

DRAMA

BY IRENE KIARIE

MINISTRY

Life is indeed a series of stories long or short that need to be told. The Gospel is all about telling the story of Jesus and salvation. How do we tell the story and sell our Gospel to the world? How do we tell the story of relevant biblical truths? Drama allows for animated speech and brings a visual reflection of reality. We know that nothing sticks with an audience or congregation better than a well told story. Life is full of dreams and drama, yes, but so is the word of God. Its message of salvation, deliverance, restoration and dominion fits the bill perfectly.

While musing on what to write about or how to introduce the drama ministry, I decided to start by giving you my personal experience, about how I got into acting. Perhaps some readers might relate to my shared experience, not just on acting per se. Drama or acting has given me confidence to stand in front of people. I know some folks think that they can never stand in front of a huge crowd to speak and even portray a character but trust me it is not that hard and the bible admonishes in Luke 1:37 that with God nothing shall be impossible.

Acting is all about portraying characters. It is imitating a character so that someone else can relate to that character or see themselves in the portrayed personality. It is about being able to stage a scene that can speak to someone without that person getting offended that you are addressing their life. It connects with people and helps them look at themselves introspectively without anyone pointing a finger at them. I find that drama helps educate, bring hope and offer solutions to people. Jesus used parables extensively to teach people and prompt deeper thinking about his teachings. The use of narrative illustrations is very similar to drama. It is a very effective tool in the church and helps address topics that normally would be hard to exhaustively deal with from the pulpit due to time constraints etc. I really love what I do because there is so much to say about drama and it has so many fun aspects. But first, I would like to share

my story of how I started acting.

"Lights, camera and action!" Every time I walk on a stage filled with lights and an anticipating audience watching, I feel like I have come alive. But this was not always the case. I started acting at an early age. I guess I was about 10 years old. My first acting experience was in church. I was the first act and played the role of an old woman doing a soliloquy-solo act of speaking to oneself. Petrified, I regretted joining the play in the first place. Days before the show, I felt butterflies in my belly every time I thought of the play and wanted to run away. However, I had committed myself, and quitting was not an option.

Finally the day arrived, the lights came on and the scene began. I hesitantly walked on stage feeling like my legs were deadweights. Thankfully, I remembered all my lines, and as I recited them I began to feel comfortable. A wave of confidence welled up in me. I felt at home onstage and realized that I was cut out for this. My scene came to a quick end and I felt like it ended too soon. I wanted to go back and recite everyone else's lines. I have never felt that kind of fear again. That is my story on how I got into acting. I believe that the confidence that came over me that day was God ushering me into my dream. The empowering power of God is able to make you do anything. Be encouraged as you read, you never know what is on the inside of you unless you put yourself out there and do something. Take that first step no matter how hard it is. My hard step brought me such great joy because now I cannot imagine my life without drama and acting. So go out there, walk on that stage and as you hear, "Lights camera and action!" Start reciting your lines no matter how terrified you are. You might just discover that it is just the perfect place for you.

In Spirit and In Truth

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It's a totality of fellowship between finite man and an infinite God.

Hebrews 12: 28 informs that our worship must gain acceptance before God. God only comes to receive our worship when conditions are right, example with Adam he only came in the cool of the evening. Dr. Myles Monroe writes in Worship And Praise that "Only as we learn to establish and maintain the conditions that he has ordained for his coming can we hope to know the joy of living in his presence on a daily basis".

How do we offer acceptable worship? Only with the help of the Holy Spirit. Worship becomes a ritualistic adventure when devoid of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. The Holy Spirit harmonizes our worship with God's will because it is He who knows the mind of God. Jesus says in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Apostle Paul upon talking about the Holy Spirit says this "And he who

searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." (Romans 8:27). True and effective worship therefore requires the promptings of the Holy Spirit, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come" (John 16:13), but a person without the Spirit does not accept the promptings from the Holy Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are only discerned via the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:14).

What does God require in worship? Knowing what God desires in worship is made easier because of Jesus. "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Paul admonishes us to arm ourselves with the attitude of Christ in Philippians 2:5-8 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of

men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross". Paul thus suggests that the mind of sacrifice, humility, forgiveness, tenderness, justice, righteousness, purity, kindness, selflessness, and love and obedience is what God requires of them that seek to worship him.

So, let's rid ourselves of the mentality that we somehow hold a monopoly over God through worship. He is a complete God who lacks NOTHING. Acts 17:24-25 says, "God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives life, breath, and all things." Though we worship God for his pleasure, He also rewards us who humble ourselves before Him through worship. Remember He is able to raise stones to worship him if we refuse such a great opportunity. Now to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

-Kwame Antwi (Music Director, FFMI)



THE SWORD

OF THE SPIRIT

Volume three



In November 2012 FFMI organized an amazing Worship Event, dubbed Gratitude for Altitude. It was an impressive interdenominational worship experience featuring Pastor Uche Agu- an internationally known worship leader. An organizing team was drafted and tasked with soliciting sponsors, procuring flight tickets, inviting guest singers, facilitating the finding of a venue, and a host of other duties. Given that this was our first event of such magnitude and we had less than 3 months to put it together, it was a challenging but ultimately fulfilling experience. There were many lessons to be learned from it. I would like to highlight a few of my experiences and share lessons learnt in leading the team.

1. Never sell your vision short, always think Big- Due to the shortness of notice, and the period of the event (thanksgiving weekend) one of the challenges we faced was finding a suitable location that corresponded with the proposed date. The event was originally set for Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend. However, it had to be moved to Sunday. Despite all the negative responses we received from all angles, Pastor stayed on course and did not shift from his vision. His relentless pursuit to see that the vision came to pass energized the team to keep pushing and seeking alternative measures until we got positive

results. So the lesson here is never give up. Pursuit is proof of desire. Though it may not appear or come the way you want or expect it, keep pressing on and trying, revising the idea, making changes and trying again, being careful not to deviate from the vision of having a worship experience and not just a musical concert dubbed a worship event.

2. Always pray and surround yourself with like-minded visionaries- This is true. There is a universal adage that says "when the going gets tough, the tough gets going". Sometimes when faced with the impossible you may feel like giving up. Surrounding yourself with like-minded praying people will encourage you during the hard and impossible times. During particularly challenging times, we took time out to fast and pray solely for the event, to seek the face and intervention of the Lord. We stood firm and trusted God, and He saw us through.

3. Start Event Planning Early- Starting early not only gives you time to pray and prepare, but it also gives your audience time to prepare and ensure that they are able to attend or give assistance at your event.

4. Location! Location! Location!- Any real estate agent will tell you that the best way to get the most out of your property is location. The same is

true for any event. Finding the right location can make or break the event. If it is too small, people will not have space to breathe, if it is too big, you may cripple yourself financially. So how do you know if the place is right? Well, you have to ask yourself; What, Why, Whom, When, Where and How. You can only answer these questions with thorough research and analysis, to reach your goal. Once again, planning ahead gives you the opportunity to investigate your options. Once you are able to answer the questions, then you can start planning your event.

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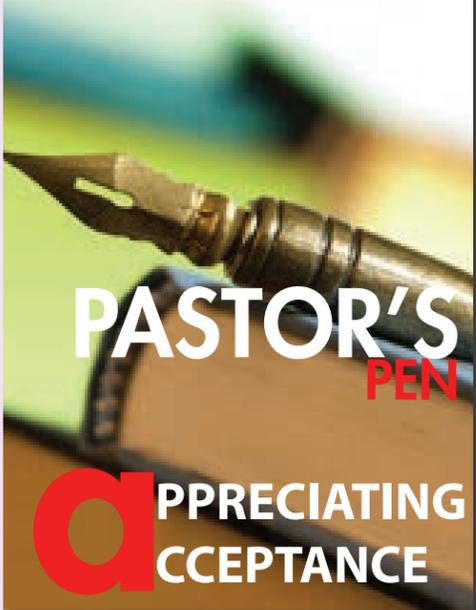
WHO WE ARE?

FFMI is a multiethnic and multicultural church. We exist to disciple Christians and fit them for the master's use irrespective of race, tribe or culture.

"There comes a point in your life when you realize Heaven and Hell are real. You come to a sense of realization and ask yourself where do you want to go?"

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worship would not be received, favored and positively responded to. Acceptance then suggests that not only is the professed offer heard but it is received not rejected, stamped by favor, gains divine approval and ultimately brings a desired expectation to manifestation. Thus David says of his Lord in Psalm 65: 2 "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come..." (KJV) In Deuteronomy 11: 26-30; Mosaic Law sets out the choices that face us between acceptance/blessings and rejection/curses. Blessings are the natural consequence of acceptance and curses are its equivalent in the negative. In Matthew 10 :14, Jesus instructs the disciples that whenever they are rejected after offering the gospel via ministration to shake the dust off their feet and depart that place. Implicit in non-acceptance is rejection which is indicative of a curse. Rejection is a negative sign of non-approval and dis-favor under which

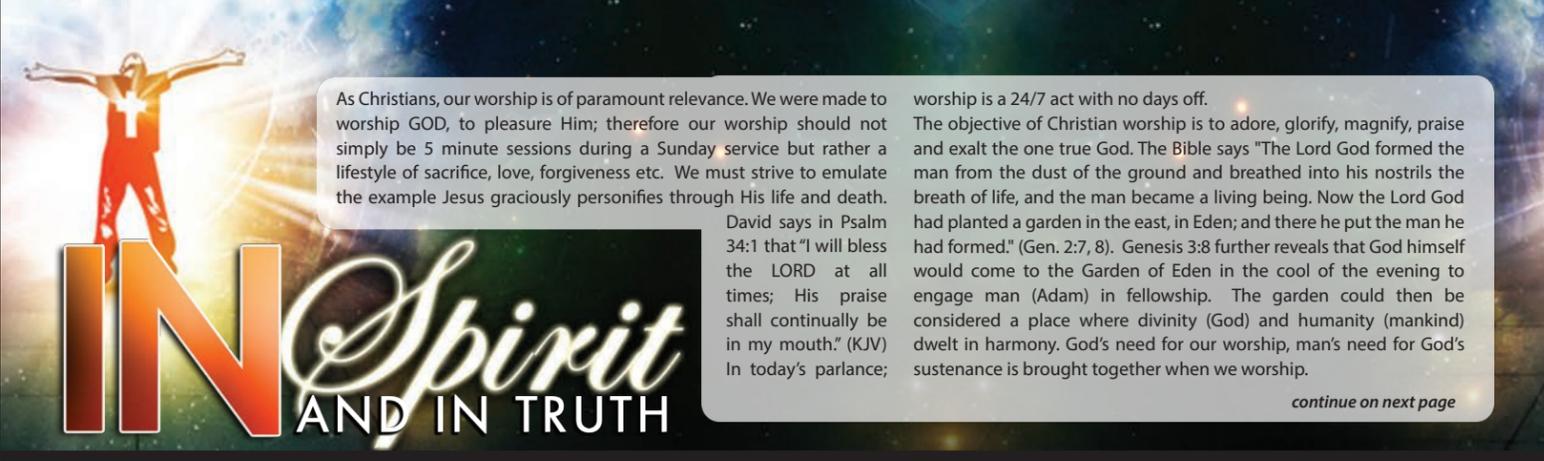
What is acceptance? Acceptance is a reactionary action. It is an act of consenting to receive or undertake something offered. Ready synonyms to acceptance might be reception, admission, approval or adoption. Acceptance cuts across varied spheres of life and operates in our physical, emotional, social, business, legal strata of life. A gift or blessing must be accepted, love requited is loved accepted, marriage and relational profession of feelings or intent must also be accepted. There must be an acceptance of an invitation, contract proposal, job offer etc. In the legal realm, it is necessarily a basic foundational step to the conclusion of any contract. An offer and acceptance are the basic drivers of law of contract. Acceptance is really then a necessary condition precedent to the commencement, development, improvement and existence of relations, exchanges and life on varied levels. Biblically, acceptance is an important spiritual principle. Our salvation is premised on an invitation and acceptance of said invitation. In John 6:37, Jesus states his willingness to accept all that come to him. He makes an offer of salvation, we accept that invitation and then we in turn get accepted into His eternal family and ultimate glory. Paul confirms for us in Ephesians 1:6 that God predestinated us for glory and has ensured our place in Him via acceptance "...to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved..." (KJV). Paul further cautions in Hebrews 2:3 that how can we escape if we neglect i.e. do not accept so great a salvation? (emphasis mine). Without acceptance, our salvation, place and position in divine design and purpose would be nonexistent. Every prayer, offering, sacrifice, worship, gift, blessing must be accepted or else be worthless. Without acceptance, a gift is of no use. This is true both in the physical and spiritual relations between humanity and divinity or simply between man and God. Every spiritual blessing including eternal life must be accepted by the child of God and in the same vein, when we pray etc. we are hopeful that our prayer and profession of faith also gains divine approval. In Psalm 141:2 David pleads for acceptance of his prayer and worship..."may my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice". Devoid of acceptance David knew that his prayer would not be received and his words, sacrifice, expressions of adoration and offering of

fruitfulness and the ability to flourish are effectively denied. The non-acceptance i.e. rejection of the gospel and the intended Christian way then indicates a choice of path that is man-made and culminates ultimately in hell. Acceptance is such a powerful principle that it can effectively strip a person of whatever grace or power they carry and render ministry non-effective and of no consequence. This is simply because we all carry the unique endowment of our personal sovereignty and a willingness to receive or accept ministry brings us into alliance and compliance with the word of God and intents of the Ancient of Days. In Mark 6:3-6, we see the manifestation of non-acceptance. The root of this could be unbelief, refusal to obey the word of God, over familiarity or other personal perceptive inhibitions that block our appreciation of what God wants to do. Even Jesus was brought to seeming inability to impart or impact the people of his hometown simply because of non-acceptance of the blessings, ministry, and gospel that He carried. Devoid of acceptance; ministry can be rendered impotent. Acceptance can also be the fruit of right intentions and also absolute obedience not just to the substantive rules set out by the Lord but also adherence to the procedural law laid out for execution of particular sacrifices. In Genesis 4, we encounter Cain and Abel. They are the progeny of Adam and Eve-fallen humanity. The state of the parents does not bar the children from building a connection with God and both appear to comprehend the necessity of sacrifice. They both sacrifice and Abel's sacrifice gains acceptance due to right procedural observance and intents. Cain's is rejected for the same reasons. Now the rejection of Cain's sacrifice did not lead to a curse but his reaction-anger and hatred-did.. Thus God cautions him in Genesis 4:7 " If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (NIV) Spatial constraints make it impossible to talk much more. Suffice it to say that it is imperative that we understand the law of acceptance its importance for our spiritual well-being.

*Till next time,
shalom
and keep reading The Sword of the Spirit.*

Lessons learnt from "Gratitude For Altitude" (GFA) 2012 continued from front page

5. Communication- Letting each team member or contacted party know information affecting their decision making and communicating that decision in a timely manner is important to any successful relationship. The Webster dictionary defines relationship as "a state of affairs existing between those having relations or dealings". I will take it further to say, that in such relationships; it is your mutual prerogative to make sure that the affairs between the parties are carried out effectively and efficiently. A key way to ensure this, is through communication.
 6. Keep to your word- Sometimes in the heat of a situation it is easy to make a promise to get the solution one intends, only to go back on one's words. During negotiations, one of the things that were noted by the people the team dealt with was that we always kept our word. This is important because it speaks to the group's integrity and character. Further, it establishes trust within the team. Thus, if you have a time-line to accomplish a task, see to it that it is accomplished because then you can be trusted to receive more business, remember that to whom much is given, much is required.
 7. Put everything in writing-In the Business world, if it is not in writing then it is treated with the formality or seriousness required. There are different kinds of contracts, but the best assured, no pain, no hassle, binding form of contract is one that is written and signed. Why? Because there are many people who cannot keep their word. Maybe they forgot, or they intentionally made a comment to get what they wanted at the moment. However, if the statement has any import on your business with that person, get it in writing. It ensures certainty, formality and commitment to what is discussed or agreed to. When dealing with event planners or artistes, etc. it is important to get every promise, the "dos" and "don'ts" of the participating parties in writing. Thus, in the future, one can easily refer to the agreed terms without any qualms.
 8. Stay true to the contract- Staying true to the contract speaks to the party's integrity and character. When dealing with different businesses and people of different nationalities, it pays to stay true to the agreed terms. It helps to maintain order and harmony throughout the planning and execution process. It also builds trust, confidence and relationships.
 9. Remember to say "Thank you"- It does not cost anything to say "Thank-you". It lets people know that their efforts were appreciated. It is particularly useful in some instances to send a quick note of appreciation r gratitude.
 10. Do not be afraid to ask- Ask questions, ask for finances, ask for favor, ask for help, assistance etc. There is great power in simply asking. Matthew 7:7
 11. Harness great public relations skills- It's an event for people, by people, financed by people to benefit people. You will need to sell the concept to people, whip up interest and get them to attend.
 12. Finally, do not lose sight of the nature of what is being done- A healthy balance between the spirit and the flesh is imperative. Such an event is ministry and therefore must be viewed aright from the spiritual perspective but it must also be executed with excellence in the physical dimension.
- These are 12 great lessons I personally learnt in my capacity as convener of the organizing team for GFA 2012. On an even more personal level, the challenge of being the only woman on the team, tasked with being its lead and convener had its challenges. The experience had greatly enriched my proficiency in team building, bonding, communication, cultural & diversity management and human relations amongst others. I would urge sisters to get involved in church and ministry events like this. It boosts confidence, brings new skillsets, improves knowledge and leaves you humbled but totally fulfilled. FFMI consistently provides platforms for spiritual, social, cultural and personal development that we must take advantage of. God bless you as you rise to new challenges. Overall, whatever you do, commit it in God's hands do not lean on your own understanding, acknowledge Him and He will direct your path. Think Big, Dream Big, for your God is BIGGER than you can ever imagine. Remain blessed.



As Christians, our worship is of paramount relevance. We were made to worship GOD, to pleasure Him; therefore our worship should not simply be 5 minute sessions during a Sunday service but rather a lifestyle of sacrifice, love, forgiveness etc. We must strive to emulate the example Jesus graciously personifies through His life and death.

David says in Psalm 34:1 that "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (KJV) In today's parlance;

worship is a 24/7 act with no days off. The objective of Christian worship is to adore, glorify, magnify, praise and exalt the one true God. The Bible says "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed." (Gen. 2:7, 8). Genesis 3:8 further reveals that God himself would come to the Garden of Eden in the cool of the evening to engage man (Adam) in fellowship. The garden could then be considered a place where divinity (God) and humanity (mankind) dwelt in harmony. God's need for our worship, man's need for God's sustenance is brought together when we worship.

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WOMEN IN ACTION

HAGAR, THE HORRIBLE (GENESIS 16)

Hagar's name does not evoke any fondness in the Christian in the manner that the name of Abigail or Esther does. Perhaps despise for Hagar ranks next to Jezebel and maybe Delilah. In fact we tend to totally ignore her story and even blame her for the unending strife between Muslims and Christians/Jews. Hagar's story in the bible is not very flattering but we can learn some valuable lessons from her, surprise! Surprise! We are first introduced to Hagar in Genesis 16 when Sarai, deciding that she was tired of waiting on God to fulfill His promise to give Abram an offspring, "pimped" her slave girl Hagar to Abram. It was in line with the traditions of the time for the slave to have children with her master for her mistress, but who said we the people of faith are to abide by tradition? Hagar was married off (Genesis 16:3) to Abram and quickly conceived! As expected, the slave began to despise her mistress, treat her badly (NCV), look down on her mistress (MSG) and was hateful to Sarai (CEV). Of course Sarai would have none of it (forgetting that she set the chaos in motion in the first place), and treated Hagar so harshly that the latter fled and made her way back home to Egypt through the desert! Perhaps tired, despondent, sad, disillusioned and thirsty, Hagar rested by "a fountain of water in the wilderness". There the angel of the Lord found her. It is worth mentioning that this was the first record in the bible of the appearance of the angel of Lord! Allow me to gloat a little and chip in that it was to a woman and a slave gentle at that! It is refreshing that we never have to fight for equality in the eyes of our Father. Amen.

Hagar's discourse with the angel of the Lord is the gravamen of this article. After Hagar told the angel of the Lord her mission in the desert "... the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." Say what? Did God really want her to return to that place of misery and discomfort? Is He not the all-seeing, all knowing God? Had God not seen how her once-loving mistress Sarai had turned vicious and maltreated her? Hagar had every right to dispute what the angel said, she had every right to think that the angel was not really of God or that maybe it was a mirage-she must have been hallucinating after treading the desert in the sweltering heat, pregnant and tired and probably famished! Because surely the Lord would not ask her to abide in Sarai's house till her child was born and even beyond? But Hagar did just that! She obeyed, returned and submitted to her mistress. I can imagine how humiliating and difficult that must have been for Hagar. Yes, sometimes God allows us to remain in that unkind place, that job, that house, that situation for a season, for a reason. God will not ask you to stay in a place of discomfort, or return and wait in a place of pain unless He has something greater for you that is connected to that very place! Sometimes, the purpose is to

humble you while building up your character. Again, like Hagar, we have a tendency to run away from our problems! Running away never solved anything. The angel of the Lord sent Hagar back to confront her problem. May we ask the Lord to grant us strength and wisdom to deal with and overcome the problems that we need to overcome (and to flee the things we must flee). If you quit that job in a huff because of an inconsiderate boss and you are sitting in the desert (still unemployed), it is time to ask God whether you should go back! Before you give up on that marriage or that child, ask God whether you should just wait a little longer. Inquire of God what lessons He wants you to learn from that situation or that place; ask Him what His will for you is before you make the move or take that decision. Like Hagar, your elevation or promotion may be tied to that place of hardship or distress! Specific geographical delineations and jurisdictions matter to God. He is a God of places, very deliberate and specific in where He meets his people. He assigns specific places for us to encounter Him and see his glory. He anoints places for specific purposes and brings His presence to bear in that location. Identify that special place of meeting with Him and honor it.



LEADING LADY MONICA ARYITEY