

Founding of the Salvation Army

by William Booth

The Salvation Army was founded by William Booth in 1878, with the name 'Salvation Army' reflecting the organization's purpose and character.

Duration: 2:29

Scripture: Psalm 33:3, Proverbs 16:3, Ephesians 6:11, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Church History", "Evangelism"

Description

This sermon delves into the origins of The Salvation Army, tracing back to a pivotal moment in 1878 when the description 'Salvation Army' was first introduced by William Booth, emphasizing the organization's purpose and character. The sermon explores the transition to a military form of government and the adoption of a distinctive uniform, highlighting the significance of music in the army's mission and the establishment of a musical department to enhance its impact.

Transcript

In the year 1878, what appeared to be a small incident developed into a momentous happening. The front page of the printer's proof of the mission's 1878 report and appeal bore the words, The Christian Mission, under the superintendence of the Reverend William Booth, is a volunteer army. William Booth was studying the proof in his bedroom with Bramwell and Railton.

Bramwell, on seeing the phrase volunteer army, said, Here, I'm no volunteer, I'm a regular or nothing. At this, William Booth looked at his son, took out his pen and struck out the word volunteer. For it, he substituted salvation.

This was the first appearance of the description salvation army. Out of that conference and by the hand of William Booth came the inspiration which gave the organization a striking name, wholly descriptive of its purpose and character, the appropriateness of which has never been questioned. With a change of name officially confirmed in 1878, a military form of government was adopted.

A natural step was the adoption of a military uniform also. At first, as this picture of the Exeter Corps in 1880 shows, there was a great variety in the styles worn by the various individuals. In 1883, William Booth, now beginning to be universally referred to as the General, called attention to the greatly increased value of uniform with every fresh growth of the army's publicity.

Old photographs had been preserved too, showing how music was taken up by the soldiers of the army during the 1880s. Here is the Fry family, famous among early army musicians who formed the first band. The General, who had always been a great lover of music, wrote at this time, music is to the soul what wind is to a ship, blowing her onwards in the direction in which she is still.

Typical of the time is the concert corps band. Vocal music too underwent a fundamental change at this time, the word hymn being dropped in favor of the term Salvation Army song. Members of this speaking, singing, and praying brigade include Emma and Evangeline Booth.

With the advent of bands and singing brigades on a wide scale, music had become so important that the General established a musical department. Richard Slater with a violin, Henry Hill and Fred Fry, the first staff, were charged with the job of making the best use of music in the army. This drawing shows Whitechapel Band on parade.

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