

Chapter 4

Rhodes and Booth

“Wholesale Salvation,” 1901–8

“When ye get among th’ Chinee” . . . says [the Emperor of Germany], “raymimber that ye ar-re the van guard iv Christyanity” he says, “an’ stick ye’er bayonet through ivry hated infidel you see” he says. “Lave him understand what our western civilisation means. . . . An’ if be chance ye shud pick up a little land be th’ way, don’t lave e’er a Frinchman or Roosshan take it from ye.”

—Finlay Peter Dunne, *Mr. Dooley’s Philosophy*¹

Probably Cecil Rhodes’ version of social imperialism, which thought primarily of the economic benefits that empire might bring . . . to the discontented masses, was the least relevant. There is no good evidence that colonial conquest as such had much bearing on the employment or real incomes of most workers in the metropolitan countries, and the idea that emigration to colonies would provide a safety-valve for overpopulated countries was little more than a demagogic fantasy.

—Eric Hobsbaum, *Age of Empire*²

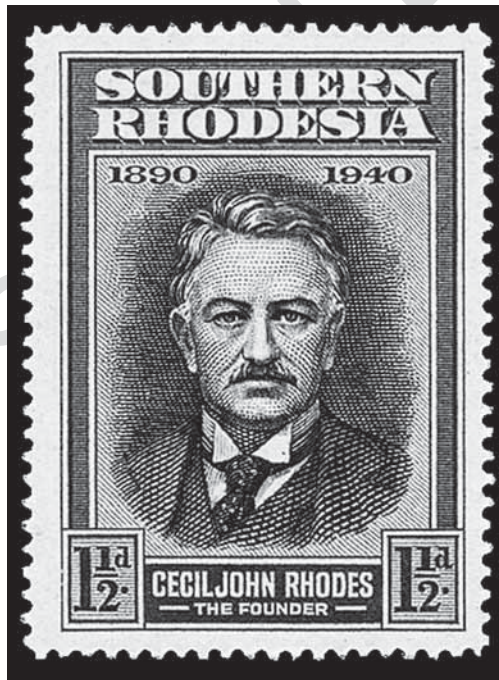
Although after Cass’s death in 1896 the Salvation Army closed its work in Mashonaland, William Booth still nurtured his dream of opening a

1. Dunne, *Mr. Dooley’s Philosophy*. New York: 1900, 93–94, cited from Hobsbaum, *The Age of Empire*, 56.

2. Hobsbaum, *The Age of Empire*, 69.

Rhodesian land colony settlement for white settlers taken from England's unemployment rolls. By June 1901 the General was working hard in London to get Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company and the British government to provide financial support for his "Darkest England" scheme in Rhodesia. He continued his strenuous campaign from 1901 to 1908.

Meanwhile, in 1896 the Salvation Army opened a white corps in Bulawayo, Matabeleland. The Mazoe Valley Farm near Salisbury reopened in 1901 when the Army appointed Staff Captain and Mrs. Frank Bradley with Adjutant and Mrs. Mbambo Matunjwa from South Africa to take charge of the farm Captain Cass had managed. In 1904 the Army appointed Lieut. Colonel Johnston as Provincial Commander in Matabeleland. He would also run the "commercial side" of the Mazoe Farm after 1906. In 1908 Captain and Mrs. Ben Muhambi became the first African officers in Matabeleland, and two African officers began operations in Salisbury's Shona townships in 1909.³ The Army had shifted from saving white miners to evangelizing Africans who lived in native reserves.



**Cecil John Rhodes portrayed on stamp to mark 50th anniversary of Pioneer Column.
(Image courtesy of Alan MacGregor, Simon's Town, South Africa.)**

3. "Historical Survey, The Salvation Army, Southern Rhodesia," London: Salvation Army Archives, n.d.

Between 1891, when William Booth first met Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, and 1908, when he finally realized that the BSAC would not respond to his pleas for financial grants and land, the General's quest for support from the BSAC and the British government had become an obsession. In 1902 Booth recalled his first meeting with Rhodes. Rhodes was then Premier of the Cape Colony and Booth was making his first visit to the colony. After they discussed Booth's dream for "an Over-the-Sea Colony," Rhodes had promised him, "I can give you whatever extent of land you may require" in Mashonaland. At their next meeting in South Africa in 1895 Booth claimed that Rhodes had "renewed his offer of land in Rhodesia."⁴ But Booth later found out that subsequent problems in the BSAC made the promise hollow.

Booth called his 1890 Darkest England social reform program "wholesale salvation." In three steps he would move Britain's unemployed from city workshops to farm colonies in England and then to overseas settlements in British colonies. Instead of retailing salvation by winning converts to his Wesleyan form of Christian faith, he would evangelize the masses through an imperial social program that would put thousands of emigrants under the mentoring supervision of Salvation Army officers.⁵ W. T. Stead, Britain's leader in "yellow" journalism, as well as Rhodes' friend and fellow imperialist, became Booth's amanuensis in putting the Darkest England plan in book form in 1890. His book's title, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, mimicked *In Darkest Africa*, the title of Henry M. Stanley's best-selling report of his journalistic adventures in Africa published earlier that year.⁶

Booth's second partner in developing his social scheme was a Salvation Army officer and socialist, Frank Smith, later a leading light in Britain's Independent Labor Party with his friend Keir Hardie.⁷ After Smith resigned from the Salvation Army in 1891, he became a member of the London County Council, and in 1929, a Member of Parliament. Smith's life-long quest for social justice began in 1884 when he had read Henry George's 1879 book, *Progress and Poverty*, on his way to take charge of the Salvation Army in the United States following a schism. Smith became George's life-long devotee. George proposed that governments adopt a single tax on land values. That tax would place a heavy duty on the value of unused land that

4. "The Founder and Cecil Rhodes," *The War Cry*, London (4 July 1953, extracts from a March 1902 article).

5. See Murdoch, *Soldiers of the Cross: Susie Swift & David Lamb* for more on the Army's social programme, including its post-World War I Emigration Scheme for overseas settlements.

6. Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*; Charles M. Stanley, *In Darkest Africa*.

7. Murdoch, *Frank Smith: Salvationist Socialist*.

would cause speculators to sell their excessive holdings, thus freeing up the land for the use of the nation's landless poor. The end result of the sale of unused land would be the formation of land cooperatives by the masses that would increase production, secure justice in wealth distribution, benefit all classes, and "make possible an advance to a higher and nobler civilization."⁸ According to George, the availability of land would create social justice and opportunities for the masses in America and Britain, including Ireland.

In 1887 William Booth replaced Frank Smith as the Army's commander in America with his second son Ballington. Smith gave his poor health as the reason for his request to return to England. Between 1888 and 1890, Smith served as Booth's private secretary. He travelled with the General on his frequent tours of Britain. Smith also travelled to Europe and Ireland to collect material for the social reform program that they were planning.

In the 1890 book Booth acknowledged the contributions of neither Frank Smith, the ideologue of the social scheme, nor of W. T. Stead, its writer (apart from his reference to "valuable literary help from a friend of the poor . . .").⁹ It is reasonable to discount Booth's contribution as author on two grounds. First, he had never been a social reform thinker; he was heart and soul an evangelist. And second, at the time the book was being written his wife Catherine was dying a painful death of cancer, leaving him no time or energy for social scheming.¹⁰ But most importantly he had on his staff Frank Smith, a skilled social reformer, and Suzie F. Swift, a Vassar graduate and editor of the Army's missionary magazine, *All the World*, who claimed a role in drafting the book's outline.

For the ideas behind urban workshops, the first stage of the Darkest England scheme, Frank Smith passed to the Booths, Swift and Stead, Count Rumford's late-eighteenth-century ideas for handling urban beggars in Bavaria. Rumford had "served with considerable distinction" as an "American officer" in the Revolutionary War. After the war he had settled in England and then moved to Bavaria to take command of its army. There he set up Houses of Industry (urban workshops) where, beginning on New Year's Eve 1790, he had compelled beggars to work. He found that when he treated them with justice and kindness, offered them clean and orderly surroundings, and provided them with satisfactory yet inexpensive provisions, the beggars responded with hard work. Best of all for the cost-conscious Booth, Rumford's program was self-sufficient. That Rumford used a military approach to solve the problem of unemployment was particularly appealing to

8. Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, xxix.

9. Booth, *Darkest England*, preface.

10. Murdoch, "Frank Smith, M.P."

Booth.¹¹ Smith picked up the term “elevator” either from Edward Bellamy’s 1888 book, *Looking Backward, Looking Forward*, or in earlier French socialist literature.¹²

By 1890 Smith was already implementing the workshop plan in London’s “elevators,” possibly the best indicator that he was the genius behind the plan. The idea of setting up urban “colonies” (workshops) was to provide work for the unemployed as a first step in their rehabilitation. Workers would salvage furniture and clothing from the emerging middle class, repair them, then sell them to support the Salvation Army rehabilitation program. Booth assumed that a large part of the problem was drunkenness and other aspects of “sinful” living. He would deal with these problems through personal redemption from sin as a part of rehabilitation.

Smith picked up ideas about the second phase of Darkest England’s three-step system, farm colonies in England to train the urban unemployed before sending them overseas, from E. T. Craig, a disciple of Robert Owen. Although Craig’s 1831 co-operative experiment at Ralahine, Ireland, failed in 1833, it was nonetheless a model worth imitating. Under an agreement with a wealthy Irish landowner, John Scott Vandeleur, Craig induced unruly, insubordinate peasants to join in a cooperative experiment in order to increase production and improve their living standard. All profits, after rent was paid to Vandeleur, belonged to the peasants. Craig forbade intoxicating drink and tobacco. The Salvation Army adopted this rule in its city workshops and on its farms, and also the Owenite tradition of providing physical and moral training. Later reformers saw Craig’s Irish cooperative as the one successful Owenite experiment. Unfortunately, the gambling debts of Vandeleur, the estate owner, led to the closing of the cooperative, not any deficiencies in the work of the peasants.

When William Booth established his farm colonies, Craig’s Ralahine was the format he followed, although Booth was in no sense a descendant of the secularist Robert Owen. The willingness of Booth and Smith to embrace and adapt ideas from heterodox sources, and to go beyond the boundaries of their evangelical Christian traditions to find ideas that would attract a long list of financial subscribers, was an imprint that remained on the Salvation Army through the twentieth century.¹³ This second step in the Darkest

11. Booth, *Darkest England*, Appendix: “How Beggary was Abolished in Bavaria by Count Rumford,” xviii–xxii.

12. Murdoch, “Rose Culture and Social Reform.”

13. Booth refers to Ralahine in the Appendix to *Darkest England*, xxiii–xxiv. On Ralahine see Vincent Geohegan, “Ralahine: Ireland’s Lost Utopia,” paper presented at Utopian Thought and Communal Experience Conference, New Lanark, Scotland, 1988; Garnett, “Robert Owen and the Community Experiment”; Darley, *Villages of Vision*,

England plan, to move the urban unemployed to farms in England for training in agricultural skills and moral reformation, had significant success, but only as part of the third element.¹⁴

The third stage of Darkest England's ideas, and the one of greatest interest in this study, would move England's unemployed, after training in farming skills, to "vacant" lands in Britain's overseas colonies—Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and Southern Africa. It was for this phase Booth asked Cecil Rhodes and others for help in moving thousands of England's urban poor to Rhodesia's vast, allegedly "uninhabited" lands. Besides solving England's problem of urban unemployment, Booth had a vague notion that he would also elevate the "criminal and submerged classes of Africa." There is no record that Booth ever spelled out who these "criminal and submerged classes" were, white or black. He hoped that Rhodes, who shared his dream of white emigration to Southern Africa, would also make this Salvation Army imperial scheme part of his last will and testament.

In 1889, Booth acknowledged the English source for the first step in the three-part emigration plan he was about to publish. It was Reginald Brabazon, 12th Earl of Meath, a member of the Church of England. Booth mentioned his debt to Meath in a speech published by the *Times* of London, saying that Meath's pamphlet on poverty expressed his ideas exactly. The context of the speech was the opening of a second shelter for unemployed men at Clerkenwell in London. For three pence the men would receive supper, a "homely talk on salvation" and bed and breakfast. Unlike the common lodging house, the men would find shelter in an atmosphere that was free from "vile, demoralizing associations." And Booth promised the men would not need to do something "religious in return."

Lord Meath's book, *Social Arrows* (1886) also provided Smith and Booth with ideas for the third part of their Darkest England plan—the creation of overseas farm colonies for England's urban unemployed. Meath had pressed for state-directed colonization of the unemployed in "Greater Britain." *In Darkest England* (1890) offered the Salvation Army as the state's agent in selecting, preparing, and transporting poor but willing settlers who wanted to relocate in Britain's empire. Booth agreed with Meath that British

1975, 84–85, 105; and three books by E. T. Craig, *Cooperative Society Illustrated* (1880); *History of Ralahine and Cooperative Farming* (1882); and *An Irish Commune* (1919).

14 See Murdoch, *Origins*, 162–63. There are a few farm colony remnants, but they are not being used as launching pads for emigration to overseas colonies. See: Murdoch, "William Booth's In Darkest England and the Way Out" (<http://www.wesley.ncc.edu/theojrnl/25-6www.wesley.ncc.edu/theojrnl/25-6>); and "Anglo-American Salvation Army Farm Colonies, 1890–1910." See also Haggard, *The Poor and the Land*, and Spence, *The Salvation Army Farm Colonies*.

colonies would not be willing to accept London's idle, vicious paupers, but that the urban poor could improve their work habits and their character on farm colonies in England prior to emigration. Meath also set out a plan for processing emigrants for an overseas colony. Character was more important than agricultural training. A government program to move emigrants to the colonies had failed because it had not followed this character-building plan. In addition, children without families could be trained on model farms in England to be apprenticed to colonial farmers.¹⁵

There is no suggestion that Meath had much affection for General Booth. In an 1884 article he excluded the Salvation Army from a list of charitable organizations that deserved the support of "men of leisure."¹⁶ Meath was the President of the Church Army, a Church of England imitation of the Salvation Army and potentially its principal rival. In 1882–83 William and Bramwell Booth had been negotiating a merger with a committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but the Booths had declined the invitation to make the Salvation Army an urban evangelical branch of the state church.¹⁷ By the mid-1880s Meath's Church Army had its own plans for social reform that competed with Booth's program.

Meath led two other competing social reform groups as President of the Social Service Union and the British Institute of Social Service, inspired by Booth's friend J. B. Paton.¹⁸ Meath may have indirectly critiqued Booth in 1904 when he attacked a "great religious Nonconformist leader" who had failed to mention 22 German Labor colonies in existence in 1890 when he was recommending such colonies for England. Had Booth or Frank Smith done this out of ignorance of what had occurred in Europe or out of a desire to "claim credit for an idea which was not novel," as Meath claimed?¹⁹ Booth often found that religious, labor, professional social workers and philanthropists were his most ardent foes in the field of social reform.

Unfortunately for William Booth, Cecil Rhodes did not mention the Salvation Army emigration scheme in his will. Instead, Rhodes authorized

15. Brabazon (Earl of Meath), *Social Arrows*, 112, 116, 133, 137, 189, 220–21, 133–35. Meath, ed., *Prosperity or Pauperism?*

16. Earl of Meath, *Brabazon Potpourri*, 22.

17. Murdoch, "The Salvation Army and the Church of England, 1882–1883," provides the story of why these negotiations failed. See also Eason, "The Salvation Army and the Sacraments in Victorian Britain."

18. Booth's sons, Ballington and Herbert, had attended J. B. Paton's Theological Institute in Nottingham. When William Booth was looking for a denominational affiliation outside the Methodist New Connexion in 1864, he consulted Paton about a place with the Congregationalists (Independents). See Murdoch, *Origins*, 34, 37.

19. Meath, *Brabazon Potpourri*, 269.

the use of his fortune to form a “Secret Society” to extend “British rule throughout the world.” His “system of emigration from the United Kingdom” was on a grander scale than Booth’s. He would occupy “the whole continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia [Crete], [and] the whole of South America.” Thereby Rhodes would “render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity.” From the 1840s on, colonial reformers like Edward Jenkins had called for what amounted to a revival of mercantilism. They would: 1) find work for the poor in the colonies; and 2) use them to provide a market for British manufactures, thereby providing employment opportunities in Britain. Booth and Smith were reinventing a fifty-year old idea in their overseas colony plan, but updating the scheme to fit late-nineteenth-century imperial designs.²⁰ But in death in 1902 Rhodes provided no money for the Salvation Army imperial scheme.

Henry George, Robert Owen, Count Rumford, E. T. Craig, German farm colony advocates, the Earl of Meath, Cecil Rhodes, and W. T. Stead are a sampling of the imperial and social ideologues whose ideas were taken up by William Booth and Frank Smith. Others also contributed to planning the Army’s social services in the late 1880s and early 1900s. While subordinate Salvationists dug out ideas from the social reform literature, Booth put his imprimatur on the ideas and placed his reputation behind their implementation. William and Bramwell Booth, Frank Smith, Susie Swift, and W. T. Stead incorporated the reform measures into *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, drawing the attention of leading reform critics in reviews in nearly every major journal. Booth raised over £100,000 within four months of the book’s release in October 1890 and Frank Smith began to put the plan into effect in England.

While the last two aspects of Booth’s utopia, the farm and overseas colonies, lasted in their intended form only until about 1914 in England, North America, and Australia/New Zealand, their life-span has been considerably longer. Urban workshops—now called Adult Rehabilitation Centers in the United States—continue to be the major element of the Army’s social services into the twenty-first century as they work with the homeless, the addicted, and those released from prison. More important, the effect of the Darkest England scheme was to turn the Salvation Army away from a single emphasis on urban evangelism toward a dual program of spiritual and social reformation by 1890.

Booth’s official biographer, Harold Begbie, argued that in 1898 the Salvation Army’s General had seen the unpredictable Cecil Rhodes as “a man

20. Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 376–77; Porter, *The Lion’s Share*, 81.

who might either plunge [Britain] into war or make an end of a very dangerous tension [in Southern Africa] by reasonable and conciliatory diplomacy.” This was just before the Boer War broke out in South Africa—a war which Booth regarded with horror, although he sent Staff-Captain Mary Murray to minister to the troops engaged in it. The occasion for Booth’s comment was a May 1898 visit by Rhodes and Charles Loch of the Charity Organization Society to the Salvation Army’s Hadleigh Farm Colony in Essex on the Thames River estuary east of London.²¹ Salvation Army reports indicated that Rhodes was “immensely impressed” with the farm that represented the second stage of Booth’s plan to rehabilitate the urban unemployed and prepare them for an overseas colony.

On the train back to London Booth and Rhodes had a serious discussion. Booth, ever an evangelist to the heathen, gave this recollection of their talk. He had asked Rhodes, “How is it with your soul?” Rhodes responded, “It’s not quite so well with my soul as I could wish.” “Do you pray?” “Sometimes, not quite so often as I should.” “Will you let me pray with you—now?” Rhodes agreed and they knelt down in the coach. Booth asked God to guide Rhodes and save his soul. When Rhodes died in 1902 at age forty-eight, Booth wrote in his diary, “I wonder whether in our several interviews I did what I could for his soul?”²²

British governments and religious leaders made small distinction between African natives and what Booth termed Britain’s “submerged tenth.” The “heathen,” home-grown and foreign, needed saving and civilizing; this was the task of Christian missions at home and abroad, by whatever means they devised. With a call to “lift them in pity from sin and the grave,” missions did not always sense a call to develop a personal attachment to the African poor any more than middle-class Christians mixed with the poor of London’s East End. Social reformers seldom associated with beneficiaries of their arms-length largess. As in the social distance between London’s social workers and its poor, missionaries and their African charges lived lives apart, in distinct neighborhoods and in separate churches and schools. Missions and the BSAC engaged in paternalistic and authoritarian management of those under their control. This was an aspect of Britain’s consciousness of imperial prowess. Missionaries from North America and elsewhere shared in this Anglo-imperial mission culture.

Historian Bernard Porter defines the 1890s “new imperialism” of British leaders Chamberlain, Rosebery, Curzon, Milner, and Rhodes, as

21. Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army*, vol. 3, 136–43, provides details on the beginning of Hadleigh and other farm colonies.

22. Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth*, II, 140, 188, 209–10, 231–32, 298, discusses Booth’s associations with Rhodes.

an idea based on what Rosebery termed “an Imperial Race—a race vigorous and industrious and intrepid.” Victorian imperialists were Darwinian in that they believed that “the survival of the fittest is an absolute truth in the conditions of the modern world. . . . England must have better schools, improved social reform, military conscription, and no political division, if it is to carry out its imperial mission in its colonies.”²³ The old imperialism, before the 1877 designation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India, had wanted to regenerate Africa by use of “the Bible and the plough,” thereby undercutting profiteers in human flesh by implementing “commerce based upon Christian standards and Western commodity.”²⁴ For Cecil Rhodes and William Booth the new imperial scheme would result in a British-Christian world, with no distinction between what it meant to be British and what it meant to be Christian.

General Booth frustrated his commanders in the colonies, including his children who served in America, Europe, India, and Australasia, with his autocratic rule from London. As the British increased central control over colonies, including Cecil Rhodes’ domination in Southern Africa, William and Bramwell Booth tightened their mandate over the Army’s imperium. In North America, Europe, and Australia there were problems between 1884 and 1904 over issues of centralized control from London. There were also schisms that have not gained the attention of the Army’s official historians. The final episode of authoritarian rule came with the deposition of General Bramwell Booth, William’s eldest son and successor, by a council of the Army’s international leaders in London in 1929.²⁵

As with Cecil Rhodes’ last testament that aimed to bring the world, even the United States, under Britain’s Union Jack, General Booth proposed to move London’s poor to Southern Africa under London’s rule. In 1895 Rhodes claimed that “in order to save the 40 million inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines. . . . If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists.”²⁶ Thus, as people of their era, nearly all merchants and missionaries were imperialists and continued

23. Porter, *The Lion’s Share*, 23–24; 45; 64.

24. See Thomas, *Rhodes*, 102ff, for his discussion of the transformation of the imperial enterprise based on speeches made at London’s Exeter Hall in 1840 by missionaries and humanitarians.

25. Moyles, *The Salvation Army and the Public*, Essays 5, 7, 10; Murdoch, *Origins*, 115–45; McKinley, *Marching to Glory*, 29ff and 97ff; Larsson, 1929: *A Crisis that Shaped The Salvation Army’s Future*.

26. Porter, *The Lion’s Share*, 129–32, quotes a missionary at the Exeter Hall meeting.

to be imperialists, albeit with slowly changing attitudes, until the scramble out of Africa began in the wake of World War II in the late 1940s and 1950s.

This gradually brought to a close of what was, as historian Eric Hobsbaum put it, “the classic age of massive missionary endeavor.” But he argued that “missionary effort was by no means an agency of imperialist politics,” in that missionaries were often at odds with the British South Africa Company and British colonial social policy. Yet, he continued, there can be no denying that colonial conquest opened the door to Africa for European and North American Christian missions, and that “the success of the Lord was a function of imperialist advance.” Efforts of church and state mingled in that both ventures were “done by whites for natives,” and were “paid for by whites.”²⁷ State and church were paternalistic operations financed by state and commercial interests as well as mission funds.

In 1906 William Booth began two and a half years of intensive lobbying of the British government and the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to gain financial support for his plan to settle the English urban unemployed on Rhodesian soil. Costs would include transportation and the building of farm colonies. By his calculation Booth needed £100,000 from the British government and £150,000 from the BSAC and an unnamed group to colonize “Britain’s surplus population.”²⁸ In January 1906 he welcomed news that the opposition to his plan by certain members of the BSAC board was fading.²⁹

Booth then turned to the new Liberal Party government that had replaced the Conservatives in December 1905. Liberals were generally friendlier to nonconformist churches like the Salvation Army while Conservatives favored the establishment’s Church of England. Booth met Herbert Gladstone, the new Home Secretary, and Winston Churchill, a Colonial Office Undersecretary. Former Liberal Prime Minister Lord Rosebery assured Booth of his sympathy and the sympathy of the Rhodes’ Trust. Booth also visited Dr. Buckle, editor of *The Times*, from whom he gained a promise of support.

Booth asked Captain Wise of the BSAC not to start a competing emigration scheme such as the one contained in Rhodes’ will. Colonial Secretary Lord Elgin was cordial, but said that he had no money for the project. In March Booth saw his friend John Morley, Secretary of State for India, who promised help for “our Indian hospitals and Village Banks,” but he had

27. Hobsbaum, *The Age of Empire*, 71.

28. Chennels, *White Rhodesian Nationalism*, 123, discusses the popularity of such schemes at this time.

29. Stead told Booth that John Burns had opposed the scheme because of unspecified “slanders” he had heard.

no control over the government's Africa funds. In May Booth explained his plan to Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman who said that he was appalled that the Salvation Army was doing great work with "limited resources, while organizations with so much wealth and power" were "spending their strength on useless contention." But he offered no "practical help in the shape of money."

In September 1906 Booth took courage when Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, the former BSAC administrator in Rhodesia who had spent time in jail as a result of his unauthorized raid on the Boers in 1898, and then had served as the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, said that he was "anxious for the success of the R[hodesia] Scheme." Booth's hopes rose again when he heard that the BSAC "had accepted our proposals for the contract and [had] given us some of the privileges we asked for." The *Mining World* reported that "the Rhodesian market [gets] firmer at the very mention of a proposal to extend [Booth's] works to that territory." That tribute was based on "the fascinating influence of [Booth's] personality and the immense power for good he wields over men and things."³⁰ St. John Ervine, Booth's best biographer, claimed that the General saw colonization as the "most natural outlet for the over-plus population of this country," and contended that Rhodesia was "the most likely, if not the only possible country, for such a scheme to be tried with the possibility of success."³¹

On August 23, 1907 the *Rhodesia Herald* reported that the BSAC had offered General Booth a "large tract of land" and "a large sum of money" for his plan, which would cost £250,000. The editor found it "unlikely that the promised cooperation of the Chartered Co. is inspired by [Booth's] spiritual aim." Rather, with reasonable insight, the paper concluded that the grant resulted from a merging of the imperial designs of the BSAC and the Salvation Army. The editor did not altogether trust Booth and proposed an alternative plan, that the BSAC should float a loan on its own behalf if its aim was to provide jobs. The *Herald* reported that the Salvation Army and the Canadian government had set up a special commission to work out a colonization scheme that would send 1,450 settlers to ten Canadian townships, but this was "only a drop in the bucket of the Army's requirements."³²

South African and Rhodesian whites already viewed the BSAC and the British government as meddlers in colonial affairs about which they knew little. The *Rhodesia Herald's* editorial page carried a letter to the editor of South Africa's *Die Volkstem* that opposed Booth's plan on grounds

30. Begbie, *Life of General William Booth*, 2, 331–35.

31. Ervine, *God's Soldier*, 2, 791–94.

32. *Rhodesia Herald*, Aug. 23, 1907, and Sept. 6, 1907.

that the new emigrants, once settled on the Salvation Army's Rhodesian farm colonies, would leave the colony to flock to gold fields and become a nuisance. The *Kimberly Advertiser* preferred that the BSAC send settlers to Rhodesia from South Africa, which at the time was suffering from an economic depression. The *Advertiser* reasoned that South Africans had qualities that would be invaluable to Rhodesia, whereas Booth's poor urban migrants would run from adversity, die from malaria, gravitate to towns, and intensify Rhodesia's unemployment problem. It concluded that new colonies had a right to a better class of men than that of England's surplus slum populations.³³

Nothing came of the BSAC offer to fund Booth's emigration scheme. The BSAC announced in January 1908 that "neither large monetary assistance nor free land will be forthcoming." South Africa was on the verge of concluding a plan of Union in 1907-8, between the former Boer and British colonies, which would detach South Africa politically from Britain's colonial control. This would initiate what Thomas Pakenham calls the beginning of the decolonization of Africa so far as white control was concerned.³⁴

In this unsettled era, the *Rhodesia Herald* reported on January 18, 1908 that General Booth was "terribly disappointed at the lack of enterprise by the Company." But on February 28 the *Herald* rumored once again that a settlement had been made after all. The BSAC would provide millions of dollars for Booth's "efficient organization" to solve Britain's unemployment with a plan to colonize Rhodesia with white settlers. The BSAC would ask British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey for a government charter to turn Rhodesia into a "flourishing industrial nation."³⁵ But surely Booth's request would be a minor concern of the British foreign ministry at a time when Britain was considering withdrawal from its colonial chores in South Africa.

In April 1908, over two years after William Booth recommenced his exhausting campaign to garner financial aid from the British government and the BSAC, his solicitor received news from the BSAC that their board definitely would not provide money for his Rhodesia Scheme. The General lamented that he had wasted "two years and five months spent in anxious negotiation, and more money than I like to calculate spent in the inspection

33. "Salvation Army Settlers," *Rhodesia Herald*, April 10, 1908, 4; "Salvation Settlers," *Rhodesia Herald*, April 17, 1908, 4.

34. Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 665-7.

35. "Salvation Settlers," *Rhodesia Herald*, Jan. 17, 1908, 4; "Salvation Settlement," *Rhodesia Herald*, Feb. 28, 1908, 3; Begbie, *Life of General William Booth*, 2, 331-35, 359, 361-70, 372-73, 379-80, discusses Booth's Rhodesian Colony Scheme at length.

of the country, drawing up legal documents and other matters. It may turn out useful in the future; but I don't know—God's will be done.”³⁶

Booth issued a public statement on May 22: “I regret to say [that] owing to [the] inadequate response of the British South Africa Company shareholders to [our] appeal for fresh capital [the] undertaking must be abandoned.” He had hoped for millions of acres and large amounts of capital. He had intended to experiment for two years to prove that the scheme worked before he launched the full program. The Army's Chief of Staff, his son Bramwell, said diplomatically that the BSAC “are as acutely disappointed as we are at the temporary abandonment of the scheme.” Nevertheless, he argued that “The great hope for the future of Rhodesia lies in obtaining a good white population.”³⁷ No doubt sending a “white population” to Rhodesia was the sentiment of the day, but the BSAC was likely having second thoughts on who should administer the plan.

In spite of the fact that General Booth shared the racial sentiments of the British government and BSAC, his plan to provide white settlers from London's slums to enhance white settler control in southern Africa was not accepted by either funding source. The BSAC gave no reason for rejecting his scheme apart from a lack of money. Did they believe that the Salvation Army was incapable of carrying out the plan administratively? Were they concerned about the quality of the emigrants from London's East End? Were they worried about the reaction of white settlers already in South Africa and Rhodesia to a scheme that was under the control of missionaries, whom they possibly saw as religious fanatics? Did they know that Booth's Scheme was the product of Frank Smith's planning? Smith had resigned his Salvation Army post and was by now a Fabian and a socialist member of the London County Council. Was it the Church of England, speaking for itself or the Charity Organization Society and other conservative organizations that blocked Booth's ambition? Certainly Booth had many detractors by 1908, yet in spite of what his detractors might have been saying, by that spring the Salvation Army was running farms at Rondebosch and Talagourria in South Africa and at Pearson (formerly Mazoe) near Salisbury in Rhodesia. But William Booth's hope of spreading his grand imperial plan in Southern Africa was now nearly dead in spite of his blind hope for a resurrection.³⁸

Four months later, in September 1908, the seventy-nine-year-old William Booth arrived in Southern Africa for a tour that included his visit to

36. Begbie, *Life of General William Booth*, 2, 358–59.

37. “Salvation Settlers,” *Rhodesia Herald*, May 22, 1908, 4.

38. “Salvation Army,” *Rhodesia Herald*, May 22, 1908, 7; “Town Council Report,” *Rhodesia Herald*, June 12, 1908, 3.

Rhodesia. He reasserted his goal to send England's unemployed to Southern Africa. A farm settlement run by Salvation Army officers would find a place where white people who were content with essentials would live decently. He would send 4,000 British settlers to Rhodesia at a cost of £400 per family. Sensitive to South African public opinion, he allowed that some of the settlers might be from South Africa. Settlers would pay off loans for their property on an installment plan as they had done at the Army's land settlements in India, Australia and North America.

Booth told the media that the Salvation Army was working in fifty-three countries with 1,000 trained officers. It fed 200,000 and sheltered 22,000 "wretched creatures" every week. The *Rhodesia Herald's* editorials now thought better of the General than they had earlier in 1908. Now he was the "grand old man of the Salvation Army," whose "fierce energy had caused the Army to work with the poor with honest purpose." Apparently his charismatic presence was modifying the editor's earlier opposition.

Booth had no message for black Africans to encourage their economic well-being or their human rights. Instead he advocated that the African "character must be made good." They must "not simply be taught to read and write and calculate." He shared the well-accepted notion that the Africans' role would be that of unskilled laborers, as it was in other white-dominated nations.

As for southern African governments, Booth brandished his autocratic formula for maintaining an orderly civilization. "What South Africa needs is strong government, but strong government has gone out of fashion."³⁹ In fact, paternalism remained much in vogue as the best way to deal with Africans, at least until 1960.⁴⁰ A Plan of Union for South Africa would increase apartheid (racial separation) in the Cape Colony where there had been limited liberal rule before the British negotiations with the Boers (Dutch-speaking people of the Transvaal). If any population proved difficult for the British to control it was the Boer settlers who had preceded them to Southern Africa. Was this was the population that Booth had in mind for discipline?

At Booth's first stop in Rhodesia in October he met a small group of the Army's white and African converts at Woodleigh Farm. The train that

39. "'General' Booth," *Rhodesia Herald*, Sept. 3, 1908; "'General' Booth," Sept. 4, 1908, 11; "'General' Booth," Sept. 18, 1908, 3; "'General' Booth," Sept. 18, 1908, 7.

40. Even the most liberal missionary teachers dealt with Africans by caning and other forms of harsh discipline during the 1950s, according to Ruth Weiss (with Jane Parpart), *Sir Garfield Todd and the Making of Zimbabwe*, 103. While Todd served as Prime Minister in the 1950s he returned to his mission school on weekends to administer discipline.

the BSAC provided for him stopped briefly at Leighwoods railway siding. James Usher, a Salvationist who owned the Woodleigh Farm, had arrived in Bulawayo (the Matabeleland capital) in 1894. In 1899 he had married the Army's local Corps Officer, Captain Jessie Stuart Rogers, whom the Army had appointed the previous year. In 1902 the Ushers attended the funeral of Cecil Rhodes and his burial in the Motopos hills, south of Bulawayo, a possible indication of their social standing and identification with the white BSAC government.⁴¹

On October 1 the General addressed a packed civic reception at Bulawayo's Grand Hotel at which the Mayor presided. He described the success of his colonizing venture in Canada as proof that he would not use Rhodesia as a dumping ground for England's urban refuse.⁴² On October 8 Booth arrived at Salisbury's train depot to be greeted by "all classes"—although reporters listed only white celebrities of social rank: "prominent residents and business men." Booth told the cheering crowd that they knew "little of poverty here in Salisbury." Nevertheless, even here some had "slipped down in the battle of life" and needed "spiritual assistance." Booth lodged with the BSAC Administrator, Sir William Milton, who presided at his Drill Hall lecture. Attorney General Tredgold, Marshall Hole, Mayor Ross and Salisbury's city councilors were in the audience. Booth drew a word picture of London's East End, a "continent of misery and crime," where in 1865 he had begun his mission to "alleviate that ocean of misery" by rescuing more than just the "vicious and criminal classes." Again he was responding to criticism that his Darkest England scheme would dump Britain's slum dwellers on African soil.

When Booth returned to Cape Town to prepare to leave for home he called his colonization scheme the most exciting project "since Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt." If he found support he could fit "all of Britain's unemployed" into South Africa. Dr. Jameson, who had just concluded a four-year term as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, had provided the Booth party with a railway car for his trip to Rhodesia and had given substantial grants to the Salvation Army's Rondebosch Social Farm for ex-convicts established in 1893.⁴³

41. Paton, *'Mzilikazi': A Biography of Lieut. Colonel John Tudor Usher*, 4–22.

42. "General Booth: Arrival in Salisbury, A Hearty Welcome," *Rhodesia Herald*, Oct. 9, 1908, 4; "The General's Story, 43 years of Work, Colonization Schemes," *Rhodesia Herald*, Oct. 10, 1908, 4.

43. "General Booth, Another Lecture," *Rhodesia Herald*, Oct. 16, 1908, 7, no longer placed General in inverted commas, a practice *The Times* of London employed to take note of Booth's self-imposed title (actually a brief form of "General Superintendent," the title Booth had used in his Christian Mission, 1865–78. See the *Church Times'* sarcastic

But by the fall of 1908 Booth had failed to gain support for his plan to develop a farm colony for white settlers in Rhodesia. Neither the British government nor the British South Africa Company would offer land or money. His hopes to turn Rhodesia into a settlement for England's unemployed were dashed. Now he would have to find other means of building his Christian imperium in Southern Africa. Conceivably he would expand work that the Army was already doing by following the lead of other missions in "civilizing" and "Christianizing" the Africans, using funds from the BSAC government.

SAMPLE

comment of July 23, 1897. See also "South African News: General Booth Leaves for England," *Rhodesia Herald*, Oct. 16, 1908, 11; *Rhodesia Herald*, Nov. 15, 1908. See also "Darkest England Helpers," *The Darkest England Gazette*, Nov. 11, 1893, 7.