

“I’M IN THE LORD’S ARMY!”

“My name is Eliza Shirley. I was born in 1863 to Amos and Annie Shirley. My father was a part-time minister.

When I was fifteen years old, the Salvation Army marched into my hometown and began a work led by women preachers that came to be known as Hallelujah Lassies. The women’s mission was to reach the poorest of the poor, whom no one else cared about, with the saving message of Jesus Christ. I was so affected by the preaching of these women that I dedicated my life to God’s service and wanted to become a Salvation Army worker.

After I turned sixteen, I was summoned by William Booth, General of The Salvation Army, to discuss my entry into full-time service with the group. The General met with me and I accepted a post in Bishop Auckland, a coal mining village in Northern England.

As part of my new post, I lived in impoverished conditions among the poor of the village, getting most of my food from keeping what was thrown at our Salvation Army meetings. Most of the money taken in offerings to be used to help with the work was stolen by the crowds before it ever reached us. Though times were hard, we saw God move in that village in a powerful way as even the worst men were converted to Christ during our meetings. We remained faithful to the work, and lives were changed.

Later that year my father sent word that he and my mother were moving to America, and they wished I would go with them. My dad thought that I could start a work for The Salvation Army in

America. I decided to ask General Booth for his advice as to whether I was suited for the task. He gave his blessing for me to test the waters in the U.S. I was a courageous young woman who had heard God’s calling and answered.

My family arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1880 and immediately began looking for a building to hold meetings. Their first meeting was attended by only 12 people and the work grew slowly. Though the rough crowds often pelted us with mud, stones, sticks, and rotten vegetables, we didn’t lose hope.

Nearly four weeks after their first small meeting, God intervened. As we made our way to the lot where we would be holding our meeting, we noticed a glow in the sky. A fire had been started on our lot and hundreds of people turned out to see the spectacle! We knew God had a plan, so we began to sing and preach. After the sermon, a drunken man known as Reddy came forward and asked if God would even forgive a drunk like him. Yes, even him, we explained. So, at that moment, Reddy gave his life to the Lord and his life was changed ... and so was the ministry in Philadelphia. Reddy became such a living testimony to the grace of God that people filled the meeting house to see it for themselves.

Soon after this, I was able to find another building [an old chair factory] on the West Side of Philadelphia and opened a new work for the Salvation Army, [calling it Salvation Factory]. I asked General Booth for reinforcements and the work of the Salvation Army spread throughout America.”

ELIZA SHIRLEY

“CAN I GO AND DO SOMETHING?”

“I’M IN THE LORD’S ARMY!”

“One picture among the many that I cherish of my father I should like to place at the very beginning of what I have to say of him here. It explains a certain new development in the history of the Army, but it also gives a glimpse of the deep fires that burned in the personality of William Booth. One morning, away back in the eighties, I was an early caller at his house in Clapton. Here I found him in his dressing-room, ... [t]he hair-brushes which he held in either hand were being wielded with quite eloquent vigour upon a mane that was more refractory than usual, and his braces were flying like the wings of Pegasus. No good-morning-how-do-you-do here!

‘Bramwell,’ he cried, when he caught sight of me, ‘did you know that men slept out all night on the bridges?’

He had arrived in London very late the night before from some town in the south of England, and had to cross the city to reach his home. What he had seen on that midnight return accounted for this morning tornado. Did I know that men slept out all night on the Bridges?

‘Well, yes,’ I replied, ‘a lot of poor fellows, I suppose, do that.’

‘Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself to have known it and to have done nothing for them,’ he went on, vehemently.

I began to speak of the difficulties, burdened as we were already, of taking up all sorts of Poor Law work, and so forth. My father stopped me with a peremptory wave of the brushes.

‘Go and do something!’ he said. ‘We must do something.’

‘What can we do?’

‘Get them a shelter!’

‘That will cost money.’

‘Well, that is your affair! Something must be done. Get hold of a warehouse and warm it, and find something to cover them. But mind, Bramwell, no coddling!’

That was the beginning of The Salvation Army Shelters, the earliest and most typical institutions connected with our now world-wide Social Work.”

BRAMWELL BOOTH

“GO AND DO SOMETHING!”

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“I was born Catherine Mumford in 1829. I was the daughter of a preacher and grew up in a home where the Bible was read and taught, and where my family prayed together. When I turned twelve, my doctors noticed a curvature in my back, and I was ordered to stay in bed for several months. Not liking to waste any time, I spent these months reading my favourite storybook—the Bible. I read the whole Bible through cover to cover EIGHT times that year.

My favourite Bible story was the story of how God called Samuel when he was just a young boy. I hoped that God would also call me to do something important for Him. I often felt that God might not be able to use me because I wasn’t sure I had any special talents. But my mother always reminded me that when God calls you to do a job, He also gives you the ability to do it.

When I was 16 years old, my family moved to London, where I began to lead a Bible study and prayer meeting for girls. One day a young man came to speak at my church—it was one of the best sermons I had ever heard! This young man was William Booth. A week later William and I were both guests at a dinner where William recited a poem about how it was wrong for bar owners to sell alcohol. This created quite a controversy, but I agreed with William, having firsthand seen the damaging effects of alcohol, and I stood up and said so.

After this dinner, William and I spent much time together, talking about the Bible and our faith. Eventually, we fell in love and were married. We knew that we would help each other to know God better, that we would be great partners in preaching and caring for the needs of people, and also in raising our children to love and serve God. Soon, we put our skills and our passion for reaching the lost, both of which God had given us, to good work as we started what is now known as The Salvation Army. I eventually became known as “The Army Mother.”

My mother was right. Not only did God call me, but he gave me all the ability I needed to do his work.”

CATHERINE BOOTH

“I WILL GO AND DO SOMETHING!”

DEPLOYMENT CHALLENGE

Make contact with your Corps Officer and/or particular leaders in your corps this week.

Interview them, using the questions on this card as a general guide, to help you discover areas where you may be able to be further **EQUIPPED FOR & ENTRUSTED WITH MINISTRY**.

1. How old were you when you first took on a ministry responsibility?
2. What advice would you give to someone my age regarding becoming **ENGAGED IN MINISTRY**?
3. What ministry needs does our corps have that a teen could become involved in?
4. How do you possibly see me helping meet these needs, or becoming actively involved in ministry?

ENGAGED IN MINISTRY 11 BATTLE READY

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