

Celebrating Jesus

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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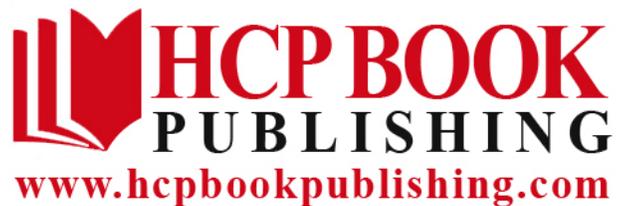


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Characters

Joseph

Mary

Samantha

Regina

Mother

Miss Blair

Harold

Stewart

Ma

Jason

Setting

Several settings are used including various Living Rooms, Meeting Room at a Local Jail, Conference Room & Outdoors.

The Story

Celebrating Jesus is a collection of short stories for Christmas that begin as random and unrelated events that culminate at the Worship Center Church on Christmas Day. This Church is the only thing these characters seem to have in common.

We begin with a biblical setting with Joseph waking out of his sleep realizing that he has just received another visit from an angel telling him to flee to Egypt with his wife and young son. We then journey into a more contemporary setting with Samantha, a young teenage girl who finds herself being left at home alone. She is scared and confused and try to make sense of life through immorality, but she has a Christian friend who will change her life.

We then meet Jason; an incarcerated young man who is sitting in jail on a weapons charge. He struggles with the absence of his father and a mother whose love he may never understand.

Amid all this, a few executives meet to discuss making some of their workers redundant just before Christmas. The Human Resource Manager struggles with her responsibility to bear the bad news to the unfortunate ones who have been randomly selected from a list.

How do we celebrate Jesus when our lives are falling apart, and we can find no peace? What role or significance does His birth have in changing the course of our lives? At the end of the day, we realize that we have no control over circumstances and situations, but we have the power to choose how we respond to it.

Play Details

Length: 60-90 Minutes

Cast: 5 Males, 6 Females

Audience: Teens & Adults

Genre: Biblical & Contemporary Drama

THE SCRIPT



SCENE 1

SETTING: In a stable

LIGHTS UP

Joseph jumps from his sleep. He wipes sweat from his brows. He looks beside him where Mary his wife and baby are still sleeping.

He gets to his feet. Mary stirs and opens her eyes.

MARY: What is it, Joseph?

JOSEPH: Try to get some sleep, Mary.

Joseph takes off his coat and covers them with it.

JOSEPH: We have a long journey ahead of us, and I think we need to leave tonight.

MARY: Why? We just got here, and the baby needs to sleep.

JOSEPH: I saw him again.

MARY: Who?

JOSEPH: The angel who confirmed your pregnancy. He visited me just now.

MARY: What's wrong?

JOSEPH: We have to leave for Egypt tonight. He says some people would want to see harm come to this child.

Mary looks at the sleeping baby.

MARY: Isn't He amazing Joseph?

JOSEPH: I can't believe He's here already.

MARY: Everything just happened so quickly since the angel came to visit me. It still feels like a dream. He really is the Messiah.

JOSEPH: I think it was confirmed by all those people who came to worship Him last evening.

MARY: Words cannot begin to express.

JOSEPH: Mary, please try and get some rest for the journey we have ahead of us.

Mary relaxes.

MARY: I'm sure we have time.

JOSEPH: Get some rest.

Mary closes her eyes.

Joseph walks away a bit looking up to the heavens.

JOSEPH: I don't understand this. *(pause)* When the angel appeared to me the first time and told me to take Mary as my wife, I did not hesitate, I knew people would say terrible things, but I did what You asked. Now the angel tells me that King Herod wants to kill this child. When will this end? *(looks back at his sleeping wife and baby)* He has to be the Messiah. Why else would all those people travel so far to see an ordinary baby boy? How can someone want to kill an innocent child? Look at us! We are sleeping in a stable with filthy animals! *(pause)* The Shepherds spoke about peace on earth and goodwill to all men. *(begins packing his bags)* There was no goodwill to us on this journey, and if the angel is right, which he usually is, then we are still yet to see the worst of humanity. Now we have to run for our lives. Peace on earth! How can this ever be? We will never see peace as long as this evil ruler has his own way.

Mary again wakes up.

MARY: Why are you pacing back and forth talking to yourself?

Celebrating Jesus by Cleveland O. McLeish

JOSEPH: You are supposed to be sleeping.

MARY: How can I sleep when my love is so troubled?

JOSEPH: I thought we were past the worst, but it seems to only be the beginning.

MARY: We both knew this would not have been a walk in the park.

JOSEPH: I'm packed. I think we should hit the road.

Joseph takes the baby and helps Mary to her feet.

JOSEPH: Can you walk?

MARY: Do I have a choice.

They begin to exit.

VOICEOVER: For to us a child is born, to us, a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Segue into "HE IS NOT JUST A MAN"

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2

SETTING: Living Room

LIGHTS UP

Samantha sits at her laptop with some open books sitting beside the laptop (Use a Projector to project the contents of the laptop on a screen to make this scene more interesting).

Mother walks in.

SAMANTHA: Can't you knock?

MOTHER: This is my house.

SAMANTHA: This is my room.

MOTHER: I pay all the bills.

SAMANTHA: I wash the dishes. I think that entitles me to some privacy.

MOTHER: Samantha, did you turn the radio off again?

SAMANTHA: I'm trying to study, Mom.

MOTHER: You are on the computer--- (*comes around and looks at the screen before Sam can hide it*) ---and you are talking on messenger.

SAMANTHA: Regina is helping me to study.

MOTHER: What does LOL and BRB have to do with mathematics?

SAMANTHA: Give me a break, Mom.

MOTHER: I will be going out for a few minutes, and I want to make sure you are hitting

the books before I go, so get to it.

Mother exits.

SAMANTHA: (*typing*) My mother is riding me like crazy. (*hears the radio come back on*) And she turns on the radio blasting this cheesy Christmas music all through the house.

RESPONSE: I like Christmas music.

SAMANTHA: (*types*) You like everything with Jesus in it. Do you believe this is the most wonderful time of the year?

RESPONSE: Yeah.

SAMANTHA: What makes this month so different than all the others? The only good part is that my parents buy me stuff.

RESPONSE: That's Cool LOL

SAMANTHA: Dad feels so bad about divorcing us that he keeps getting me stuff to make me happy. Not even sure what to ask for this year.

RESPONSE: LOL

SAMANTHA: I already have a iPhone, a Mac, a Wii and an iPod. Do you think I should ask for a car LOL

RESPONSE: You are 14

SAMANTHA: So, I have been doing things that 21-year-olds do since I was 12.

RESPONSE: You mean, you and Charlie have done it...LOL

SAMANTHA: Of course. I wouldn't lie about that.

RESPONSE: How was it?

SAMANTHA: It was gross, but who cares. I hate him. He broke up with me and started dating Lindsay like a day later.

RESPONSE: Lindsay Lohan?

SAMANTHA: Have you seen her profile pic????

RESPONSE: Nope

SAMANTHA: Its gross...I hate her too.

RESPONSE: Do I really need to be hearing all this?

SAMANTHA: Regina Simmonds, you're my BFF so you have to like me no matter what I say or do *SMILE*

RESPONSE: Are you sure this is how you want to live your life?

SAMANTHA: Why are you asking me all these questions? Gosh, you sound just like my mom.

RESPONSE: Where did you and Charlie hook up?

SAMANTHA: We were at my house, and for the record we were bored.

RESPONSE: Where was your mom?

SAMANTHA: In her room. She doesn't care what I do. It's no big deal...she had me when she was 15.

RESPONSE: Were you in love with Charlie?

SAMANTHA: NO....it was just something to do. I think that's why I like being your Friend, "Was I in love with Charlie," you say the cutest things.

RESPONSE: Just curious.

SAMANTHA: You are probably the only girl in school who hasn't...you know. You could definitely play the Virgin Mary in the Christmas play LOL. I would have to play the devil hahahahaha

RESPONSE: Come with me to the Youth Group meeting.

SAMANTHA: Will Jaden be there?

RESPONSE: Yeah SMH

SAMANTHA: You know that's the only reason I come...Just don't know why he won't go out with me. He's probably scared of me...LOL...he is scared because I'm not a Christian and I will corrupt him LOL.

RESPONSE: My mom asks for you again. She wants you to come over for Christmas dinner.

SAMANTHA: Your mom is too nice. Tell her I will come. Anything is better than eating my mom's food. It's horrible. Dad was the real cook around here.

RESPONSE: You should try being a little more grateful.

SAMANTHA: Whatever. Why does your mom keep inviting me around? Isn't she afraid I'm going to corrupt her little baby?

RESPONSE: I guess she is hoping that I corrupt you LOL

SAMANTHA: I bet your family just sit around the Christmas tree drinking hot chocolate while your dad reads the Christmas story LOL.

RESPONSE: Something like that.

SAMANTHA: Your dad is this amazing Christian. I find it hard to believe he was involved in anything illegal in his past.

RESPONSE: He was. We were not born at the foot of the cross.

SAMANTHA: Must have been some magic transformation.

RESPONSE: Ask him when you see him. He loves to tell that story. Do you know the Christmas story?

SAMANTHA: Of course I do. What do you take me for? Some heathen LOL, Christmas is about getting presents from Santa Claus...

RESPONSE: Really

SAMANTHA: Just messing with you. I know it's about Jesus coming to earth. Tell me why He had to come anyway.

RESPONSE: He came to prove His love to us.

SAMANTHA: I sin every day and twice on weekends...I find it hard to think that God would love me after all that.

RESPONSE: He loves you.

SAMANTHA: Sometimes I think my own parents hate me.

RESPONSE: I am sure they don't.

SAMANTHA: Then why am I alone most of the time. What good is believing in Jesus for someone like me? I believed a lot of things, and nothing ever changes. My father is still not here. You can trust Jesus all you want because your life is perfect, but mine is messed up.

Mother walks into the room

MOTHER: Samantha, I told you to shut down that laptop.

SAMANTHA: You really should knock before you barge in.

MOTHER: You are supposed to be studying. You are going to repeat this year if you don't get those grades up. Log off now.

SAMANTHA: *(types)* BRB, mom is riding me again. *(closes the laptop)* Happy now.

MOTHER: I'm going out for a few hours.

SAMANTHA: You are leaving me here alone? You know I am scared to be alone.

MOTHER: Just lock the door and don't let anybody in. There is some money on the counter if you want to order some food or pizza. I will probably be late. Bye sweetie.

Mom tries to kiss her, but she turns her face away.

Mother sighs and exits.

SAMANTHA: I hate being alone.

Picks up iPod but quickly pushes it aside; picks up the phone but quickly pushes it aside; Opens up the laptop but quickly closes it. Samantha squeals out of frustration. She holds her head in her lap.

SAMANTHA: Regina told me that if I ever felt alone, I should pray and that You would always listen. *(looks up)* Is anybody there? I don't know who I am talking to or if you are even real. All I know is that I am afraid and I am alone. My life is out of control, I get in trouble all the time, and my grades are low. I know I have a lousy reputation...and you probably hate people like me. *(pause)* Neither of my parents have time for me, and I have to figure this out by myself...so I have a few little minor questions I want to ask you, why couldn't my parents be like Regina's? I know they are a little weird, but they are nice. They find time for her, they never fight. Why did my parents fight all the time? They said they had to separate so they would stop fighting but now in the silence, I feel like the noise is even louder and it's driving me insane. *(pause)* I keep hearing voices telling me what I should do and be and I know it's the wrong thing, but I don't hear anything else. You are not saying anything so what else was I supposed to do. These same voices keep reminding me of the bad things I do, and what an awful person I am...but you are silent. You say nothing. I want these voices to stop. *(pause)* I want the peace that Regina has...I want it...I need it.

VOICEOVER: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid.

SAMANTHA: I don't want anything for Christmas this year...I would give anything to have some peace.

Samantha reaches for one of her books and begins to study.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 3

SETTING: Meeting room at the local Prison

LIGHTS UP

Two tables with two chairs are Stage Right (SR) & Stage Left (SL). Ma is sitting at the table SR.

A Warden enters leading Jason in by his arm. The Warden removes the handcuffs and allow him to sit opposite Ma. Warden exits. Jason avoids eye contact.

JASON: Hi Ma. You look good.

MA: You are not even looking at me, Jason.

JASON: I told you not to come. I don't want you seeing me like this.

MA: I am your mother. From the day you were born, we have spent every single Christmas together. Why should this one be any different?

JASON: Does my dad know I am here?

MA: Yes.

Pause.

JASON: Merry Christmas when it comes.

MA: Do you mean that?

JASON: It's merry for you. I am sure you went to church this morning to begin celebrating the birth of Christ.

MA: Yes and we also prayed for you.

JASON: Thanks ma.

MA: You know I will not let you spend Christmas all by yourself. No matter what you have done to be here, you are still my child, and I will be here for you.

JASON: Thanks for coming, but you can't afford to bail me out so I will be here for Christmas. How is everyone at home?

MA: Worried sick. Your sister hasn't been able to sleep much.

JASON: Will you be making Christmas dinner this year? I miss your turkey and stuffing. How about Collin Jenkins? I hear he is going away to university.

MA: How did you hear that?

JASON: Doesn't matter.

MA: Who have you been talking to?

JASON: Ma, I said it doesn't matter.

MA: Look, I didn't come here to argue.

JASON: Why did you come?

MA: Tell me Jason, what do you plan to do with your life? That's what I really want to know.

JASON: You sure you didn't come here to argue.

MA: I am upset, if that's what you are asking.

JASON: You think this is my fault.

MA: Does it matter? You are in jail Jason. What kind of future do you plan to have behind bars?

JASON: I will work it out.

MA: The lawyer wants you to take a plea deal. That means he thinks you are guilty. What chance do you have of not spending the rest of your life in prison if our own lawyer thinks you are guilty?

JASON: Every man is entitled to their own opinion.

MA: Did you do it?

JASON: I did what I had to do, Ma. Those other guys been messing with us for too long. I needed to support ma boys. They have been there for me.

MA: Where are they now?

JASON: I choose not to leave them when they needed me.

MA: Now you are here instead of them.

JASON: This is my first weapons charge. I should get off easy enough, so find me another lawyer.

MA: You always reap what you sow Jason. You remember that scripture? How about the one that says “Do violence to no man...”

JASON: Give me a break ma.

MA: Why do you need those guys anyway? All they do is get you into trouble? After everything I taught you growing up, now you want to go out and steal and get into fights? I don't even know you anymore.

VOICEOVER: The Lord tests honest people, but despises those who are cruel and love violence.

MA: Your boys should be the ones in here and not you.

JASON: I am not going to rat out my boys Ma. They my family.

MA: I am your family.

JASON: You know what I mean. They have been with me from the start. They have been with me longer than my own father.

MA: He is still your father.

JASON: He is nothing more than a sperm donor.

MA: You have to respect him.

JASON: For what?

MA: Those boys aren't your family. They are not here, I am. You are the one in jail taking the rap for them while they are walking around free. Those boys are gonna let you rot in this jail cell.

JASON: You don't know jack, Ma. So what if they ain't here now? How is that any different than what Dad is doing to us?

MA: Your father is a good man.

JASON: He left and never came back. How does that make him a good man? You keep telling me to give Dad a chance and that I need to respect him. Why?

MA: Everybody deserves a second chance, Jason.

JASON: He doesn't deserve any more chances from me and he definitely doesn't deserve my respect. I don't care if he lives or dies.

MA: You don't mean that.

JASON: I meant every word.

MA: I tried to be everything to you when your father left. The pull from those boys was just so powerful, and I wasn't strong enough to pull you away.

JASON: I didn't want to be pulled away, but it's not your fault. You did everything right. I just needed to feel like I was in control of my own life and I felt that when I was with my boys. No one messed with us when we were all together.

MA: Where is all that power now?

Silence.

MA: Every choice has its own rewards or consequences Jason, and you have no power over what you receive...but you do have the power to choose what you do and until you stop and begin to take responsibility for what you have done...there is no help for you.

There is some truth to what Ma is saying. Jason struggles to fight back the tears.

MA: This just proves you are not in control. You are stuck behind bars wearing what others tell you to wear and getting up when others tell you to get up. The power you thought you had from these boys was not real.

JASON: So you want me to go back to school and struggle through another semester with teachers who don't care if I pass or fail.

MA: It is not the teacher's responsibility to care. You should care if you pass or fail.

JASON: Maybe you want me to work at some \$8.00 an hour job.

MA: It's honest living that won't land you here.

JASON: I don't see myself doing that.

MA: If you continue down this road you will not live to see your 18th birthday. I want my son back. I have had to watch all my hopes and dreams for your life die. Do you know how that feels? Praying every night you are not at home that you don't get shot? Jumping every time the telephone rings? Do you know what that does to a mother?

JASON: I'm sorry, Ma.

MA: Sorry. You are telling me you don't see yourself doing honest work and you want to apologize. Jason, I was glad because the call I got was that you were arrested and not killed. I don't know how much more of this I can take.

JASON: I didn't know it would hurt you so much. I am sorry I did all those things.

MA: I wish I could take you away from all this. If I could give you one thing for Christmas, it would be a life away from all this.

Ma hugs Jason who allows the tears to flow freely.

VOICEOVER: My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 4

SETTING: Conference Room

LIGHTS UP

Two high-level executives are sitting in a conference room.

The Human Resource (HR) manager walks in.

MISS BLAIR: The cappuccino machine is broken again.

HAROLD: I guess I will be going home early today.

STEWART: Can we get this meeting started?

HAROLD: I have called this emergency meeting to discuss some changes that have to be made.

MISS BLAIR: Do we need to do this so close to Christmas?

HAROLD: We have all seen how the financial downturn has impacted this company. We have managed to stay afloat this long, but there are only so many ways to cut costs.

STEWART: I have survived operating on one faulty cappuccino machine, but I am still traumatized that they took away my personal parking spot.

MISS BLAIR: Are you saying we have to cut people?

HAROLD: Exactly.

MISS BLAIR: How is this office going to function if we cut staff?

STEWART: Can't we get machines to replace them?

MISS BLAIR: Don't be ridiculous.

STEWART: That would save us money, and we wouldn't lose any productivity.

MISS BLAIR: Yeah right!

HAROLD: Don't be such a skeptic.

MISS BLAIR: Skeptics are those who believed that by this time in history we would be living on Mars, driving cars that fly, discovered the fountain of youth, have battery-operated butlers and be able to teleport. Computers will never be able to replace people.

STEWART: Don't get sidetracked by your emotions, Miss Blair. We all saw this coming.

HAROLD: You know we answer to the board, and the share value as it stands is way below what they want it to be.

MISS BLAIR: The Board should understand that we are doing everything we can.

HAROLD: We work for the Board...and if we don't deliver, then you and I don't have jobs.

MISS BLAIR: This mess isn't our fault! It's all those greedy people who work on Wall Street.

HAROLD: That's water under the bridge. This is our reality now, and we just have to work with it.

MISS BLAIR: Well, what if we all took a pay cut or didn't get our bonuses? We might be able to save some jobs.

Pause.

The others burst out laughing.

HAROLD: *(trying hard to compose himself)* Let's be serious now. *(more laughter)* Okay, pay cuts for the executives are definitely out of the question.

STEWART: We are crucial to this organization, and we deserve to be paid for all our hard work.

HAROLD: Plus, I deserve every penny of that 5 million dollar bonus...but thank you for that, Miss Blair. Haven't had a good laugh in a long time. *(takes out a list)* Here's a list of people that we think should be let go. *(hands a copy to the others)*

STEWART: *(looking at the list)* Good choice with Mr. Talbot. He's old and almost ready to retire.

MISS BLAIR: He's only two years away from retirement. If we let him go now, then he'll lose his pension.

STEWART: That's why he's perfect! If we let him go, then we'll save money we would have paid for his salary, and we won't have to pay his pension. That's a definite win for us.

MISS BLAIR: But a huge loss for him.

HAROLD: Your point?

MISS BLAIR: Isn't there another time for us to do this? Can't we wait till after Christmas? These people are going to be devastated.

STEWART: We have to do it now. We need to start next year in the black.

HAROLD: Besides, is there really a good time to lose your job? If it's not Christmas, then it's right before your kids go away to college, or right after you have bought a house...it's never a good time, if you think about it. I am just as compassionate as the next guy, but my job is to make money for this company...and I am very good at it.

HR is flustered. She puts their list aside and looks over another list of employees.

MISS BLAIR: What about Quinn Thornton the third?

HAROLD: What about him?

MISS BLAIR: He has a degree from Harvard, so it shouldn't be too hard for him to find another job pretty quickly.

HAROLD: True.

MISS BLAIR: Even after going to such a fine school, his last two reviews weren't very good, so he won't be missed in his department.

HAROLD: Well, we can't fire him.

MISS BLAIR: Why not?

HAROLD: Hiring him was actually a favor I called in for his father.

MISS BLAIR: *(presents a sheet of paper)* Look at his last review. *(reads)* “Quinn is not a team player. He continually shows up late and leaves early. He takes excessive breaks and continually flirts with the female staff who all find him creepy.”

STEWART: Who wrote that review?

MISS BLAIR: Does it matter. He would definitely be my pick as the one to let go.

HAROLD: Come on, give the kid a chance. Where is your compassion? We can't let him go. His father's on the board, and we don't want to upset him. Look for someone else.

STEWART: That reminds me, Quinn and I have our weekly tee-off...I mean, 'planning meeting' this afternoon.

MISS BLAIR: I am not making this decision. I don't want to fire anyone.

HAROLD: But it's your job.

MISS BLAIR: I'm not doing it.

HAROLD: Fine, I will do it. *(casually looks through the list of names)* Adolphus Brown...

MISS BLAIR: He has a wife and three kids.

HAROLD: Mashema Williams...

MISS BLAIR: Her baby father left her with six children.

HAROLD: And Mr. Talbot.

MISS BLAIR: We can't do this.

HAROLD: You will do your job or be reported to the Board, and Mr. Quinn would not be pleased that you wanted to fire his son.

Pause.

HAROLD: Make sure you tell them about their severance and that they have until 5pm to vacate the premises. And try to be sensitive. We don't want them thinking of this company as the Grinch who stole Christmas.

MISS BLAIR: We are stealing a lot more than Christmas from them. We are destroying their peace of mind.

STEWART: Just do it quickly and treat yourself to a new pair of shoes or a spa...or whatever women do.

HAROLD: It's gonna be hard, but this is what we pay you all the big money to do.

Harold & Stewart gets up and heads for the exit.

STEWART: So, where are you and the mistress going for your Christmas vacation?

HAROLD: Given the current economic situation, we really had to scale back. We're thinking of a 14-day cruise around the Mediterranean.

STEWART and HAROLD exits.

MISS BLAIR: Great! This is just great! One month away from Christmas and I have to tell all these people that they no longer have jobs. *(Pause)* People are going to lose their homes. Some of them are so close to retirement and may not be able to compete in the open job market. What are they supposed to do? *(Pause)* Our jobs are supposed to provide us with security, but if we don't have that, then what do we have? I'm not even sure how secure my job is. *(Picks up Christmas card from the table and reads)* 'Fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be for all people.' *(throws the card on the table)* I hope they realize that I am just a messenger. *(pause)* Why can't I have an angel come deliver my news for me? People just want to have a good life. Make enough money to provide for their kids and to be comfortable in their retirement. Is that too much to ask? Instead, we see people losing their jobs, families falling apart and everything we once thought to be unshakable, shattering right before our eyes. *(Becoming increasingly agitated and angry)* Why is it that those who already have the most keep getting more? Life isn't fair. Mr. Talbot worked for this company for 35 years and that all means nothing now. Mashema Williams is a single mother who has raised her kids alone. She doesn't want to take handouts, but what choice will she have now? It's not fair! Our security can be taken from us in a second! *(long pause)* Why do I have to do this?? Am I supposed to just say 'Good afternoon Mr. Talbot, I am calling to destroy your life. Merry Christmas when it comes!' *(longer pause...picks up the phone and dials)* Good morning Mr. Talbot, this is Rachael Blair from Human Resources. Can I speak to you in my office for a moment? *(pause)*

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 5

SETTING: Living Room

LIGHTS UP

Regina and Samantha walk in.

SAMANTHA: I can't believe you are here alone.

REGINA: Why?

SAMANTHA: It's tormenting and scary being alone.

REGINA: It depends on who your friends are.

SAMANTHA: What do you mean?

REGINA: Do you know which season we are in?

SAMANTHA: It's Christmas. I wish you would stop asking me as if I don't know.

REGINA: If Jesus is your friend, you won't feel lonely. From the moment He was born into this world, His people have never been left comfortless.

SAMANTHA: Are you saying I am miserable because I am a sinner?

REGINA: Doesn't that make sense to you?

SAMANTHA: How about my parents just try to spend more time with me?

REGINA: My parents work all the time, just like yours, and even though they find time for me, I am alone most of the time.

SAMANTHA: Let me guess, you spend all that time with Jesus.

REGINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: I am glad you found what works for you.

Miss Blair enters. She is not looking so happy.

MISS BLAIR: Hi girls.

REGINA: Hey mom.

SAMANTHA: Hi Mrs. Blair.

MISS BLAIR: Dinner will be a little late this evening, but it will give you girls some time together.

REGINA: Why do you look so depressed, Mom?

MISS BLAIR: Hard day at work...more like a hard month.

REGINA: What happened?

Pause.

MISS BLAIR: I had to fire some very unfortunate employees from the company.

REGINA: So close to Christmas?

MISS BLAIR: My sentiments exactly. Had to let one go as early as today, Christmas Eve. Can you imagine that?

SAMANTHA: Couldn't my father have done something to help?

MISS BLAIR: He's the one who made the decisions.

SAMANTHA: So typical of my father to ruin people's lives.

MISS BLAIR: It's not entirely his fault. He answers to someone higher than himself.

REGINA: God will take care of them, Mom.

MISS BLAIR: If only it were that simple. God uses people to touch other people's lives, and we are the people who are responsible for them being unemployed.

REGINA: It's just a part of life.

MISS BLAIR: And what of the little children expecting presents this year. They will be

so disappointed. How many Christmas's have we ruined this year?

REGINA: They can have my presents.

Pause.

MISS BLAIR: What!

REGINA: Whatever it is you were going to give me for Christmas, give it to them.

MISS BLAIR: Are you serious?

REGINA: Yes mom.

MISS BLAIR: That's a kind gesture, but I am not so sure that's a good idea.

REGINA: I have been thinking about it all week, Mom, especially the message Pastor preached on Sunday about sharing out of our abundance and touching someone this season.

MISS BLAIR: So you want to give away some of your stuff?

REGINA: Yes, Mom.

MISS BLAIR: I guess I am proud of you Regina. I will definitely give it some thought. Anyway, I need to go start dinner.

Miss Blair exits.

SAMANTHA: What did you just do?

REGINA: What do you mean?

SAMANTHA: You just gave away your Christmas presents to kids you don't know.

REGINA: Does it matter if I know them or not?

SAMANTHA: That's crazy. So now you have no gift to look forward to.

REGINA: That's where you are wrong. Jesus is all the gift I need this Christmas.

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 6

SETTING: Living Room

LIGHTS UP

Samantha is putting some of her stuff in a box.

Mom walks in.

She looks around stunned.

MOTHER: It's midterm, and you are not on your laptop, or cell phone, or iPod. Are you feeling okay?

SAMANTHA: I am fine, Mom.

MOTHER: What's going on?

SAMANTHA: I am packing up a few things I don't use very often.

MOTHER: Okay. Why are you doing that?

SAMANTHA: I was thinking maybe we could give them to children who need them more than me.

Pause.

MOTHER: Miss, what have you done with my daughter?

SAMANTHA: When is dad coming over?

MOTHER: Should be any minute now. He has been asking all week what you want for your Christmas.

SAMANTHA: That is such an interesting question.

MOTHER: You are behaving so strange.

SAMANTHA: I have been doing a lot of thinking.

Celebrating Jesus by Cleveland O. McLeish

MOTHER: I see. So what do you want for Christmas?

SAMANTHA: I want what Regina has.

MOTHER: What is that? A new laptop. A new phone.

SAMANTHA: Peace.

MOTHER: Piece of what?

HAROLD enters carrying two bags.

HAROLD: Hey.

MOTHER: You are finally here.

HAROLD: Glad to see you too, Gladys.

MOTHER: Oh, I didn't say I was happy to see you.

HAROLD: Can we not do this arguing thing today. *(gives her one of the bags)* This is yours.

MOTHER:*(takes the bag)* A gift. How thoughtful!

HAROLD hugs Samantha who barely hugs back.

SAMANTHA: Hi daddy.

HAROLD: Merry Christmas.

SAMANTHA: We still have a few hours to go.

HAROLD: You are looking good.

SAMANTHA: Thank you.

HAROLD: *(hands her the other bag)* This is yours. I hope you like it.

SAMANTHA: Thanks. *(takes the bag and starts taking out the presents putting them in the box)*

HAROLD: What are you doing?

SAMANTHA: I am putting some things together to give to the children of some of those people you fired.

Pause.

HAROLD: What did you say!

SAMANTHA: It's something I saw Regina do and I have given it some thought, and it's a good idea. What do you think?

HAROLD: Seems I have one more person to fire for leaking private company information.

MOTHER: You would not be so insensitive. Haven't you done enough?

SAMANTHA: Why'd you have to fire them before Christmas?

HAROLD: Christmas is just another day for my company.

SAMANTHA: If you believed that, you wouldn't spend so much money buying gifts.

Pause.

HAROLD: Okay, I guess it was a mistake coming over here.

MOTHER: Always a pleasure Harold.

Samantha holds his arm before he leaves.

SAMANTHA: You can't leave yet, Dad.

HAROLD: Why not?

SAMANTHA: I need a ride to deliver these gifts.

HAROLD: And you want me to carry you...to face those same people I fired?

SAMANTHA: Yes.

HAROLD: That is out of the question.

SAMANTHA: It's easy to sit behind a desk and tell someone they no longer have a job. It's easy to buy your daughter everything that money can buy. But what counts is saying I am sorry, and hugging those you care about and tell them you love them. Do you want to know what I want for Christmas, Dad? Peace of mind. Can you give me that?

Pause.

MOTHER: *(to Samantha)* Seriously, who are you?

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 7

SETTING: Living Room

LIGHTS UP

The sound of a doorbell.

STEWART comes out and goes to the door. Ma is standing on the other side.

STEWART: What are you doing here? You shouldn't be here.

MA: Can I talk to you a minute? *(Lets herself in)*

STEWART: Do you know what time it is?

MA: If you answer the phone when I call you, I wouldn't be standing here now at this hour.

STEWART: You are trying to get me in trouble.

MA: Still afraid of your new girlfriend huh?

STEWART: What do you want?

MA: It's about your son.

STEWART: What about him? If this is about getting more money, I am not giving you a dime more. \$1000 a week is more than you need for that boy and he is old enough to go get himself a job.

MA: He is in jail.

Pause.

STEWART: What?

MA: He's in jail.

STEWART: What did he do?

MA: He will tell you himself when you go to visit him.

Pause.

STEWART: Is this a joke?

MA: Jason is your son.

STEWART: How long has he been in jail?

MA: A month.

STEWART: And you come here after a month to tell me I need to go and see him.

MA: I have been calling you, Stewart.

STEWART: Well, I will give this some thought and maybe schedule it for next week. How about that? *(Tries to let her out but she resists)*

MA: Tomorrow is Christmas Day.

STEWART: So?

MA: For five years I have been telling Jason to respect his father, give him another chance. Five years Stewart, and what do I have to show for that? He blames you for where he is.

STEWART: He made his own choices.

MA: All this grandeur and money has gotten to your head. You have forgotten what it means to love your own son.

Pause.

STEWART: Why do you think he even wants to see me?

MA: Jason thinks he doesn't want to see you, but a mother knows better than that.

STEWART: Why are you doing this?

MA: Our son will spend Christmas in jail, if you don't intervene. It's the season when people share love and gifts to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Celebrating Jesus by Cleveland O. McLeish

What kind of gift can I give my son when he is in jail, except his father?

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 8

SETTING: Meeting room at the local Prison

LIGHTS UP

Jason is sitting at the table waiting.

STEWART enters. He reluctantly goes to the table and sits. Jason is not happy to see him.

JASON: Where is Ma?

STEWART: You can only have one visitor a day, Jason.

JASON: I thought that would have been Ma. What do you want?

STEWART: I came to see you.

JASON: I don't want to see you, so why are you here?

STEWART: Because you are my son.

JASON: Now, after five years.

STEWART: Look, I am here now. That should count for something.

JASON: Ma probably told you something that stirred your conscience.

Pause.

JASON: This was her idea wasn't it?

STEWART: Does it matter?

JASON: That my own mother has to blackmail you or stir your conscience to get you to come. Of course it matters. Why are you here?

STEWART: I wanted to wish you a Merry Christmas, and give you gift.

JASON: What good is a gift in jail?

STEWART: I just posted your bail. At the very least you will be spending Christmas with your family.

Pause.

JASON: Why would you do that for me?

STEWART: Jason, I have been a lousy father to you over the years ---

JASON: Can't argue that.

STEWART: --- but you are still my son.

JASON: So you think you can use five minutes to fix five years.

STEWART: I am not trying to fix it. I would like to try and pick up from where we left off.

JASON: So we can go through the cycle again.

STEWART: What are you doing in jail, Jason?

JASON: What does it matter?

STEWART: Are you going to answer the question?

JASON: I got caught with a gun.

STEWART: Your first-time offense, right?

JASON: Yeah.

STEWART: You believe you deserve a second chance?

JASON: I know where you are going with this.

STEWART: We shouldn't ask for what we are not willing to give.

JASON: Being in jail, there are just so many things we can do. One of which is watching a whole lot of television. I saw on the news that this company made six of their workers redundant and those were faithful workers who have nowhere else to turn for money. Just so happens that the name of that company sounds familiar.

Pause.

JASON: Thank you for making my bail pops, but a second chance is not something I can give. It's something you have to earn.

Jason gets up and moves to the exit.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 9

SETTING: The Worship Center Church

LIGHTS UP

Pastor walks to the pulpit.

PASTOR: I want to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to our Christmas service. It's a little non-conventional for us to meet so late in the day, but some people opt to make additional preparations. Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus. He was not just born here on earth, but He has been born in most of our hearts. He came that we might have peace. If you examine your hearts and this peace that surpasses all understanding is missing from your life, you can claim it today. We will listen to some testimonies now of some people who have found this peace. Feel free to share.

Miss Blair and Regina walks out from the audience and goes to the pulpit.

MISS BLAIR: It was a rough year, but God has seen us through. At the point I thought I could not learn another lesson, my daughter taught me something very valuable. Even if we are placed in a position where we take something from somebody, we can choose to give something back. I am happy to see Mr. Talbot here today, smiling as usual and his children and we want to make a special presentation to them. In giving and sharing, I have found peace.

Mr. Talbot walks out from the audience.

Regina goes for a huge box and gives it to him.

REGINA: Merry Christmas Mr. Talbot.

Samantha walks on with another huge box. Her father stands at the door.

She puts the box at Mr. Talbot's feet. Regina goes and hugs her.

REGINA: I am glad you are here.

SAMANTHA: I never thought I would ever say this, but...me too.

REGINA: How did you get your dad to come?

SAMANTHA: I told him I needed a ride. (*Motions for him to enter – Reluctantly he does*) I know for some of you my dad is the last person you want to see, but I just wanted you to know that these are from us. Right dad?

HAROLD: Yes.

PASTOR: We are not partial when it comes to God's house. All are welcome.

SAMANTHA: It has been years since me, and my dad have been to this church together, and I am glad he made an effort. I have been to a very dark place of confusion and discomfort....but I have a friend named Regina who gave me a personal introduction to an extraordinary person, and I am just glad I have the opportunity to say, Happy Birthday Jesus.

PASTOR: Amen. Anybody else wishes to share with us. Don't be afraid.

Jason enters with his Ma.

MA: It has been a while since I have witnessed a miracle Church, but today I am glad to report that Jesus is still working miracles. My son is supposed to be in jail, but instead, God saw it fit for him to spend Christmas with me and more than that, he wanted to be in Church.

JASON: I miss this church.

PASTOR: Who could it be but Jesus? We have seen the miracles, we have shared each other's burdens and have made it through another year wiser and stronger. Jesus is still the reason for the season. In times of trouble and distress, He is still our peace.

The Congregation celebrates.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10

SETTING: Outdoors

LIGHTS UP

Joseph sits with Mary holding the baby.

MARY: What do you think the world will be like 2000 years from now?

JOSEPH: Donkeys on wheels, precooked meals, water heaters, lighter clothing, baby diapers.

MARY: I am serious.

Pause.

JOSEPH: People will know that life can get very difficult and times can be trying and hard to bear, but they have the power to choose how they respond to it.

MARY: God has given us more than we deserve by sending His Son into this world.

JOSEPH: At last, for the troubled hearts and discontented lives, God the Father has granted us His favor....His goodwill....and His peace.

MARY: Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.

JOSEPH: Amen.

Pause.

FADE TO BLACK