

**PLASTER SAINTS**

A Jazz/Rock Musical by H. Steven Ackley

ACT I

Scene 1 - The Family Meal

The FATHER (in his early fifties) is sitting at the table. He is reading the evening paper and drinking a cup of coffee.

[Enter sister SALLY (age 22) coming home from work. She carries a big paper bag in her arms.]

SALLY: Hey, Dad.

DAD: Hey, Sally.

SALLY: I stopped off at Fat Luk's for Chinese food. I had to work late.

DAD: What did you get?

[Sally looks in the bag. As she speaks, she takes out the different containers and opens them up.]

SALLY: Well, let's see... I got some mu shu pork and some beef with snow peas. And then there's some kung pao chicken -- you know, the stuff you like with the peanuts. And then there's rice of course, and fortune cookies. Hmm, what else do we got here...

[A noise is heard. At the side of the stage the youngest son, MICHAEL (age 18) and his friend SCOTT arrive home from school.]

DAD: What's that? I'll bet it's that damn dog again. [He gets up and goes to the window.] ...Oh, it's Michael. And he's with that Scott kid again. I'm getting awfully tired of that kid.

SALLY: Why?

DAD: I'm tired of him pestering everybody with his religion -- the kid's a Jesus freak.

SALLY: Dad! That's not very nice.

DAD: Well he is. And now he's got Michael all converted. He's been going to church every Sunday with that guy. For the TWO MONTHS he's been down at that church every Sunday!

SALLY: Yeah, well I'll admit he is a little pushy, but he's Michael's friend. Why don't you try to be a little more understanding, Dad?

DAD: [defensive] When your mother was alive I went through the whole religion thing with her. Her trying to get me to go to church and all that. I'm not about to go through that again with Michael and this Scott character.

[Lights up on back porch, outside house.]

SCOTT: So you want to get together tomorrow and do something, play some one on one or something?

MICHAEL: [pause] Nah, I don't think so, Scott. I think we're supposed to go see my grandma this weekend.

SCOTT: Oh yeah? Well, praise the Lord! Where does she live?

MICHAEL: Lodi.

SCOTT: Oh Lodi, that's great! I love Lodi. Praise God! So you're going tomorrow?

MICHAEL: Yeah, I guess so.

SCOTT: You're gonna be back in time for church on Sunday?

MICHAEL: Well, I don't know. I kind of doubt it.

SCOTT: [disappointed] Oh, are you going to attend somewhere in Lodi then?

MICHAEL: No.

SCOTT: You know, Michael, being a new Christian, you really should try and attend church every week. Especially since your family isn't Christian.

MICHAEL: Are you saying my family is a bad influence on me?

SCOTT: No, not exactly, it's just that...

MICHAEL: Listen, Scott, I love my family. If anything, my faith in God has brought me closer to them. But lately you've been talking about them as if they had some kind of disease.

SCOTT: No, Michael, that's not true at all. I like your family. It's just that...

MICHAEL: What?

SCOTT: [pause] They're gonna pull you down, Michael. That's why you need the church. In the church you can't get the nurturing and the teaching you need to...

MICHAEL: You mean the indoctrination.

SCOTT: [indignant] What are you saying?

MICHAEL: The church isn't my salvation, Jesus is! Right? It seems like all the church wants to do -- YOUR church anyway -- is tell me how to live, what to do, and WHO to do it with. And now you're making all these accusations about my family.

SCOTT: [condescending] Oh Michael, you don't understand, you just...

MICHAEL: Look, Scott, I'm not mad at you, and I don't hate your church either. It's just that I need to make decisions based upon what GOD reveals to me, not because of what you say or what some pastor says on Sunday morning. I just need to think things through a little, that's all.

SCOTT: What do you have against what the pastor's been saying on Sunday morning?

MICHAEL: Oh you know, the way he carries on about politics all the time -- slamming minorities and the governments of other countries.

SCOTT: You need to be careful about what you say about Pastor Rasputin -- he's an anointed prophet of God.

MICHAEL: Oh come on, I sure hope not... Did you hear what he said about the Muslims last Sunday? Those are human beings, Scott!

SCOTT: What did he say?

MICHAEL: Hey look, I don't want to get into it, OK? I've said too much already. I've got to go. I'll give you a call when I get back.

[Lights down on Michael and Scott. Lights up on dinner table. Michael enters.]

MICHAEL: Hey everybody!

DAD: Hello, Michael.

SALLY: We're having Chinese food tonight. I hope that's OK.

MICHAEL: [sitting] Sure.

DAD: How was school?

MICHAEL: OK.

[Dad pauses and pretends to read the paper while Michael dishes out his food.]

DAD: So have you decided whether or not you're going with us to see Grandma this weekend?

MICHAEL: [with his mouth full] Yeah... yeah, I'm going.

DAD: You don't sound too excited. [pause] You know, we hardly ever go up there as a family anymore. I figured since your brother was home from college this weekend, it might be nice if we all go up and...

MICHAEL: I said I'm going.

SALLY: What is it, Michael? Do you have other plans? You know if it's really important I'm sure it would be fine if you...

MICHAEL: It's OK. I'm going! Did I say I wasn't going?

DAD: You were gonna go to church with that Scott kid again, huh?

SALLY: Dad!

DAD: Well I don't want to interfere with the work of the Lord. Maybe you should go. Get down there and roll in them aisles.

MICHAEL: Hey, Dad! Come on, I said I'd go. What is this anyway? [pause] Besides, Scott's starting to wear on my nerves.

DAD: Oh really? [pause] Well I'm glad you're finally starting to see things a little objectively.

MICHAEL: What do you mean by that?

DAD: [pause... thinking] Michael, all this religious folderol, it's not for you.

MICHAEL: Wait a minute...

DAD: It's made you so serious. Why you're not even in college yet. Give yourself some time. Have some fun. You'll have the rest of your life for religion. You don't need to...

MICHAEL: Hey, wait a minute! All I said was that Scott is starting to get on my nerves. I didn't say anything about rejecting my faith.

DAD: Your FAITH? [sarcastically] Well...

SALLY: Come on, you guys. Quit fighting with each other. [to Dad] Don't you think you're overacting a little? Why don't you let Michael make his own decisions about these things?

[MUSIC BEGINS]

DAD: [shouting] You don't know what he's getting involved with! You don't know what kind of people these are! Jesus freaks! Religious fanatics! HOLY ROLLERS!

SONG: WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE

[Dad starts pacing around the room. He begins to sing.]

What kind of people are these, who think they know it all?  
 What kind of people are these, who say they see writing on the wall?  
 Where do they think they come off, to say I'm living a life of sin?  
 And who do they think they are, to say I have to be born again?

What kind of people are these, who get on their knees and pray?  
 What kind of people are these, who say that Jesus is the way?  
 How can they possibly think, that they are all of one accord?  
 What right have they got to say, that Je-sus is their Lord?

CHORUS

How can I possibly know, that this talk about God is real?  
 What is it I have to do, in order to really fe-el his love?

What kind of people are these, who turn the world upside down?  
 And why is it that they insist, I have to turn my life around?  
 Where do they get the nerve, to say I need to be set free?  
 Why don't they leave me alone? It's alright for them -- BUT NOT ME!

Well everything that they've said, it seems to light the way.  
 But what is it I have to give, what price to I have to pay?  
 SURE I want to know the truth, in a world full of lies.  
 But in order to live again, they say I have to die.

[At the end of the song, Dad sits back down in his chair and looks at Michael in disgust.]

[Enter oldest son, Tom (age 25), home from college.]

TOM: Hey everybody! What's for dinner?

[Sally acknowledges Tom. Michael and Dad resume their argument.]

Michael: Just leave me alone. Sally's right, I can make my own decisions about these things.

DAD: [backing down] ok ...OK.

TOM: [sitting down] What's going on with you guys anyway?

MICHAEL: Nothing.

TOM: Nothing, huh? That sure sounds like a lot of noise for nothing.

SALLY: We're having Chinese food tonight. Is that alright?

TOM: Fat Luk's?

SALLY: Yeah, you got it.

TOM: [in fake Chinese] Hung yah, so yah, foo taipei. Fat Luk's es velly velly good.

SALLY: [laughs] Shut up, Tom.

TOM: [he grabs a container of food, begins eating] So what are you guys fighting about anyway?

DAD: Mind your own business, Tom.

TOM: [pauses, thinking] Oh, I know what it is! It's that church thing again, huh? You're still upset because Michael's going to church with that guy ...that guy?

MICHAEL: Scott.

TOM: Scott!

DAD: Yes, if you must know, that is what we were discussing.

SALLY: I've had enough of this, I'm gonna go make some tea.

[she exits]

TOM: [with mouth full] What kind of church is that anyway?

MICHAEL: Well, it's...

DAD: It's one of those holy roller churches! Where they talk about hell all the time.

MICHAEL: Hey!

TOM: [kidding] Is that right, Mike? Do they talk about hell all the time?

MICHAEL: No! It's not like that at all. Christianity is about love. Besides, I'm not concerned about hell. [pious] I've got my mind on things above.

DAD: Do you even realize what you're talking about?

MICHAEL: Well, yeah, I...

TOM: I realize what he's talking about. He's become a party to pie in the sky Christianity -- the opiate of the masses. That's what Karl Marx called it. [to Michael] Don't you realize that's all a bunch of garbage? All that spiritual rhetoric is just designed to keep people's minds off what's really happening in the world.

MICHAEL: No, you're wrong! Jesus lived to help people in the world. All he ever did was teach and feed and heal.

TOM: Come on, Michael! All Christians are doing in the world is strong arming politicians into office so they can preserve their cushy American lifestyles and drive around in their Mercedes Benzes. They don't care about society. You watch. You may be all spiritual now, but before long you'll be advocating imperialist, right-week policies in the name of God.

MICHAEL: No, it's not like that at all. There's nothing political about it. I've never even voted. My faith isn't political, it's spiritual, it's ...love.

TOM: [getting up] Ah, you hang in there, Michael. [pats him on the head] I'm gonna go watch TV. [pause] Just remember, when you get up there and start rubbin' elbows with Brother Falwell, don't come asking me for any money. [Tom and Dad both start laughing.]

[Tom exits]

MICHAEL: What are you laughing at? [pause] I suppose you agree with him, that the church is just out to get me -- to take my money.

DAD: [still chuckling] What money? I didn't know you had any money.

MICHAEL: Jeesh! Tom treats it as if I joined the Klan or something.

DAD: [more serious] Well, maybe you have joined a klan of sorts.

[Michael slumps over in his chair.]

DAD: How do you know Christianity's right? What about other religions? What about Buddha or Mohammed?

MICHAEL: I don't feel like I have to examine other religions. I've found truth in Jesus.

DAD: Do you realize how awfully narrow that is? Why Jesus? Why not some other path?

MICHAEL: Why are you putting me on the spot? I don't want to explore other "paths." I've found all I need.

DAD: But why Jesus? Sure he had some good things to say, but there are other...

MICHAEL: The bible says that there's no other name under heaven by which men can be saved.

DAD: [skeptically] The bible, that's another thing! How do you know the bible's right? Why, there have been so many translations and opinions.

MICHAEL: But, Dad, I experienced his presence. I KNOW he's real! What do you want from me?

DAD: HOW do you know?

MICHAEL: I know. I just know.

DAD: You can't know! Nobody knows. Michael, you're young. Don't be so sure what you experienced wasn't a...

MICHAEL: Mom knew, didn't she?

DAD: [outraged] You leave your mother out of this!

[Dad rises out of his chair.]

MICHAEL: I'm sorry. I just...

DAD: What did she know anyway?

MICHAEL: Dad, I...

DAD: I can see I'm wasting my time. You want to believe your fairy tale, go ahead.

MICHAEL: What if I didn't believe anything? Is that what you want? You want to reduce Jesus to a myth or some obscure character in history? Well, what's the point of believing in him at all then? If I can't believe in a God that's real -- one that I can know -- then, tell me, what's the point of believing at all?

DAD: I didn't say not to believe anything. I just think you should be cautious.

MICHAEL: But isn't it the nature of faith to throw caution and doubt to the wind and to put your whole heart into something?

DAD: You're irrational! You know when your mother was a live, she was just like you, she ...Ah, forget it!

[He storms out of the room.]

MICHAEL: Wait, Dad! Let's talk. I'm sorry... I...

[Michael sinks back into his chair. After a moment, Sally enters and quietly begins clearing the table.]

MICHAEL: You're awfully quiet. Aren't YOU going to say anything?

SALLY: Haven't you had enough for one night?

MICHAEL: [pause] Do YOU believe in God?

SALLY: I don't know. Yeah, I guess so. [pause] I don't know what I believe any more, Michael.

MICHAEL: You don't KNOW. But, Sally...

SALLY: Don't start. [pause] You were young when Mom died. You didn't understand at the time. When Mom got sick, she became more and more religious. She always went to church and everything. But when the end got near, she started pleading with Dad that he ...I don't know ...What's the Expression?

MICHAEL: You mean to get saved?

SALLY: Yeah, that's it. Anyway, it became a real hard thing for Dad to take. He'd always had a real bitterness towards the church and when Mom died ...I don't know, it sort of put a barrier around Dad. He's never really been the same.

MICHAEL: Wow, I never knew that, I...

SALLY: And a couple of months ago, when you started going to church with Scott, it started all over again. I could see it coming, but there was nothing I could do. [pause] I know you've found a new peace of some kind. I can see it. And what's more, Dad knows it too.

MICHAEL: Sally, it's God! Don't you see, if you just believe...

SALLY: [shaking her head slowly] I have to think about it. OK?

MICHAEL: I love you, Sally.

SALLY: I love you too, Michael.

[Sally exits]

MICHAEL: Oh God, I've really blown it. What did I do wrong? I didn't mean to upset Dad like that. I wouldn't have even said anything if hadn't have started in on me.

[Michael's head slumps over into his arms.]

Scene II

Michael's GUARDIAN ANGEL enters the room and begins to circle the table, looking at Michael with a bemused expression on his face. The angel is played by a young man wearing a Anaheim Angels warm-up jacket.

ANGEL: [putting his hands on Michael's shoulders] Oh, Michael.

MICHAEL: [thinking his dad has returned] Oh Dad, I...

[Michael then notices the angel. He gasps and falls from his chair and scrambles backward.]

ANGEL: Hey man, don't be afraid. It's cool.

[Michael is still in shock.]

ANGEL: It's alright, man ...really. Here, let me help you up.

[The angel extends his hand and helps Michael up.]

MICHAEL: Who are you?

ANGEL: [pause] I know this might be hard for you to buy into, but I'm your guardian angel.

MICHAEL: You're crazy! [pause] Are you serious?

ANGEL: Yeah I'm serious. You do believe in angels, don't you?

MICHAEL: Well, yeah, sure, I...

ANGEL: Well? [extends arms] As a wise man once said, "What's the point of having beliefs if you can't believe them?"

[Michael looks downcast.]

ANGEL: Hey, look, I saw you back there with your family. I'm sorry things are so rough for you.

MICHAEL: How...

ANGEL: Like I said, I'm an angel. It's our job to know these things. I know my appearance might throw you. I mean ...no wings, no halo, [pause] no Della Reese. [pauses, smiling] What do you want, some kind of magic show? Do you want me to pull a rabbit out of my hat?

MICHAEL: Well, would you?

ANGEL: [pause, thinking] I tell you what I'll do ...if you look deep inside of yourself, I will believe for you. I will believe that the Lord will confirm in your heart who I am. And then the choice will be yours: either accept or reject me.

[The angel shuts his eyes and waves his hands in Michael's direction. Chimes tinkle, and Michael reacts with bewilderment and then enlightenment.]

MICHAEL: Yes ...yes of course! You really are an angel, aren't you?

ANGEL: I really am. Now sit down and tell me about your family.

MICHAEL: [sitting] Well, I really love them, but I feel so separated from them. They'll never believe anything I say. They'll NEVER believe this. [pause] Tom's so full of sarcasm. He doesn't take anything seriously.

[The angel begins nodding in mock agreement.]

MICHAEL: ...And my dad. I guess he hates religion. I kind of understand, but he just doesn't see that Jesus is the way. It's not the church, although that may be part of it. But the church doesn't mean anything without God. [pause] But I guess YOU know that. [Michael looks questioningly at the angel.] I can't believe I'm telling all this to a real angel.

ANGEL: And the real angel is listening. What about Sally?

MICHAEL: Oh, Sally, she's so ...well, she's a sweet girl. But she's confused ...and SO naive. It's hard to get her to believe anything. [pause] It's all my fault. I don't know ...have I been too soft? ...too hard? What should I do? I'm a failure. I'm having trouble fitting into the church, and now I've alienated my family. I'm kind of in a no man's land.

[MUSIC BEGINS]

ANGEL: You know you're not the first person that's had to suffer. There was a time when people dies for their faith. Surely you've heard some of the stories of the early Christian saints ...Peter, John, Mary, Paul, Thomas, Matthew ...the list goes on. You need to believe in God and get your eyes off yourself. Trust HIM; believe HIM; listen to HIS voice.

SONG: HEAR THE NAME

[The angel sings]

Hear the name of Jesus, he is the Lord and God of peace.  
Praise the name of Jesus, come let us worship on our knees.

Master, we love you master.  
We long to worship, worship, at your feet!

Precious lamb of heaven; the Lord come down from up above.  
One and only savior, you touched my soul with perfect love.

[speaking] Michael, have you ever heard about how the angels are gonna blow there trumpets on judgment day? Well, if you listen closely, sometime you can hear them practicing.

[A short trumpet solo is heard, to which Michael reacts. The angel smiles and continues to sing.]

Lord who gives us light, who takes the blind and gives them sight.  
When you're standing near, the sound of love is all I...

Hear the name of Jesus, he is the Lord and God of peace.  
Praise the name of Jesus, come let us worship on our knees.

Master, we love you master.  
We long to worship, worship, at your feet!

MICHAEL: Yeah, well that's all fine and well, but I'm only human.  
You're just wasting your time with me. I'm not good enough to pull it off.

ANGEL: Pull what off?

MICHAEL: Oh you know ...the love and righteousness bit. [pause] And like what you said about all those early Christians and the Disciples and all? Well, you can't expect me to be like them. Why they were just a bunch of plaster saints.

ANGEL: Plaster saints? No Michael, these were living, breathing human beings. ...if you could only see ...if you could only meet them.  
[pause] Wait a second! I've got a great idea.

MICHAEL: What?

ANGEL: c'mon Michael. [The angel grabs his hand.] We've got places to go and people to see.

Scene III

[Michael and the Angel appear on the shores of Galilee, circa 57 A.D.]

MICHAEL: Where are we?

ANGEL: By the sea, by the sea, by the beautiful sea.

MICHAEL: Yeah, but where?

ANGEL: Galilee

MICHAEL: You mean Israel? You mean you can take us anywhere on the planet just by snapping your fingers? [snaps] Like that?

ANGEL: ...Anywhere on the planet, the galaxy, the universe. And not only anywhere, but anyTIME.

MICHAEL: You mean ...like in Back to the Future?

[Music cue -- "Back in Time" vamp. Michael and Angel react.]

ANGEL: Yeah, something like that.

MICHAEL: Well, what time is it?

ANGEL: Well, by my watch, [lifts sleeve] about 57 A.D. It's summertime "...and the living is easy. Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high."

MICHAEL: Cotton? In Israel?

ANGEL: Well, Cedars of Lebanon ...whatever. But the fish are jumpin' anyway. Look, there's one right over there!

[Enter St. Peter, played by Michael's brother Tom. He is outfitted with a Fly rod and a tackle box.]

PETER: Boy, they're bitin' today!

[Peter starts unpacking his fishing gear.]

MICHAEL: Who's THAT?

ANGEL: THAT is one of our appointments.

MICHAEL: You're kidding.

ANGEL: Nope. That's the infamous St. Peter. He comes up here every now and then from Jerusalem to get away from the tensions of being an apostle. You know ...preaching, teaching, visiting little old ladies, answering the phone.

MICHAEL: The phone?

ANGEL: Oh, sorry. I keep getting ahead of myself, don't I? Anyway, he loves to fish. [pause] Come on, let's go say hello.

[They walk towards Peter.]

MICHAEL: He looks a lot like my brother.

ANGEL: Just a coincidence.

MICHAEL: Yeah, I guess so, but Tom would die if he...

ANGEL: [shouts] PETER!!!

[Peter falls over on to his butt.]

PETER: Ahhh!

ANGEL: [to Michael] I love doing that. [to Peter] Relax, Peter. I'm an angel. Will you ever get used to us being around?

PETER: [nervous] You guys ...I'll get used to you when you stop showing up so unannounced. [pause] Hey, what are you doing here anyway? Don't you know I'm supposed to be on vacation? You must have gotten your wires crossed or something. [points up] HE told me that it would be OK if I took a few days off and came up here and did some fishing and...

ANGEL: Now calm down. I'm not here to take you away from your vacation. I have someone I want you to meet.

PETER: OK, great, but let's make it quick because the fish...

ANGEL: Peter, this is Michael. He's a new brother in the Lord.

PETER: You're not an angel?

MICHAEL: No, I...

PETER: Wait a minute, what kind of clothes are those? [pause] Corinth? You're from Corinth! Who else but a Corinthian would wear such, such... [to Angel] You're not sending me to Corinth, are you? I thought it was agreed that Paul was going to be the one to go to the Gentiles and...

ANGEL: I'm not sending you anywhere, Peter. No one's going to take you away from your precious vacation. Just relax. Besides, Michael is from a land far beyond Corinth, he's from...

PETER: Spain!!! Ah ha, so this is what a Spaniard looks like. Well, well, well.

ANGEL: Peter!

PETER: No, not Spain?

ANGEL: No.

PETER: Then where?

ANGEL: You wouldn't understand.

PETER: Another one of those mysteries, eh? [pause] Well, ok, so we've met. [shakes Michael's hand] Do you like to fish? Check out this new rod. I got it the other day at the discount store.

[He drags Michael over to look at his pole.]

ANGEL: Uh, Peter. We didn't come all this way to get the Jerusalem field and stream report. I want you to tell Michael about how you met Jesus; tell him about your conversion.

PETER: [quiets down] Oh ...OK.

[Peter smiles at Michael. He takes his hat off and begins.]

PETER: Well, it wasn't very far from this spot. I was with my brother Andrew and our partners, James and John -- the fishing business, you know. Anyway, we'd been fishing all night long -- hadn't caught a thing! [pause] That's when he came along. He had this glow about him. You couldn't take your eyes off him! [pause] He told us to put our nets out one more time and we'd catch some fish. I thought the idea was nuts, but I did it anyway. [pause] Well, the net was so full we couldn't even get it back into the boat! I knew then that he was sent from God. And then I just fell at his feet, Michael. I just fell at his feet. And I'm not the kind of guys that goes around falling at people's either. I mean, look at me! [pause] No, don't look at me. [pause] Anyway, that's how I met him. Me! Peter! A sarcastic old fisherman. I watched him teach, feed the multitudes, heal the sick. [pause] Then I saw him suffer and die. [pause] But then he rose from the dead. HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD! [looks off] You know one of the last time I saw him right over there by that big rock. We'd been fishing again, hadn't caught a thing, and then...

ANGEL: Peter, I want you to tell Michael about Pentecost.

PETER: Oh, Pentecost! Boy, do I remember Pentecost. [turns to Michael] That's one of our big Hebrew holidays. They all come to Jerusalem for Pentecost ...religious leaders from as far as Asia to Rome. [sarcastically] They all come to Jerusalem each year to try and out do each other. Oh those pious scholars sitting in all their finery.

MICHAEL: Sounds sort of like the church I go to.

PETER: Well, that year God had other plans. That year God decided he was going to crash their party. You see what happened, Michael, was this: all of us disciples were gathered together in this upper room ...waiting on the Lord.

ANGEL: Uh, Peter, wasn't it more like you were hiding out from the authorities?

PETER: Hey, I'm tellin' the story here! [pause] Anyway, Michael, the power of God filled the room and filled the souls of everyone in the room. And I really can't explain it, but we knew! We knew we were supposed to run into town, right in the middle of where those old birds were having their picnic, and tell them about Jesus. [pause] ...tell them how they crucified their long awaited messiah.

[Peter moves forward and addresses the audience.]

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know -- this man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, YOU nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death. And God raised him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for him to be held in its power!"

MICHAEL: Wow! All Jerusalem must have fallen on its face that day!

PETER: Many did. [pause] But many ignored us, some even saying we were drunk and out of our minds.

MICHAEL: Really? [pause] You know, there's lots of that going on where I come from.

PETER: What's that?

MICHAEL: What you were saying about those religious leaders and all. They were so concerned about their form of religion that they didn't recognize the Son of God ...they even crucified him.

PETER: The problem was I was too polite with them that day. I should have cut the formal language ...I should have been more personal. [pause] Boy, if I only had a second chance!

ANGEL: You want another chance, Peter?

PETER: Yeah, sure I do, but history's already been written.

ANGEL: Not necessarily.

PETER: Do you mean ...?

ANGEL: It means cutting your vacation short.

PETER: That's OK.

ANGEL: OK then, it's "Back to the future!"

[lights out]

SCENE IV

[Michael, Peter, and the angel appear in front of Michael's church. The congregation is seen in the background, listening to the preacher. The congregation and preacher are frozen and unaware of the presence of the three.]

MICHAEL: Hey, we're at my church!

PETER: [dumbfounded] Oh my Lord. Where are we? What is this place?

ANGEL: We're in the future, Peter.

PETER: The future? Wha...?

ANGEL: No time to explain. Church is starting.

[The three move to the side of the stage and the congregation unfreezes. As they do, church organ music is heard and the pastor begins to preach.]

PASTOR: ...And so now it's time to take up the offering. And remember, don't hold back! Give it ALL! Don't lay up treasures here on earth -- our treasure is in the sweet by and by!

SONG: "GIVIN' IT ALL/I'LL FLY AWAY"

[This is a square dance number with the pastor as the caller.]

[the congregation sings]

I'm givin' up all, given up all my money

I'm givin' it all, givin' it joyfully

I'm givin' up all, given up all my money

I'm givin' up all my dough so I can live happily

[second chorus is sung in two parts]

I'm givin' up all, given up all my money

[\*Men, 2x] Giv-ing up all my money

I'm givin' it all, givin' it joyfully

\*Giv-ing it joyfully

I'm givin' up all, given up all my money  
 \*Giv-ing up all my money

I'm givin' up all my dough so I can live happily  
 \*so I can live happily

PASTOR: [shouts] Get out your bread and put in your dough and the blessings of God will overflow. Put in the whole loaf, not just a slice and it'll be your ticket to paradise.

[the congregation sings]

I'll fly away, oh glory. I'll fly away.  
 Just a few more dollars by and by. I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory. I'll fly away.  
 Just a few more dollars by and by. I'll fly away.

PASTOR: Just a few more dollars in my pocket.

CONGREGATION: I'll fly away.

PASTOR: And you'll take off to heaven on a rocket.

CONGREGATION: I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory. I'll fly away.  
 Just a few more dollars by and by. I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory. I'll fly away.  
 Just a few more dollars by and by. I'll fly away.

[As the song ends, the congregation is seated. The pastor continues.]

PASTOR: That's right ...I'm gonna fly away on my nice Lear jet. [pause] Deacons! Deacons, please bring forth the offering.

[The deacons bring up the plates and hand them to the pastor. The pastor then dumps the money out onto the podium and begins to paw through it. Despite the congregation's great enthusiasm, the offering all turns out to be small bills and change. The pastor begins to reprimand the congregation.]

PASTOR: Hmm, looks pretty skimpy to me. Why, there's hardly enough here to cover one payment on my Mercedes. Come on. people. I know you can do better than this. I'm looking for some real givers here. Cheerful givers! [pause] And we all know that the Bible says God loves a cheerful giver. Well, what does that say about he that doesn't give, huh?

PETER: [irritated] What's he trying to say?

PASTOR: Let us worship God with our money. If we worship God with our money, we will be blessed. For God love those who worship money ...er, I mean those who worship him with their money.

PETER: No, that's not right! He should be preaching about love, not money.

ANGEL: Now do you know why we're here, Peter?

PETER: Yes!

ANGEL: Do you feel it, Peter?

PETER: Yes, oh yes! The hypocrisy ...the legalism. [pause] This isn't the gospel. He's teaching lies!

MICHAEL: What is it?

PETER: Pharisees. [sniffs] I can smell 'em. I don't understand where I am, but I know that this is my second chance.

[The pastor continues to sermonize as Peter sneaks behind the pews, up to the front.]

PASTOR: Lately I've heard it said by some of these wayward people who've come through my office that they can't give because they have no money. The problem is that these people, these "under privileged," don't get jobs because of all of them liberal politician that make welfare so easy to come by. Why, I remember the story of the poor widow woman who put in her two mites. Didn't Jesus tell the apostles that she was great because she put in all that she had? Why don't YOU [points] put in all that you have? Why, what would Jesus and the apostles think about you if they were here today ...what would they say?

PETER: They'd say you're a liar!

PASTOR: They'd say I'm a liar! [shocked/indignant] What? Who are you?

PETER: I'm Simon Peter, apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ! And that's not at all what the Lord meant about the poor widow. He pointed her out as an example of faith. FAITH -- something you're obviously lacking. The only faith you have is in money ...just like the money changers that did their trading in the temple courts. [pause] And if the Lord were here today, he'd turn over your tables, just as he did theirs.

[Peter kicks over the pulpit and the music begins.]

SONG: CARNAL BELIEVER

[Peter sings to the pastor.]

DO WHAT DO, do what you say  
SAY WHAT SAY, say what you mean

'Cause you're livin' a life of lies, and you're running from judgment day  
You say "Lord, I love you, but you've got to get out of my way."

DIE MAN DIE, you die on the vine  
SEE MAN SEE, that you're going blind

'Cause you're runnin' away from God, when you know he wants you to stay  
You say "Lord, I'll buy it, but just how much do I have to pay?"

Well you're a carnal believer and you're grieving the heart of God  
Will you believe the deceiver when he tells you to forget the cross?

'Cause you're living' a life of lies, and you're running from judgment  
day

You say "Lord, I love you, but you've got to get out of my way."

[sax solo]

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE is all he can give  
POWER AND TRUTH to help people live

He is ready to forgive you and to fill your heart with peace  
Just call upon Jesus and the darkness will cease

[Segue into the next song, NO TIME. The people have been shocked by  
Peter's appearance, but are still spiritually unmoved. The angel  
interrupts with a bolder message.]

ANGEL: You're still being too polite with them, Peter. Why don't you  
let me have a crack at them?

[start strobe]

SONG: NO TIME

[Angel sings]

Time is running out!  
No time to dance and shout!  
You better throw yourself upon the altar, before there's no time left  
to run!

Christ was killed for you!  
This news, it ain't that new!  
You better throw yourself upon the altar, before there's no time left  
to run!

[Big time lead guitar solo during which the congregation, having been  
convicted by the angel, try to escape. Peter, having been infected by  
the Angel's zeal, joins in the singing.]

PETER: [singing to the Pastor]

Oh you talk about pie in the sky!  
You talk about a day that will come when you will fly  
You talk about rapture from up above!

[to audience]

But how do we tell this prophet that the time to go has come?

[lights out]

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Scene 1

[The angel are time traveling.]

MICHAEL: That was fantastic! Did you see their faces? You really blew them out of the water.

ANGEL: No, it was God that blew them out of the water. All I did was act as an agent. [pause] And what about Peter, what did you think of him?

MICHAEL: Oh, he was great. I really liked him.

ANGEL: You didn't think that he was a little too comical ...that he didn't take things seriously enough?

MICHAEL: No, not at all. I thought he was a great guy. Why do you ask?

ANGEL: Oh, no reason.

MICHAEL: [pause] Where are we groin' now?

ANGEL: We're going to see someone very special.

MICHAEL: Yeah?

ANGEL: "Ave Maria Purism!"

MICHAEL: What?

ANGEL: [ignoring Michael's question] When we get there, she won't be able to see us. We're going incognito this time. [pause] You are about to witness something few mortal eyes have seen.

Scene 2

[The scene opens with Mary sitting outside her house. The annunciation of the birth of Jesus is about to take place. Mary is played by Michael's sister Sally.]

[When Michael sees Mary, he walks closer, believing that she is his sister.]

MICHAEL: Sally! [pause] Sally, it's me Michael.

ANGEL: Michael, she can't see you.

MICHAEL: But it's my sister Sally.

ANGEL: You mean the one who's too nice, too naive to believe the gospel? No, Michael, I don't think this could be your sister.

MICHAEL: But she looks just like...

ANGEL: Michael, this is Mary ...Mary the mother of Jesus.

MICHAEL: [stepping back] Whoa!

ANGEL: [kneeling] Hail, Mother of God! Thou art to bear the savior of the world!

[The angel Gabriel enters to give the annunciation.]

MICHAEL: [seeing Gabriel] Who's that?

[As Gabriel enters, he notices the angel.]

GABRIEL: Sir? What are you doing here? I thought I was the one who was...

[Angel winces and motions to Gabriel to be quiet.]

MICHAEL: I thought you said they couldn't see us.

ANGEL: Michael, this is the angel Gabriel. Angels can see through time. [to Gabriel] We're observing, Gabriel. Go about with your business. Don't pay any attention to us.

[Gabriel continues, revealing himself to Mary.]

GABRIEL: Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women!

[Mary reacts by falling to the ground.]

GABRIEL: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

ANGEL: [to Michael] King James English ...don't yah just love it?

MARY: How shall this be, seeing that I have known no man and am a virgin?

GABRIEL: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore, that Holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth she hath also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren, for with God nothing shall be impossible.

ANGEL: [clapping] Well done! Well done!

[\*\* MUSIC BEGINS]

MARY: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

[Gabriel silently prays for Mary and then slowly exits.]

SONG: MAGNIFICAT/WE THREE KINGS

[Mary sings]

My soul exalts the Lord; my soul exalts the Lord  
For he knows the humble state of this bond slave

My soul exalts the Lord; my soul exalts the Lord  
For he knows the humble state of this bond slave

[Other angels enter and sing celestial "ah" music with Mary.]

Da -- da da da da, da da da da, da da da da -- da da da  
Da -- da da da da, da da da da, da da da da -- da da da

[keeps repeating and building in intensity]

[trumpets sound]

My soul exalts the Lord my God and king, for he has done a mighty thing  
in me  
My soul exalts the Lord my God and king, for he has done a mighty thing  
in me

[segues into "Three Kings." Three women in sequined outfits with tiaras  
in their hair (representing the kings) come out and sing.]

Merry Christmas, the Lord has come!  
Alleluia, the victory's won!

The Lord has come; the victory's won  
The victory's won; the Lord has come!

Merry Christmas, Christ is his name!  
Alleluia, to earth he came!

Christ is his name; to earth he came  
The victory's won; the Lord has come!

[sax solo. A shepherd appears with a sax. Pantomimes the solo while the  
three "kings" bop around.]

We three kings of orient are; bearing gifts we travel a far  
Born a king on Bethlehem's plain; gold we bring to crown him again  
We three kings of orient are; bearing gifts we travel a far

Star of wonder, star of night, star of royal beauty bright  
Star of wonder, star of night, star of royal beauty bright

Merry Christmas, the Lord has come!  
Alleluia, the victory's won!

The Lord has come; the victory's won  
The victory's won; the Lord has come!

Merry Christmas, Christ is his name!  
Alleluia, to earth he came!

Christ is his name; to earth he came  
The victory's won; the Lord has come!

[After the song has ended, the Magnificat music is played again as Mary exits.]

Scene 3

[Michael and Angel appear again, in transition.]

MICHAEL: I never realized Mary was like that ...she's so shy ...so humble.

ANGEL: So unlikely that someone like that would be chosen to be the Mother of God? Someone so naive -- just a confused and frightened peasant girl.

MICHAEL: yes ...yes. I see what you mean. I always thought of these saints as having brilliant, regal personalities. You see all those paintings from the middle ages and you can't help but put them in that role.

ANGEL: Now you're beginning to understand.

MICHAEL: ...They were just people.

ANGEL: Just people ...people like your sister Sally, like your brother Tom.

MICHAEL: Hey, what is it you're trying to tell me anyway? First you introduce me to a Saint Peter that looks like my brother. And then to a Mary that looks like Sally. What do you want from me?

ANGEL: I really don't want anything from you. And I'm not trying to tell you anything either ...I'm just your guide in the service of God. [pause] Perhaps it is HE that is trying to show you...

MICHAEL: To show me that my family isn't beyond hope.

ANGEL: No one who breathes is beyond the reach of God's love, Michael.

MICHAEL: I have a feeling I know what's coming next.

[With this, a spotlight comes up on an aged Saint Paul, asleep in his prison cell. Saint Paul is played by Michael's father.]

MICHAEL: I knew it! [He moves toward Paul.] Now way, it couldn't be ...it is! It's my father.

ANGEL: Michael, you seem to be caught between a rock and a hard place - that is, two worlds that are equally corrupt. On one hand, there's

your friend Scott and his church, which really isn't a church at all. And on the other hand there's your father who's trying to turn you away from your beliefs. And as you well know, all his misgivings about religion aren't entirely unfounded.

But this wasn't always so. In fact, it's ironic that it's this way now. Christianity was never intended to be a religion, but a refuge from religion. [pause] And I know of no one better to show you this than this man -- the Apostle Paul. [to Paul} Arise, oh servant of the most high!

[Paul gets to his feet.]

PAUL: Yes Lord, here am I.

ANGEL: Paul.

PAUL: Yes, my Lord.

ANGEL: This is Michael.

PAUL: Michael ...I'm happy to meet you. I'm Paul.

ANGEL: [looking around cell] So, are they treating you OK?

PAUL: As best as can be expected, I suppose.

ANGEL: You know it won't be long now. You are going to be take away from this life soon.

PAUL: VERY soon. [pause] But unless they take my life soon, my heart shall rapture from the expectancy of seeing him. Thus, I shall depart soon one way or the other.

ANGEL: Well, before you leave, there's one thing I'd like you to do ...that is to tell Michael here about your former days and about your conversion.

[Paul looks downcast.]

PAUL: Must I?

ANGEL: It is for the good of the kingdom.

PAUL: [sighs] Well my friend, it is not something I am at all proud of. But you see, before becoming a Christian, I was an enemy of God. [pause] They called me Saul in those days, Saul of Tarsus. I was a young ...a young ...oh, what I suppose you'd call a religious fanatic. But I had not the love of God in me "...Circumcised on the eight day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews!"

I adored the form of religion; I craved the respect that was paid. I loved telling people what to do -- how to live their lives. But I did not know God. And as far as Christians were concerned, I hated them. I wanted to kill them. "As to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." [pause] But

whatever this were gain to me, I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ." Ah, yes ...I remember ...I remember.

Scene 4

[Pharisee school]

SONG: THE DANCE OF THE PHARISEES (instrumental)

[The Pharisees come out in a line and do this crazy, buffoonish dance where they bump into each other a lot. They end up standing in an awkward line-up. the young Saul of Tarsus (played by Michael's friend Scott) breaks through the line. He is wearing a period robe outfitted with lapels, a loud tie and a clip-on microphone. He also has a pompadour hair-do and speaks with a southern accent.]

SAUL: Gee, it's great to be here a Pharisee school where we study the law.

PHARISEES: "The Law!"

SAUL: Where we become good polished citizens by studyin' and obeyin', down to the last detail, the laws of MOH-SES.

PHARISEES: MOH-SES!

SAUL: It's here that we learn to become good ol' boys. We learn how to tawk right, eat right, comb our hair right, and best of all, we learn how to tell everyone to live their lives. We learn how to preach!

PHARISEES: Yeah!

[The Pharisees all begin to mumble and move around. They end up in a semi-circle around an imaginary podium and listen to Saul. Saul points to the crowd and begins to preach.]

SAUL: "Lego, lego, agoosi-te too nah-moo!" [pause] You dummies know what that means? Why, you can't because you don't know the Greek. But I know the Greek. Why, I learned to speak Greek in Tennessee. [pause] Where ever that is.

PHARISEES: Amen! Preach it, brother.

SAUL: Why, you bet I will. [pointing] YOU! You! Yes, you over there in the third row, second from the left-hand side. Yes, you! Why, didn't I see you last night down at Bernstein's tavern? Yes! I saw you down there last night with that FLOOZIE!

PHARISEES: With that FLOOZIE!

SAUL: Why, I don't know what I'm gonna do with you people ...I

[enter Gamaliel, an Pharisee in his 60s. He wears the traditional garb of the Pharisees which includes an ornate rounded turban.]

GAMALIEL: Saul!

[The young Pharisees, being startled, all scurry out of the room.]

SAUL: Sir, I...

GAMALIEL: What do you think you're doing?

SAUL: Oh you know, me and the guys were just, uh ...well ...you know.

GAMALIEL: It doesn't matter now. [pause] I've been informed that you wish to make a Damascus to round up the Christians there.

SAUL: Why, yes sir. I want to put them all away. I despise that heresy. They claim they've found the messiah. Why I just want to...

[Saul mimics a strangle hold.]

GAMALIEL: Kill them?

SAUL: Why, no sir. Uh ...heh ...It's just that...

GAMALIEL: What about the Christian named Stephen? You and your cut-throat friends murdered him.

SAUL: Why, no sir. I didn't lift a finger against that man!

GAMALIEL: No, you just held the coats of those that did. You held their coats while they pounded him to death with stones. You ...you people are Hebrews, you're just a bunch of thugs.

SAUL: [indignantly] Well, what if we did? We had the permission of the council. He was a heretic, sir.

GAMALIEL: The council ...the council. [pause] Very well then, I'll you the same thing I've told the council from the beginning. If this movement, this heresy as you call it, is indeed a heresy, then it will die out as all the other heresies have before it. But, my dear Saul, if this is a move of God, if this Jesus is indeed the messiah, if he did indeed rise from the grave as his followers say -- and which I might add, your beloved council has been unable to disprove. then, my dear friend, and uh, "colleague," [flips Saul's tie] you will find yourself fighting against God himself. In which case you are a dead man! Count the cost, Saul of Tarsus. Count the cost.

[Gamaliel begins to leave]

SAUL: What about Damascus?

GAMALIEL: [pause] Does what I say even matter?

[exit Gamaliel]

SAUL: So long, ol' "Jiffy Pop."

Scene 5

[Damascus road. Music plays softly as the Pharisees ride.]

SAUL: [From atop a horse.] C'mon you guys. Let's get the lead out! I want to get to Damascus before the sun goes down.

PHARISEE 1: Hang on, Saul! You don't want us to die from heat exhaustion, do you? Man, it's hot!

PHARISEE 2: Yeah, man. I'm dying. I think I'm sick.

SAUL: What's wrong with you guys? Come on!

PHARISEE 1: We've got to stop. Simeon is sick and the horses need water.

SAUL: [frustrated] Oh, man!

[All the Pharisees but Saul get off their horses.]

PHARISEE 2: I'm sick. The sun is so intense!

[At this point, the sun hits Saul. The rest of the Pharisees scatter and Saul is left to confront his destiny. He is thrown off his horse and lies there motionless. The voice of Jesus is heard.]

JESUS: Saul! Saul, why are you persecuting me?

SAUL: [barely able to lift his eyes] Who are you, Lord?

JESUS: I am Jesus. He whom you are persecuting. Rise up and go into the city and it shall be told to you what to do.

[The other Pharisees come forward and carry Saul offstage.]

SONG: THE LIGHT

[The music starts after Saul leaves the stage. The born again "Paul" then re-enters dressed in brighter apparel.]

[Paul sings]

I see a light coming down from heaven  
I see a light that will take me to paradise  
I see a light that will last forever  
Jesus is the light, the light of the world

There is a God, a God above you  
He is the one who forgives unrighteousness  
There is a God, a God who loves you  
Jesus is the light, the light of the world

Jesus is the light, the light of the world  
Jesus is the son, the son of God  
Jesus is the prince, the prince of peace  
Jesus is the king; he's the king!

[guitar solo]

Don't hold out waiting for tomorrow  
 Give your life to the God of peace  
 Put you faith in the savior  
 Jesus is the light, the light of the world  
 Jesus is the light, the light of the world  
 Jesus is the light. HE'S THE LIGHT ...of the world!

He's the light!

[black out]

#### Scene 4

[The aged Paul, the angel, and Michael are once again back in the prison cell.]

PAUL: Well, that's the story.

ANGEL: A beautiful story.

PAUL: A story, I might add, that is coming to an end.

MICHAEL: What do you mean?

PAUL: I'm supposed to be executed at dawn. The gospel has been outlawed by Nero. MY execution is to be an example as to the severity of the new law.

ANGEL: You're going home.

PAUL: [wistfully] Home! I've spent the majority of these last few years in prison. I have no wife or family, and my friends have either deserted me or have been prevented from seeing me. [pause] These last few years I have grown lonely and cold. But God is faithful and now I'm going home.

[\*\*MUSIC BEGINS and the martyrs from throughout the ages enter, singing a Gregorian-like chant. They are all dressed in costumes from different periods of history. They move to the back of the stage and stand in semi-darkness.]

MICHAEL: Who are those people?

ANGEL: These are the martyrs from throughout the ages ... "The souls of those who have been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they have maintained."

MICHAEL: The persecuted ones!

PAUL: Persecution, yes! Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked, a day and a night I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, from my countrymen, from the Gentiles. Dangers in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea. Dangers from false brethren. I have been in

labor and in hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And apart from such external things, there is daily pressure upon me for concern for the churches.

MICHAEL: How have you withstood such hardship?

PAUL: By setting my mind on things above, young friend. I have counted all things as loss for the sake of the gospel.

SONG: I WILL PRAY

[Paul sings]

Alone inside this prison, my eyes are filled with tears  
Without a loving sweet caress, I've suffered through my years  
Tempted, kicked, and beaten, my freedom now is near  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God, I will pray

My heart has bled with mercy, while my mind has burned with rage  
I speak to them of freedom, yet they live within a cage  
I pray that they'll grow stronger and not remain as babes  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God

[chorus]

I will pray in the name of Jesus, I will pray in the name of Jesus  
I have prayed all my life, I will pray to the end. I will pray to my God.

PAUL: [speaking over the music] So now I go to look upon his face. Your know, I've never really seen his face. I've often wondered what it would have been like to have been one of the twelve ...to have walked with him while he was here on earth ...to have lived in his presence! Now my curiosity will be satisfied.

[Peter enters]

PETER: I walked with him, Paul.

PAUL: Peter!

PETER: I walked with him, but never recognized the magnitude of who he was. I proclaimed, "You are the Christ!" But never recognized that he was the God who fashioned me and gave me life. You're going home, Paul. And you shall see him face to face in all his majesty and glory.

[Peter sings]

Trapped in my confusion, I always run and hide  
Caught up in the moment, my heart gets filled with pride  
Yet it's for this very weakness, my Lord was crucified  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God, I will pray

I denied I even knew him at the crowing of the cock  
I stood and watched him murdered as the Romans spat and mocked

Yet for some strange unknown reason, he's labeled me the rock  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God

[chorus -- sung with Paul]

PETER: I will pray in the name of Jesus

PAUL: I will pray

PETER: I will pray in the name of Jesus

PAUL: I will pray

PETER: I have prayed all my life, I will pray to the end

PAUL: In Jesus' name

PETER: ...I will pray to my God

PAUL: I will pray...

[Mary now appears on stage]

MARY: [speaking over music] He was my son, Paul ...my little boy. But now he has been exalted above all things. "Jesus, the name which is above every name. The name at which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord." Once I held him in my arms, now he sits upon the throne of the Lord God almighty!

[Mary sings]

When I held him as baby, his eyes were crystal clear  
And with the love he showed to me, he cast out all my fear  
I saw him filled with power as he grew into a man  
I've seen him heal the blind man and help the cripple stand  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God, I will pray

The multitude that followed him became an angry mob  
They beat his naked body and nailed him to the cross  
But he rose up from the grave that day as angels stood in awe  
And the babe that I once held so close has now become my God  
And I will pray, I will pray to my God

[sax solo]

[During the sax solo, Peter, Paul, and Mary (HA!) along with the martyrs begin simultaneously reciting prayers and Psalms. At the end of the solo, the music changes to a kind of black gospel groove, over which the cast sings the following...]

WOMEN: I will pray all my lifetime, I will pray to the end. I will pray to my Jesus, I will pray to my friend.

TENORS: I will pray in the name of Jesus, I will pray in the name of Jesus

BASSES: And I will pray, I will pray. And I will pray, I will pray

[The song ends with the three saints singing a'capella. Then blackout.]

Scene 7

[Back at the family dinner table, Michael is sitting asleep with his head folded in his arms. He suddenly wakes up.]

MICHAEL: OH! ....Where am I? Where's Paul? [he stands] He was right over there. Where's the angel? ...the angel? [sarcastically] Right, the angel -- HA! There's no angel It was only a dream ...my imagination. [pause] And I felt ...I was feeling such hope when I saw Paul leaving. He said he was going home. But now I realize it was all...

[The angel has snuck in. He's wearing a centurion-style breastplate and carries a sword.]

ANGEL: A Dream?

MICHAEL: Ahhh! Oh my lord, it wasn't a dream.

ANGEL: [sternly] No, dear brother. It wasn't.

MICHAEL: What's with the sword?

ANGEL: I'm in military training. There's an enemy I must do battle with very soon. That's why you've been allowed to see what you've seen. [pause] You see, Michael, I won't have the time to spend with you that other guardian angels would. I've got another task at hand. [pause] You've been allowed to see what you've seen that you might have faith to persevere until the end.

MICHAEL: I ...I'm not sure I understand.

ANGEL: Here, read the inscription on my sword.

[hands the sword to Michael]

MICHAEL: Your sword?

ANGEL: This is very special sword, Michael. One with a very special task ahead of it. Read.

MICHAEL: "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels were raging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war and were not strong enough and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven." [looks up] You mean you're Michael the archangel?

[the angel bows]

MICHAEL: My guardian angel is Michael the Archangel!

ANGEL: All of us have been required to serve as someone's guardian angel at least once during human history. I was assigned to you.

MICHAEL: That's why Gabriel acted the way he did towards you. [pause] But why me? Why I'm just a ...just an ordinary person.

ANGEL: An ordinary person? Why NOT you? If there's one thing you should have learned tonight, it's that God works through ordinary people. God

took a cynical old fisherman like Peter and turned him into a great preacher and teacher of truth. God took a bitter hater of religion like Saul and turned him into a man of faith. He took Mary, a frightened peasant girl, and birthed in her the savior of mankind. If you've seen anything, it's how God can take the most unlikely people and work miracles.

[Michael's father has quietly entered the room. With Michael's back turned, only the angel can see him.]

ANGEL: God can even take an angry old man and turn him into a loving father.

DAD: Michael.

MICHAEL: [turns] Dad?

DAD: Uh ...yeah. Hey, look, I'm sorry I blew my top tonight.

MICHAEL: It's OK.

DAD: No, it isn't. I shouldn't have yelled at you like that. It's just that ...well, I guess it has to do with your mother.

MICHAEL: Yeah?

DAD: Yeah. You know, she used to talk about this Jesus stuff too. And there was a point where I almost started to believe it. [pause] But then she started getting real sick and the doctors didn't think she had much longer to live. And then I got mad. I thought ...if there's a God, then why would he let her die? [he looks to Michael] Why?

MICHAEL: I don't know.

DAD: Yeah, I don't know either. [pause] All I know is that it broke me in two. In our last moments together it was like she wasn't mine. You see, she still had her faith ...I'd lost mine. And then she died and I lost her too. [pause] In these last couple of months I've been watching you. It seems as though you've become really committed to what you believe. And it's not so much THAT committed I have a problem with ...it's jus that I don't want to lose you the same way I lost her. You see, out of all you kids, you remind me the most of you mother. I'm just scared, that's all.

MICHAEL: Oh Dad, you're not going to lose me. [pause] I understand now. I really do.

DAD: I don't know. Do you really think there's hope for someone like your old man?

MICHAEL: Dad. There's always hope. If there's one thing that I've learned tonight, it's that there's hope. But what more important is that there's love.

SONG: THE MASTER'S FEET

[The angel steps forward and sings.]

There is a road where life begins; won't you take my hand and be my friend?

I see a land that knows no sin; there's a new beginning at the end.

[chorus]

Follow the master's feet. At Mount Zion we shall meet.

Follow the master's feet. At Mount Zion we shall meet.

There is a crown of gold to wear. It's shining like sunshine in my hair.

I see Lord Je-sus standing there. He's coming to meet me in the air.

[chorus]

I hear the song of the morning star. The new life that awaits is not that far.

I see the Lord who makes all things new. The word of God is trustworthy and true.

THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE!

[chorus]

[At the end of the song, there is a fanfare during which two other angels come out and equip the archangel with a helmet and shield. The archangel points his sword towards heaven in a gesture of servitude.]

[BLACK OUT]

[BOWS AND EXIT MUSIC]

END