

Into the **Deep** Water?

By Richard Bott

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This script was first created for London Conference of The United Church of Canada. The Conference was looking at the theme, "Put out into deep water". The script was meant to be a "voice play" for three voices, with a fourth acting as scripture reader. It was built for use during a worship service. If you decide to do it some other way, I'd love to know how it went! Richard Bott

1—Narrator

2—Jesus

3—Simon

4—Member of the United Church of Canada

1—Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." (Luke 5.1-4, New Revised Standard Version)

2—Doesn't look like things went well.

3—Nope.

2—Guess you weren't out very long.

3—All night.

2—All night!?! And you've only caught this much?

3—Yeah. We only caught this much.

2—Hmmm... I wonder why?

3—What are you, a carpenter or something? You're definitely *not* someone who fishes for a living, or you'd know. The wind was up yesterday and stirred up the bottom of the lake something terrible. We didn't get out onto the water until late. It looked

rough, so we kept to the shallows. It just wasn't a good time out there. We were having to work hard on keeping ourselves afloat.

When you're bailing out your boat, you don't worry much about fish, eh?

2—*(Sounds of agreement.)*

Hmmmm... *(pause)*

Good excuses.

3—Excuses?

(Sounding belligerent.) Well, Mr. Wandering-Rabbi-Preacher-Prophet-Carpenter-Man, what would you want us to do about it?

2—Get back in your boat.

3—In my boat?

2—Head out into the deep water.

3—Into the deep water!?! You've got to be kidding! Look at that sky. The wind's beginning to come up. Smell the air... storm's coming for sure.

If we head out there we're done for.

There is no way you're going to get me out on *that* lake anytime soon.

No way.

2—But if you don't go out... there's no food.

3—*(pause)* That's right.

2—If you don't head out there, your children... your community... well, they're going to go without something they need.

3—*(pause)* Everyone is going to go hungry.

2—*(pause)* You'll be safe.

3—Really?

2—Really.

Take the risk.

There will be times that it's rough... and maybe even a bit frightening, but you can do it. The reward will be great – not just for you, but for everyone.

3—Take the risk... but...

2—Trust me.

3—Trust you?

2—Trust me.

In fact... if you invite me, I'll go with you.

3—Out there?

2— Out there.

3— Into the deep water?

2— Into the *deep* water.
(*pause*) Trust me.

(Fifteen seconds of silence.)

2— Doesn't look like things went well.

4— Nope.

2— Guess you weren't out very long.

4— Seventy five years.

2— Seventy five years!?!

4— Yeah... seventy five years... and it feel like we've gotten stuck somewhere.

2— Hmm... I wonder why.

4— What are you, from Antarctica or something? You're definitely *not* a member of The United Church of Canada.

Not only have we had hurtful disputes in every court of the church... not only does our membership seem to be declining at every turn... not only does it feel like there are days when none of our programs seem to make one bit of difference.. now we're having financial woes.

You know, just last week my congregation tried to start a study on "Faith and the Economy"... and *nobody* showed up.

The world's changing, and it feels like our message – our ministry – doesn't have a place any more.

(*Quietly*) There are days I wonder if we've got much of a message.

(*Chuckling sadly*) We're having to work so hard on keeping ourselves afloat.

"When you're bailing out your boat, you don't worry much about fish, eh?"

2— (*Sounds of agreement*)

Hmmmm...

(*pause*) Good excuses.

4— Excuses?

(*Sounding belligerent.*) Well, Mr. Antarctica-Man, what would you want us to do about it?

2— Get back into your mission and your ministry.

4— Into our mission and ministry?

2— Head out into the deep water.

4— Into the deep water!?! You've got to be kidding! Look at the people out there. The world's moving so fast... and it doesn't want us. Nobody wants to hear the message of the Gospel the way we share it. If we head out there we're done for. There is no way you're going to get me out *there* any time soon. No way.

2— But if you' don't go out, then the world has one less way of hearing my voice.

4— *(pause)* That's right.

2— If you don't head out there, your children – your community – God's creation – is going to go without something they need.

4— *(thinking)* Everyone is going to go hungry.

2— *(pause)* You'll be safe.

4— Really?

2— Really.

Take the risk.

There will be times that its rough... and maybe even a bit frightening, but you can do it. The reward will be great – not just for you, but for everyone.

4— Take the risk... but...

2— Trust me.

4— Trust you?

2— Trust me. In fact.. if you invite me, I'll go with you.

4— Out *there*?

2— Out there.

4— Into the deep water?

2— Into the *deep* water.

(pause) Trust me.

1— *(pause)* Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats...” (Luke 5.5-7, NRSV)