

Discovering God's 'Amazing Love'

DSC_0157 Delegates explore the kingdom of God at WBC 2014.

By Erica Helton, Captain –

Over 500 Salvationists from around the Western Territory gathered at Pine Summit Campgrounds in Big Bear Lake, Calif., seeking deeper contact with "Amazing Love."

The theme for this year's Salvation Army Western Bible Conference (WBC) was based on Ephesians 3:18, and challenged delegates to wonder at God's amazing love, experience it first hand in their lives, and then live it out in such a way that others might share its blessings.

"As with previous WBCs, it once again provided opportunities [for delegates] to be spiritually challenged and inspired to strengthen their faith in God," said Major Victoria Shiroma, WBC event coordinator. "Every WBC held since the first one in 2008 was successful because people accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior or deepened their spiritual walk with God—that is the focus and goal of each WBC."

Western territorial leaders Commissioners James and Carolyn Knaggs presided at the event. Guest speakers were Colonels Mark and Sharon Tillsley, chief secretary and secretary for women's ministries respectively for the Canada and Bermuda Territory, and Dr. Roger Green, professor and chair of Biblical and Theological Studies at Gordon College.

Colonel Mark Tillsley challenged listeners to consider God's constant and committed love for his people amidst ever changing circumstances and shifting positions, even within the Christian community. Tillsley called all Salvationists to experience a life committed to God's amazing love. He also examined how Paul expressed God's love through his message to the Ephesians, and challenged the congregation to present Christ to others through concrete actions.

Addressing the idea of love in a church, Tillsley acknowledged that being a part of the family of God does not always produce feelings of gladness, as our desire for individuality and sin can be a barrier to unity. Calling for a time of prayer, he challenged congregants to consider their own role within their families, corps and communities to bring about unity.



Throughout the conference, Green led a biblical study that uncovered God's kingdom through parables, miracles and laws, and examined the delegates' role in the kingdom.

[DSC_0228](#)“There were many significant statements Dr. Roger Green shared, but one that stood out the most for me was that obedience to God is the mark of a true believer and not spirituality, which is the outcome of obedience,” Shiroma said. “Colonel Mark Tillsley’s statement that ‘When the Holy Spirit is allowed to minister, there is a newness, an authenticity to prayer and Bible study and worship,’ reminded me that it’s through the Holy Spirit that makes prayer, Bible study and worship real and effective in a believer’s life.”

Shiroma said that the mercy seat (altar) was often so crowded after the united meetings that some delegates had to wait for spaces to open before they could kneel and pray. Delegates signed up to be online spiritual coaches, while others were inspired to be proactive about visiting clients at social service programs managed by The Salvation Army and offer them an opportunity to be involved in corps ministries like Sunday worship and youth activities.

According to Shiroma, delegates could attend various afternoon workshops including discovering one’s spiritual gifts, how to evangelize, how to link social service clients into corps ministries, and how to be an online spiritual coach.

Musician Sarah Groves appeared during the week, and performed songs spanning her life and career.

To conclude WBC, Tillsley prayed over the delegates of WBC, so that they would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and know Christ’s love.

[gss ids="8284,8274,8276,8286,8285,8283,8278,8275,8279,8277,8273?"]