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# Take Off Your Shoes

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Take Off Your Shoes  
A liturgical drama based on Exodus 3  
As performed at Holden Village  
June 15, 2005  
By John Steven Paul and Soul Purpose,  
The liturgical drama troupe of Valparaiso University

A shoe can make a who.  
A what?  
A who, like you.  
A shoe or two can make  
A who into a you who do...  
What?

Characters:

Moses  
Dancer  
Someone  
Another One  
Still Another One  
Yet Another One  
One  
Two  
Three

**I**

*The sound of sheep; many sheep.*

*Enter Moses.*

MOSES:

Where am I?

SOMEONE:

Mount Horeb.

MOSES:

The mountain of God?

SOMEONE:

Mm-hmm.

MOSES:

How'd I get here? Where's Midian?

SOMEONE:

Didn't you see those two logs and the sign that read, "Entering the Wilderness"?

MOSES:

No, the darn sheep distracted me – LOOK AT THAT!

*Enter the DANCER, aka "The Burning Bush." The DANCER dances in a tight circle of pirouettes.*

MOSES:

I must turn aside and see this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.

*The DANCER's circle becomes gradually wider and wider encircling MOSES.*

SOMEONE:

Looks like you're not going to have to do much turning.

DANCER:

Moses, Moses!

MOSES:

Here I am.

DANCER:

Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

*MOSES steps back as if to get off the holy ground, but he is stopped by ANOTHER, who says:*

ANOTHER:

Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

*MOSES steps back as if to get off the holy ground, but he is stopped by YET ANOTHER, who says:*

YET ANOTHER:

Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet...

ALL:

... for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

MOSES:

Okay, okay, I get the message. But I'm not *wearing* sandals.

DANCER:

What-EVER! Take off your shoes!

*MOSES does this. And when he has removed his shoes, the actors all take off their shoes and bring them to the center creating a little mound or heap of shoes.*

MOSES:

There. With interest!

DANCER:

I am the God of your father.

MOSES:

Amran?

DANCER:

Yes; and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

MOSES:

No.

DANCER:

Yes.

MOSES:

*(hiding his face)* Where've you been?

DANCER:

I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the... uh...

SOMEONE:

... the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

MOSES:

*(checking a road map, maybe)* the Hittites, the Amor- could you slow down? After the Hittites, it's the Perizzites, no wait, the Amorites...

DANCER:

Never mind. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh, to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

***Pause.***

MOSES:

Who am I—

DANCER:

You're Moses. You know, "drawn out of the water"?

MOSES:

I know that, but who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

DANCER:

You're my guy. I will be with you.

MOSES:

*(muttering)* Your guy. Yeah, sure. Who's gonna believe this?

DANCER:

*(getting impatient)* You're my creature; you're topsoil; you're dust! And to dust you shall return.

MOSES:

*(to SOMEONE)* Is this a dream? Am I hallucinating under the influence of sheep... uh... dip?

DANCER:

This shall be a sign for you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall workshop God *on this mountain*.

MOSES:

When will that be?

DANCER:

Don't ask. Just go down there.

## II

*MOSES doesn't ask, but others do:*

ONE:

What if they ask me the name of who sent me?

DANCER:

I am who I am.

TWO:

What if they don't believe me?

DANCER:

I will give you signs to show.

THREE:

What if my speech fails me?

DANCER:

I will be your mouth.

ANOTHER:

And I will be your mouth.

STILL ANOTHER:

And I will be your mouth.

YET ANOTHER:

And I will be your mouth.

1, 2, 3 and MOSES:

Oh, please, Lord, send SOMEONE ELSE!

DANCER:

You know, Mo, maybe I made a mistake after all.

*A sound is heard like a crackling fire.*

MOSES:

*(to SOMEONE)* What's that sound?

SOMEONE:

That's the sound of God's anger being kindled against you.

MOSES:

Uh-oh.

SOMEONE:

Right.

MOSES:

*(taking the deep breath of decision)* All right. I'll go. Best put my shoes back on. Where are they? Buried in this heap. *(He picks up a shoe – not his own – and considers it.)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?

- 1:                   You could walk back down the mountain. *(MOSES tosses the shoe to someone on the side)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 2:                   You could make a home for a gerbil. *(MOSES tosses a baby shoe to someone on the side)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 3:                   You could plant a seed in it. Or a petunia. *(MOSES tosses the shoe to someone on the side)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 4:                   You could bang it on the table to make your point. *(MOSES tosses a hard-soled shoe to someone on the side)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 5:                   You could give them to someone who has none. *(MOSES tosses the shoe to someone on the side. And then another one; and another one; and another and another)* what can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 6:                   You could march for justice and peace. *(MOSES tosses a pair of boots to someone on the side)* What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 7:                   You could walk away. *(MOSES tosses the shoe to someone on the side)*  
What can I do with a shoe? Or two?
- 8:                   You could walk to the foot of the cross.

*MOSES finds his own shoes and puts them on. He starts out in the direction of the cross.*

### III

DANCER:

Moses?

MOSES:

Here, I AM.

DANCER:

*(acknowledging the play on words)* Good one. How are you doing?

MOSES:

Well, I got my shoes back on. That's a start.

DANCER:

Are you beginning to figure out what I have in mind for you?

MOSES:

Get back to me on that, okay?

DANCER:

Oh, I will. You'll be back you know.

MOSES:

To Mt. Horeb?

ANOTHER:

To Mt. Sinai?

STILL ANOTHER:

To Mt. Buckskin?

YET ANOTHER:

To Mt. Copper?

ONE:

To Mt. Dumbbell?

DANCER:

Yes. And, to Topsoil.

ALL:

Topsoil?

DANCER:

To dust. To dust you shall return.

SOMEONE:

Holy wisdom. Holy Word.

**THE END**