA's theological position. The documents show also that the authors did not want to introduce too many new elements into the MSHT strategy since this makes its implementation harder. Hence, TSA's MSHT work explicitly emphasizes known TSA theological concepts, to strengthen connections between faith and action.

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