

General leads 25th anniversary celebrations in Russia





General André Cox and Commissioner Silvia Cox, World President of Women’s Ministries, led a congress to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Salvation Army restarting its ministry in Russia. People gathered from all around the country to meet in Rostov-on-Don to worship and hear God’s message.

The Salvation Army originally began working in Russia in 1910 but was proscribed in 1923 and reopened after the fall of Communism in July 1991.

The international leaders received a traditional “bread and salt” welcome at the start of the event.

The theme of the congress was based on Joshua 3:5: “*Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*” An opening celebration concert set an atmosphere of joy as the many

cultures of the Russian Salvation Army family joined together. The General spoke about the joy of knowing God before the concert finished with a laser show.

At a Worldwide Salvation Army Mission seminar, the Coxes spoke about their vision for the future of the Army. Explaining the need to be relevant in the 21st century, the General spoke openly about the current state of the worldwide Salvation Army. He called all Salvationists to take an active part in the “Whole World Mobilizing” campaign that will take place throughout 2017 and answered questions from delegates.

Over lunch the international leaders met with representatives from the Southern Russia Christian Association of Churches.

Later, the General spoke at a men’s rally, challenging his listeners to live in holiness. At the same time, delegates to a women’s rally under the leadership of Commissioner Cox heard how precious they are in the sight of the Almighty God.

Saturday concluded with a youth festival whose sections were based around the theme “I Came to Christ.” The event began in darkness with a countdown, before light was shone on a soldier from Elista Corps, in a wheelchair, who shared her poem, “About Christ.” The evening continued with youth rock band ANTICICLON singing “The Calling,” which was written especially for the congress.

Three young soldiers spoke about their response to God’s calling to officership before Silvia Cox shared her own personal testimony of her journey with Christ. She challenged her listeners to make a personal commitment to Jesus and, in response, many young people knelt at the mercy seat—some for the first time and others renewing their relationship with God. The evening concluded with young people laying their hands on and praying for the international leaders.

The holiness meeting on Sunday commenced with the song “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus,” followed by testimonies of personal relationships with Christ. The General spoke about visible grace, encouraging everyone to have a living relationship with Jesus. A group of 15 young people responded to the call for officership and many knelt in prayer both individually and in small corps groups. The meeting concluded with the General marching with the flag, joined by many Salvationists.

Returning to Moscow ahead of their flight home, the General and Commissioner Cox spent time at the Karl Larsson Centre, sharing tea and fellowship with the retired officers, employees and some homeless men from the Salvation Army social center.