

General William Booth

Remembering the Founder on his birthday

by Edie Jenkins –

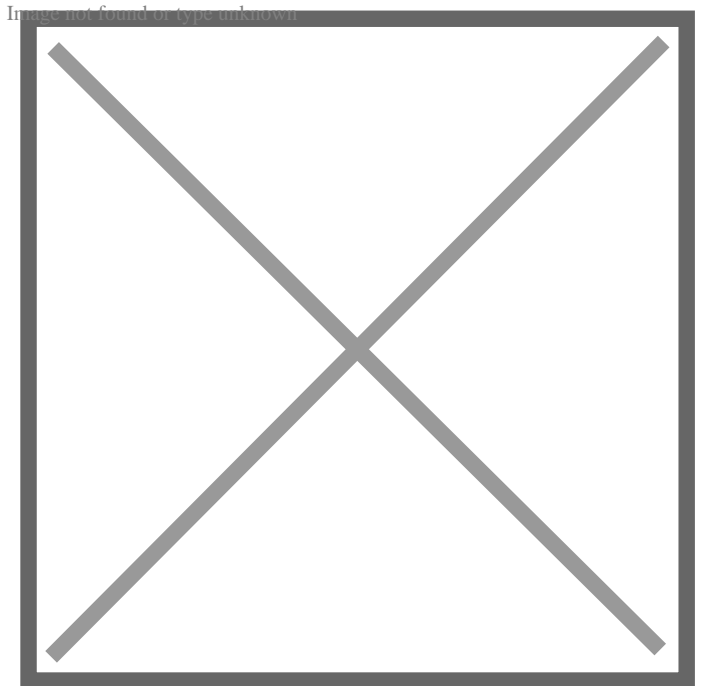
On April 10, 1829, 179 years ago, William Booth was born in Nottingham, England. As the founder of an international movement now active in 113 countries, Booth had an unlikely start. He was the son of an impoverished businessman and had to leave school at age 13 to be apprenticed to a pawnbroker.

At the age of 15, Booth knelt at a bench in a church basement to give his life to God and pledged, “God shall have all there is of William Booth.” He began preaching when he was 17 and eventually became a Methodist minister. His evangelistic ministry led to the formation of the Christian Mission and finally The Salvation Army.

In 1855 William married Catherine Mumford who partnered with him in mission and the development of The Salvation Army. He preached repentance from sin and the necessity of a holy life. Booth and his followers practiced what they preached and performed self-sacrificing evangelistic and social work—not caring if they were scoffed at and derided for their ministry to the poor and their unconventional methods.

During his lifetime, Booth established Army work in 58 countries and colonies, traveling extensively and preaching the gospel. His book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, became a bestseller after its 1890 release. It also set the foundation for the Army’s modern social service programs.

William Booth was promoted to Glory on August 20, 1912 at the age of 83. Although many prophesied that with Booth’s death The Salvation Army would also die, the Army serves today throughout the world, continuing the ministry he started, and it has earned national and international recognition.



The important thing to remember about Booth is his early determination: "God shall have all there is of William Booth." When he made that dedication of his life, he had no idea where it would lead him. He did not know the conflict and hardships that would be his. He did not know the joys and victories that would be his as well. But he never wavered from that first commitment. The Army in which we serve today is a result of his initial promise. May each modern Salvationist share Booth's zeal for God and his work!