

The history of The Salvation Army

The world is full of countless incredible people but the reality is life is not always easy or fair. Sometimes, life happens, and there are times when we all need support from the people around us.

The Salvation Army has a long history of showing support to the people around the world who are most in need, and it has been doing so for more than 150 years. To understand what The Salvation Army is and how it can help the people who need it most, we must explore the story of how this organization began and where it is today.



What is The Salvation Army?

[The Salvation Army](#) is an international movement and organization that seeks to share the gospel of Jesus Christ while serving global communities around the world. Focused on helping those in need to have access to essential resources, The Salvation Army supports people around the world through [donations](#), [volunteering](#) and even [disaster programs](#).

To fully appreciate The Salvation Army's long history, we have to consider the ways it supports people all around the world and from all walks of life. Committed to lifting up communities, this group organizes volunteers, leads fundraisers and changes lives every day. Its efforts are driven by the needs of individuals and groups. Whether you have been displaced by a natural disaster, are facing homelessness, or just need help keeping the heat on in your home, The Salvation Army is happy to lend a hand.

This group operates with one goal in mind—to *do the most good*.

Who Founded The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army was first formed by a minister named [William Booth](#). Early on, he saw that the people around him were in need, and he was deeply driven by a passion to better support them. As he was walking the streets of London, where he lived, he saw a need for change and decided to bring that change to the world.

There are several others who supported William Booth during this time. The list includes his wife, [Catherine Booth](#), who is often named a co-founder, and his daughter, [Evangeline Booth](#). Additional supporters include Joe the Turk, Eliza Shirley, George Scott Railton, and Samuel Logan Brengle.

When Was The Salvation Army First Formed?

A common misunderstanding about The Salvation Army is that it is a recent or even modern development. In reality, the founding of what would become The Salvation Army that we know today began all the way back in [1865](#). However, many believe that the creation of this idea happened 13 years prior in 1852 when William Booth first began his career as a minister.

How Did The Salvation Army Begin?

The Salvation Army is the organization we know today, but it actually started under a different name. William Booth and his wife, Catherine, left the church behind when William was criticized for preaching to the destitute of London. After they left, they decided they would rather train evangelists across England in hopes of spreading more good.

When it was first founded, The Salvation Army was referred to as The Christian Mission.

The Expansion of The Salvation Army

It took a long time for The Salvation Army to grow into what it is today. Although this uplifting organization started back in 1865 in the East End of England, this location was just its starting point. Before long, The Salvation Army and the incredible work it did began to spread.

During its first 10 years, operating under The Christian Mission, it continued to grow. It amassed volunteers from every walk of life. In fact, many of the group's early volunteers were not only the evangelists that had joined early on but also the very people that they saved and converted.

Before long, the group that would become The Salvation Army was going strong. Composed of converts and those who wanted the opportunity to do good, it continued to spread across people and places, touching hearts and minds along the way.

After 10 years, The Salvation Army had over 1,000 followers—but even this was just the start. The group traveled through the British Isles and managed to convert over 250,000 Christians, growing its numbers and strengthening its mission along the way.

Although it began in England, it wasn't long before The Salvation Army was known in America, Canada, France, Australia, Switzerland, India, Germany, Iceland and South Africa.

Today, The Salvation Army is active in a global capacity with organized groups in more than 100 countries around the world. Currently, the organization has over [1 million soldiers and over 2 million participants in total](#)

Exploring the History of The Salvation Army

It was 1878 when The Christian Mission finally became The Salvation Army. Like many great organizations, the name change was powerful and driven by the very people who helped it to grow. The group's name change happened when William Booth was working on the organization's annual report.

In the report, Booth initially referred to the people of the organization as a "volunteer army"—a name that made sense. However, struck by inspiration, he later crossed the words out. Instead, he wrote *Salvation Army*—and that defining moment changed everything.

From that moment on, The Christian Mission became The Salvation Army, an all-encompassing group of Salvationists that had the power to change the world.

Following this significant change, The Salvation Army continued to grow. It spread across countries and across groups of people, collecting volunteers along the way. No matter where The Salvation Army went, there were always good people willing to support a great cause.

An end of a golden era arrived for The Salvation Army when William Booth died in 1912, but his contributions, foundation and spirit continue to support the global good to this day.

In the United States alone, this group supports over [25 million people each year](#).

Support Global Compassion Through The Salvation Army

If you are inspired by every person's ability to make the world a better place, you can be a proud partner of The Salvation Army. Whether you [donate to those in need or choose to volunteer your own time](#), you can support an organization that is supporting people all around the world.

See more about [how you can support those in need with The Salvation Army](#) today.

To learn more about ways to give, explore our resources at [Caring Magazine](#), where we believe you can do good right where you are and *be* the reason somebody believes in goodness.