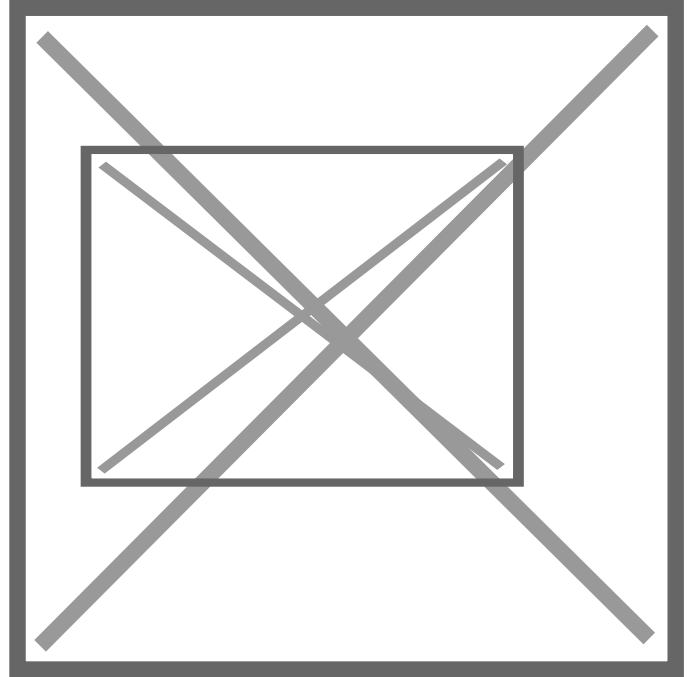


## A Western officer participates in an historic beginning

by Kelly Pontsler, Major –



Major Kelly Pontsler uses a toothpaste tube as a prop during an open air meeting.

*Major Kelly Pontsler is national coordinator/ leader/Poland Support Team—Hope Action, Paris, recently under secretary for Southern Europe at International Headquarters. She is helping with the legalities of establishing The Salvation Army in Poland. Here are her reflections on the launch weekend.*

There are few moments in life when you know that you are experiencing something truly historic. Sunday 25 September was one of those moments for me! On the third floor of the History Institute, overlooking the old square, we witnessed the official opening of The Salvation Army in Warsaw.

There, in a diverse congregation of over 100 people that Sunday afternoon, were Polish nationals and international guests, first-time visitors and lifelong Salvationists. I am convinced that it was no accident that we were together in that place. We were able to catch a small glimpse of God's "master plan."

During this time of celebration we seized every opportunity to make the Army visible. I was assigned to lead three open airs on Saturday, something I will confess I hadn't done in a while! With balloons and an ensemble from the Exeter Temple (England) band, we certainly caught people's attention. On

a street corner, in a central park, and in the old town square, we proclaimed our love for God and his love for us to hundreds of people. We stood in awe as we watched our new soldier lead a woman to the Lord.

On Sunday Captains Andrei and Olga Iniutochkin were installed as the coordinating officers in Warsaw. This young Moldovan couple, recently commissioned as officers of the Eastern Europe Territory, have no fear: they will do anything and talk to anyone, and they have a vision for the Army in Warsaw. Together with the two newly enrolled soldiers (who were both commissioned as local officers at the same time), they make a great team.

I am privileged to be part of the international team who, under the leadership of Colonel Vibeke Krommenhoek, is responsible for guiding the early development of the Army's work in Warsaw. From my desk in the Europe department at International Headquarters, Poland was one of several countries that we might move into "some day, way down the road." I never dreamed that I would be there to see the inauguration of the work! God does accomplish the extraordinary.

We spend time in prayer each day that we are together, to seek his guidance and to know his heart. I suspect that the future will be unlike anything that we can imagine today. But one thing is certain: God has a plan for The Salvation Army in Warsaw. And I can't wait to see it unfold!