

# Mission in work – work in mission

‘Be careful of what you ask God for and be extra careful of what you promise Him,’ **writes Paula Smit, ReSource’s Administrator**

**W**orking for Mercedes Benz of South Africa, one of the biggest motor manufacturing companies in Africa, for twenty years, and ‘growing up’ in my career, so to speak, in this big corporate company, really set my feet in concrete for the working world. I often reflect and am grateful for those years – not only for what I stored up in the way of knowledge but more importantly the relationships with wonderful and often amazing people with whom many I am still in regular contact. I do not take any one of these relationships for granted and know that each one has in their own way contributed to who I am today.

## God called me out of the corporate world and into full-time ministry

Six months before my 20 year anniversary of working at MBSA God called me out of the corporate world and into full-time ministry. Together with my husband Johan we were called to be Missions directors at our church. What an awesome challenge and responsibility. Never in my wildest dreams did I think God could use me in such a position. But He did and all Glory to Him.

After six years at Stirling Baptist Church the Lord brought us to England. There are a few reasons why we came to England – but one of them, and probably the most driving one – was a call of God on our lives to come to this place for a time such as this.

## Promising God we were willing to do anything if this was where He wanted us to be

Needless to say in the leading up to us leaving SBC and South Africa much prayer abounded with regards to our move. Confident that we would get good jobs, as we always had, we came to England on an ancestral visa (with permission to work but no access to public funds) and no job, before we left promising God that we were willing to do anything if this was where he wanted us to be!



After 2 ½ months of being unemployed (the longest either of us have ever been without employment), our money running out rapidly, we got our first job in England as cheese packers in Ilchester. It was very difficult to praise God in this situation but He knew that and He had a plan - due to a disagreement between two employment agencies this job only lasted three days. But we learned much in those three days as we stood shoulder to shoulder all day with people who could not speak English.

## I found myself as a check-out operator. But I also found myself asking God ‘Why?’

After many, many interviews, walking up and down the high street picking up application forms and filling out reams and reams of forms we were both employed by Morrisons Supermarket.


I found myself as a check-out operator. But I also found myself asking God ‘Why?!’ What was it that He was showing me in giving me this job? This is not what I was trained to do! But more than that this was not what I wanted to do. Surely there was a job out there somewhere that was more suited to me! Now here is the thing that the Lord clearly showed me. He wanted me to ‘Shine like a star, he wanted me to show and share Jesus wherever I was. He impressed on my heart that I could pray for every single customer that I served – no-one could stop me doing that. He

made it clear that I could be kind and friendly to every single customer that I served! He reminded me that I could smile at every single person, young or old! I could be helpful to everyone. In fact I was challenged once again to be His ambassador in a place that I did not really want to be. In a place that was so different to where I had come from.

## The grace, humility, strength, joy and perseverance to ‘keep on keeping on’

Going from working in a church environment to working in a supermarket environment is a HUGE change. But He gave me the grace, humility, strength, joy and perseverance to ‘keep on keeping on’.

Today I am so grateful to Morrisons for having faith in me and employing me and I am once again grateful to God for the incredible lessons that I learned in that place.

My story is a very long one, like most of us, and one day I may write a book. But for now I am grateful to my God and Saviour Jesus Christ for all He has done. As you know I now work for ReSource and am blessed and thankful for so much – I am sipping from my saucer as my cup runneth over. 

**Paula Smit** joined the ReSource team in February 2010. Paula was born in Zambia and then lived in Zimbabwe and latterly South Africa. She moved to England in 2008 with her husband, Johan and they have two grown up sons, Terence and Jason. Paula worked for many years as an administrator with Mercedes Benz in South Africa. She was also involved in mission in her local church for approximately ten years, of which the last six years were in a full time capacity together with Johan. Paula is thrilled to be working for ReSource and joined the team with a real sense of calling.