

Can God really use me?

It seems that when you cruise the adverts placed by many missions organisations, they are looking mainly for people with qualifications. Pilots, doctors, business managers, electricians are all in demand. As a result, many people, particularly those who don't have professional skills, academic qualifications or even much life experience, wonder if God can really use them.

When I first visited Mozambique, I was taken by the mission director on a trip into the bush to negotiate permission for organising a food-for-work programme with the rebel commander who controlled that particular area. Just as we'd finished the negotiations, they brought us an injured boy. He'd been playing with his father's gun, and accidentally shot himself. The bullet was lodged in his liver and the field medics couldn't get it out. Would we take him to hospital?

Cradled in his father's arms, the child was driven along the bumpy, unmade tracks that led to town. Every pothole made him wince, but he no longer had the energy to cry. The hospital was still an hour's drive away, and the need for speed had to be weighed against the increased discomfort. His father was visibly relieved as the flag with the familiar red cross came into view.

"I'm sorry, we can't do anything for him. The bullet is too deep for us to reach with the facilities we have here." The doctor shrugged sympathetically, but his sad eyes showed that this was not the first child he had been unable to save. He cleaned the wound, changed the bandages, and gave the boy back to us. What were we to do now?

As we drove off, we spotted a UN security convey coming towards us. We flagged it down, and explained the problem to the blue-helmeted lieutenant. Could we take the boy to their military hospital? He agreed, and radioed ahead to warn his base we were coming. By the time the boy was carried into the operating theatre, the surgeons were scrubbed up and ready to operate. They saved his life.

I tell this story frequently to people who wonder whether God can really use them. On this occasion, he used us, yet we didn't have any relevant skills. We weren't medics. We just happened to be there. And being there, being available, is the first qualification for being used by God.

In the Bible, God used a shrub (Exodus 3:2), a donkey (Numbers 22:28), ravens (1 Kings 17:6), a corpse (2 Kings 13:21), a worm (Jonah 4: 7) and handkerchiefs (Acts 19:12), so *what makes you think God can't use you?!*