

Moyles, R. G. *The Blood and Fire in Canada: A History of the Salvation Army in Canada, 1882-1976*. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977. Pp. viii, 312, Appendices. \$5.95 paper, \$15.00 cloth

Richard Allen

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It is no criticism of this lively, informative and thoughtful book to say that it is not the definitive history of the Salvation Army in Canada. R. G. Moyles, himself a Salvationist and a member of the English Department of the University of Alberta, has combined sympathy and scholarship with good narrative sense to produce what may well be the best brief popular history of a national Salvation Army. Certainly it is a distinct advance by almost any measure on Wisbey's Soldiers Without Swords (USA 1955), and Canadian Salvationists can shout "Hallelujah!" that their story is no longer limited to a few anecdotal, biographical, controversial or official accounts.

The work is based upon extensive research in Salvation Army primary sources, including the entire run of the Army's official publication The War Cry and numerous interviews. Church and secular press reports have been liberally utilized, and secondary background literature, both on the Army here and abroad, and related religious and social movements have been consulted. The research is not even throughout, but neither is the availability of sources.

Moyles has divided his account into three parts corresponding to major phases of Salvationist history: first, the formative years, 1882 to 1900, when the Army expanded from Ontario beginnings into the rest of the country, ending with a short but notable foray into the Yukon; second, the years of crisis and consolidation, 1892-1945 which saw defection, slow growth, major crises like the loss of much of its upper leadership in the sinking of the Empress of Ireland in 1914, and the rejuvenation and popularity consequent to service in two wars; and third, the post-war years, for which Moyles attempts not so much to chronicle events as to weave salient developments and issues around the central tension in Army history -- social service or evangelism. "War, War," he concludes is still the cry on both fronts.

Understandably, the heroic age when the Army encountered the new land, formed its character and left an indelible imprint on the landscape of urban Canada especially, preoccupies almost half the text. Chapters on methods, the Army press, and "Songs they used to sing," while tantalizingly brief, do much both to set mood and relate the incredible variety of the Army's assault, from the abandon of the "Hallelujah Runaway" to the ingenuity of the "Trade March." Many accounts have played up the opposition the early Army aroused. Moyles is colourful but restrained in recounting it, noting the Army's ready use of the courts in self-defence. Only in Quebec was there systematic and organized opposition. Moyles allows that the mid-eighties were hardly the time to invade Quebec, but the point loses its force in the light of the later similar response meted out to Jehovah's Witnesses.

Moyles is generally attentive to and quite deft in sketching social background, and relies heavily on S. D. Clark's classic combination of frontierism and the church-sect thesis in his explanations. At a number of points, pressing a little further into the role of social factors would not have detracted from Moyles determination to avoid a heavy scholarly hand. A more critical use of Clark would have been helpful. Moyles account suggests that, given the Army's equal failure in the settled Maritimes and on the prairie frontier, and its equal success in old Newfoundland settlements and the new underside of the industrial city, a closer analysis of the constituency might well reveal not open frontier conditions, but common factors of Britishness, extreme deprivation and residual Protestantism to be the critical combination in the social basis of Salvation Army appeal in Canada.

Moyles rightly claims a place for the Army in the annals of social reform in Canada, given its development of a number of new social institutions and the prominence of its leaders in important innovations such as prison parole. Salvationists adopted the patents of social reform, but Moyles assures us that, given the Army's specialization on reclamation and rehabilitation and its emphasis on evangelism, it had neither the motive nor objective of reforming society as such. This too easily cuts the ground from under any examination of the Army's linkages with other religiously motivated reform groups. There is no reference to participation in the Social Service Council -- and more astonishingly, nothing on prohibition -- which might at least have been presumed to have had a notable effect upon Salvationist activities.

A question may also be put to Moyles' differentiation of Salvationism and the Social Gospel. He recognizes that not all modern Christian social service is Social Gospel, and his location of the difference between the Army and the Social Gospel in the former's entrenched evangelical doctrines -- such as original sin -- may not be wrong (though I would want to refine the point considerably), but the difference may also lie in whether members originated in a social grouping which opened them to, or preserved them from intellectual temptation and the erosion of inherited belief.

If Moyles does not press social origins very far into service in the first half of the book, in the last section he reveals how far the Army has become, not a Church of the disinherited as it would have liked, but a respectable, conservative professionalized social service church which has made its own contribution to the organizational society and has not been untouched by the rationalization and secularizing of life in the modern city. This book does not answer all the questions urban -- or religious -- historians might bring to it, but it offers a vivid and frank accounting of one of an important and distinctive components of the Canadian urban past.

Richard Allen
Department of History
McMaster University