

General detects healthy Salvationist heartbeat in home territory

General_homeThe Salvation Army's international leader speaks about refugee crisis during territory's "Boundless Power" weekend.

By Nora Steiner –

General André Cox and Commissioner Silvia Cox, World President of Women's Ministries, returned to their home territory—Switzerland, Austria and Hungary—and received a warm welcome from the territorial leaders, Commissioners Massimo and Jane Paone. Throughout the "Boundless Power" weekend of Oct. 24-25, they focused on encouraging Salvationists to be confident in their mission.



On Saturday morning the international leaders met various church representatives at an informal gathering. The General stated his conviction that the European refugee crisis should be seen as a God-given opportunity to spread the message of hope beyond borders.

In the afternoon, leaders of Salvation Army social centers gathered to hear Cox, who urged the social department and corps to work hand in hand in order to be effective in reaching those in need. The General emphasised that good partnerships with the government and others are important, but it is also crucial that The Salvation Army remains true to its Christian values and biblical mission.

General_home2The evening "Powerful Praise" event brought together enthusiastic young people who were reminded that they too are an integral part of the Army. The General encouraged them to get involved as active members of God's family today. Dance, mime, testimonies and praise filled the meeting venue, and a number of young people came forward for prayer.

On Sunday morning Salvationists from across the territory joined for worship in Biel. Following a challenging message from Cox to carry the gospel to those in need, many people responded, some publicly accepting the call to officership in the Army. The Chief Secretary, Lt. Colonel Allan Hofer, appealed to local corps to welcome refugees as The Salvation Army's refugee centers in Switzerland are fully occupied with approximately 2,500 people. Fourteen corps quickly agreed to open their doors.

During the afternoon gathering the General asked Salvationists to remember their identity. "There are many churches. There is but one Salvation Army. We have a calling from God in this world," he said.

General_home4The General assured his listeners that when the Army helps people who suffer, the Holy Spirit will guide. In speaking about the refugee crisis, he observed: "We used to go to all countries in the world in order to share the gospel. Now, all the world comes to us. This may be a unique opportunity for our generation to share God's love visibly. I see a great harvest."

In the final celebration, Zürich Central Band, which had supported worship throughout the day, joined with Holy Noise Gospel Choir, a dance group and finally all participants, in singing God's praise. In her message, Commissioner Cox expressed the desire to see every person realize that with the Holy Spirit's power, fulfilling the Army's mission is possible.

The General was visibly moved by the way Salvationists responded: "Today has given me hope, because I have heard the Salvationist heartbeat once again," he concluded.