

The Salvation Army's international leaders visit Finland and Estonia

General André Cox reminding the Finnish Salvation Army not to, even in celebration, rest on their laurels but to remember the God-given mission they are here to do. At the Temple Hall in Helsinki during the 125 Meeting of the Finnish Salvation Army on 9 November 2014.



The General and Commissioner Silvia Cox lead 125th anniversary celebrations in Finland.

General André Cox and Commissioner Silvia Cox, World President of Women's Ministries, traveled to the Finland and Estonia Territory for the 125th anniversary of The Salvation Army in Finland.

For Finns it was a special treat to welcome back officers who had led the territory from 2005 to 2008. Salvationists from across Finland and Estonia attended weekend anniversary celebrations themed "I Will Fight," based on Ephesians 6:10-16.

Before traveling to Finland, the Coxes spent time in the Estonia Region, where they saw The Salvation Army's work in Tallinn, including the Hope House rehabilitation program and the new regional office.

The actual anniversary weekend started with officers councils on Friday, followed by the commissioning and ordination of cadets, when Territorial Commander Colonel Johnny Kleman commissioned two new officers. In her Bible message, Commissioner Cox reminded the new officers and all Salvationists present that they need to take on the full armor of God, know their enemy, follow their leaders, know their battle orders, know their weapons and always be prepared for battle.

[The Salvation Army '125 years in Finland' press conference, at the Salvation Army's Temple Hall in Helsinki.](#)
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at the Salvation Army's Temple Hall in Helsinki.

Pictured, from left to right, are:

Colonel Eva Kleman

Colonel Johnny Kleman (Territorial Commander),

General André Cox

Commissioner Silvia Cox

At the children's festival Saturday morning, the General and Commissioner Cox played with some of the children—admitting to the families present that young Salvationists always get to have the most fun! An open-air event took place in the centre of Helsinki, with a soup kitchen warming up the wintry proceedings as the brass band played. The General greeted the Finnish public and offered thanks to a major sponsor.

On Saturday afternoon, the Coxes attended a Salvation Army musical, "Love Looks Forward," composed and written by two cadets from Finland. Saturday ended with a Festival of Music and Poetry at Helsinki's famous Rock Church, which is quarried out of the natural bedrock. Finnish actress Ritva Oksanen sang and performed poems written by Commissioner Flora Larsson. The event included the launch of a new Finnish-language Salvation Army Song Book and a devotional book, "Through My Eyes," written by Territorial President of Women's Ministries Colonel Eva Kleman.

In his Bible address the General said that even though the meeting marked 125 years of ministry in Finland, "The Salvation Army's work is far from complete."

The major celebration took place Sunday morning, a day after the actual anniversary date of November 8. The newly renovated Temple Hall—home to Finland's first corps—was packed with people. The Minister of the Interior for Finland, Päivi Räsänen, shared a greeting from the Government of Finland in which she emphasized the important role of The Salvation Army in Finnish society. She also commended the spiritual aspects of The Salvation Army's methods of supporting people. Finland's Ecumenical Council and the Council of the Free Churches also shared greetings.

[People sing and clap to Salvation Army songs at the Temple Hall in Helsinki at the "I Will Fight" Finale Meeting](#)

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Finale Meeting of the Finnish Salvation

Army on 9 November 2014.

In his sermon, the General sent a strong message to Salvationists and others who had gathered to celebrate. "We need to take the breastplate of righteousness, which reflects the mind of Christ," he said. "Christ has not called us to convenience, but to write the history of the future. We need to be the witnesses of this time."

He reminded the congregation that everything the Finnish Salvation Army has accomplished has been through God's grace, offering the warning that if The Salvation Army is not wholly dependent on God it has no future. Many people responded to the General's message by moving to the mercy seat.

The meeting included the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in memory of Finnish Salvation Army General Jarl Wahlström.

The weekend concluded with a celebration meeting based around the theme "I Will Fight" in which a young Salvationist (and aspiring future officer) gave an inspired testimony of being called to do God's work. Commissioner Cox challenged her listeners to put the shoes of readiness on their feet so they can go forth and proclaim the message. "We need to strive toward those people who suffer and who are waiting for us to come," she said, "not just with our words but also with our deeds."

Report by Lt. Colonel Eija Kornilow