

A Glimpse From The Past – Holiness

Historians tell us that holiness preaching and practice was the strength of The Salvation Army during its formative and most expansionist years.

William Booth was convinced that the preaching and acceptance of the doctrine of holiness (also called 'the second blessing' or 'sanctification') was the key to bringing people to a belief in Jesus.

He wrote, "Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands in the front rank of our doctrines. We inscribe it upon our banners. It is with us in no shape or form an open debatable question as to whether God can sanctify wholly, or whether Jesus does save His people from their sins. In the estimation of The Salvation Army, that is settled for ever."

Across the ocean, in the United States, Samuel Logan Brengle heard Booth speak at an open air meeting and was intrigued. He travelled to England to volunteer and eventually became a Salvation Army officer. Appointed back to the US, he quickly became recognized as an eminent speaker, preacher and teacher of holiness both in America and elsewhere. He was the author of many books advancing the doctrine of holiness. In later years he became the Salvation Army's International Ambassador of Holiness.

Brengle's teaching lives on today in the training and education of Salvation Army officers and soldiers. His lifelong passionate teaching that holiness "does not consist so much in rapturous, sublimated experiences as in lowly, humble, patient, trustful love" continues to be our understanding of personal holiness.

Lt-Colonel Maxwell Ryan is retired in Burlington, Ont., where he serves as a part-time hospital chaplain and amateur Army historian.

