Uniform from *Called to be God’s People.*

The uniform identifies Salvationists. Although not worn by every Salvationist, its presence within the fellowship tends to have a bonding effect. From whatever country – say Uganda, Belgium, India or Canada – or from whatever position in life – say member of parliament, secretary, doctor or bus driver – and however wealthy or poor, healthy or sick, whether male or female, young or old, there is a shared identification which comes with the uniform. It is instantly recognisable among Salvationists and it would be rare indeed if there was not an immediate sense of belonging to one another when the uniform is seen. The uniform says ‘we are all in this together’. It speaks of commitment to one another as well as to God. It plays a significant part in uniting the Army’s soldiers, even when they may be unaware of it.

Welcome? From *Generation to Generation.*

While it is legitimate and worthwhile for the corps programme to provide activities that enrich and benefit the lives of its regular attenders, at the heart of all that takes place there must be deliberate intention to attract those who don’t yet belong – and to make them feel welcome on arrival. Unfortunately, because of the overuse of Army terminology and abbreviations, or by assumptions that ‘everybody knows’ a song that is spontaneously included, newcomers can easily be made to feel like ‘outsiders’.

Surprisingly, even the most passionate evangelists still make basic mistakes such as these, which do little to encourage people to return.

Interestingly, United Kingdom research on a divisional basis has shown that any personal welcome given by a corps officer, while appreciated, is less significant than being welcomed by members of the congregation. The officer is ‘expected’ to do this; other members of the congregation extend a welcome because they are perceived to want to do so!

There is a further barrier that arises for those from outside who look to join the Army family. It is that of a close-knit community that feels threatened and reacts fearfully once a newcomer is ready and wanting to take some prominent responsibility in the corps. This is when established family members need to see further than their own interests and contribution – and ensure that their reactions are in harmony with God’s will.