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news



The five cadets who were commissioned – David Delany, Vikki Song, Beola Conteh, Leeanne Pattison and Edward Conteh.

Cadets commissioned in inspiring and encouraging services

By Lerrisse Smith

Inspiring testimonies of lives radically transformed and amazing miracles birthed in prayer were key highlights of the Ordination, Commissioning and Sending Out of the Defenders of Justice and Reflectors of Holiness.

Cadets Edward and Beola Conteh (Defenders of Justice), David Delany (Reflectors of Holiness) and Vikki Song (Reflectors of Holiness) were all commissioned at Auburn Corps with a special and moving service befitting such an occasion interspersed with powerful messages of support and encouragement. Cadet Leeanne Pattison (Defenders of Justice) was commissioned at Adelaide City Salvos.

"This is such an exciting day for you," Captain Kylie Herring, Leader of Officer Formation, told the cadets.

"It's been our privilege to walk alongside you. We are delighted you were able to experience this event in person surrounded by people that have loved you, encouraged you and supported you along the way."

Several other Salvationists spoke at the service, including Chief Secretary Colonel Winsome Merrett, Secretary for Personnel Lieut-Colonel Chris Reid and Territorial Commander Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, who led the declaration of faith and doctrines, ordination and commissioning. Worship music by the Hurstville Songsters and Auburn Music Team also formed part of the event.

A special feature of the Commissioning was a video compilation showcasing the cadets' training during the past few years.

For Lieutenant Vikki Song, who was commissioned on Sunday and introduced the video to the service attendees, the training was a transformative journey for her personal spiritual growth and theological competency. It also sharpened her tools for the ministry role.

"It's not only for the sake of shaping me into a minister but also for reshaping me from the very deep of knowing into a holistically healthy new self and being equipped into a capable servant leader of God," Vikki said.

"The formation allowed me to develop my leadership skills based on who I am, my gifts and strengths, as well as ►

my weaknesses. I have been able to integrate my learning in many practical ways, such as how to maintain an ongoing relationship with God, how to reflect spiritually and theologically in both personal life and ministry matters, the theologies of what we do as The Salvation Army, why we do them, and how I can apply them into practice.

"I have also been integrating the learnt skills into practice, such as preaching, pastoral care, healthy boundary settings, and relationship building.

Vikki also thanked and acknowledged the officer formation team of Kylie, Heather, Andrew, and Sharon and how their love, dedication, and commitment to the cadets' training had blessed their journey so abundantly and created a nurturing environment for their growth.



Commissioner Miriam Gluyas leads the commissioning ceremony for Vikki Song, David Delany, Beola Conteh and Edward Conteh at Auburn.

Kylie shared how, in the current training model, placement officers and supervising staff became training partners with the Officer Formation Stream at Eva Burrows College. The local placement officers provide cadets with a diverse range of learning opportunities and "act as our eyes and ears on the ground" she said.

"They give us feedback on how they have experienced cadets, observing their maturity, their God, self, and others awareness, their ministry skills and capacities, and their openness to learning and growing."

Kylie added the cadets commissioned this year carried two sessional names – Reflectors of Holiness and Defenders of Justice.

"Each of these names speaks to the experience of transformation and the development of Christ-like character, which, as they have discovered in their studies and practice, is neither easy nor quick!"

Kylie spoke to the notion of justice as one of the meta themes of the Bible – as an attribute of God, its connection to righteousness, and how it is a mandate for the people of God to live by.

"In exploring how Jesus approached justice, we discover that to love is to be just; to be just is to love. We also discover that to love sacrificially is costly," she said.

"Practising genuine justice requires us to enter directly into the darkness that exists in our world, and to be the light – and as the light in that darkness, to seek to bring healing and transformation, which pushes back the darkness.

"That is a much more costly experience than the experience of someone only willing to advocate from afar ... to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ requires



Leader of Officer Formation, Captain Kylie Herring, speaks during the commissioning services.

courage. Our prayer for our newly commissioned officers is that they would be people of great love and people of great courage."

Miriam reflected on the incredible life journeys of the cadets at the service and some members of the Auburn congregation.

"Talk to all these guys, and I believe in miracles, amazing stories," she told the congregation.

"I think there are about 44 nations represented in this church today, and a whole lot of good Aussies who loved people beautifully – that's hope, isn't it? That is hope.



Commissioner Miriam Gluyas conducts the commissioning service for Leeanne Pattison in Adelaide.

"It is exciting when hope is revealed. I love the two names – Reflectors of Holiness and Defenders of Justice. You have got to love Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit to go out into the world and be those defenders of justice. And so, we have this beautiful alliance, don't we? People of God, we need you, whoever you are, whatever you are doing, to be a Jesus-centred, spirit-led, hope-revealed person."



Cadet Vikki Song is prayed over during the Sunday morning commissioning service at Auburn.

feature



Leeanne Pattison

"I am so grateful for the people that God has placed in my journey who have spoken into my life at key moments, encouraged me, cheered me on, challenged me and walked beside me."

Lieutenant Leeanne Pattison will begin life as a Salvation Army officer as leader of the Noarlunga Corps in Adelaide.

Leeanne begins a new adventure after long road to officership

By Anthony Castle

After a decades-long journey, newly commissioned Lieutenant Leeanne Pattison can't wait to begin her life as a Salvation Army officer.

For the past two years, Leeanne has been a cadet with the Defenders of Justice session at Eva Burrows College and was commissioned on Friday 24 November at Adelaide City Salvos.

She has been appointed to the Noarlunga Corps in Adelaide's south and will take up her appointment in January 2024 as the Corps Officer.

After working in ministry roles for many years, Leeanne became a candidate helper at City Salvos, then a cadet-in-appointment.

"It was a process," Leeanne says. "I was in my position at a corps for a couple of years, and I really felt that God wanted more of me. I considered a divisional role, and it didn't feel right. I had struggled with this feeling for a while and talked with people about it. I was wrestling with something inside. I originally felt called [to officership] 20 years ago. There was a hurdle at the time, and I just stood back. I still did ministry roles, but I put officership on the back-burner."

Leeanne was a Children's and Youth Assistant at Parafield Gardens Corps in Adelaide for five years before becoming a candidate helper at City Salvos. The role of candidate helper prepares someone for training and officership by experiencing the work firsthand.

"The role of candidate helper was to work alongside the officers," explains Leeanne. "I was doing sermons already in that space, learning the ins and outs of corps ministry,

then coming to my time as a cadet there. Being in a corps setting really helps, with officers there to teach me the ropes. Overall, it's been a good experience, being able to learn more on the job and see things you may not necessarily see."

The cadet-in-appointment role involves remote study rather than living on-site at Eva Burrows College. The role has pioneered new forms of learning that have become more standard since COVID-19 restrictions.

"I had a day of designated classes I attended online," explains Leeanne. "Two days a week at the corps and two study days. We also flew over about three times a year for orientation and intensives. It worked for me. As a single mum, I really needed to stay in Adelaide. You're not with your session mates or your lecturers as much, but I still got to know my session well. You find different ways of connecting."

Growing up as the child of Salvation Army officers, Leeanne first considered officership decades earlier. While feeling called to ministry, Leeanne wasn't initially sure if officership was the right path for her.

"I had been through a really rough time, and I thought I was hearing wrong," Leeanne says. "I thought, 'I'm a mess, I can't be an officer.' I was at a real low point. I just pushed that aside and ended up studying community service, and then that led to my ministry roles. There's been callings on the way, though, and I eventually got there."

"I think it's important to follow God's lead," continues Leeanne. "I think it's been about stepping into the unknown, even the challenges I know are going to happen. There's strength in that. I think I will see – both in ministry positions but also personally – that God can use me. That's the important thing, listening to God and stepping forward."

viewpoint



When Christmas comes with a sting

By Kirralee Nicolle

Christmas is a time of anticipation. As soon as shopping centres and department stores roll out festive displays, children begin quivering with excitement at the thought of gifts to unwrap. Family WhatsApp chats fill with food ideas and discussions of logistics. Who has the best air-conditioning or pool to best host? Who will fly or drive in swarming heat this year? And in my opinion, what is perhaps the most important question of all – who is in charge of the ham?

For Christians, we look forward to the candles and the nativity displays that remind us of Jesus, who entered a world of pain and risk as a vulnerable child to bring ultimate restoration.

However, events with great anticipation surrounding them are not always joyful. How do you feel when treatment options are running out and you suspect this Christmas may be your last? What about when the bank account is running low, and you feel a need to retreat from your excited children to grieve what you could have given them if circumstances were different?

One pain I know all too well is the gaps at the table left by family dysfunction. When each year, you eat extravagant food with a lump in your throat, wishing things were different. Christmas is a reminder that not every wound can be healed with a sprig of mistletoe, and not every heart can be warmed with a particularly good egg nog. Sometimes, Christmas just hurts.

As anyone who has been pregnant will know, anticipating the birth of a child is not always happy either. Many parents harbour fears – about their child's wellbeing, about their capacity to care for an infant, about the state of the world or the community into which they are bringing their child.

For Mary, mother of Jesus, her fears may have been difficult to fully quantify. She was a young teenager, bearing a child with a man who was not the biological father. The government was unsafe, to say the least. In the end, she didn't have a soft bed to birth in, or a warm inflatable pool to soothe her labour pains. Medical attention was not sophisticated or even readily available in a stable in Bethlehem. It was likely her, Joseph and some noisy animals. Talk about the makings of a traumatic birth story!

And yet, in her moment of deep need, she managed to birth the greatest source of hope the world has ever known. God's plan is somehow providential, mysterious and confusing at the same time.

I wonder sometimes if our hurting souls spent more time at Christmas thinking on the circumstances of Jesus' birth and the struggles of his mother, we might feel less alone in our own pain. I love The Message Bible translation of Romans chapter 8, verses 22-25, which describes how, as we anticipate Jesus' restoration of his creation, we feel pains like Mary did:

"All around us, we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

This Christmas, I pray you can reflect on the God who sees, and the God who grieves alongside you. The God who is deeper than twinkling fairy lights, carols and perfectly wrapped gifts. The God of grit and grain, of manure and hope.

story of hope



Mario and The Salvation Army's Lieutenant-Colonel David Godkin at Shire Salvos Miranda – “where the miracle started for me”.

Mario experiences a 'miracle' at Miranda Salvos

When Mario came to the Salvos, he was broken and without hope. Now, he's thriving. He shared his story of redemption with *Salvos Online* reporter LAUREN MARTIN.

I came here broken two years ago [to Shire Salvos Miranda Food Relief and Assistance Centre in southern Sydney.] I was heavily drinking and heavily using drugs. I was in a lot of depression, anxiety and stress. I was having suicidal thoughts.

I found Shire Salvos Miranda because I rang Lifeline. I was so broken, I was in tears, I had given up on life. I had recently separated from my partner, who had found out that I was using drugs, so she didn't want a bar of that.

I was also in the process of being evicted, so I was very close to being homeless.

I came from a good, hardworking family, but I had broken all bridges with my father and brother because I had abused them so much. I was blaming everyone else [for my problems].

I remember being in line [for a Salvation Army food hamper] when a Salvation Army Moneycare financial counsellor came and spoke to me. She said, “I haven't seen you here before”, and I just broke down in tears. She brought me inside [to the office] and said, “It's going to be OK”, and she introduced me to some staff members. They made me feel really welcome and made me feel safe.

There was either death or change for me. I was that broken.

I always knew I was a better person. I knew I was a good person and had a good heart, but I was obsessed with depression and stress. I got exhausted from that lifestyle and didn't want to do that anymore. I wanted a better life.

I then met with a Salvos AOD worker and pretty much surrendered in her office. I told her everything.

She mentioned going to rehab [Recovery Services] and spoke to me about a couple of them. The Salvation Army's William Booth House was the first one she mentioned, but I didn't want to be around that area in the city. I explained that I'm a Cancerian – I like parks, rivers, and the outdoors. She told me about a place at Callum Park in Sydney called WHO's (We Help Ourselves). I got a place and was there for three and a half months.

I didn't know what to expect. What I did know was that I needed help and guidance. It took a while for me to become teachable because I had all that ego and addiction. Slowly, I started becoming vulnerable. And listening – shutting up and listening. Then I could learn.

I'm now 16 months sober. My life is amazing right now. I am discovering the person I'm meant to be. I feel that God's called me ... he's grabbed me and said, “I need you to help others.” I'm at peace now. I'm not in my head anymore. The fog has lifted, and I'm clearer. I hold myself responsible for my actions, and I do the next right thing. I don't associate with anyone I knew prior to rehab. I have made great new friends. I walk every morning and go to an AA meeting every night.

I've set some goals. My plans are to do service and help anyone I can. I decided to do a community services certificate at TAFE, and they said you have to do some work placement. And I thought, “Why not Shire Salvos Miranda?”. I'll never forget this place – this is where the miracle started for me.

I've made amends with my mum and my father. I now have the best relationship ever with my brother and my mum and father. I owe my life to the people here at The Salvation Army who gave me hope. This is where I came when I was broken. You have to be broken in order to be healed.

army archives

When officer training was fast and furious

By Lauren Martin

Just three years after The Salvation Army began in Australia, moves were made to train new officers.

In the early 1880s, a small training centre was set up in a corner shop in Adelaide, and cadets in Sydney were taught from a room at headquarters.

The first dedicated training centre was established in South Melbourne in June 1883, and by March 1888 a new men's training school was opened in Punt Road, Richmond.

Training of officers at the time matched the spread of The Salvation Army across the nation in those early days – fast and furious! The Punt Road training college accepted 20 cadets at a time, with a total of 80 trained in the first year, which equates to about three months' training time for each session.

The program was mostly practical rather than theological or academic. Each day would start with a long march to 'knee drill' (prayer) at 5am, which was followed by street meetings, the selling of the *War Cry*, housework and a public meeting at night.

In 1889, the first training home for women opened in Richmond. This was run much like a religious order under the watch of the principal, Staff-Captain Mary Shackson. The women would march to the men's home in Punt Road for lectures and conduct practical training at the North Richmond Corps.

Both training homes were affected by floods in 1891, and in 1900 the men's training centre was destroyed by fire, prompting the Army to rethink its training as it constructed a new purpose-built centre.

The new centre – The Federal Training College – was opened on 16 July 1901. It could house 160 male and female cadets from across Australia and New Zealand. Although the college was co-ed, the male and female



Cadets outside The Salvation Army Officers Training Home in Punt Rd, Richmond, Melbourne, in the late 1880s.

cadets were kept separate – even the library was used by men and women on alternate days!

This college continued to function as the Australian National College until the division of Australia into two territories in 1921, when a new training college was built in Petersham, Sydney, for Australia Eastern Territory cadets.

Little more than 10 years later, however, the Great Depression forced the amalgamation of training again, with Eastern Territory cadets travelling to Melbourne for training. Both the Australia Eastern and the Australia Southern territories upgraded their buildings in the late 1970s, with a multi-story motel in Parkville, Melbourne, purchased for the Southern Territory Training College, and a Sydney campus relocation to Bexley North, the site of a former boys' home.

Eva Burrows College in Melbourne is now The Salvation Army's national college in Australia, born out of the unification of Booth College in Sydney and Catherine Booth College in Melbourne. All residential cadets began their training at the national college in 2018.



The training college at Petersham, Sydney, that opened in 1921 and closed in 1980.