

Rethinking Calling

YouthDownSouth interviews Russell Rook, founder of [ChapelSt](#), an organization reimagining renewal and regeneration for the church in community.

YDS: Please tell us a little bit about yourself – in particular please tell us your testimony.

RR: Hi, I'm Russ, I'm married to Charlotte and have two kids Joe and Toby. I am a fetal Salvationist, my grandparents were officers and, as a kid I attended a large-ish corps in Southsea on the south coast of England. Like many, faith was always in my life, at least in the background but came alive to me most when I was 18 and interned with The Salvation Army prior to going to college. It was then that I figured out that God really did know what he was doing with my life.

YDS: Why are you a member of The Salvation Army?

RR: Wow! What a question! Because that's where God put me in the first place, where my family chose for me in my formative years and because it's where I've chosen to be since. I suspect there is no one collecting reason however I do retain this one sometimes seemingly illogical belief that this weird and wonderful little movement for all its quiriness has the most incredible ability to change the world.

YDS: How did you first come into contact with the SA?

RR: As I said, in one way, when I was in the womb! That said I didn't really get it until I was 18 and had the privilege of seeing what we do among the last, the lost and the least. That's when I first saw the real Salvation Army.

YDS: What do you believe it means to "be called"?

RR: It means knowing that God has made and chosen you to know him and belong to him. Beyond that, my feelings about a specific call have changed greatly over time. To sum it up, I think God allows us a lot more freedom than we give him credit. Presumably God had great reasons to give humans free will and it causes him some delight to see us exercise that. For me, there are times when I knew God was asking me to do something but most days it comes down to the fact that as you get to know him better you get to know what he wants to do in a situation and you make it your call to do that.

YDS: Do you believe that you are called?

RR: Yes, absolutely but I believe that it's as much my call as it is his.

YDS: What are your top 5 favorite Salvationists of all time?

RR: Couldn't possibly cut the list to five and if I did you wouldn't have heard of them anyway. I think the celebrity/hero status thing is a huge distraction and mistake. Being part of The Salvation Army has meant that many of my greatest heroes are my personal friends and fortunately I have loads of them.

YDS: If you were to give words of advice to a young adult to figure out what God wants him/her to do in life, what would you say?

RR: Get to know God really well and then you'll know the kind of things he wants you to do.

YDS: What ultimately lead you to the profession you are in today?

RR: A belief that the local church is the hope of the world and that The Salvation Army has a unique role to play in that.

YDS: What is the most successful thing you have accomplished as a professional?

RR: I'm not sure I feel that I've accomplished much. Anything I could claim would involve me robbing the credit from the guys that really made it happen. When I look at people and leaders that I have had the privilege of learning from and serving alongside then I feel proud and incredibly blessed.

YDS: What is your take on ministry as it relates to your career?

RR: There is just no line to draw. I get out of bed in the morning as a full-time soldier in The Salvation Army and go to bed at night to rest for another day on the frontline. My life is one big ministerial mess!

YDS: What is your favorite Scripture verse?

RR: Again, I couldn't pick one verse. I have a love affair with Isaiah! Particularly chapters 40-55. The prophets that wrote these songs reinvented and re-imagined biblical faith. In a really difficult time and place they became Israel, God's chosen people, in a whole new way. They changed the world forever and wrote sermons for Jesus in the process. I think it's one of the most relevant parts of Scripture for our time.

YDS: If you could give words of wisdom to our readers, what would you say?

RR: I would leave the words that I read in my prayer time this morning, "Here I am Lord, I've come to do your will. Here I am Lord, in your presence I'm still."