

Miranda Village

A Dramatic Approach to Missions Training

BY JOHN COSPER

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Mission workers interview two mothers (Colleen Mooney and Erica Goldsmith) at the doctor's office in Miranda village.

WELCOME TO MIRANDA VILLAGE!

Located by a peaceful lake in a tranquil, wooded setting, Miranda village is a quiet town full of friendly people who believe in hard work and family. The people of Miranda have had little contact with the outside world, but they do enjoy a few benefits of modern life. There is electrical lighting in certain areas of town, a modern hardware store, and a school sponsored by the local church.

Miranda does have a serious health crisis. The lake provides their only source of water, and the water is far from clean. The people of Miranda and surrounding communities have used the lake as a dumping site, and the water is filled with harmful bacteria. One of the chief's family serves as a token water official, testing the water monthly with dated, contaminated equipment that produces bad results.

WaterStep, in partnership with a number of missionaries serving in the area, has targeted Miranda as a potential site for one of their water purification systems. When installed, the system will provide steady work for several villagers as well as pure, clean water for all the towns people. Food will be safer, water will be safer, and the over all health of the community will improve.

To assess the readiness of Miranda to accept such a system, a team of mission workers will visit the village, gather information, and make initial contacts with the local leaders in the hopes they can establish a working relationship. This initial meeting will be critical to not only getting a foot in the door, but developing a long term connection with the people of Miranda.

SO WHERE IS MIRANDA?

Only in the imagination.

Miranda village was the brainchild of the people at WaterStep, a real missions organization based in Louisville, Kentucky. In 2007 the leadership at WaterStep (then known as Edge Outreach) wanted to do something a little different to prepare the trainees at their Pure Water Pure Life conference. I've worked with WaterStep for a number of years, going back to the days when they were known as Mega Ministries, a community-wide youth ministry. I'd written drama and film scripts for them in the past, but in early 2007 they came to me with an idea beyond anything we had done before.

The Pure Water Pure Life conference draws mission workers and government officials from around the world to learn about a water purification system that is changing and saving lives in third world countries. It's an incredible tool for helping the impoverished and establishing relationships in places that have not heard the gospel.

One of the biggest challenges for mission workers looking to install these systems is convincing the people in a village they need a water purifier and convincing them you have the right solution. Cultural differences can be a big barrier to mission workers, and the wrong first impression can shut the door permanently on people with the best intentions.

One of the hardest things to teach in missions work is how to overcome these communication barriers. You can write and speak on the subject all day, but there's nothing that compares with first hand experience. The problem is, first hand experience doesn't allow room for trial and error. So how do you give mission workers a chance to learn by trial and error without potentially damaging the communication with the people you want to help?

WaterStep came to me with the idea of creating a simulated village. Using first hand accounts from people who had been in the field and knew what to expect, we created characters in a realistic setting that allowed the trainees at the water conference to put their new knowledge to work. Armed with a simplified version of the questionnaire WaterStep's field workers use on site, the trainees spent an hour in Miranda village assessing the community's needs first hand and begin the difficult task of persuading the villagers to install their water system. The mission workers spoke with the townspeople and even the chief, gathering basic information, names, and laying the groundwork to come back and install a water purifier.

Miranda became the highlight of the weekend for many of those in attendance. The lessons learned through the exercise and the debriefing session that followed gave the trainees a new perspective on how they would approach prospective towns in their actual work.

DRAMATIC AND EFFECTIVE

The use of role play as a training method is certainly nothing new. Political candidates spend hours preparing for debates by squaring off in mock debates with actors who portray their opponents. Salesmen practice new sales techniques in role play exercises. Medical schools and hospitals use actors to help train students in diagnosing patients.

Anyone who has a message they need to communicate effectively would be wise to practice their communication skills in such a way. Those of us in the church have been tasked with delivering the most important message of all, the only one with eternal consequences. There are plenty of books out there that train people in evangelism, counseling, and other forms of communication. But how much more good could you and your church do if you took that training one step further, getting students out of their seats and into real life situations?

My goal in sharing Miranda village with you is to show you how to apply this type of training to your missions team, your church, your community, and your specific needs. The same technique we used in Miranda can not only benefit your missions group, it can be modified and applied to a wide range of ministries: outreach, evangelism, altar counseling, student counseling, greeter's ministry, community activism, and so many more.

Let me take you through the process of how Miranda was created. Along the way, we'll stop to look at how the same type of research and creative work can be applied to uses. I've even included the materials used by the actors and trainees in Miranda to give you an idea what you'll need to develop for your team. You are free to borrow, modify, and use everything you see printed here.

Of course if the materials in this book are not enough help, I certainly don't want to leave you high and dry. If you'd like to ask some questions, or if you'd like help in developing your own training materials, here's my

email address: john@righteousinsanity.com

You can also see a little bit of Miranda for yourself at this web address:

www.righteousinsanity.com/miranda



Buying locally is a priority for WaterStep because it's another way to assist in building the local economy. Trainees had a chance to work on their negotiating skills with a hardware store owner (Erin James) who was very wary of the newcomers.

MISSION PREPARATION

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was Miranda. WaterStep came to me several months before the conference and asked if this kind of exercise could be done. This was different from anything I had ever done, but again, it's nothing new. It's also not near as daunting and complicated to organize as you might think.

There is a good deal of grunt work that takes place before you can begin making phone calls to actors. And it all begins with setting a goal.

DEFINING YOUR MISSION

Let's take a step back for a moment. With Miranda village we created more than just a training exercise. We also created an improvisational work of drama. The characters in the drama included some that we created (the villagers in Miranda) and the trainees who attended the water conference. In addition to having characters, drama must also have a plot. Plot can be loosely defined as a series of actions taken by the main character (the trainees) in pursuit of a goal.

In order to make Miranda village effective, we had to give the trainees a concrete goal.

WaterStep came to me with a very clear cut goal for exercise. They wanted to better equip trainees to go into the villages where clean water is needed and lay the groundwork for bringing in the water purifier. The people at WaterStep believe when you meet the survival needs of the people, such as clean water, and establish a good relationship, you then earn the right to speak to them about spiritual needs.

WaterStep handed me a questionnaire used by their missions teams in gathering information and assessing the needs of communities. The questionnaire served as the goal for the exercise. We simplified the six

page form to just a handful, including population information, names and contact information for the local leaders, names of people willing to help with the equipment, availability of tools and electricity, and other general information. (You can see the questionnaire for yourself near the end of this book.)

Before you can do anything else, you need to establish a goal for your trainees within the exercise. “I want my counselors to be better communicators” is too big and nebulous for this kind of exercise. Whether you are training mission workers, altar counselors, or door greeters, they need a concrete goal to pursue. “I want my counselor to lead someone to accept Christ,” or “I want my counselor to convince someone they need to seek more counseling,” gives the trainees something they can grab onto and achieve.

LOCATION

The next step is to identify the location where this training will take place. Before we could give names and personalities to the people of Miranda, we needed to establish the town of Miranda itself.

Miranda was developed through a combination of first hand accounts of the places mission workers have visited and the location where the water conference took place. The first Miranda village was established at Camp Kavanaugh in Crestwood, Kentucky, a picturesque retreat center with a good sized lake in the middle. Like many villages in South America, where WaterStep does a lot of its work, the village was located right on the water. A nearby dorm served as both the church and as the chief’s residence.

We based the social and economic facts of Miranda more on the kinds of villages WaterStep targets in their ministry. Third world, rural, little or no modern conveniences. The water in the lake, like many places in the third world, is polluted and filthy - not at all suitable for human consumption. Yet the people of Miranda depend on the water for everything. It was an ideal location for WaterStep to move in, establish a connection, and introduce the water purification system. It was an ideal setting for the trainees at the water conference.

Every village has a history, and Miranda was no exception. There’s no

need to go into great detail; paint on broad strokes, but try to cover some basic facts that will help your actors answer questions if they come up. What is their history? What sort of government do they have? How are women viewed in the community? Do they know the water is dirty? What explanation do they have for so many illnesses?

Giving your actors the right frame of reference is critical. As an example, many places in this world have no concept of germs. When people get sick, they blame it on evil spirits. This is a common belief that WaterStep encounters in the field, and one they wanted their trainees to uncover in Miranda village.

The ideal setting for your training will be where ever your trainees will be sent. If you're taking a mission trip, simulate the country and the culture where you plan to visit. If this is a ministry that happens at church, do it right there where the ministry happens.

THE PEOPLE

Once you have a goal and a location, it's time to populate that location with realistic people. This will take a lot of research, and there is only one type of research suitable for this exercise: first hand. Books and videos and other educational materials are nice, but by the time they get from those who created them into your hands, they are dated. You have to have first hand knowledge of the people you are simulating in order to make the exercise as real as possible.

I've never been to a third world country, but I know people who have. I traded many emails and had several lunches with members of the WaterStep staff. With their help, we were able to create a population of ten (later expanded to twelve) typical characters one would encounter in the field.

There's Zoe, the town doctor, who is overworked and overwhelmed by the poverty. She knows the water's making people ill, but there's no one to believe her. There's the chief's daughter Jane, the town water official, who uses out of date, contaminated tools to measure the cleanliness of the water. There's the hardware store, where a mistrusting store owner gave trainees a very hard time. They don't allow you to touch the merchandise like they do here in America. And then there's the chief,

who is always looking for bribes and spent the first part of the exercise locked in his office asleep! Just because you're there to see them doesn't mean they're going to be eager and waiting to meet you.

Each character was condensed to a one or two page synopsis. You don't want to go into great detail, for several reasons. First, your actors need to know each other in addition to themselves. They need to know "That's Zoe the doctor," and "That's Mal the chief." Make it simple for them to get the feel of the town, their own character, and each other. Second, leave room for the actors to do their thing and ad lib. There is no way to predict how the trainees will interact with the villagers. You cannot anticipate where conversations will lead and what questions will be asked. If you waste ten or twenty pages on character history, it's very likely they will never be asked about a single thing you wrote down! Form a skeleton, and let the actors fill in the blanks.

When creating characters for your exercise, start with the people who have been there. If you're going on a mission trip, interview people who have been where you are going. If you're training altar counselors, let them tell you who your trainees are likely to encounter. First hand information is the best source for creating realistic characters to give your trainees the best possible experience.

Keep the number of characters small and manageable. Remember, every character you create is another actor you have to recruit!

Give them names you can work with easily and remember. If you're a Joss Whedon fan, you'll know exactly where I got the names for the people of Miranda. It is a little self-indulgent, but it's also going to make your life easier.

Your characters should resemble the cast of *The Breakfast Club*; John Hughes boiled 80's high school culture down to five archetypes: a jock, a brain, a princess, a criminal, and a basket case. Simplify your cast. Paint in broad strokes, and don't get bogged down in details. Give your characters some biographical information, but leave room for your actors to develop the character on their own. Most of the details they give trainees will be made up on the fly.

REALITY CHECK

Miranda was a dream set up for a missions training. We had the resources to set up a small town on a lake populated by a handful of actors with strong improvisational skills. Clearly, this is not something everyone will be able to recreate. So what do you do when you have far more limited resources? You make do as best as possible.

If you can't bring the trainees to the village, bring the village to them. Let your missions group meet one or two villagers in your church. Establish a separate room from the training room that will be the encounter zone, where your trainees can meet a handful (even just one or two) people. This will still create a different sense of place, as your trainees meet the actor in a different environment from the training room. If possible, break the large group down into smaller ones, and let them go a few at a time. You don't want the whole crew bombarding one individual in the field anyway.

Counseling and evangelism trainings will be smaller by nature. One on one exercises will be a must. But what if you only have one or two actors available? Rotate your trainees, and give your actors two or three characters to play. Slight costume and personality changes are enough to help the actor and the trainee connect with the different roles. And by mixing up the characters, trainees will not be able to compare notes, and everyone will have a different experience they can share and learn from.

CASTING

Now that you've created all these wonderful characters, it's time to find actors to fill them. You might be blessed with a good sized group of actors already doing ministry in your church; you may not. Here's what you need to look for, and some ideas on how to find them.

You will need actors who are VERY comfortable with improvisation. They should be good at staying in character and have a long memory. The more they learn not just their character, but all the others, the more real the exercise becomes for the trainees. After all, in a small village, everyone knows everyone else's business. Your characters should be no different.

If you can't find enough adults, go to your youth pastor. High school kids, even if they're not trained actors, are often less inhibited and take to this sort of material far more easily than self-conscious grown-ups. This is also a great opportunity to let them get some hands-on experience with ministry training. You might just awaken a passion within one or more of them for your ministry.

For Miranda village I cast a wide net looking for actors. I am on several casting groups on the Internet, so I sent out casting notices and drew in whoever responded. Did this mean we had non-Christians? You bet. Did it affect the production? Not at all. I have yet to encounter a non-believer who, when cast in a Christian film or stage project, did not take it seriously and give it their best. I'm sure there are those who will let their personal beliefs get in the way. If you find them, don't cast them. Most actors I've met, Christian and non, are happy to have new and different things on their resume. They are very professional, and their talent greatly enhanced the end product.

One other note about using non-Christians: this is a chance to do real ministry in the midst of your training exercise. It is never a bad thing to invite someone into your group who might discover that Christians are not all kooks and weirdos. You may very well discover, as I have over the years, your welcoming them into your group will have an impact for the kingdom and lead them to accept Christ as well!

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal process is a little different than your typical drama would be. There is no script to follow, no blocking to plan, no lines to memorize. You are creating living, intelligent characters who will interact with real people and make up all their dialogue on the spot. The only way to prepare for this is to give the actors time to improvise in character.

Depending on how much time you have available, and how easy it is to gather your cast, start them off with some regular improvisation. Let them play some games and perform a few scenes completely unrelated to your project, giving them a chance to get loosened up and get a feel for one another.

Next, give them an overview of the program. Explain to them the purpose of the exercise, what goal the trainees will have within the exercise, and what boundaries the actors will have. This is a great time to share the vision of your ministry with them, and to give them a little more background. In our case we brought in WaterStep team members to share their experiences. Actors asked questions about their roles, and people who have been there on the ground told them what it was like to barter at the hardware store or deflect a bribe request from the chief. This information proved invaluable to all the cast members and is well worth the time it takes from actual rehearsal.

Finally, have the actors spend time with each other in character. You can keep them in a group setting, or let them mingle. Give them a time and place - perhaps right after the missionaries have been in town - so they have something to discuss. You might also act as a facilitator, asking them questions that the trainees might ask.

Be looking for who is getting into their character, and who might need help. Offer suggestions where needed, or allow the group to help their fellow actors to find a voice and personality. Test their character knowledge and make sure they know the most important facts. In our case, I had to be sure that the actors knew the vital pieces of information the trainees needed on their questionnaire.

Rehearsal time is also useful for planning things the entire group may need to know. The original Miranda village decided the morning of the exercise to greet one another with a Seinfeld-like, "Heeeeeelllllooooooooooooo!" It was a bit goofy, but it was uniquely Miranda.

If you struggle to get your actors together and don't feel like you have enough time to prepare them - do not panic. I had a horrible time gathering the original Miranda inhabitants. In fact they did not all meet until the morning of the exercise. We had several actors bail on us at the last moment, and we had one replacement come in that very morning. Despite these set backs, the cast performed remarkably well, individually and collectively. Every one of them took the event and their character seriously, and they made a deep impact on those present.

One final note on rehearsals. It's most important that your actors know one another by character name, but try to give them a chance to know

one another personally as well. Years ago, I was working with a group of teens on an anti-violence play called *The Waiting Room*. We were rehearsing a scene involving two people - a new actress named Gloria, and a guy most of the cast had known for years named Steve. Steve was a very energetic actor and a unique personality. Consequently, he frequently ended up the butt of everyone's jokes. I don't remember how it happened, but this was one of those times when rehearsal descended into a "Pick on Steve" rally. Steve laughed. The cast laughed - all except for Gloria, who put her hand in the air after a few minutes and asked, "Who's Steve?"

"He's the guy next to you," I informed her. Four weeks into rehearsal, Gloria knew everyone by their character names, and not their real names.

It's important that your actors know who all the characters are. It's very nice, though, when they can know each other in real life as well.



A local doctor welcomed the mission workers, but found their presence made it difficult to do her work. Actress Alyssa Harley was able to express her frustration in a debriefing session following the visit to Miranda. One of the benefits of this exercise is that trainees can learn from mistakes that could prove damaging in the field.



A worried mother (Erica Goldsmith) cradles her sick child, keeping a wary eye on the visitors. Erica made a deep impression on mission workers with her ability to cry on command. Trainees had to approach residents like her with extra care.

BUILDING MIRANDA

The first visit to Miranda happened beside a lake at Kavanaugh Retreat Center in Crestwood, KY. The lake was surrounded by picnic tables and tents, brought in for the conference, that had the water purifiers set up inside. There was no budget for building an actual town; it would have been wasteful for such a short exercise. I made some preliminary visits to the site with the staff members from WaterStep, and we paid out the town with some very simple furnishings.

A picnic table became the doctor's office, where a mother with a sick child waits. The dormitory up the hill became the church and the chief's house. A table and a simple shelf with some plumbing equipment was set up near the lake. That was all we needed to establish the hardware store.

We sketched out the town on paper so that the actors had a general idea where everything would be. The morning of the event, the actors were shown the town as it would exist for them and the trainees. It was just enough information to allow them to move from place to place, visit one another, and refer the trainees to the people they wanted to see.

When planning for your training session, be creative in setting the stage for your trainees. Don't spend money you don't have to. Use simple props and use costumes to set the stage. People have good imaginations, and if your trainees buy into the exercise, they won't be taking note of what's missing. They'll be focused on applying the lessons you have taught them. That's the whole point.

ANOTHER DAY IN MIRANDA

When the trainees entered Miranda, they did not find a bunch of people standing around waiting for them. The electrician was working on the town lights. The doctor was tending to patients. Mothers were gathering water for their children. The pastor was preparing a sermon, and the chief... was in the middle of a nap.

We wanted trainees to experience life in Miranda as they would in the field - living, breathing, and not at all prepared to receive guests. Not that the residents weren't friendly. Like many warm cultures in third world countries, the people were friendly and inviting. It's just that whether or not the missionaries came, life was still happening in Miranda.

Your mission workers or ministry volunteers are not going to walk into cookie cutter ideal scenarios either. Make sure they encounter their training sessions as they would in real life. Where will your volunteers meet them? What will they be doing? Or rather, what would they be doing if they weren't expecting someone to come to them with a gospel message that day?

VISITORS ARRIVE

Having been given the mission of WaterStep and the tools for opening a dialogue with a town like Miranda, the trainees were commissioned to enter. Trainees were free to move about from one place to another. There was an hour time limit on the exercise, but no other restrictions were placed on the trainees.

Once they were in the performance space, the actors really came alive. The hardware store owner threatened people who tried to touch her things with a stick. Villagers dished dirt on each other in addition to discussing the town. The chief was constantly campaigning for bribes and gifts. One of the most interesting things that happened in the exercise involved something that was mentioned in training, but never discussed as part of the exercise. We were told that witch doctors often held great sway over superstitious villages. This proved to be the case in Miranda, as nearly all of the villagers (save the doctor and the pastor) spoke about the witch doctor who lived up on top of the hill beside the lake. We had not discussed a witch doctor in Miranda, nor where that witch doctor would live; talk about groupthink.

Even if the cast members had not all identified the same location for the witch doctor, it would not have mattered. One of the liberating things about our third world scenario was that cast members didn't have to be too exact in having their facts match up. In cultures like the one Miranda was designed to reflect, people think it rude not to answer questions. So

rather than telling you they don't know something, they will make up answers. It wasn't that they wanted to lie to the mission workers; they didn't want to seem rude by not giving an answer. WaterStep teaches their trainees to survey two or three people on important questions - especially directions - and follow majority rules if they get different answers to the same questions. The "lies" told by Miranda residents added to the realism in our scenario.

Observe your trainees and your actors carefully, and look for teachable moments. Take notes on what you observe: what do they do well? What do they do poorly? Your objective outside vantage point is going to prove just as valuable in the end as those of the trainees and the actors. All of you will soon have a chance to share and teach one another in the debrief.

DEBRIEF

One of the most valuable aspects of the Miranda village training session was the debrief. The trainees returned to their conference room to discuss the experiences they had with a moderator. Challenges and problems were discussed in the group, and people who were able to overcome these challenges offered their advice. People who had previously worked on mission trips were able to discuss similar encounters as well as how things might have differed in the field.

After twenty minutes of dialogue, the residents of Miranda village - now out of character - joined the discussion. They gave their own impressions of the encounter from the other side. It was incredible to see the reactions and feelings these actors had after portraying the villagers. The Miranda residents were impressed with people who introduced themselves, discussed their personal lives, and took time to say thank you. Far too often, however, people would ask a few questions and wander off. It wasn't intentional rudeness; people had a questionnaire and a limited time. But they let their agenda get in the way of something more important: building personal connections.

Another serious problem occurred at the doctor's office. Many trainees tended to gather around the important people of the village, and the doctor was considered of utmost importance. The doctor had a much different agenda - treating a sick child - and continually asked for space so she could work. Sadly, most of the trainees ignored her pleadings,

staying focused on the task at hand.

A few of the actors went as far as to test the trainees on their own, to see how friendly and accepting they would be. The chief managed to get his hands on a plastic tub of honey - a gift from one of the trainees. He ate the honey with his bare finger, using the same hand he would then use in shaking hands with visitors. He gauged their reactions to this gross encounter - and almost everyone passed.

The actors found it very easy to put themselves fully in the shoes of the villagers. They, more than any other, knew what it felt like to be peppered for information, to be taught, to be ignored. They in turn were able to give the trainees a picture of things from the other side, giving them more understanding and a desire to be warm, friendly, and above all, polite to their hosts in the field.



An extra twist of reality awaited the trainees in Miranda: they arrived during the chief's naptime.



A very proud chief (Denny Grinar) shows the newcomers around his village. Earning the chief's trust and support was crucial for the trainees.

REVISITING MIRANDA

Planning for the 2008 Water Conference began days after the 2007 conference ended. Within a week, I had an email asking us to reprise the Miranda village exercise at the 2008 conference.

NEW WRINKLES

I met with WaterStep a few times over the year to plan the next conference. Several changes were planned. We created some additional characters, including a shady water salesman. This is another common archetype encountered in WaterStep's work. Often times these are people who charge exorbitant fees for water that may or may not be clean, taking advantage of the locals. This character would be a fly in the ointment for the mission workers, discouraging their work and spreading distrust among the other inhabitants of Miranda.

We also added the element of foreign language to the project. Three characters were designated to be non-English speaking, which meant that the mission workers would have to find others in the village to translate for them. Three characters were designated to be default interpreters for these characters.

WaterStep also wanted to use the Miranda residents to correct some of the potential problems they observed during the 2007 conference. Many of the trainees had their noses stuck in the questionnaires. They were focused on getting answers, but not on establishing relationships. Many trainees would wander from person to person asking questions but not stopping to say hello, exchange names, or even say thank you.

The actors were given new instructions to combat these errors. Miranda residents were polite, and expected the same. They would become insulted if hellos and goodbyes were not exchanged. They also became suspicious of anyone writing on a clipboard. The general directive was to react to any trainee behavior that might cause a problem in the real

mission field so that the same errors would not be repeated.

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

I'd love to tell you that we added extra rehearsal time, or we found some new technique to train the actors for this conference. Unfortunately, everyone we recruited for round two was in rehearsals or productions elsewhere, and only a hand full could make one of the two "mandatory" meetings we scheduled. Nevertheless, Miranda 2008 was a better production than 2007 for one key reason: three residents of Miranda 2007 came back for round two.

I said earlier there's no good way to prepare actors for this type of performance. However, if you plan on doing this type of training more than once, I strongly recommend using at least some of the same actors every time. The experience they bring is simply invaluable. They already know what to expect. They have a deeper grasp of the experiment and what you want to accomplish. And their past experience will enhance what you are doing in ways you may not expect.

The chief and the doctor were two of the returning cast members, and their performances showed. The chief had a stronger grasp of his importance to the village and to the trainees. The actor we used relished the chance to test the trainees, seeking out bribes and putting them in uncomfortable situations. He usually had sticky hands from whatever food he was eating, and the trainees had no choice but to be polite and shake that sticky hand.

The chief decided to carry a walking stick with him in 2008. The doctor played off this character trait right away, diagnosing him with kidney problems that caused a lot of pain. The kidney disease was directly linked to the bad water. The chief also betrothed his daughter (another veteran of Miranda 2007) to one of the visitors.

One of the veteran cast members made another valuable suggestion. Since Miranda now had a language of its own, and since Miranda placed a high importance on politeness, the residents needed their own words for hello, goodbye, and thank you. The value in this is two-fold; it enhances the experience, and it gives the trainees another take away they will share with each other throughout the weekend. If they are able to pick

up the language, the trainees would go on using Mirandan words to greet one another.

The newer cast members were made more comfortable by the leadership of the veterans, and dived right in. The new hardware store owner traded for a man's watch, then tried to sell it back to him. The water salesman - a non-actor we threw into the part that morning - became a great foil for the trainees. Many were surprised at this character's attitude and found it a challenge to bring him over to their side.

The corrective behaviors we put in place also worked. Actors not only reacted negatively to the questionnaires, but to anything foreign to their culture. The chief and his daughter ran in fear from a man who pulled out a cell phone.

Many mission workers did a better job at the relationship building. Many responded to the superstitious fears of the people, who believed evil spirits were the source of many of their afflictions, by using that as an opportunity to explain to them what germs were. This allowed them to then present their case for installing the water purification system.

One mission worker from Costa Rica earned very high marks from the cast. He worked the people in the village perfectly, getting to know everyone on a personal level, and using his new-found connections to get a trusted member of the village (the pastor) to personally introduce him to the chief. The chief honored him by sitting at his table during lunch.

We hadn't planned it, but the actors who stayed for lunch and the debriefing stayed in character through lunch. The cast was very game for this, and more lessons were learned by the mission workers in communication. The chief ended up eating cookies with sour cream thanks to a helpful mission worker who told the chief that sour cream was to be eaten on other food, not straight from the package.

As a drama director, I've always found that the veteran actors will draw the best out of the less-experienced. Such was the case with Miranda. The new cast members included three semi-professionals; the teenage daughter of a returning cast member in her first real acting gig; and a friend from college of the chief, who came with us that morning expecting to run video tape. All of the new cast had an easier time

assimilating and then expanding on the Miranda atmosphere thanks to the veterans who taught them and then showed them the way.



Trainees in 2007 tended to crowd the individuals in Miranda village. To discourage this behavior, the trainees were broken into two groups for 2008. Miranda residents also tended to run when surrounded, preferring to be approached by one or two instead of a mob.

BEYOND MIRANDA

Miranda village has become a treasured part of WaterStep, serving as both a training tool and a symbol of their work. In 2009, WaterStep invited several “Miranda residents” to a formal dinner fundraiser as a way of bringing their purpose to their key donors. In 2012, after a three year hiatus, WaterStep called on Miranda again to play a part in their presentation at IdeaFest in Louisville, Kentucky.

Miranda was no substitute for cultural education, evangelism training, and the practical training of the water purification systems. Rather, it was Miranda was a complimentary exercise to reinforce what the trainees had learned. It’s one thing to discuss how you would approach strangers in a strange land with a message of hope. It’s quite another to actually do it, either in real life or a simulation. Trainees from the 2007 conference are still talking about the strange characters and experiences they had in the first Miranda village.

I hope you have seen ways that an exercise such as this can benefit your ministry. Whether you are training mission teams, greeters, altar counselors, grief counselors, youth workers, children’s workers, the same strategy can be adapted for your unique situation. You know what the need is. You know what the challenges are. Bring your team together to identify those needs and establish a goal: what would we like to do better?

Choose a training program to get your team to where you want them to be. Once you have identified the method, create an environment where they can put their new skills to the test. Work within your budget and resources. If you can’t build a whole town populated with a dozen actors, use a classroom with one or two people.

Create believable characters for your simulation, real people with real quirks and problems that will challenge your trainees. Don’t make it impossible, but don’t give them an unrealistic easy as pie scenario either. Choose actors that will buy into the scenario and give your

trainees an experience they won't soon forget.

Gather your team, train them, and test them. Afterwards, gather them back, along with your actors, and discuss the exercise. What went right? What went wrong? What would they do differently? What can your actors share that will make them do it even better the next time?

The rest of this book contains all of the information I compiled and gave to the actors involved with Miranda Village. This material is provided as a guideline to show you how such a training program could be put together. You are welcome to adapt any of the village and characters described for your own use.

I fully realize this book may not be enough information to help you set up your own training program. Therefore, if you have questions or need help, please send me an email at john@righteousinsanity.com. I would be more than happy to answer questions or assist you in preparing a improv training exercise to equip your team for the Lord's service.

CHECKLIST

A quick guide to helping you form your own improv training.

PURPOSE

What is my goal in doing this training exercise?

What will be the goal for the trainees within the exercise?

What information will I give them to use within the exercise?

How will we gauge the results of this training?

SETTING

What setting do I need to create to develop this simulation?

Where can I establish this setting?

What props/set pieces do I have available to help create a location?

CHARACTERS

How many characters do I need for this exercise?

How many actors do I have available?

What do I know about the people my trainees will encounter?

What obstacles will they present to the trainees?

Do my characters have enough background and information to give a realistic simulation for the trainees?



Trainees compare notes while in Miranda village. Although they had a questionnaire to fill out, the most important skill for trainees was to build relationships with the people of Miranda.

WATERSTEP WATER PURIFICATION TRAINING “MIRANDA”

CAST

Mal - Village chief
Kalie - Mother/ Water gatherer
Inara - School teacher/ Water gatherer
Zoe - Doctor
River - Mother with sick child
Wash - Town electrician
Jane - Village water official
Joss - Hardware store clerk
Shep - Hardware store assistant
Simon - Pastor
Fanti - The chief's wife
Mingo - A water salesman

SETTING

The town of MIRANDA is over a hundred years old. The people who live there are a mix of natives and immigrants. Most live without electricity, and none have internal plumbing. Few have real currency. Most of the inhabitants are farmers. They live off the land, make clothes and goods by hand, and trade for what they need.

The village has been hit with plagues on a regular basis, and the mortality rate for children is exceptionally high. Yet very few people ever leave for better opportunity.

The town is ruled by one family that passes power from one generation to the next. There is a school, but most of the people are very uneducated.

The people of Miranda have no sense of time. No one has clocks or watches or calendars. No one is ever in a hurry.

The people of Miranda always have an answer to every question... even if they make it up. One trick the missionaries will need to learn is discovering who actually knows the truth. For example, if they need directions, they may ask 3 different people. If 2 of the 3 give the same directions, they will take that route.

Everyone has a story... and they are more than willing to share with people who listen.

NAME: Mal

AGE: 40

OCCUPATION: Village chief/leader

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? 3 (plus 2 deceased)

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: Native (Fanti acts as his interpreter)

STORY/BACKGROUND: Mal's family has lived in this area more than 300 years. He comes from a long line of tribal chiefs. His rule is kind, but firm. The people have no concept of democracy; he is simply accepted as their leader. Mal holds to the old ways, and is often distrustful of outsiders. That said, he loves money - real money - and will gladly listen to anyone who offers some. He believes himself to be always right; whatever he says is true, even if he makes it up. He and his wife have had 5 children. Two died very young; a third is very sick. Although he doesn't trust the doctor, he relented to let the doctor treat his son when his wife insisted. He insists to the people that the water is fine for drinking from their water sources; yet he himself drinks bottled water when it is available. It's not that he doesn't care; he doesn't know what to do to change things, and he refuses to look like a failure before his people. He likes to show off his village, and proudly points out improvements and advancements HE has brought to the community. He can read and write at a very elementary level.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Mal is a pleasant person and a know-it-all. He loves appearing strong and smart, and hates when people act above him or show him up. He will do anything to avoid appearing weak in the eyes of his people. Mal lives for a good bribe, but he can be persuaded. The way to Mal is flattery, and letting him think everything was his idea.

FAITH: He does not believe in God; he is very superstitious, and distrustful of the Pastor - although he likes the man very much. He is not above mocking others for believing in God.

COSTUME: Nicer clothes, but still old and worn. He does his best to look dignified.

NAME: Wash

AGE: late 20's

OCCUPATION: Town electrician

MARRIED? No

CHILDREN? No

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: English

STORY/BACKGROUND: Wash is a very adept, mechanically minded person. Not formally educated in electrical works, Wash has always loved taking things apart and seeing how they work. Wash became the village's electrician because of his reputation for manipulating such things. Wash loves to learn, but prefers to do it hands-on. He is never happier than when he is working with wires and electricity. The more damaged or complex a problem, the more he revels in it. Wash is single, preferring to care for his mother rather than settle down just yet. Truth be told, he wants to leave town to get married so he can seek a better life and his children will have a better chance of survival.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Wash is quieter than most, but friendly. He is a sponge for learning. He plays the part of yes-man to Mal, but he is frequently sarcastic about it; he sees right through Mal's lies and doesn't believe any of it. Still, he likes Mal, and he's not about to rock the boat. Wash is very helpful - but like most, he will make up an answer rather than say the words "I don't know." That doesn't happen often; Wash knows the town and its people very well, so he's a reliable source for directions and such.

FAITH: Mal attends church, but has not become a baptized believer.

COSTUME: Old worn - and dirty - clothes. Wash is a hard worker, and his clothes reflect that.

NAME: Inara

AGE: Early 30's

OCCUPATION: Teacher

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? One (plus two deceased)

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: English

STORY/BACKGROUND: Inara is the town school teacher, and next to the pastor and doctor, the most educated woman in town. She has had some education outside Miranda, though her own knowledge is about equivalent of an American high school student. She is also a mother who has lost two children to illness. Her husband is a farmer, and the two of them lost their oldest child barely a month ago from a parasitic illness. He suffered diarrhea, stomach pains, weight loss, and fever. The doctor tells them that it was contracted from dirty water. They believe her, but they don't feel like there's anything they can do. They are too poor to go any place that has cleaner water, and there's nothing they can do to purify the water they have.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Inara is a very sad woman, still mourning the loss of her child. More than anything, she needs people to listen to her tell her story. She is helpful, but she will make up answers when she does not know the truth.

FAITH: Inara was a spiritual woman, praying daily and continually, before her daughter died. Now she is questioning. She wants to believe, but she is very angry with God.

COSTUME: Rags, old clothes.

RELEVANT TESTIMONIAL:

The school we are in this week is in the community of Los Guido, a barrio or slum of San Jose. Many of the people living in the community are refugees of surrounding countries. While I don't know much of the living conditions besides what I can see from the bus windows, the conditions of the school are heart breaking.

Before going into the school, our team was briefed on the conditions that many of the students live in. Many of these students receive their only meal at the school. When we teach about teeth, we have to discuss how to clean your teeth without a toothbrush, as some may not have one. However, even though we were briefed on the condition that these students live in, I wasn't prepared. I had imagined difficult conditions, but now there are real people with real faces asking me how to clean their hands if they don't have clean water or soap. Now that I know the people living in these difficult situations, the poor conditions are not imagined, but reality for these sweet children who give me hugs and ask my name and give me a stickers.

I'm glad that I am getting to see this reality. Once you know the people living in the hard reality, you can't pretend that it isn't real.

NAME: Jane

AGE: mid 20's

OCCUPATION: Water official

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? No

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: English

STORY/BACKGROUND: Jane is the oldest child of Mal, the chief. She is considered an important member of the community because of her family, but she will not be the village leader; her younger brother will. Jane accepts this without malice. She takes her job as water official seriously. She knows the people in her town have suffered. Many of her friends have children who have died. She has equipment for testing water, but it is not terribly accurate. Jane has educated the people on occasion about water safety, boiling water, etc. But for the most part, no one listens. Jane will always give an answer to every question; she knows the town inside out, so she's not one who has to make up directions or lie.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Jane is a daddy's girl. She defers to him on everything. If Dad says it's okay, she'll do it. She is friendly, polite, and intelligent. But she's not pro-active or much of an independent thinker.

FAITH: Attends church with her mother, but is not a "believer."

COSTUME: Old clothes, but nicer than most; she is the Chief's daughter, after all.

NAME: River

AGE: early 20's

OCCUPATION: Mother (sick child at doctor's)

MARRIED? yes

CHILDREN? One (two deceased)

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: Native (Zoe acts as her translator)

STORY/BACKGROUND: River has lived in the village all her life. Half of her siblings died from illnesses contracted from the water. River married young and had a child right away who died as an infant. Her second child was two when she died, and her third, three months old, is very sick. [She is in the doctor's office when the missionaries arrive, seeking treatment for her baby and herself.] All of her children suffered the same way - constant crying, vomiting, stomach pain, and diarrhea. She now has some of the symptoms herself.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: River is very sick. She will answer truthfully, but prefers not to talk. She is desperate for any hope that might cure her child. She doesn't care what happens to her; she wants this baby to live.

FAITH: She believes in God.

COSTUME: Old worn out clothes.

NAME: Simon

AGE: mid 30's

OCCUPATION: Pastor

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? one

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Transplant

LANGUAGE: English

STORY/BACKGROUND: Simon was saved by missionaries as a child. He has studied at seminary abroad, and returned to his home country. Two years ago, he took over as pastor in Miranda, a church planted by missionaries a decade ago. The people of Miranda are hurting and suffering, and many have no clue why. Simon knows the water is dirty and tries to help educate people on healthier habits, but most ignore him and listen to Mal when he says the water is okay. Despite their conflict, Simon likes Mal, and prays for him and the rest of the village daily.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Simon has a good heart, and he will be very helpful, especially to other believers. He has prayed for some means to bring better health to his village.

FAITH: He's a pastor; he's got that old time religion. Nuff said.

COSTUME: Nicer but old clothes.

NAME: Zoe

AGE: 30

OCCUPATION: Doctor

MARRIED? No

CHILDREN? No

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Transplant; Zoe grew up in a larger city and went to med school as part of a government program. In exchange for her education, she was sent to Miranda to work for ten years as the village doctor.

LANGUAGE: English. Acts as interpreter for River. This actress must know River's character as well as her own.

STORY/BACKGROUND: Zoe was a bright-eyed "I'm going to change the world" type when she arrived in Miranda. When she first arrived and saw the deplorable conditions people lived in, she was determined to educate the adults and children on health and hygiene, implement a vaccination program, and teach the people to take better care of themselves. Zoe hasn't thought of this in years; every day, from the crack of dawn (sometimes before) until nightfall (and even into the night), she is seeing patients. The sicknesses come in waves, but they never truly go away. People take their medicine with the same filthy water that made them sick in the first place. She is somewhat desensitized to the loss of life - though she never gets over seeing children and babies die. Zoe has had help at times from missionaries and nurses; 8 times out of 10, the missionaries are there more for the experience rather than truly being helpful. She occasionally writes letters to the country's government for aid, hoping she might still leave this place in better shape than she found it. More and more, however, she is just ready to leave, get married, and forget Miranda.

FAITH: She has never been religious. She respects Mal, the minister, and enjoys discussing matters of faith. But she personally struggles with the idea of a loving God because of the horrors she faces in her work.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Zoe is exhausted. She is constantly busy, and frequently short with people - especially outsiders. The lack of real help and empty promises of others who have come before have left her jaded. Still, she will give honest answers and as much information as she can to the visitors. Unlike the common folk of the village, Zoe will admit when she does not know something. She welcomes any hope of educating her village and slowing the cycle of sickness and death... even though she's slowly losing hope.

COSTUME: Zoe hasn't had new clothes for years, but she dresses like a professional with what she has. Nice pants and shirt, but definitely old and worn.

MEDICAL INFO: Zoe is likely to be asked what symptoms/illnesses she has seen as listed on the water survey. She has seen them all.

RELEVANT TESTIMONIAL:

I visited a clinic in San Felipi and spoke to the Dr. on duty (he is always on duty and worn out). He said that 90 percent of the illnesses he sees are water related. When I went to the clinic I found about 6 wooden benches filled with mothers, crying babies, and scared looking children. Most of these, according to worn out Doc, had parasites, diarrhea, and wounds that would not heal. I found the wound thing interesting, I never thought about it but if a wound is cleaned with dirty water it gets infected....one of those duhhh moments for me. Everyday, all day, this is what the worn out Doc treats.

NAME: Joss

AGE: Early 40's

OCCUPATION: Hardware store clerk

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? One grown

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native; except for one trip for a medical emergency, she has never set foot beyond the farm fields of her village

LANGUAGE: Native/ some English when convenient to her (Shep acts as translator)

STORY/BACKGROUND: Joss inherited the store from her father. She worked with him for years before taking over. She has a basic ability to read and do math. Joss is a slow mover who talks constantly. She loves business, especially from outsiders, because it means real money. She loves to wheel and deal, and she's good at it despite her limited education; Trump would love her. She is one of the few in the village not to have lost many relatives. Thanks to the family business, the one major illness her son Shep had was treated in the city hospital.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Joss is a positive person who loves to wise crack. She is very pleasant with outsiders, and likes to present a strong front with them. She wants to be seen as an expert and an important person. Joss is very deliberate when it comes to business. You can't just hand her a list of items; she takes things one at a time. If she doesn't have what you need, she will bring you something else - the wrong size, the wrong shape, or something completely different, and try to sell it to you. Joss will answer any question, whether she knows the answer or not. She is very convincing even when she's making things up. She doesn't do it maliciously; it's just a part of her need to be seen as intelligent. Joss is not concerned about the water. The Chief says the water is clean, and that is good enough for her.

FAITH: She attends church, but she has a very shallow understanding of God.

NOTES ON HARDWARE STORES: Everything is on display on a wall. Joss will not let customers browse and pick items out; that's how theft happens. You ask for things one at a time, and she will get them - or something she deems just as good. If something is out of stock, she can order the item. She will always try to upsell you on a special order, insisting she has to order in bulk and pass the cost on to her customer (whether that is true or not.) As she rings up orders, she places stickers on every item, and writes them on a receipt. Shep, her son, will double check the order and remove the stickers before the customers leave.

HARDWARE STORE STOCK INFO:

Water storage tanks: not in stock. Can be ordered.

PVC plastic pipe: pipe available in 1/2" sizes. Elbows and joints all 3/4"

Glue, solvent: available

Plumbing tools: available

12 volt automobile type battery: available

6 volt - 12 volt battery charger: can be ordered

COSTUME: Old, worn clothes.

RELEVANT TESTIMONIAL:

Another story for another one of your stations is the hardware store. Nothing is within reach, you can not just shop for what you want. You have to ask for everything. You made need 20 90degree elbows and they may only have 2. You may need a 3/4 inch fitting and they only have 1/2 inch. The tanks you want are not at this store, you may have to drive 40 minutes to another store. Our attendees need to come across these situations at our village. Hardware stores are a nightmare!!!

NAME: Shep

AGE: 21

OCCUPATION: Hardware store clerk

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? One (and one deceased)

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

LANGUAGE: English. Acts as interpreter for Joss; this actor must know Joss's character as well as his own.

STORY/BACKGROUND: Shep is Joss's son, and the husband of Kalie. They have a son together, but the boy is very ill. They had one other child, but that baby died as an infant from disease. He believes the water is okay because he was told so, even though the diseases that afflicted his children were contracted from dirty water. He blames the doctor, and refuses to take his second child to her. Shep and Kalie are at odds about their son: he wants him to follow his footsteps at the store; Kalie wants their son to go to school and then on to college.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Shep is not so optimistic as his mother. He is very depressed, and sad. When help comes from the outside offering hope of better health for his family, he is all ears. Shep is rather uneducated, however, and is limited help with questions. He will make up answers to questions he doesn't know the answer. He's quiet, but if you are nice and gentle, he will talk - and tell you his story.

FAITH: He is not religious; his wife is.

NOTES ON HARDWARE STORES: Everything is on display on a wall. Joss will not let customers browse and pick items out; that's how theft happens. You ask for things one at a time, and she will get them - or something she deems just as good. If something is out of stock, she can order the item. She will always try to upsell you on a special order,

insisting she has to order in bulk and pass the cost on to her customer (whether that is true or not.) Shep stands at the door. After his mother rings up a customer, he takes the receipt and checks each item on the list, removing the stickers from them as he goes.

COSTUME: Old raggedy clothes.

NAME: Kalie

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: Mother/ Water gatherer

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? One (and one deceased)

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Native

STORY/BACKGROUND: Kalie is an orphan, married to Shep. She was married at 18 and lost her first child at 19 to a disease caused by filthy water. Kalie now is mother to an 18 month old boy. He has been sickly since birth, but Shep will not allow her to take the child to the doctor because he blames her. Kalie believes the water in their village is safe because that is what they are told. She is well aware of the child's symptoms: diarrhea, weight loss, fever, skin rashes. She is illiterate, but smart. She wants her son to go to school and to have a better life than she does. Shep wants him to follow his footsteps in the village store. Kalie enjoys meeting outsiders and learning from them. Like most in the village, she will give an answer even when she does not know.

FAITH: She is very religious, even though Shep is not. She is a strong woman of prayer.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Kalie is sad, but kind. She has an enduring faith that shines through. She is eager to be helpful, and wants to see miracles happen. She is constantly thinking of her sick child.

COSTUME: Rags, old clothes.

NAME Fanti

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: Chief's new wife.

MARRIED? Yes

CHILDREN? One infant

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Transplant.

LANGUAGE: English. Acts as Mal's interpreter. This actress must know Mal's character as well as her own.

STORY/BACKGROUND: The chief's wife and interpreter. Fanti has a good education, thanks to a missionary school from her native village. She is not from Miranda, but she moved there when her father, a chieftan, arranged the marriage with Mal, the chief. Mal does not speak English, so he relies on Fanti to translate for him. Fanti loves her husband and wants to be a good wife. She is smarter than him, and she sees the suffering more than her husband. She would like to see change come to her village, but she has seen promises come and go.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Fanti can have a great deal of fun with the mission workers and the chief. She will translate word for word for him often, but sometimes she cuts to the chase. The chief is always looking for gifts and bribes. Some times she plays along at hinting for things. Other times she comes right out and says, "The chief would like.." in the interest of expediting things. The chief is also always on the lookout for someone to marry his daughter, so Fanti often finds herself caught in the middle of his playing matchmaker.

FAITH: She still believes in God, but she has a great mistrust for Christian missionaries. The missionaries that educated her left her village when she was in her teens, and no one came to replace them.

COSTUME: Worn but nicer clothes

NAME: Mingo

AGE: 23

OCCUPATION: Water seller

MARRIED? No

CHILDREN? No

NATIVE or TRANSPLANT? Transplant

LANGUAGE: English

STORY/BACKGROUND: Mingo is a native of the country, but not Miranda. He works for the Water Company, a shady organization run by a regional profiteer that provides "clean" water to residents for a fee. The truth is the water is simply bottled water from where ever Mingo can get it. He gets clean bottles and supplies from the Water Company, then he procures water from creeks, lakes, where ever he can get clean looking water to fill the bottles. Mingo has been on his own since he was a young teen. He got into some trouble at first, but then he got into the water business. He is street smart, very shrewd, and has an answer for everything; it's just that his answers are usually lies. He does have eyes for the chief's daughter, and sucks up to the chief whenever and where ever possible.

DISPOSITION/PERSONALITY: Mingo will say and do whatever he can to discourage the mission workers. He will lie, give misinformation, and also speak privately with any other villagers in their native tongue to convince others to side with him. They do not need a water purifier. They have him.

FAITH: Mingo is not a believer in God. He looks after himself, trusts no one.

COSTUME: Very worn, tattered clothes

WATER PURIFICATION SURVEY

WaterStep provides its trainees with a six page survey filled with all the questions needed to get a water purification system moving forward. For our purposes, we compressed that survey down to two pages.

Different applications of this type of training will have different requirements. It was vital for us to know what questions would be asked (and what answers should be given) so that we could spread the information among the characters. No one character had all the answers either; trainees had to gather information from at least 5-6 sources to get most of their questions answered.

What questions will your trainees be asking? What objections or obstacles will they face? Make it real, but don't make it impossible for them.

This survey is provided along with this material as an example. If you would like assistance putting together your own improv training please email me at john@righteousinsanity.com

WATERSTEP

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come..." Isaiah 55:1

Community Assessment

This survey tool is designed to gather necessary and basic information in determining the needs and possibilities of developing a water purification project in a particular community.

Please answer each question as best you can. It is not necessary to answer every question if information is unavailable. When giving a distance or measurement, indicate the units you are using (such as kilometers or miles).

Contact information:

Community: _____

Contact church/organization: _____

Contact person(s): _____

Basic information:

1. Land/terrain description (i.e. mountainous, desert, valley, etc.):

2. Climate description:

3. Total population of community: _____

4. Level of education: _____

5. Literacy rate: _____

6. Primary means of employment/occupation:

7. Method of garbage disposal: _____

Site information:

1. Site location: _____

2. Access to electricity: _____

3. Local access/locale for:

a. 250-750 liter (200 to 600 gallon) water storage tanks: _____

b. PVC plastic pipe, fittings, glue, solvent: _____

- i. sizes available (i.e. 1/2 inch, 3/4 inch, etc.): _____
- c. Basic plumbing tools (i.e. hacksaw, channel locks, pipe wrench):

- d. 12 volt automobile type battery: _____
- e. 6 volt - 12 volt battery charger: _____

Existing Water Sources:

1. Primary source of water: _____
2. Site access to water (i.e. piped, carried, etc.):

3. Method of water treatment (if any):

Health Assessment:

(Information to be obtained from the most reliable source possible. Mothers are often the most knowledgeable and most frank about illnesses.)

1. Name and title of person providing the information:

2. Local health clinic or medical service facility and contact information:

3. Illnesses in the community (circle all that apply):

Diarrhea	Dysentery
Dengue	Abdominal pain
Cholera	Typhoid
Hepatitis	Skin Infections
Parasites	

Community Involvement

1. Does the majority of the community understand the relationship:
 - a. between health and pure water? Yes: ___ No: ___
 - b. between health and sanitation? Yes: ___ No: ___
2. Community knowledge of need for pure water:

3. Has the community expressed a desire for clean water? Yes: ___ No: ___
4. Do the people consider a community water project to be a worthwhile investment? Yes: _____ No: _____
5. Willingness of community to devote time, money, labor toward the planning, construction, proper use and maintenance of a water purification

system: _____

6. Possible local leaders (from community and organization) for:

a. Site installation: _____

b. Health education: _____

c. Water purification: _____

7. What is the role of women in this community?

Other considerations:

1. Political/ legal considerations:

2. Local and governmental agency relationships:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Cospers is the founder of Righteous Insanity, a ministry based in Southern Indiana that specializes in creating unique drama and film resources for ministries.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Righteous Insanity and view our drama resource catalog, please visit www.righteousinsanity.com

For more information about WaterStep and their water purification conferences, please visit www.waterstep.org