

Christian Life On Stage

Volume I

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

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PERPETUA IN THE LION'S DEN:

CARTHAGE A.D. 205

A One-Act Play

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

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Characters

PERPETUA , age 22

FATHER, 40's—50's

Time

March 8, 205

Place

A prison in Carthage. The stage is bare except for a small mat at center stage. PERPETUA wears a rough, dirty, torn robe. She has a baby infant wrapped in a blanket. FATHER has clean robe with sandals.

Synopsis

Perpetua's father begs her to offer a sacrifice to the Emperor to save her life.

Themes

Christian faith
Martyrdom

PERPETUA IN THE LION'S DEN:
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(The roar of a lion. As the lights come up, PERPETUA is sitting on the mat. She gathers the infant to her as she finishes nursing him. She hums to the infant. FATHER enters from stage left and crosses hurriedly to PERPETUA)

FATHER

(anxiously)

My dear Perpetua. Are you feeling better today?

PERPETUA

(happily)

Since they've given me back my son, my health has returned.

FATHER

How is he?

PERPETUA

He's nursing very well. (patting infant's head) It makes him happy, I think. (smiling) It makes me happy too. (hand up) The prison's become a palace since he's arrived.

(FATHER shudders in great distress)

FATHER

(anxiously)

You know I've come in love...

PERPETUA

(kindly)

Of course.

FATHER

I must ask you again. (pleadingly) Please...change your mind.

PERPETUA

(genuinely)

I can't.

FATHER

Hasn't the heat or the stench in this hole been enough?

(PERPETUA looks down)

FATHER (cont'd)

(pointing to PERPETUA)

Or the torture you've endured?

(PERPETUA looks at the blood stains on her robe)

FATHER (cont'd)

(hands together in prayer)

Have pity on your father's gray head. (pointing to infant) Have pity on your son! What'll become of him?

(PERPETUA looks at son and holds him tightly)

FATHER (cont'd)

Perform the sacrifice for the welfare of the Emperor. You must.

PERPETUA

(strongly)

I can't go against God.

FATHER

You don't have to believe what you're doing. Just go to the temple. I beg

you.

PERPETUA

I will not.

FATHER

(in desperation)

You're doomed!

(FATHER crosses closer to PERPETUA)

FATHER (cont'd)

This has only been the beginning. They're taking you to the amphitheater this morning. You'll be made to run the gauntlet between the elite guard as you enter the arena. They'll whip you with scorpions. You'll be stripped naked in front of the whole crowd. (pointing at PERPETUA) Is that what you want?

PERPETUA

I can't stop what they'll do to me.

FATHER

(earnestly)

Yes you can. You can. They'll release the lions from the cages. I could hear them roaring as I walked over here.

(PERPETUA nods and looks down. FATHER kneels down beside PERPETUA)

FATHER (cont'd)

(imploringly)

Perpetua.

(PERPETUA looks at FATHER)

FATHER (cont'd)

They'll tear you apart. Please...(holding up one finger) just one sacrifice.

(PERPETUA stands up with difficulty
because of pain)

PERPETUA

(shaking head)

No!

(FATHER falls on face in front of PERPETUA)

FATHER

(with great pathos)

There's no hope.

PERPETUA

(triumphantly)

There's hope, father. I'm a Christian.

(FATHER gets up on knees. PERPETUA hands
infant to FATHER)

(black out)

END OF PLAY

MAHALIA JACKSON—MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

A One-Act Play

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

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Characters

MAHALIA JACKSON, Afro-American singer, age 44

SIMON, Mahalia's manager, white male, 40's—50's

Time

1955

Place

A recording studio. There is a tall stool at center stage with a microphone on a stand. MAHALIA is attired in a dress. SIMON is attired in a suit and tie.

Synopsis

MALHALIA JACKSON considers a lucrative offer to sing music other than gospel music.

Themes

Gospel message
Christian commitment
Cost of Being A Christian

MAHALIA JACKSON—MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

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(As the lights come up, MAHALIA is sitting on the stool, holding the microphone and sheet music. SIMON steps onto the stage from stage right stairs and crosses to MAHALIA. He is clapping)

SIMON

(effusively)

Wonderful, Mahalia! Absolutely wonderful. I don't believe in God myself. But when you sing, it gives me goose bumps.

MAHALIA

They's not goose bumps, Mr. Simon. They's your soul speaking and you don't even knows it's there.

SIMON

(nodding and smiling)

Perhaps. Perhaps. (pause) So...(hands up) the session's over. We'll get it mastered and we're done.

(MAHALIA stands up)

MAHALIA

When will the record hit the stores?

SIMON

Just before you start your tour. The timing's perfect, though most of the concerts are sold out anyway. (pause) Now remember (pointing finger at MAHALIA), we're having lunch with the president of Decca records.

MAHALIA

You said...

SIMON

(hands up to stop MAHALIA)

Just give him a chance. He's come all the way to Chicago to talk with you.
He just wants you to...

MAHALIA

(slowly and emphatically)

I sing gospel music.

SIMON

I know you do. And you're the best...

MAHALIA

(modestly)

Now...

SIMON

The best in the world.

MAHALIA

(smiling with hands on hips)

What do ya want me to do?

SIMON

(waves hand)

I want you to come...

MAHALIA

I already weigh too much...

SIMON

And see what else you could do.

MAHALIA

Could?

SIMON

(defeatedly)

Would. Of course, would.

(MAHALIA shakes head)

SIMON (cont'd)

There's big money out there.

MAHALIA

I's make a living. People love my singing.

SIMON

That's not enough. (with discouragement) Production costs keep going up...

MAHALIA

(with feeling)

I want to reach people...

SIMON

You will. You will...

MAHALIA

With the gospel message: The love of Jesus Christ. (pointing to SIMON) I was born to sing gospel music. Period.

SIMON

(strongly)

You don't have to stop. You can sing it at...church.

(MAHALIA squirms with discomfort)

SIMON (cont'd)

We'll put it in your contract that you do another gospel recording (rolling hand around)...in a few years. Later. You can do it later.

MAHALIA

I's doing what I's want now: (closes eyes and puts hands up high in praise)
"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands".

SIMON

(with exasperation)

Will you come to lunch?

MAHALIA

I'll get my own lunch. I don't want to owes him nothing.

SIMON

This is gonna to cost you big. This is nineteen fifty-five, not thirty-five.

(MAHALIA turns away)

SIMON (cont'd)

Time's a changing. It's where everyone's going.

MAHALIA

(turning back to SIMON)

I don't know where everyone's going; (taps chest and looking up) but I's know where I's going.

(SIMON looks up. Then he looks back at MAHALIA shakes head)

SIMON

(with a sigh)

I don't know how long I can afford to manage you.

MAHALIA

(with resignation)

You gotta do what you gotta do.

SIMON

(with kindness)

We've been together a long time.

MAHALIA

(pointing to stage left)

Goes if you want to. You don't need my permission.

SIMON

(with enthusiasm)

I just want to hear what he'll offer you.

MAHALIA

Suit yourself.

SIMON

It's a lot. I know it is.

MAHALIA

Go.

(MAHALIA sits on stool)

SIMON

(as he crosses to stage left exit)

I'll be back this afternoon.

(SIMON reaches stage left exit)

SIMON (cont'd)

I promise.

(SIMON exits stage left and shuts door sharply.
The noise startles MAHALIA who is looking
forward)

MAHALIA

(with resignation)

Byes, Mr. Simon.

(MAHALIA looks at music)

(black out)

END OF PLAY

**SAINT PATRICK 440 A.D.:
MISSIONARY TO IRELAND**

A One-Act Play

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

CHARACTERS

PATRICK, missionary to Ireland, age 50

KING TARA, an Irish leader, age 40

TIME

440 A.D.

PLACE

A plain in Ireland, midday.

PATRICK wears rough simple clothes with boots.

KING TARA wears rough clothes and carries a large sword.

SYNOPSIS

PATRICK entreats an Irish KING to eschew vengeance.

THEMES

Christian history
Missions

SAINT PATRICK 440 A.D.:
MISSIONARY TO IRELAND
by Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

(As the lights come up, PATRICK is at center stage. He looks serious. He gazes at the ground, bends down, and picks up a shamrock. KING enters hurriedly from stage left. He is angry)

KING

(crossing to PATRICK, with anger)

I know why you're here, Patrick. My men are right behind me. I will have Prince Cashel's life and his family's. You will not stop me.

PATRICK

(calmly, looking at the shamrock)

My king, have I taught you about the shamrock?

KING

(still angry)

Of course you have.

PATRICK

What does the shamrock symbolize?

KING

(with a little less anger)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

PATRICK

What has Jesus done for us?

KING

(with less anger)

He's died for our sins.

PATRICK

For mine?

KING

Definitely.

PATRICK

For King Miliucc?

KING

Sure.

PATRICK

Even though he kept me as a slave for six years after I was brought here from England by Irish raiders and sold on the slave market?

KING

(with less anger)

You've said so.

PATRICK

For Prince Cashel who raided your village?

KING

(unwilling to admit it)

I suppose...

PATRICK

(calmly)

What?

KING

(resigned to admit it)

Yes, He has.

PATRICK

When I came back to Ireland years later—to bring the gospel—what could I have done according to the law of the land?

KING

(like a recitation)

Exact vengeance on King Miliucc for the years of misery you had as a shepherd.

PATRICK

Would I have had any peace after I'd accomplished it?

KING

(reluctantly)

No.

PATRICK

I'd have to fear for the rest of my life the cycle of vengeance would return upon me or my family. If I'd die before this would happen, I'd know that a violent act would likely befall the next generation or whenever the opportunity would occur. The sword is not the only way to structure a society. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself on the cross. He absorbed all vengeance. He offers us a new way. What is the way, my king?

KING

(calmly)

Faith, hope, and love.

PATRICK

Go to your men. They await your leadership.

KING

(kindly)

Thank you, Patrick.

(KING turns toward stage left)

PATRICK

Take this.

(KING turns back toward PATRICK. PATRICK hands KING the shamrock)

PATRICK (cont'd)

Go in peace.

(KING nods and crosses to stage left. He exits stageleft.
PATRICK watches KING)

(black out)

END OF PLAY

SLUM SISTER OF CALCUTTA:

MOTHER TERESA 1948

A One-Act Play

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

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Characters

MOTHER SUPERIOR, age 50's—60's

MOTHER TERESA, age 38

Time

1948

Place

A convent in Calcutta, India.

There is a desk with chair at center stage facing stage right. There is a chair in front of the desk.

MOTHER SUPERIOR is dressed in a long, black nun's habit.

MOTHER TERESA is dressed in a white, ankle-length sari with blue trim and sandals.

Synopsis

MOTHER TERESA applies to leave the convent to start a new order to serve the poor.

Themes

Heroes of the faith
Charity

SLUM SISTER OF CALCUTTA:
MOTHER TERESA 1948

(As the lights come up, SUPERIOR is sitting at the desk looking at a pile of papers and a pen. She picks the pen to sign the papers. She shakes her head and puts the pen down without signing. TERESA enters from stage right and stops. SUPERIOR looks up)

SUPERIOR

(motioning to TERESA)

Come.

(TERESA crosses to desk with hesitation and reaches SUPERIOR)

TERESA

(bowing)

Mother Superior.

SUPERIOR

(slight nod) (with seriousness)

Mother Teresa. (motioning to chair) Please.

(TERESA sits in chair. SUPERIOR picks up papers and comes around the desk. She sits on the edge of the desk. She looks TERESA up and down)

SUPERIOR (cont'd)

(with some displeasure)

Your new habit, for the ... (looking at the papers) "Missionaries of Charity"?

TERESA

(motioning to her outfit)

Do you like it?

(SUPERIOR looks coolly at TERESA. SUPERIOR stands up)

SUPERIOR

(seriously)

Mother Teresa, your request is...unusual. For the eleven years you've been in this convent, I've allowed you to spend Sunday afternoons visiting the poor, as you've requested. Your work on their behalf's been admirable. However...(holding up papers) there's no procedure for this.

TERESA

I must live among the poor.

SUPERIOR

Why?

TERESA

To give them the most important thing they could ever get: love.

SUPERIOR

You are bound by your vow of enclosure. Leaving the convent to start a new order has not been done before.

TERESA

I need to be released from my vow.

SUPERIOR

It's essential to be in the convent for study, prayer, and meditation.

TERESA

I must be where they are. God has called me to give myself totally to the care

of the poor. On the train to Darjeeling, I heard His voice: (rhythmically like the sound of a train) “Go to the poor. Leave the convent. Live with the poorest of the poor”.

(SUPERIOR listens and then smiles)

SUPERIOR

(genuinely)

You have great ability.

TERESA

Thank you.

SUPERIOR

You’ve moved up the ecclesiastical ladder faster in our convent than anyone else. You were made Mother only months after you came to India, with your appointment as superintendent of the high school. Then you became head of the Daughters of Saint Anne. (pointing to TERESA) You could go far as an administrator. The doors would open widely for you to help the poor in a leadership position.

TERESA

God has spoken to me.

SUPERIOR

(nodding)

Of course He has. (shaking head) You’ll be swallowed up by the poverty and the misery...

TERESA

As Jesus was sent by the Father, so he sends us, full of his Spirit, to proclaim the gospel of his love and pity among the poorest of the poor...

SUPERIOR

...if not violated or killed by the hooligans in the slums. (animately) Gandhi

has just been killed. Hindus and Muslims are rioting. There are atrocities regularly by one or the other side. Thirty-two were killed on the streets yesterday.

(SUPERIOR points stage right. TERESA looks stage right)

SUPERIOR

(with alarm)

I can't protect you out there.

(TERESA looks back at SUPERIOR)

TERESA

I'm not afraid.

(SUPERIOR shakes head, then leans against desk)

SUPERIOR

Where will you get the money to support your efforts?

(SUPERIOR crosses to desk and puts down papers)

SUPERIOR (cont'd)

Begging won't be enough, (pointing to papers) not for this.

TERESA

I have...

SUPERIOR

(firmly)

You have no place to live or work. No access to medical supplies or expertise. What about help? You can't have an order with...(holding up one finger) one person.

(SUPERIOR sits down)

SUPERIOR (cont'd)

(motioning to pen)

I can't sign if...

TERESA

(standing)

A couple in our church has offered me the third floor in their house on Creek Lane as a place to live. I've arranged a refresher course with the Medical Missions Sisters. One of the new novices has asked to join me. Two others are interested.

(SUPERIOR sits back)

SUPERIOR

(smiling)

I should have known. (picking up pen) I'm sorry you'll be working in obscurity. You've already accomplished much and deserve recognition for it. (shakes head) It won't happen in the slums.

(SUPERIOR looks at TERESA. TERESA considers what has been said)

SUPERIOR (cont'd)

(sitting forward and signing papers) (formally)

I'll send my approval to the Archbishop, who'll forward your petition to Rome.

(SUPERIOR stands up with papers in hand)

SUPERIOR (cont'd)

You'll have your new order. God be with you, Mother Teresa.

TERESA

Thank you, Reverend Mother.

(TERESA crosses quickly to stage right exit and exits)

(black out)

END OF PLAY