

## The General Leads Thanksgiving and Celebrations in Japan



The General (third from left) with five young people whose coming of age (20) was recognised as part of 'New Adult Day' celebrations. From left: Mizuki Hirai, Kiho Arai, R. J. Manligas, Aki Yamaguchi and Koutaro Kumada

Salvationist from around Japan made their way to Tokyo to share in fellowship under the leadership of General Linda Bond. Meetings included the retirement of territorial leaders and the installation of their successors.

In the Sunday morning holiness meeting, having entered the meeting to the music from the Japan Staff Band, the General commended the impact of relief efforts which were carried out in the country after the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011, supported and prayed for by the worldwide Salvation Army.

The General enrolled nine senior soldiers before introducing the new Chief Secretary and Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries, Lieut-Colonels Kenji Fujii and Chiaki Fujii, who shared their testimonies. The 80-member united songsters from the Tokyo-Tokaido Division presented a vocal offering.

In her Bible message the General challenged the congregation to pursue holiness. She described holiness not as a matter of exterior deeds and words, but a heart-cleansing experience of transformation and full obedience to the Lord. Responding to the altar call, 56 people knelt to seek the blessing of a cleansed heart.

After the holiness meeting, laughter and joy filled the hall during a New Year luncheon for 385 young people. The General warmly welcomed them as a true sister to those who had gathered – through Jesus Christ.



She presented Bibles to five 20-year-olds to

celebrate their coming of age on 'New Adult Day' – a traditional Japanese celebration marked by a national holiday – and encouraged them to go with God. Salvationists sang the territorial theme chorus for the Year of Youth before the new territorial commander (Commissioner Jiro Katsuchi) gave the Bible message, stating his intention to reach young peoples' souls by every way possible.

Salvationists, employees and friends of the Army from around Japan gathered in the afternoon for the retirement and installation ceremonies of the territorial leaders. Commissioners Makoto and Kaoru Yoshida were presented with retirement certificates which remarked on their sincere, encouraging, influencing and challenging service that advanced the Army's mission at home and abroad. These qualities had been clearly seen during their almost six years of territorial leadership. Members of the family were invited to stand with the commissioners before the General shared words of thanks and prayer, followed by the couple's faithful testimonies. The congregation responded with warm applause.

The Japan Staff Songsters' item 'I Surrender to the Lord' helped to prepare the hearts and minds of the congregation for the installation ceremony of the new territorial leaders, Commissioner Jiro and

Keiko Katsuchi. The General solemnly led the ceremony before offering prayers of dedication.

Commissioner Jiro Katsuchi stated his determination to live and die for Christ.

The General spoke about the International Vision – One Army, One Mission, One Message. She said that The Salvation Army needs leaders who are Spirit filled, mission possessed, and who are people of integrity and influence. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, 19 people responded to the altar call.

Afterwards, a long line of Salvationists greeted the General and the territorial leaders.

*Report by Keiko Saito*