



William Booth

Founder of **The Salvation Army**

Contents

**While women weep,
as they do now, I'll fight.**

**While little children go hungry,
as they do now, I'll fight.**

**While men go to prison, in and
out, in and out, as they do now,
I'll fight.**

**While there is a drunkard left,
While there is a poor lost girl
upon the streets,**

**While there remains one dark
soul without the light of God,
I'll fight – I'll fight to
the very end!**



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A Nottingham Boy



William Booth was born in Nottingham in 1829.

No one would have guessed that he would make a difference in millions of people's lives throughout the world.

Growing up, William was often up to mischief and having fun. This earned him the nickname – *Willful Will!* His father wanted him to grow up to be a gentleman and earn lots of money, so he sent William to a good school.

But everything changed when William turned 13. William's father lost all his money, and then, a year later, he died. The family was left with nothing, and had to move to a poor neighbourhood. William left school to help support the family.

William got a job in a pawnbroker's shop. It didn't pay very well. In the shop, people sold their precious possessions to get a little money to help with the rent or to buy food. Later they would buy the same items back, but at a higher price. William saw how the poor were getting even poorer. He didn't like it.



The Boy Preacher



William's family went to church most Sundays, but William thought little of it. When he was 15, his friends took him to listen to a visiting preacher. William was inspired. He was determined to live his life for Jesus. He said, '*God shall have all there is of William Booth.*'

William wanted to change things for the better – starting with himself! The first thing he did was to apologise for some of the pranks he'd done growing up. Then William tried to help the people around him. He and his friends collected money to help a homeless woman, and then found a cabin and furniture for her too.

William was also keen for others to come to church. He persuaded boys from the slums to join him. But the regular churchgoers did not like these new additions – they were poorly dressed and smelled.

So William tried a new approach. He started to preach on the street. If people were not welcome in church, he would bring God's word to them.

This *boy preacher*, as he was called, would stand on a chair and tell people about God's love for them. And there was something about William that made people stop and listen. Even the local troublemakers stopped and took note of William's words!



Changing William

Young William's life changed when his father died, and also when he started to believe in God.

Which do you think was the biggest change?

A London Lad



When William was 20 he found there was no longer a job for him in Nottingham.

So he decided to try his luck in London. Unfortunately the only job he could find was in another pawnbroker's shop.

William worked very long hours at a job he hated. He had very little free time, but he spent all of it preaching. People were very impressed by William. One man, Mr

Rabbits, was so impressed that he wanted to support William for three months as a full-time preacher. William did not need much persuading, and took the job!

One Sunday afternoon, after William had been preaching, Mr Rabbits felt William would enjoy the conversation of a young lady from the church – Catherine Mumford. Catherine was very knowledgeable about the Bible and she challenged some of William's ideas. William accompanied her home so they could continue their discussion.

William enjoyed Catherine's company very much, and soon they fell in love and became engaged. Catherine encouraged William to improve himself, so he entered a training college to become a minister. For three years they continued to write to each other, sharing their thoughts and ideas. In 1855, after he had finished his training, William and Catherine were married.

Church work

William's job was to travel around England and Wales, campaigning and preaching. At meetings he would speak to thousands of people. It was not easy being separated from his family but sometimes Catherine would accompany him, bringing their children if possible.

It was challenging work, but William really enjoyed it. But then William was asked to look after two small churches in the North of England. William applied himself to helping the poor and needy that he saw around him. But William felt he could do more.



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Working William

William was busy working: at being a father, a minister, and by helping others.

What do you think was the hardest job?

Outside the Blind Beggar Pub



William and Catherine went to a church meeting which was going to decide where William should work next.

William asked to be allowed to return to campaigning, to travel and preach. But the church disagreed and wanted him to stay in one place. So William and Catherine stood up and left.

They left the meeting and they left the church.

William had no job and no home, so the Booths travelled. William preached where he could – in churches, theatres and even in a circus tent! It was not easy as there was not much money, but William and Catherine felt it was the right thing to do.

In 1865 the Booths arrived back in London. One summer evening, William went for a walk in the East End of London. He came across some people from a group called The Christian Mission preaching outside a pub – The Blind Beggar. He stopped to listen, and when they invited people from the crowd to speak, William volunteered.

A large crowd grew, and when William finished speaking, he was invited to lead the mission. This was the beginning of everything for William and Catherine.

Soup, Soap and Salvation



William started to preach all around the East End of London – a place that was overcrowded, dirty and filled with crime. He spoke to people in words they could understand and used popular music to sing Christian songs to. William spoke about changing people's priorities. Why waste your time and money in the pub when you have a family who are hungry, and missing you at home?

But William soon realised that people who were tired and hungry were not ready to listen about God's love. William discovered that he had to show God's love first, to care for people. He would say, *'Soup, Soap and Salvation.'*

Catherine supported William by raising funds for his work. Catherine wrote and preached about what William was doing. When William became exhausted and fell ill, Catherine helped by taking over his duties.

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William's new work

William was working to improve the lives of people.

Why do you think he was doing this?

The Salvation Army



By 1878 The Christian Mission had grown in size and was spreading throughout the country.

It was becoming a strong church, and with Catherine's ideas it was a church that welcomed everyone. Members were working hard to help others and to fight against injustice. One member liked to call William *The General*, as he felt William was leading an army for Jesus.

One day William and his eldest son Bramwell were writing a report describing what the mission did and they decided to change the name. It became The Salvation Army.

Members loved the idea of being soldiers for Christ, for standing up for your faith. They became known as Salvationists. They soon started to make their own uniforms and Catherine designed a flag. Salvationists marched to meetings, singing while brass bands played. They wanted to share the joy they felt in their faith.

The Skeleton Army

But not everyone liked what The Salvation Army was doing. Some people did not like the noise from the marching bands. Pub owners were not happy because they were losing money – The Salvation Army encouraged people not to drink and lots of people had stopped spending their wages on alcohol.

In 1882, 669 Salvation Army members were attacked – 23 were children – and 56 Army buildings were damaged, some completely destroyed.

Despite the fact that Salvationists had done nothing wrong, they were the ones who were often arrested and put in prison.

William and Catherine were once caught up in a riot in Sheffield. But they and their followers marched through, ignoring the rotten food and insults thrown at them. When they arrived at the church, they were a complete mess. William, however, said: 'Now is the time to get your photographs taken!'

Eventually, things changed for the better. Parliament backed The Salvation Army's right to march. Judges agreed that the law should protect those who were doing no wrong. The police started to arrest rioters. Salvationists were able to march freely to tell people about their faith. The public started to understand that The Salvation Army wanted to help improve people's lives.



Bold William

William stood up for his beliefs: belief in God and belief in helping others.

What would you stand up for?

Helping the homeless

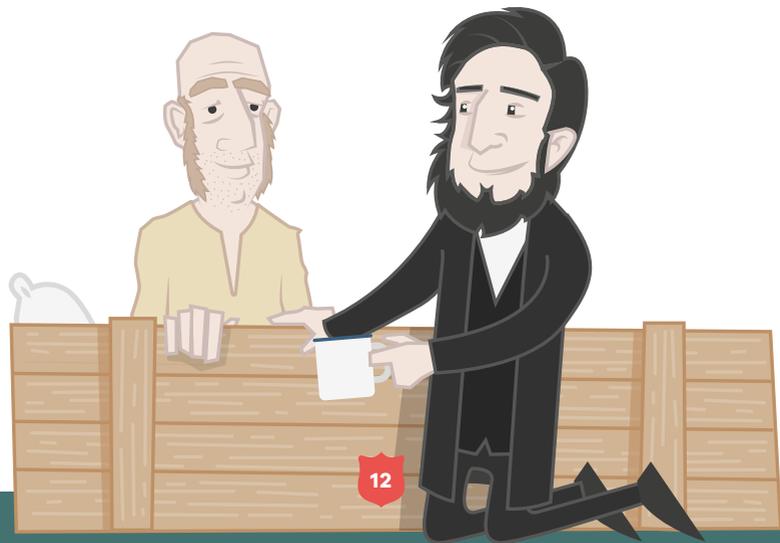
William had many ideas about how to support people.

In 1890 he wrote his plans in a book called *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. It proved very popular and William sold more than 20,000 copies that year, earning enough money to start all his projects.

There were many projects to help the helpless. He and his eldest son, Bramwell, started by running a Soup Kitchen for the poor – a place to get free hot food. Later on, Farthing Breakfasts were introduced. For a farthing – a quarter of an old penny – you could get a breakfast; just bring your own cup! By 1892 more than 20,000 breakfasts were being served each week.

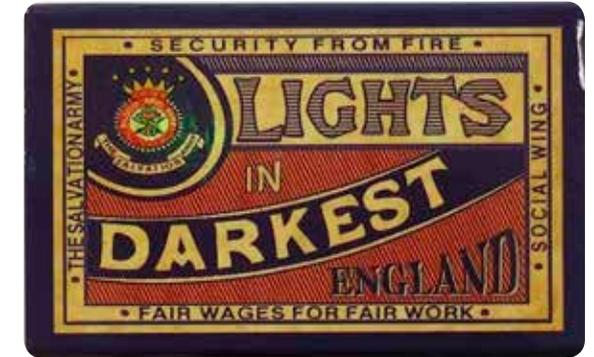
When William spotted people who had no homes sleeping under a bridge, he told Bramwell, 'Go and do something.' Bramwell found an old tram shed which he made into a shelter with coffins for beds! Eventually he found proper accommodation and hundreds of men and women were cared for.

Finding jobs was also important. Centres were opened to help people find employment. William even bought a farm to help train people!



Social Justice

Treating people fairly was still important to William. When he learned that girls making matches were dying from the dangerous chemicals, he had to help. He opened his own factory, with better pay, better working conditions, and best of all, using safe pink chemicals. The matches were called *Lights in Darkest England*.



The Salvation Army campaigned against girls being sold. Bramwell was arrested for his part in highlighting the problem! People were shocked, and the law was changed.

A missing persons service was created to help people find missing family members.

In just nine years The Salvation Army had:

.....
served 27 million cheap meals
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.....
found 18,000 missing people
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.....
housed 11 million people
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found 9,000 jobs
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Planning William

William had big plans to help people.

**What do think helped
the most?**

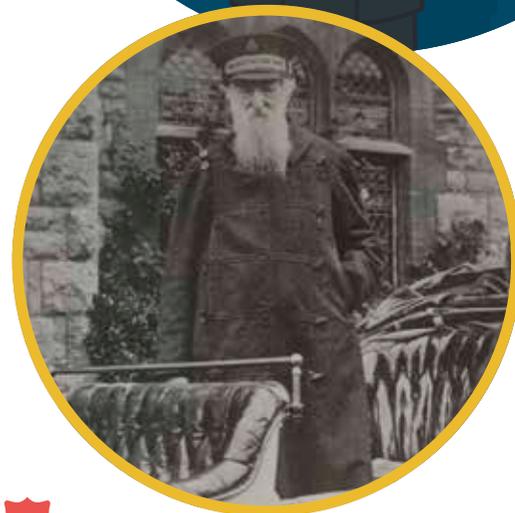
One World, One Family

Unfortunately Catherine became very ill, and in 1890 she died.

William was devastated but he refused to give up their dream, and threw himself into the work.

The Salvation Army had started to spread around the world. This was a surprise to William – he had not planned this! But members were keen to help wherever they could. Soon the Army was at work in France, America, Australia and India. William started to *think of all nations and peoples of the earth as one family*.

William wanted to see for himself what the Army was doing. He bought a new machine – a motor car – to travel across the UK. At the age of 75 William started to travel to visit the Army in other countries. Kings and presidents wanted to meet him, including King Edward VII.



William's Words

In 1912 William spoke to seven thousand Salvationists at a meeting in the Royal Albert Hall in London. He was 83 and nearly blind, but his voice was strong. The General spoke of his life's work, and of how he would never stop fighting to help others.

Three months later, William died. More than 40,000 people attended his funeral – parts of London came to a standstill. People said that William had been *promoted to Glory*. Salvationists mourned, but also celebrated all that William had done.

William's work can still be seen today.

The Salvation Army is at work in more than 125 countries around the world. It is still working to support those in need, and fighting for fairness. Salvationists follow the teachings of Jesus by showing kindness and compassion to all. And where help is needed, there is always the positive attitude of *Go and do something*.



Fighting William

What do you think was William's most important achievement?

What would William do today?

How could we help?

The Salvation Army today...



A Christian church and charity



Working in local communities

Helping developing communities



Children and youth clubs

More than 1,200,000 members



Caring for the elderly

Supporting people overcoming addictions

Practical help during emergencies

Supporting victims of human trafficking



More than 15,000 churches

Helping people back into work

Helping homeless people



At work in more than 125 countries

Campaigning for social justice

Supporting families

The Salvation Army mission:
Save souls
Grow saints
Serve suffering humanity

