

Commissioning seminars spark spiritual revival

English and Spanish-language seminars aim to develop spirituality.

By Vivian Gatica

Commissioning weekend's Spiritual Life Development seminar on June 15, themed "Life with God," was based on James Bryan Smith's Christian Apprentice book series: "The Good and Beautiful God," "The Good and Beautiful Life," and "The Good and Beautiful Community."

"The purpose of the seminar was to help equip, encourage and empower officers, ministry leaders and local officers to become more Christ-like themselves so that when they return to their appointments and ministries they can serve as promoters of the spiritual formation concepts presented, and thus help our soldiers, adherents and friends experience total transformation," said Major Steve Bradley, Spiritual Life Development secretary, who organized the event.

The seminar consisted of six sessions emphasizing several points: the most important thing between you (and your church), the definition of the kingdom of God, growing your relationship with God, the number one spiritual illness, the power of community, and discipleship. Speakers included Smith and Matthew Johnson, assistant minister at Andover United Methodist Church in Andover, Kan.

"The sessions are meant to lead people to trust Jesus with their whole lives," Smith said. "The best offer in the universe is to live as Jesus' apprentice."

Smith focused on discipleship, and how to implement the narrative of Christ at corps.

"There's really no denomination that makes discipleship their primary focus, and I think that created the stage for what we looked at in the seminar," said Captain Jonathan Harvey. "It is important that our congregations learn to be disciples, and obviously that starts with us as corps officers."

Attendees said it was a reminder that spiritual growth is an ongoing process.



“I was spiritually refreshed and encouraged to keep moving forward no matter what,” said Major Victoria Shiroma.

Simultaneously, hundreds of Spanish-speaking corps members attended the Spanish Doctrine Seminars focused on The Salvation Army doctrines and how to handle controversial themes at corps.

“The seminars addressed problems existing in corps, and how to eliminate them,” said Lt. Colonel Zoilo Pardo, territorial multicultural ministries secretary, who led the seminar.

Speakers addressed topics including the danger of not discerning, apostasy, sects, judgement, false prophets, false doctrines, and controversial themes.

“The topics touched upon at the seminars are relevant to the times in which we are living,” said Major Gil Román, a speaker at the seminar. “These teachings are necessary in order for the Word of God to be taught effectively at our corps.”

Pardo said the goal of the seminars was to advise Salvationists on how to follow a healthy evangelical doctrine in dangerous times.

“I think the seminars helped prepare us for the problems that trouble our corps,” said Manuel García, youth leader at the Bellflower Temple Corps. “They taught us how to look to God to better serve our community and others.”