

Preface

THIS BOOK CAME TO be written for three very specific reasons. Firstly, I happen to possess a possibly unique claim to two parents, four grandparents and eight great-grandparents, who were Salvation Army Officers stretching back to the very beginnings of the movement, with William and Catherine Booth. That heritage has understandably instilled in me a deep sense of loyalty and commitment to what has proved to be a quite remarkable phenomenon. Secondly, with my wife, I have been a Salvation Army Officer, offering leadership and service within a number of Salvation Army congregations for nearly thirty years, most recently in Wood Green, London, where we grew together, with other Christian partners, in a deepening understanding of *koinonia*, for nineteen years. Thirdly, I hold a deep longing to see the Church of God, in ecumenical unity and partnership, find a more robust theological foundation upon which it might visibly live and express the gospel of God's grace in a fractured world.

It is from those three perspectives that this study has sought to investigate and interrogate, what it might mean for The Salvation Army to live and demonstrate the reality of God's Church in the world, offering a gospel of grace in word, deed, and generous community. Whilst some might find the interrogation in places to be uncomfortable, I hope that ultimately it will be discerned to have stemmed from a genuine sense of loyalty for the honour and glory of God, and therefore faithfulness to the cause of The Salvation Army. Certainly, I cannot rest content to withstand Karl Barth's perceptive and striking challenge against all acquiescent and complacent denominationalism, in the face of the "one Church." Truly, the Church—*ecclesia semper reformanda*—is in need of constant reformation as it seeks to enter into God's mission.

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