

## Order of the Founder awarded during USA Southern Commissioning weekend

**General André Cox admits Commissioners James and Ruth Osborne to the Order of the Founder, the Army's highest honor.**

*By Allen Satterlee, Lt. Colonel –*

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Over a weekend that saw seekers kneel at the mercy seat in every meeting, General André Cox and Commissioner Silvia Cox (World President of Women's Ministries) were used by God to bring waves of blessing to Salvationists of the USA Southern Territory. Hosted in Atlanta, Georgia, by territorial leaders Commissioners Donald and Debora Bell, the international leaders were untiring during a demanding schedule which included commissioning celebrations, officers councils and the awarding of The Salvation Army's highest honor.

During the first days of the visit the General and Commissioner Cox led officers councils and had opportunity to spend quality time with the cadets of the Disciples of the Cross Session. Public events began with a soldiers rally on Friday night, at which the General challenged Salvationists to live in the joy of Pentecost. "We are the temples of the Holy Spirit," he said, "reflecting the fullness, abundance and praise that only God can give. We don't want to be lemon-sucking Christians. We should be the happiest people on the planet."

The crowning moment of the evening came when Commissioners James and Ruth Osborne, former USA national and USA Southern territorial leaders, were admitted jointly to the Order of the Founder – The Salvation Army's highest honor. The General described the couple as "spiritual giants," telling them: "I believe your spirit of Salvationism that you have shared together ... is something that would have commended itself to our Founder." The award's citation revealed that it was presented for "extraordinary leadership rendered to The Salvation Army in the United States," saying that the two recipients have "continuously managed to raise the standard of service by exhibiting a high degree of guidance, empowerment and clarity of mission, both as active officers and in post-retirement."

Another soldiers' rally – with an emphasis on youth – started Saturday activities. Speaking of the biblical record of Naaman, who was witnessed to by a young girl, Commissioner Cox reminded those present: "His life changed because of that one little girl. This teaches us that children in difficult



circumstances can be a light because they know who God is. We must teach our children the ways of God.”

A series of rallies followed for youth, men and women. Later that night a festival of praise highlighted the talents of the cadets, featuring thrilling testimonies from several about how God had touched their lives. The internationalism of the Disciples of the Cross Session was evident, with cadets from the USA being joined by people originally from The Philippines, Mexico, Cuba, Canada, Kenya and Korea.

The commissioning and ordination of the Disciples of the Cross Session was the focus of Sunday morning. Evangeline Booth College principal, Major Dean Hinson, presented 29 cadets and 9 auxiliary-captains who were “trained, taught and excited.” The territorial leaders saluted every cadet and auxiliary-captain, giving each a specially chosen Scripture promise.

In his Bible message the General reminded the new lieutenants: “These are sacred and solemn moments. God in his faithfulness still calls men and women to leave all to commit themselves to the building of his Kingdom. We leave behind our personal ambitions, hope for career or any monetary reward. The strong sense of calling demands that we cling to the Cross, no matter where we are sent.” He admitted: “I was not called to rank or position, but to proclaim the Gospel!”

At the end of the meeting an invitation was given for those who felt God’s call to officership. No fewer than 200 people crowded the stage in response.

The appointment service capped off the weekend with a spirit of joy and celebration. The sessional speaker, Lieutenant Arnaldo Peña, declared: “Our covenant is not with The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army did not call us – God did. It is my prayer that we are laying all we are on the altar every day. If we do that, the fire will come.”

The fire of the Holy Spirit came throughout the weekend as scores knelt in rededication, in response to God’s call to officership, and to be saved and sanctified.

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