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African heritage conference focuses on outreach

The importance of using the language of love to connect “God’s mosaic creation.”

by Tory Ross, Captain –

Over 100 delegates from across all four territories recently traveled to Pennsylvania for the Eastern Territory’s “Empowerment 2008” a conference on African heritage and diversity in the Army. Eight delegates represented the Western Territory.

While admiring the beauty of autumn leaves in various shades of red, orange, yellow and brown—symbolizing the diversity of God’s creation—delegates attended workshops in subjects including successful strategies for building multicultural ministries, mentoring, and networking; multicultural congregations from a biblical perspective; history of the Army in communities of African descent and in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Many of the people who come through the doors in Army corps look, smell and speak differently. Regardless of these differences, however, they will clearly recognize and feel a language of love we show them a language that will transcend any of the superficial differences we all have; a language that will win souls for the kingdom of God.

The weekend conference left me empowered and reminded me of the uniqueness of the Army—an Army that meets the spiritual needs, and more, for the “whosoever” regardless of color, age or economic standing.

With other delegates of multiple ethnicities, we defined the language of love as one that transcends color and cultural lines and reaches into the hearts, souls, and minds of a world that is hurting and in desperate need of God’s healing power. It is a love that refuses to give in to the sin that so easily divides and tries to conquer, to squelch and overpower, to dismiss and not recognize.

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:12-14).

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