

The Mission

***Aim :** This piece was originally written for the launch of a new edition of “Operation World” in Hull. I wanted to explore the notion of calling. The piece is comical but makes the point that we are all called to be concerned with the spreading of the Gospel, to our neighbours and to the world. The second part makes use of facts and figures from “Operation World” to aid awareness and prayer.*

Characters :

Part One : Sam – young and enthusiastic

Church Elder

Part Two : 4 people – 2 men and 2 women (although you can easily change the names of the characters to match available actors)

Props/Costumes :

2 chairs (& table – optional)

TV magazine

Masks (for part 2 optional)

***Notes :** Again, this piece is in 2 parts which can run consecutively, or you could simply use part one on its own. Much of the success of part one lies in Sam. S/he must get the balance of being enthusiastic about the “vision” they have had, without the audience becoming suspicious of it too soon. Similarly with the music from “The Mission”. It adds a great deal if you have the resources to bring this in as directed, but the audience should feel stirred by it without being overly aware of it and making the connection too soon.*

The second part of the piece is totally different in tone and content, but does work straight after the first part. It should be played with a quiet naturalism. We used masks so the people came and stood at the back of the stage and took off the mask as they came forward to say their lines – to show the faces behind the statistics. We left Sam and the Elder frozen on stage as this happened.

The Mission

*Person 2 is sitting in an informal office, person 1 (Sam) has just burst in, obviously very excited.
Person 2 indicates a seat for her to sit down*

1) Morning, thanks for seeing me so quickly

2) Well, it sounded pretty urgent on the phone

1) Oh, it is (*now sitting down she turns all her attention to her momentous news*) I've been called.

2) (*not as enthusiastic as you'd expect*) Oh right

1) By the Lord Almighty

2) Uh - mm

1) He has revealed his plan for my life's work in a vision

2) (*dismissive*) Again.

1) Oh, don't be like that - this is it

2) Look, Sam, much as I would hate to be a barrier to God's word or work, we *have* been here before haven't we?

1) I don't know what you mean.

2) Well, last year you felt called to save people

1) As we all are

2) Literally. As a life guard, and off you headed to Brighton Beach

1) Well, when God calls you

2) And it was nothing to do with your fascination for Baywatch at the time was it ?

1) Of course not. Anyway, I couldn't ignore the calling could I ?

2) No - but you also couldn't swim

1) Yeah well, I thought God would provide - and he did

2) Well yes, I suppose he did, in the form of the Brighton Coastguard, who ended up rescuing you, and the person you were trying to help.

1) Ah yes, but this time it's different. I've had a vision

2) Right

1) No really I have - a very clear one

2) (*relenting a little*) Well, I suppose we can all get it wrong when we're trying to listen to God's voice

1) Exactly, but now I've become more discerning

2) Well, it could happen

1) I'm a different person now than then

2) True

1) And I just know that this is God's purpose for my life - it was so clear

2) (*much more warmly*) Okay, now I'm intrigued. Go on . .

1) Right, well, I was in on my own on Saturday night, and God spoke to me in a vision

2) And what did he say?

1) Well, it was more in pictures really

2) Okay, so what did you see?

1) Well, I saw forests, thick forests, thicker than you would get in this country, so I knew it was a land far from here

2) Go on

1) The vegetation was rich and beautiful, but the land felt troubled

2) right

1) Through the leaves and between the vines, the faces of the natives peered through, their eyes lost, as though looking for someone who would lead them

2)(*a little less warmly*) I see

During this next section, if possible "The Mission" music slowly fades up and Sam stands up and looks into the distance, lost in the memory of it all

1) Someone, not perfect themselves, in fact the person they found was a troubled soul, weighed down by their past, but set free to serve these people

2) Hmmm

1)A person who would argue with the establishment, but defend the rights of his people. He showed them the love of God in his love for them. He embraced their life, and enhanced it with the stories of the Gospel, and above all, he brought them music, sweet music coursing from their hearts through their veins, filling the valleys and the lands, crashing over the waterfalls and . .

During this last speech person 2 has started flicking through the pages of a television magazine. As she starts speaking the music stops abruptly

2) Sam. You've not had a vision at all have you?

1) (*coming out of her reverie and turning back to person 2*) Yeah I have I saw it all really clearly

2) Yes, but you've not had a vision. You've watched "The Mission"

1) What?

2)(*showing her the television pages*) "The Mission" BBC 1's film - 11pm Saturday night

1)Well, I did doze off about then

2)And don't tell me – when you woke up you saw a priest

1)(*excitedly*) Yes, that's right

2) Was the priest dark good-looking, with a beard?

1) (*even more excited*) Yes! Is that confirmation then?

2) No, that's Robert de Niro

1) (*Pause as she filters this information. She sits down*) God has used Robert de Niro to speak to little old me!

2) Look, Sam . . . okay, no, let's take this a step at a time, and let's for the moment assume that God was speaking to you through this film. You do realise that missionaries don't really work like that don't you?

1) Oh yes, of course, I'm not daft you know. That priest died in the end, and God wouldn't really let that happen to one of his workers would he?

2) Well, actually, people do die on the mission field, but, admittedly, some places are more dangerous than others. Do you have a specific place in mind?

1) Oh yes.

2) Oh, good, right. Where?

1) China

2) Well, that's good, I mean China is in need of mission partners, so that's good. Has China held a special place in your heart for a while?

1) Oh yes. I've nearly worked my way right through the menu at the Lucky Star.

2) Special in your heart, Sam, not your stomach. I mean, why Asia, and not, say, Africa - and I don't want any answers involving food.

1) Right, well, I just think that, well, the Chinese people just appeal to me more

2) But why?

1) Well, I think it's because, you know when you see African people on TV?

2) Yes

1) Well, they always look a bit miserable don't they, and I think that would get me down after a bit, and God wants cheery workers doesn't he?

2) And Chinese people always look happy do they?

1) Well, when I've seen them on telly they do.

2) And what have you seen on the telly? News? Documentaries?

1) The Olympic games.

2) Right, so you don't know that it's a part of their culture? That the Chinese smile when they are upset, or apologetic?

1) Well, I could teach them the proper ways to react then couldn't I?

2) Right, so that's your whole evidence of this calling is it?

1) No, I've not come to the best bit - a Chinese family has just moved in next door to me. Now don't tell me that's not a sign.

2) No, I'm sure that is a sign - a sign that house prices are still quite reasonable in your neighbourhood. Anyway, at least they must have told you about their country and culture. Has that added to your excitement?

1) Well, I've not spoken to them. I've been too busy exploring my calling

2) To mission?

1) That's it.

2) And you are absolutely sure that this is your calling

1) Absolutely

2) I mean, you're sure that God's not calling you to *pray* for China

1) What good would that do?

2) Well we have a very strong mission prayer group at church that support God's work

1) Hmm (*she leans back in her chair*) in my experience there are the do-ers and then there are the pray-ers. You know if you can, do, and if you can't, pray - it'll make you feel better, if nothing else, and I am definitely an able person of action.

2) (*in low voice*) Yes, I am coming very close to action myself

1) Praise the Lord

2) Look, what about if God was calling you to get to know your neighbours, take them to church, tell them the gospel

1) No, no - there are other people that could do that. To be honest that would be a waste of my talents I feel. No, I think God has bigger plans for me, somewhere far away.

2) (*pause as a plan dawns to her*) Yes, that does have a certain appeal to it I must admit. Have you ever considered Outer Mongolia?

The Mission – Part 2

For this section, the people could come on in masks and stand at the back, walking forward and removing their masks to speak. This piece is quietly and naturally spoken.

3) My clan name is Daarood. This is one of the most important clan families in northern Somalia. My country of Somalia has been in conflict ever since I can remember, firstly with neighbouring countries and then amongst its own clans. This has led to whole families, thousands upon thousands of people being wiped away, and a terrible famine to follow. The people of my countries now neither follow laws or leaders, even the Islamic ones. I know little about Christianity, bibles are not allowed outside of refugee camps.

I need to know the love of Christ.

4) My family name is Blum, and I am very proud of it. I live in Israel, in Jerusalem, and enjoy a good family and work life. I have never known anything but conflict in the land around me, even though I am neither religious or political, you sort of accept it in a way, although recently it seems to be worse than ever. Religion, to me, seems to be a source of stubborn pride and an excuse for fighting, and Christianity still echoes with the horrors of the Holocaust.

I need to know the love of Christ.

5) My name is Jenny Sandler and I am proud to say that I come from the United States of America. I see my country as the greatest country in the world today, because it stands for freedom of thought and belief. I have lost sight of what Christianity is really about, and I have more faith in my country than in religion. I believe in the American dream, and know that I can achieve anything that I set my heart on. I need to know the love of Christ.

6) I'm Mrs. Smith, Susan Smith. I live next door to you. I am a good neighbour, waving hello in the morning, making polite enquiries about your family every now and then, inviting you in at Christmas, but never becoming over-familiar or crowding you. I have a good job, pleasant kids and ups and downs in my marriage like everyone. I see you every Sunday going off, and wonder what makes you go, but I don't like to ask. I need to know the love of Christ.