



THE SALVATION ARMY MIDDLE EAST REGION:
KUWAIT; UAE; BAHRAIN; OMAN.

Middle East letters: to encourage & resource individuals & groups, give glimpse of SA work here, & provide topics for prayer



Letter 39
To Comrades in the Middle East & Friends around the world
Greetings to you all in the name of The Father, & Son, & The Holy Spirit!

Date: MAY 2014
Title: WOW –
Can't help it - just got to tell you!
WOW – could be – Wonderful! One! Weekend!

Report on the visit of International Leaders GENERAL ANDRÉ COX & COMMISSIONER SILVIA COX To Kuwait 8th May – 11th May 2014



The General & Commissioner Silvia Cox at Seif Palace with His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait! Presenting plate inscribed with the Lord's Prayer in Arabic, + Booth House camel!

As-Salaam-Alaikum!

There certainly was Community, Challenge, Contrasts, Character, Courage & Christian Celebration in Kuwait when our international leaders visited just a few days ago! Be sure, it was a great honour and blessing as Salvationists welcomed, General André, Commissioner Silvia Cox with Captain Scott Linnett first ever visit of a General here!

I wonder when international leaders travel the world and visit new places – sometimes exotic, bizarre, and mysterious; sometimes alien, unfamiliar, and unknown yet surely often what might seem the known, the mundane, the ordinary, the expected – do they think to themselves, or perhaps pray: *“Here we are, Lord, adventurers in your world, looking for excitement, travellers on a journey, visitors to your people, looking to be used, looking for some rest, looking for guidance here we are, not knowing what we'll find, but, Lord, we offer our lives in service, we offer our hearts in prayer, we bow our heads in worship, we open our hands for the dare and bring you our love, our prayer, our time, our wealth, our commitment, our lives in service for you. Here we are, Lord, we open ourselves to you – use us in this land!”* I feel they must do so – because God's used them in a mighty way, that's for sure – and he surely wasn't just answering our prayers.

“Can't help it - just got to tell you!” My Father and Mother regularly used to perform a piece of drama from Commissioner Alfred Gilliard’s play – The Road. (Heather & I have staged this also.) It’s the scene with Blind Bartimeaus and a passing woman, where he witnesses to her as to what Jesus has just done for him! By dad would dress up in old torn ragged eastern garb, rub his hands along the floor where there was some dirt and rub it into his arms and face so he could look the part and then he would captivate all with his portrayal. Always, as a child or teenager, I was enthralled. He would jump, and shout joyfully; **“Bartimeaus can see! Bartimeaus can see! Can't help it, I've just got to shout it!”** It’s how many of us in the Middle East Region feel right now – **can't help it – just got to tell of it!** O and there’s big prayers in there also that new, fresh, sight has been realized, that eyes and ears and hearts and minds have been opened to how great God is, the gospel truth, and some insight into understanding The Salvation Army.



Airport welcome!

About 20 comrades managed to get time off work or jig their times so as to be there to welcome our leaders!



It's Captain Scott on the left with the luggage – not the guy on the right!

Do you like the flags? Paper printed and stuck on Kebab sticks and the point shaved at the end!

We're very dexterous here in Kuwait!



Thursday. On the first day after rest, and other work related to being the General, our leaders took an evening tour to get a feel of Kuwait, and then they experienced a fantastic Arabic meal.

Friday. On the morning of the second day our leaders met a small gathering of local Army leaders from the Gulf Countries and Kuwait Praise Band for challenge and prayer. Major Heather Grinsted led praise and prayer, challenging all to seek God's guidance through complete surrender to His will. Commissioner Silvia gave a lovely introduction to the General his family & service. The General stressed the importance of our relationship with God being real so we can be effective in his will for us to build up his kingdom. He used the short powerful Psalm 131 backed by other bible verses to make challenge to us to be humble before God, take time to be still in his presence, and to put our complete trust in God! Everyone then shared a buffet lunch Major Stewart had prepared and a fantastic Army crest cake by Jeycelyn!



PSALM 131

Lord, my heart is not proud;
my eyes are not haughty.
I don't concern myself with matters too great
or too awesome for me to grasp.
Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself,
like a weaned child who no longer cries for
its mother's milk.
Yes, like a weaned child
is my soul within me.
O Israel, put your hope in the Lord—
now and always.



Top: Prayer lunch at quarters!
 Middle: Neck compound welcome!
 Bottom: Marching through compound to our venue!

Top: Singing songs awaiting our leaders!
 Middle: Singing & flag waving as they arrive!
 Bottom: Still singing & waving moving to venue!

Our leaders then moved to the National Evangelical Church compound to be welcomed by hundreds of onlookers including flag waving singing Salvationists. Possibly the first open air meeting here as Salvationists waited for The General! A public welcome and celebration then took place in a united service with The Lighthouse Church. The 500 hundred seater hall was packed as worshippers celebrated, the international leaders were welcomed by Pastor K.R. Paton, Commissioner Silvia responded to the welcome and later read scripture, Kuwait Brass Band accompanied first and last song, united TLC & SA dramatic reading and Major Tracy Bearcroft sang a solo. The General preached on God's faithfulness and made powerful challenge based on Joshua 15: 'Are you on the Lord's side?' Many came and knelt at the altar.



The first public meeting of the visit! More people came as the meeting moved along!



We had a great time – look at the faces of Edison he purchases a mug: at Pastor KR as he converses with the General; if you look at Major Stewart in the band he's crying! Not really the heat made me sweat too much! And above Emobet is happy!

Saturday. On Saturday Sheikha Hussah Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah (daughter-in-law of the Amir) made it possible for the General and Commissioner Silvia to have special tour of the unique Amricani Cultural Centre. This was greatly appreciated by the guests, they really enjoyed the Islamic art collection but more so what might be called the spiritual birth place of Christianity in Kuwait, for it's the site Dutch Reformed Church Missionaries to Kuwait occupied 100 years ago. The General noted how excellent the guide was.



Left: The Amricani Cultural Centre now!
 Right: As it was, the first hospital in Kuwait, started by missionaries!
 Left: Children visit Amricani;
 Below: Restored mission hospital room!



The party then moved to a lunch time reception at Don Mario's Restaurant, Arabian Gulf Road, where a great time was had by 50 people, both Kuwaiti and expatriate, including: embassy staff, senior church leaders, lawyers and lay people, representative of many who have helped the 'Booth House' social care program. The meal shared was excellent, all who attended received a fun, functional gift of William Booth mug ("I like my religion like I like my tea – hot!"), tea, literature, and Booth House marmalade, made from oranges from the grounds of the UK embassy! The General was presented with a gutra, which a willing Kuwaiti aided in placing on his head! Much generosity was unexpectedly received from guests attending.

Wonderful 'Thank You' Meal - for helpers of our cause!





5 Salvationist Nurses, all from India, now of Kuwait Corps – get to their seats early – waiting for The General and Commissioner Silvia! They all look so beautiful – did they know Captain Scott isn't married?

Another praise and celebration meeting 'Salvation Army Style' followed in TLC. The youth praise band, brass band, Major Mark wrote parts for him and Gilbert (UAE) to play with the Praise Band – sounded good – (they also played with the brass band), youth drama, children's comic flag waving welcome, praise, prayer, preaching and challenge all warmed people's hearts! Many gifts were given the General on his visit of unique interest was a Salvation Army Red Shield with a camel face drawn in it by young artist Andrew Veeramony of Kuwait! After the meeting shawarmas and drinks were served to all, and stalls with Booth House wares and Army mementoes to purchase.



KUWAIT KIDS
Welcome our leaders!
They did well – thanks to all!

But little Jessica looks cool in her gear but where's the smile?



**Left: praising with the Praise Band!
Below: Ronald gives great testimony
– but wrote it down to keep to time!**



**Right: Start of the
appeal – ‘There is
none like you’!
Below & Right:
Closing song – I’ll go
in the strength!**



**Left: Andrew presents his
skillful Salvation Army Shield
fused with the face
of a camel!**



Left & Below: 'One' dramatic readings!

Far left: Commissioner Silvia makes joyful challenge!



**Above: Andrew & Felix strumming away!
Below: Peter Robinson presents gifts from Bahrain!**



**Above: The kids are really into clapping these days!
Below: The brass section – Tower of Power beware!
Below right: The General preaches!**





Left: ACSM Robert Ramesh passes around Shawarmas; The General, Gilbert & Major Bearcrofts share a smile!

Below: One of lots of photos!

Deep below: The General & Commissioner Silvia try to get a smile & eventually Jessica smiles – with 2 of her cousins!



All the lefts: How many pictures can Shibu get into? Below: The south west Indian crew & Shibu – but he does come from there!



Sunday. On the last day of the visit a meeting with His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait and our international leaders had been arranged at Bayan Palace for 12 noon, however the Amir's schedule became very busy, but pleasingly were told The General would be welcome to meet His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait at Seif Palace at 11.15 am! What a marvelous host the Crown Prince was, his hospitality was impeccable. Our General was so grateful and believes what officials told us was a surprisingly long meeting will be most helpful for many. It was cordial, friendly, with humour and seriousness fused in good balance.

The General assured the Crown Prince three times Christians were grateful for the freedom they had to worship in Kuwait, he assured the Crown Prince The Salvation Army wanted to be of help to the state and people of Kuwait and those of other nations here. The Crown Prince on two occasions stated they wished to help us, and he emphasized the great tradition of religious freedom in Kuwait, and the many other fine traditions of Kuwait. In that the international headquarters of The Salvation Army is in London the Crown Prince also stressed the deep gratitude for the special relationship with the UK and its help in the liberation from Iraq.

After some time the Crown Prince asked: "Why the name The Salvation Army?" and so ensued another dialogue, but the great thing was The General was freely able to witness to the Lord, tell of the Army and its work, and advocate for all Christians in Kuwait. With good humoured and interesting questions by others in the room The General told of the realities of poverty in Victorian Britain and the emergence of William Booth the founder of The Salvation Army, and then it's growth throughout the world during the last 149 years, and our desire to help all people in need regardless of colour, race or religion. How wonderful for a senior Christian leader to be received so warmly by the Crown Prince and advocate for all Christians in Kuwait. The Crown Prince was presented with a simple plate with The Lord's Prayer inscribed in Arabic; a 2014 year book of The Salvation Army; and a little camel made at Booth House: I think it was undersecretary of the Crown Prince Diwan for Protocols Affairs Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, who humorously asked "did you travel here on the camel!" It's possible a picture had been seen or heard of the thank you meal held on the Saturday where the General was presented with a gutra and one of our Kuwaiti guests fixed it on his head, because the Crown Prince suggested on another visit he should wear a dish dash also!

Obviously our congregation here which spans from expatriate Canadian teacher and Asian Doctors to quite impoverished African and Indian labourers are 'made up' - full of thanks and wonder by the news and photos, their international spiritual leader has had the audience with the His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait. Also senior Church leaders of others denominations in the Christian faith are delighted at the meeting and feel it will have been most beneficial in many ways. The meeting between The Crown Prince and The General was filmed and has been shown on TV channels in Kuwait and the reports and picture have featured in newspapers throughout the Gulf countries!

Audience has been in newspapers and on TV! news!





Above: Major Stewart, Major Heather, Commissioner Silvia, Head of Mission UK Embassy Jacky Perkins, The General. interpreter Mohamed Hani. Al-Abed, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah!





**Not only did we give gifts we received them!
The Amiri Diwan generously presents you with beautiful pictures
in lovely frames commemorating your audience with
His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah!**



After the above meeting on this final day the General and Commissioner Silvia journeyed to Booth House to view the hub of our social care program. They met our staff, Irwin, (but it needs to be said Irwin was the driver for most of their trip using his wife's Dr. Christine new company car) Sandyha, Embobet and Subash. They took a tour of our premises and were informed about the operations of the house, and many questions and explanations took place.

The party then moved to the basement where we held a meeting. At first we showed the pictures above – WOW! Praise the Lord! And a lot more but the joy was with Janet as the Crown Prince was holding the camel she had made! Then we all sang songs of praise, we made prayer, a Ugandan group, and then an Ethiopian group, sang songs of praise with dancing, the Ugandans also danced a traditional dance, Major Tracy sang a solo, Commissioner Silvia spoke words based on the parable of the sower, the General gave a few word of encouragement and closed in prayer. Our residents were overawed by the visit!



Top: Ethiopian song!
 Next: Embobet translates Commissioner Silvia!
 Next: Waiting for the Ethiopian coffee ceremony!

Top: Positions of honour in meeting!
 Next: Ugandan dance!
 Next: Annette receives her Booth House certificate from The General!

We moved upstairs to the entrance hall lounge and participated in the Ethiopian Coffee ceremony, the cutting of a chocolate cake made by resident Sirgud, and experienced the poignant moments of General Andre presenting resident Annette with her Booth House Certificate as she left to go to the airport to return home to safety in Uganda that afternoon.

Our leaders, Captain Scott, the Bearcrofts, Irwin and the Grinsteds shared in one last Arabic meal together and then made for the airport. We finished as we started – a party of Kuwait Salvationists said farewell to the international leaders at the airport. And Jasper - who so desperately had wanted to return from college in India for the weekend with The General to play in our Praise Band (we do miss him!) but couldn't get until Saturday night because of an exam - was there and was able to get a great pictures with him! There was sadness to see our leaders go, yet gratitude that we had had such a wonderful time! The busy airport looked on as we all watched our leaders return from checking in to say goodbye!



Above: part of the goodbye group!
Below: Jasper gets his photo with our leaders!
Right: Closing prayer!



As he was about to depart General André prayed his blessing on the group, on The Salvation Army, on the country and its people and on Kuwait leaders the Amir and Crown Prince, and intimated he hoped he would be able to visit again sometime in the future! Then Major Stewart prayed a prayer of thanks and blessing on the international leaders.

Off they went, turning occasionally to wave farewell!

Monday. Back to normality and work for all – The General, Commissioner and Captain Scott included! Reports, letters and e mails to write; duties to do, interviews, and appointments and I had to get back to my soup diet – but I did enjoy a few days respite from it! What there's been no respite in is - the constant flow of short e mails of prayer support – as they had come before the special days – so they have come in the days since! Big thanks for the many communications of prayer support – they are most welcome and greatly appreciated.

Since Thursday last we have received blessing after blessing. General Cox leads a unique Army, and this small unique part of it believes we have experienced a privilege in having as our guests quite unique leaders. Be clear it's something we prayed about, dreamed of, even to the point of longing for a meeting with senior leaders of Kuwait

because we thought it would do our cause good, and maybe gain us that authority, or legality we treasure. Such hopes hit my heart just over 3 years ago and now they have been gloriously realized. We felt it would do so much for the faithful Salvationists here and be belated affirmation and expression of thanks to the pioneers here. We experienced community, challenge, contrasts, character, courage & Christian celebration in Kuwait and our international leaders threw themselves wholeheartedly into this experience!

We witnessed and experienced in General Andre and Commissioner Silvia Cox, wonderful God honouring ministry, solid Christian character, relational style, sincere interest and kindness.

We owe our leaders big time and sincerely thank God for them. From the first day they arrived they both oozed a manner that was about inclusion and insight, about warmth and desire for witness, about clarity of where they stood and what they wanted for the Army and its people. Their ministry, was spot on - in the formal words they spoke and in the engagement and embracing of all they met. As I look back on the few days I feel a real sense of elevated pride more so than before they came - not over inflated personal pride - but of who we are as Salvationists and for what we do all over the world. I observed our leaders in the luxurious Amiri Diwan setting and then in the humble Booth House ministry and believe what I saw was genuine!

Our General will have put many straight on who we are, where stand, and what our purpose is! He made clear we follow One Lord and trust in God's faithfulness! Our General embraced and owned the band of faithful Salvationists here. Our General gave time to the officer team, including others at times of meal sharing, giving instruction, insight, advice and counsel. I gave thanks to the Lord, for our leaders being the right people, in the right jobs, at the right time! As our CSM in Kuwait shouts every week as he commences the announcements: **HALLELUJAH!**

Prayer Points for the Middle East

Thanks:

- God is everywhere present in His world and He answers our prayers
- For the visit of our international leaders, General and Commissioner Silvia (with Captain Scott Linnet) to Kuwait. Salvationists and friends of TSA have been encouraged and blessed by their leadership and personal conversations.
- We are delighted that they were able to meet with the Crown Prince, member of the Royal Family and to share the meaning behind the title The Salvation Army.
- The development of more good contacts in the government ministries to help the residents of Booth House.
- News from Bahrain of the start of a second worshipping fellowship. It is with labourers who cannot afford to get to the city, so TSA is going to them twice monthly on Fridays.
- News another fellowship in Al Ain, UAE convenes tomorrow.
- In Oman, after much prayer and discussion with church leaders and the ministry of religious affairs, the Salalah comrades are now able to worship in the Marthoma church on the compound. Although this doesn't have the easy accessibility of the party hall that they were meeting in and the ability to eat together afterwards, they are able to share in fellowship
- The great improvement in the health of Malikson, (who has Leukemia) the son of CSM Yesumerlin Mani Salalah and grandson of Colonels Moni.

Requests:

- Having had the visit of our international leaders to the region we are praying for a positive surge from such a springboard. Conversations and social media indicate the great joy and interest that the visit has had, including acceptance by Royalty. We pray that this cordial meeting will open up ways to help TSA find authority and legality in this land.
- We desire too to find a small base in Kuwait where we can meet in the week for different corps activities.
- That positive development will come out of the thank you reception held when the International leaders were here. I.e. that relationships and networks will continue to be strengthened as we help to resolve the repatriation needs of women in our care and are now being asked to assist others.
- The visit of the international leaders will help enable others to see us as a church
- Wisdom for Majors Stewart & Heather as they partner in mission with NECK common council as TSA have been asked to help spearhead a medical clinic on the compound.

Thank you for your prayers.

The next two pages are simply a selection of some very, very happy days! Then there's final page.





I feel inclined to come to an end quoting from 1 Chronicles 29 and David's Prayer of Praise:

10 Then David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly:

"O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. 12 Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.

13 "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! 14 But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us! 15 We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace.

16 "O Lord our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! 17 I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

18 "O Lord, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes. 19 Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, laws, and decrees, and to do everything necessary to build this Temple, for which I have made these preparations."

20 Then David said to the whole assembly, "Give praise to the Lord your God!" And the entire assembly praised the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and they bowed low and knelt before the Lord and the king.

Your prayers are certain to be effective when you pray in faith to such a God.

May we all adore the Lord as the one who is over all things!

May we see we are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land!

May it be that as the Lord examines our hearts, he rejoices for he finds integrity there!

May we all have wholehearted desire to obey all the commandments, laws, and decrees, of the Lord, and do everything necessary to build his Kingdom here!

With thanks to the ONE who has suffered for us, saved us, and who smiles on us – the object of his love. He wants to do great things for us all; may we let him do it! He has brought us safely this far: let's trust him to bring us face to face with him according to his plans.



Thanks for your prayers, support & encouragement.

Heather joins me in greeting you.

As you serve him, may you experience
the rich Oneness of God,
his Son the Word,
& his Spirit.

**With love,
Heather & Stewart Grinsted
(Majors)
Middle East Region**

The General stands side by side with Kuwait comrade Emmanuel, and he was so pleased to stand with the General. The day after this picture was take Emmanuel heard the news his sister had died. Straight away he had to make an unplanned trip back to India. Pray for him and his family!