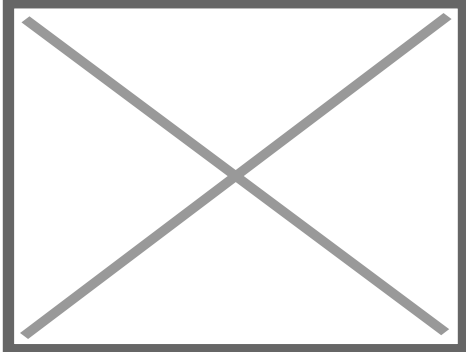


## Army's youth are "Raised Up"

**Over 1,000 Salvationist youth gather in Sweden for the World Youth Convention.**



Western soldiers Sarah Wild and Mark Svenson join other delegates at the World Youth Convention.



Stockholm University, Sweden, welcomed 1,100 Salvationists between the ages of 18 and 28 for the World Youth Convention (WYC) on July 15-18, 2010.

Held in the Aula Magna area of the university, the conference included discussions on realism, idealism, inclusiveness, compassion, simplicity, internationalism, being visible and being audible.

Because the number of delegates from each territory and command was limited, Army youth leaders organized events to run concurrent with the event. Some were linked via satellite, which broadcasted the General's messages worldwide. The Raised Up website kept Salvationists informed of the schedule and allowed them to participate via virtual experience.

### **Challenge, contemplation and celebration**

Commissioner Sue Swanson, world secretary for women's ministries, addressed the crowd on Friday morning, saying that all Salvationists must consider officership.

"It is obvious that every committed Salvationist will need at some point to work through whether they have been called by God to officership or not," Swanson said.

"If it is for you the call will become increasingly obvious and strong. God's Word will direct you to it, circumstances will lead you to it, applicable spiritual gifts will start to come alive and others will say to you that they can see you as an officer," she said.

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“Every soldier is a candidates’ secretary,” she added. “If you recognize that another Salvationist is being called to officership it’s your responsibility to assist them to take the step.”

Following Swanson’s words, many delegates sought additional information on becoming an officer.

Major Sandra Ryan, Canada and Bermuda Territory, was the keynote speaker for the late morning Friday session. Speaking on “sacrifice,” she emphasized the reality of sin and its devastating consequences, admonishing that all Christians should hate it and avoid it and its brutal repercussions.

Friday afternoon consisted of 20 focus groups discussing worship, ministry opportunities, human trafficking, health, and The Salvation Army and politics.

In the late evening service, Lt. Colonels Janet and Richard Munn, International Headquarters, outlined the importance of spiritual disciplines. General Shaw Clifton and Commissioner Helen Clifton participated in a question and answer time, discussing they discussed family life and officership, sacraments, women officers in leadership, human trafficking, evangelism and much more.

This, and every evening, concluded with an “After Glow,” a time of celebration and fellowship.

### **Social justice**

On Saturday, Commissioner Clifton addressed the issue of human trafficking, informing the assembly of the many miracles the Army is encountering as they become more involved in rescuing people from this contemporary form of slavery. She gave a “Wake Up Call” to not only be educated on trafficking statistics, but also become involved. She urged everyone to “join the fight.”

“We need to be wiser and better trained, but without losing the deep passion for those who have lost their innocence and succumbed to what is a sad and lonely life. The work involves prevention, prosecution, protection and prayer,” she said.

The social justice theme continued in the following session as Commissioner Christine MacMillan, director, International Social Justice Commission (ISJC), addressed the convention via DVD. She said that the ISJC wrestles with the challenge of extreme wealth versus extreme poverty—one of the most prominent world injustices—and is researching the condition in depth.

“Our journey of faith needs to be disturbed by all injustices in the world,” she said.

Lt. Colonel Geanette Seymour, assistant director, ISJC, summed up the ISJC’s message: “We have come from the east and the west to this convention but we need to go beyond the talk. There is a need to love, understand and to share,” she said.

Saturday’s activities included an outreach event—lasting eight and a half hours—in Stockholm city center. Around 4,000 people enjoying a day in the park witnessed the enthusiasm of the Army’s performers and delegates.

General Clifton shared Christ’s message and explained the meaning behind the colors of The Salvation Army flag—the blood of Christ, the fire of the Holy Spirit, and the purity of God. This was

new information for the non-Salvationists of Sweden, who live in one of the most secularized countries in the world, with less than one percent of the population attending church.

The surprise of the day was the arrival of the Sri Lankan delegation after two days of passport problems and overbooked planes.

### **God's call**

Hundreds of life-changing decisions were made on the final day of the WYC. When General Clifton made several appeals concerning officership, over 200 delegates made their way to the stage and mercy seat. His initial call for those who had already commenced their application resulted in 120 responders; 80 more came forward confessing to having a compulsion from God to apply for officership and another 60 said they needed more time to pray and consider it. Lastly, he called for current officers to renew their commitments and ask God for fruitful appointments, courage and added purity, power, health, strength and wisdom.

“The WYC was one of the best experiences of my life. I not only felt a strong affirmation of my desire to become an officer, but I also feel more and more that I really need to stop focusing on what the world thinks is so great, and focus on my own personal holiness. As Christians we're not meant to be popular, we are meant to go against the flow, to be radical,” Western Territory delegate Susan Cassin said.

After the General's sermon on “Who are you going to be?” Chief of the Staff Commissioner Barry Swanson led the morning holiness meeting. Commissioner Sue Swanson spoke via satellite to Salvationists in South Africa.

Commissioner Helen Clifton spoke on Sunday afternoon regarding the advances the Army is making throughout the world and asked for prayer that it would continue to grow. A combined prayer meeting led by Captain Matt Clifton, UK Territory with the Republic of Ireland, concluded the day.

Although the flags came down at 11 p.m., it was not over for the delegates. The weekend came to an end, but the work of God continues in and through them.

“Overall, the World Youth Conference has left an everlasting impact on my life. I think of the miles everybody traveled, to the words that were spoken, and the connections to young adult Salvationists from around the world. I know that I will have friendships down the road because of this. My heart has been changed to see a wider view of the world, and to admire the beauty that God has created.” Matt McQuade, Western territorial delegate, said.

*From international news reports by Major Laurie Robertson*