

## Called to be second banana

### The Spice Box

by Sharon Robertson, Lt. Colonel –

Sharon Robertson, Lieutenant Colonel

When I was called to serve the Lord as a Salvation Army officer, I had all sorts of visions about how God would use me in this very special vocation. Few, if any, of those visions featured me in an assisting position! God had other ideas. For most of my forty years of officership, my appointment title was preceded by the word “assistant.”

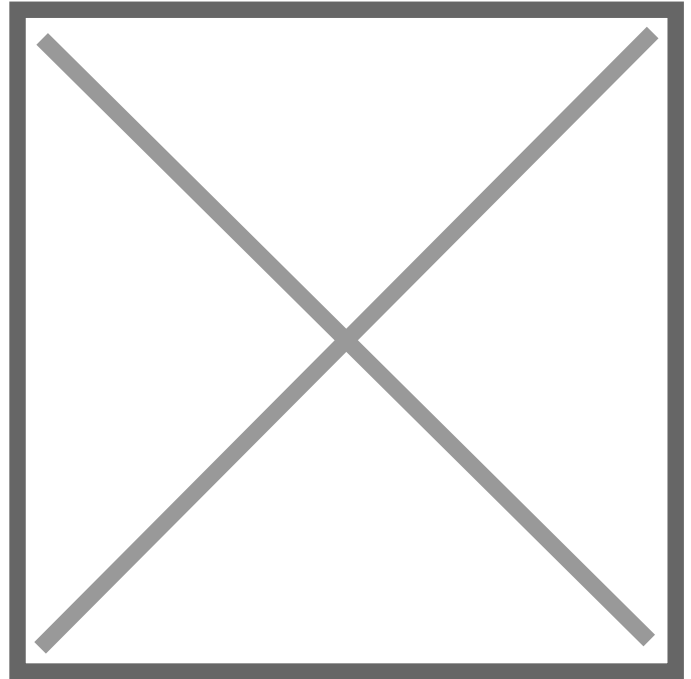
Few of us ever had an ambition to work in the background, keeping the work flowing smoothly and the schedules in order. Few of us envisioned ourselves as the ultimate paper-pushers in Salvation

Army uniform, or the corps assistant running around in high gear, trying to keep up with an impossible schedule, but always there when needed. I have to admit, there were times when I ground my teeth and thought how great it would be to be “boss,” the ultimate decision maker. Yet over the years I learned that as an assistant I had many of the opportunities for effective ministry that “the boss” could only dream of.

Here’s a bit of heresy for you: one doesn’t have to love an appointment in order to know that the appointment is of God.

Here’s another: the traditional “the Army can’t put me where God can’t use me,” while true, is too often a panacea, a balm to ease the pain of believing that God has allowed the Army to put me in an appointment that God wouldn’t have chosen for me. The fact is, if we have placed ourselves in God’s hands and fully committed ourselves to him, saying, “Lord, I am yours, for whatever purposes you choose. I trust you to place me where you can best use me,” we have every right to believe that our appointments, easy or difficult, exciting or routine, fulfilling or discouraging, will be from him. It is NOT the Salvation Army in charge, no matter what anyone may say. For those who have realized God’s power in their lives, the greater truth is not “The Army can’t put me where God can’t use me,” but “The Army cannot put me where God does not WANT me.” Who’s the boss around here, anyhow?

Admittedly, there have been appointments where I never really understood why God placed me there until *after* I had moved on, but I’ve found that eventually it usually becomes clear. And sometimes I have realized that the official duties of the appointment, as the Army intended, turned out not to be the ministry God had in mind at all—the true opportunities for ministry he gave me in many appointments turned out to be hardly referred to in the position description at all! As I think back, here are some of



the “special” ministries that God entrusted to me:

- Offering concern and encouragement to the employees and fellow officers, trying to help them reach their full potential in Christ
  - Being a safe, trustworthy sounding board for those who needed someone to whom they could speak their minds and a voice for those who could not speak for themselves
  - Being a safe, trustworthy sounding board for executive officers who needed to talk out difficult issues
  - Offering the best support I could as a member of the office staff, freeing up my boss was to operate at his or her most effective level
  - Helping to set the tone in the office as a place where the work of God is being done
  - Working and praying and speaking out for change where I believed change was in the best interests of God and the Army
  - Being an active soldier, accepting responsibilities at the corps when possible
- God doesn't believe in “second bananas,” and he doesn't see any appointment as of lesser importance. He sees us all as individuals who have responded to his calling and offered ourselves for his service. He appoints us to the work he needs done, with the expectation that we will use the skills he has taught (or is teaching) us to accomplish his purposes. And when we have done our best, it doesn't matter if the boss gets the credit—just so long as God gets the glory!