

Freetown

By Doug Irving & Gary Randolph



Theme and Purpose

Missions is not exclusively an activity of European and North American Christians. Christians from all nations and of all colors feel the call to preach the gospel to their own people and to others. It is important for western Christians to hear that passion from Asian, African, and South American Christians.

This monologue is about that passion for sharing the gospel. It is about hearing and answering that call. It is also about the freedom we find in Christ. It presents the story of Samuel Crowther, who as a boy in Africa was kidnapped and placed into slavery. Rescued, he became a Christian and eventually a missionary to his people. Like Crowther, we too can hear the call and follow it wherever it takes us.

We have compressed the timeline in one place for the purpose of dramatic flow. We have selected 1843 for the point in time of this monologue when Crowther was returning to Sierra Leone after studying for the ministry in England, and we have him mention that he was ordained as a bishop. Actually Crowther was not yet a bishop when he returned to Africa in 1843. He was named bishop in 1864. However, the significance of the first black bishop is too important to leave out of this monologue, even if it is set in 1843.

Cast list	Bishop Crowther
Approximate Running Time	4 minutes
Scene Description	Bishop Crowther is standing at the railing of a ship coming into Freetown, Sierra Leone.
Prop List	Perhaps a suitcase
Other Production Notes	This monologue needs to be performed by a black person, preferably one who has or can do an African accent.
Related Scriptures	Psalm 142:7; Psalm 146:7; Isaiah 61:1; John 8:36; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1
Song Suggestions	Field of Souls; Free For All; Use Me; I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go

BISHOP CROWTHER

Africa. The land of my birth. The land where I lost my freedom but then was set free - and then set free again indeed.

I was just a boy, twelve years old, when slave traders raided my village. I and my whole family were carried off in irons. I never saw them again. I was brought to Sierra Leone and thrown chained in the belly of a slave ship waiting to sail for the sugar cane fields of the West Indies. It would no doubt have meant an early death. But the hand of God intervened - in the form of the Royal British Navy.

The British sailors took me off the ship here in Freetown. Freetown. Indeed I was free. And here I would soon learn what real freedom was. Missionaries took me in. They taught me English. More than that, they taught me about the love of God in Jesus Christ. I was baptized and took a Christian name, Samuel Crowther. Samuel Adjai Crowther - the Adjai, my old name, was so I would always remember that little slave boy God set free.

I hungered to learn more about God. So I left for England to study. Oh, the books in England. I could have stayed there many lifetimes. But God was calling me back to Freetown to teach the African people.

So I came back and began to teach. And soon I had an opportunity to go on an expedition up the great river into my home country. There I saw boys and girls like I had been - they were not in slavery's chains (though that was still a risk), but they were in the chains of sin. I felt God's call to spread the Gospel to my people and also to fight the slave trade by bringing commerce to the region. So once more I returned to England, this time to study to be a minister. I was ordained a bishop, the first black bishop of the Anglican Church. And so now I return once more.

I have heard many languages in my time. The Yoruba of my village when I was a boy. The Arabic of the slave raiders. The Portuguese of the sailors. The English of my liberators. Each was like music with melodies and harmonies. I especially love the cadences of the Bible in King James English.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But those beautiful cadences do my people no good. They need to hear the Bible in their own tongues. So I will put to work all I have learned - all the experience God has brought me through - to translate God's Word for them. Then I can share with my people the true freedom I have found.

I step out now once more into the streets of Freetown - truly free. And, with God's grace, I will work to break every chain.

Fade to black

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