

First Territorial Latino Bible Conference held



Lt. Colonel Zoilo Pardo prays over an altar call. Photo by Erick Rodriguez

More than 700 people attend the conference at Pine Summit Camp.

By Erick Rodriguez

More than 700 Spanish-speaking Salvationists from all over the Western Territory assembled at Pine Summit Camp in Big Bear Lake, Calif., May 17-19, for the first-ever Conferencia Biblica del Territorio Oeste (Territorial Latino Bible Conference) to worship God, receive his word, and make new commitments.

“It’s important to have events like these to remind us of our commitment,” said Lt. Colonel Zoilo Pardo, territorial multicultural ministries secretary. “This weekend had a real impact on people’s lives and I believe that it will have lasting effects on families in their walk with Christ.”

The welcome meeting focused on the legacy and the growth in the Latino ministry throughout the Western Territory. Guest speakers for the weekend were Commissioners Torben and Deise Eliassen,

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who serve at International Headquarters as international secretary for the Americas and Caribbean and as zonal secretary for women's ministries—Americas and Caribbean, respectively. They brought a message that both satisfied and challenged the delegates to live lives committed to God and his Word.

Along with activities for the entire family, Saturday's offerings included spiritual enrichment workshops led by Dr. Enrique Torres, pastor of the Hispanic Baptist Church of Los Angeles, and a youth track led by Captains Sergio and Stephanie Garcia, Southern California divisional youth and candidates' secretaries. The Pine Summit staff provided childcare. The whole camp came alive with soccer tournaments, a Latino festival, and games for everyone.

Attendees appreciated that they could participate in an event without translation, so the message could be captured in Spanish.

Various corps participated in evening meetings through song, dance and dramatic presentations. Delegates shared powerful testimonies. Surround the City, the Southern California divisional worship team, led worship in song.

Pardo led the Sunday school lesson on being committed to God, and emphasized the importance of evangelism, sanctification and supporting the Army to help spread God's kingdom.

"The CBTO was a tremendous success," said Lt. Colonel Edward Hill, Western territorial secretary for program. "Commissioners' Knaggs are to be commended for having the vision to make this particular event a priority and a reality that will pay great dividends going forward for the Latino ministry of The Salvation Army."

The weekend ended with a challenge from Eliassen to live lives that show commitment to God, while making a difference in the world.

Pili Martinez-Moore, territorial Latino ministries specialist, said, "God was present at the conference, and our hope is that our commitment to the truth will be forever present in the lives of every person who attended."