



**THE HEART OF A CHRISTIAN PLAYWRIGHT**

Written by us, inspired by Jesus

## What Easter Means To Me

An Original Stage play

By

**Cleveland O. McLeish**

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## **THE CHARACTERS**

MICHAEL  
JANET  
MICHELLE  
JULIUS  
GRANDMA  
PASTOR

## **SETTING**

The stage is bare, with only a stool positioned at Center Stage (CS). Each character may have additional props they need to take with them on stage.

The Characters should enter from different parts of the stage.

## THE SCRIPT

### SCENE I

#### LIGHTS UP

*(Michael, mid 30's, enters and sits on the stool. He looks out over the audience).*

**MICHAEL:** What Easter Means To Me?

*(Pause)*

That's a difficult question to ask somebody who is not really into religion, don't you think? But, if I should attempt to answer, I would go back to when I was a kid. I think it had greater meaning back then. Charlton Heston --- do you remember that name? American Actor and Political Activist. Interesting guy. He was the lead role in the 1956 rendition of the ten commandments. That was a very Loong movie that they played every Easter on local television in the Caribbean. My father would sit and watch that movie every single year of his life. He died in 2012, but that's how I remember Easter.

*(Smiles at the memory)*

Then, there was all these old Jesus movies they would replay every year. There was just so many, that it was hard to keep track of them, but Easter was a time to watch old religious movies. There would be laughter, a lot of bun, cheese and fish and a visit to our local church. We only went twice a year – Easter & Christmas. Kind of a traditional family thing that we did. I never understood it, but every time my parents would make a commitment to visit church more often, but they never do. Easter Sunday, Christmas Sunday. That was it. I still maintain that tradition with my own family.

*(Gets up and paces a bit)*

I find though that the traditions here are a little different. In the US there seems to be all this grandeur about chocolate bunnies and colored eggs. I am not really into that kind of stuff. I rather like the Caribbean flavor, and usually around this time, I would order bun on amazon. Cheese I can get here. My family would visit and bring fish, so I get to relive my childhood memories of Easter.

What does Easter mean to me? It's a time for family, I guess. There is not as much indulgence as the Christmas season, or thanksgiving, but the air does still

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feel a little different. I know in church they celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. My parents never really thought much of that. They believed it was a good story, but not historically accurate. I never learnt what they meant by that, but apparently, Friday would be a time of mourning and Sunday a day of celebration.

***(Sits on the stool)***

What does Easter mean to me? It's just another day, isn't it? Just another season that has been commercialized by society for high profits. They sell a lot of stuff during these seasons, don't they?

***(sighs -- a beat)***

I guess Easter has its place, if you are into that sort of thing. I wasn't brought up to think of it with much significance outside of what I have just said. I guess people do what they want to do, and act out whatever it is they believe.

***(pause)***

Do I believe that Jesus came, lived, died, was buried and rose of the third day during this time, many moons ago?

***(thinks)***

Personally, I struggle with it. Generally, I have met some Christians, and they don't live as if their God is alive. I find them to be depressed, ungrateful and very miserable. That's it. I have nothing else to say.

***(Michael shrugs, and exits).***

*(Janet, mid 50's, enters and sits on the stool).*

*(She looks out over the audience)*

**JANET:** What Easter Means To Me?

*(A beat)*

You never quite know how to answer such questions. It may seem an easy, straightforward and direct question with a relatively easy response, but it really isn't. I assume you base the question on the fact that everyone is different, and while everyone sees and experiences the same things, our perception of it can be quite different. So, different that our reaction to stuff may swing dramatically from one extreme to the next.

*(laughs)*

Pardon my pontificating. I was buying time, while I think.

As a child growing up, my parents set a solid foundation. Easter was a time for families to gather, reminiscing old times together, but most of all to go to church twice on one weekend. We loved it. On Good Friday, we would all go to church and it would be a time of commemorating the death of our Lord and Savior. Have you ever seen the Passion of the Christ? Of course, you have. The first time I watched that movie, I wept like a baby. I cried until I was gasping for breath. We showed it at church on Good Friday that year when it was released.

*(pause to wipe a tear)*

Jesus did that for me. I never looked at sin the same way again --- not that I was out there doing crazy stuff. I know who I am, and who I belong to, but the extent to what Jesus endured for me was never quite evident in all those other old movies we used to watch, and even the Passion doesn't quite capture it, if you read the Bible with imagination engaged. It was a tough call.

*(Pauses to reflect)*

Easter is so much more than society makes of it. You walk into Walmart and you are greeted with commercial stuff. Where is the cross? Where is the suffering, the blood and gore --- the sacrifice? What does bunnies and chocolate have to do with anything?

*(Catches herself --- A beat)*

I have heard it said that the celebration of Easter was a pagan ritual, that they did all kinds of ungodly stuff on that day, like any other major holiday. They say we as the church have adopted all the pagan practices, even to this day. I have no idea if that is true or not, I just know that Easter for me is all about Jesus.

***(A beat)***

I think my appreciation of Easter should be credited to my parents. I believe because of them. I see a different generation of parents these days --- some who have lost sight of what is important. They have no idea how that is going to affect their children in the future, but those who know better should do better. I suppose there would have been a degradation in our society when kids started having kids. But hey, let me not end on a sad note.

***(getting happy again)***

After Good Friday, comes Easter Sunday and that is when Jesus walked out of the tomb. He didn't even have to roll the stone away Himself. It was as if the door was opened for Him to walk out. That is my favorite part. I do wonder why they call it Good Friday? There was nothing good about it, was there?

***(Smiles)***

I sure love Sunday though.

**JANET EXITS**

***(MICHELLE, 15, enters and sits on the stool. She is holding a Bible).***

***(She looks out over the audience, excited. She opens the Bible).***

**MICHELLE:** What Easter Means to Me? I want to read something for you.

***(She reads)***

This is what it says, and I love this, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made, without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Do you see!

God created us, and we messed up. God became one of His own creation, because of love, to save us. Do you see? Easter is about love, a love we can hardly comprehend. You know what Jesus went through the last days of His life here, and there are myriads of things He experienced that were never recorded. That's what John says right? I love John. I see why He was so loved by the Lord. The world could not contain the books, if everything about Jesus was written. Hello! So, we think we can put God in our tiny little boxes. Get a life.

***(A beat)***

My mom used to wear a cross around her neck. I wondered about that as a child, and eventually I asked. She said it's a reminder of love. How could a cross remind somebody about love? You would think they would use a cupid or a red heart or something else right. I understand what she meant now. The Cross is a universal symbol of love that transcends culture, race and class. I embrace the Cross, and that is what Easter means to me.

***(Pause to think)***

I cried the first time I read the line that Jesus came to His own, but His own did not recognize Him. How ironic is that? The Creator took on flesh, and endured rejection, torment, ridicule, arguments and even death at the hands of His own creation. And He did it with joy. I don't get that. If I was God, I would just be zapping people left right and center until they recognized who I am. But, I am not God...but I am a recipient of what He did on my behalf.

***(Skips through the Bible)***

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Let me read it for you. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Do you see?

It was during Easter --- during the Jewish Passover --- that Jesus translated humanity out of darkness into light. My friends, if you are still walking in darkness, you must know that that is your choice, and you will bear the full responsibility for that choice, right? You know that, right?

What Easter Means To Me? In a sense, it was our birthday --- the time and season that we were reborn --- our sins were atoned for --- and we were empowered to walk on this earth, just like Jesus did. I don't know what else to tell you.

***(Michelle exits)***

***(Julius, mid 50's, enters and sits on the stool. He looks out over the audience, and smiles).***

**JULIUS:** What Easter means to me?

***(considers for a moment)***

As a retired Pastor of 55 years old, I can probably give you two versions of Easter --- just to highlight how much the world has changed. Easter was once a very sacred time, from the beginning of Lent. I think, for the most part, we kind of leaned more to the old ways of doing things, and observing the sacraments of the time. Today, Easter is commercially marketed and the focus seems to be more on products and benefits.

So, to answer that question, I would like to know from which perspective should I look at it.

***(a beat)***

It is the rapid change of the world that caused me to walk away from the pastoral office. I could not keep up. I was evaluated on the stringent rules of the secular world, and was told many times that I was backward --- behind time. I still don't know how to use a computer, and while I see this as a blessing, not being tempted with porn and stuff like that, many will look at it as a hindrance to ministry. This is the age of projectors, and lights and sound. So, I guess I would say Easter is not what it used to be.

***(pause to consider)***

For me, I try to maintain the old paradigm in my own family. While the young one's protest, and often accuse me of being old fashion, I still feel like I have an obligation to my family to maintain a true reflection of Easter. I mean, let's admit it, it is easy to get side tracked, distracted and lose sight of what is important. All the recent study about these major holidays being rooted in paganism doesn't help either.

I think seasons like Easter is what you make it out to be. In a sense, I guess that's why you are asking me anyway what it means to me.

***(Pause to reflect)***

Easter is a good time to reflect on what Jesus did. At our home, we do communion together as a family, just as Jesus did on the last night that he was betrayed. From reading scripture, the whole thing seems to

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happen so fast from His arrest to His crucifixion. So, Easter, for me is a time of reflection. We watch the movies as well, both old and new. That is somewhat of a family tradition. Just a reminder of Jesus' journey to the cross. Some movies are gorier than others, but I think we get the point. Our family usually takes turn in talking about what the Cross means to us. You would be surprised that everyone's perception of the Cross of Christ can be so different, yet we can recognize a commonality among ourselves, that we do realize that Jesus paid a debt He did not owe, to cancel a debt that we could not pay. Interestingly, those discussions usually lead to arguments about the true effectiveness of the blood of Christ. Can the sins we spend so much time thinking about really be forgotten from God's perspective. I mean, we sin a lot, and some people's sins are gorier than others, but just how powerful is all this forgiveness stuff.

That's the final point I want to make. Easter is about forgiveness. You remember this line in the prayer, "Forgive us as we forgive others." Do you realize how truly hard that is? But here are my thoughts. If God can forgive the vilest of sinners to the point that He remembers their sins now more, even before they commit the sins, what possible reason can we have not to forgive each other? And I am about to succumb to my pastoral instinct, those people you are struggling to forgive --- it's not worth it. You are the one who truly suffers from unforgiveness, so let it go. Easter is a good time to do that, so yeah, that's about What Easter Means To Me.

*(Smiles – gets off the stool and exit.)*

*(Grandma, mid 60's, enters with the aid of a walking stick and stands staring at the stool. She looks out over the audience).*

**GRANDMA:** They don't expect me to climb up on this thing at my age, do they?

*(Someone brings a chair. Grandma sits in the chair, leans on her walking stick).*

**GRANDMA:** What Easter means to me? I have seen several generation shifts, so it's hard to give a general answer because I can identify preferences. I like some of what I had as a kid, some of the stuff I had as an adult, and some I have as an elder. The truth is, what meaning I draw from this time of the year is probably a combination of all.

Easter is a time of mourning and celebration. Does that make sense to you?

*(pause to consider)*

You know, I find that the things of God are a complete mystery. To lead, one must serve; to be first, one must be last; to live, one must die. It shouldn't surprise us that trials lead to victories, and mourning leads to joy. It is just the pathway to heaven – you know, that narrow, rough road the Bible speaks about. This pathway did not exist when man was first created. I think, because of our sin, this is the path we choose when we partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, our journey back to Eden has been a tedious one. We would not even consider it, if Jesus had not come and walked out that perfect example --- challenged the status quo --- all that He did.

*(Pause)*

I'm just going to be straightforward and blunt, since you ask me what Easter means to me. Jesus said, if any man will come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Do you realize that is a path for every Christian? But the truth is, most of us haven't even begun to deny self, much less to take up a cross. This is what I see in our churches today. Christians grumble and complain, just like the Israelites wondering around in the desert. I find Christians to be very miserable, ungrateful, bitter, easily offended, judgmental and sacrilegious. If that rubs you the wrong way, it was meant to. I am an Elder. I can get away with saying things like that.

How is it that our response to trials and difficulties is the same as the world? Has the Word of God changed? Is it not through many trials that we come into the kingdom of God? Has that changed? Do you realize that you have the power to choose how you respond to your circumstances?

***(Sighs)***

I am getting ahead of myself, so let me take a breather.

***(Pause)***

Easter should be a time of restoring hope. That's why Jesus came. Can you imagine what the world was like before Jesus set foot on the earth? There was the Roman rule on one end, and Grecian influence on the other. The church had no voice, no influence, as a matter of fact, the existing church back then was called a synagogue of satan. Jesus had to come when He did --- I think the Biblical phrase for that is, "the fullness of time has come."

***(smiles)***

It's not easy to watch these recent movies being made about that day Jesus suffered, but it does give us a basic idea about what Jesus endured on our behalf. That's what Easter Means To Me. It is a reminder that God did something He didn't have to do to save us. What troubles me is how resistant we are to such a sacrifice. Do we realize that unless we accept Jesus sacrifice, we are dead, even while we are living? There is no life outside the Cross.

***(gets up --- sighs)***

You know, I think we need to seriously consider the path that Jesus walked as our own path to abundant life. I know no other way, and Easter reminds us to reflect whether we are on track, or have managed to be derailed somewhere along the journey.

***(Grandma exits)***

*(Pastor, mid 30's, enters and sits on the stool. He looks out over the audience).*

*(He pulls out his iPad and swipes to find an article).*

**PASTOR:** Can I read you something?

*(audience responds)*

I would read it, even if you had said no.

*(smiles)*

*(Reads)*

All the fun things about Easter are pagan. Bunnies are a leftover from the pagan festival of Eostre, a great northern goddess whose symbol was a rabbit or hare. Exchange of eggs is an ancient custom, celebrated by many cultures. Hot cross buns are very ancient too. In the Old Testament, we see the Israelites baking sweet buns for an idol, and religious leaders trying to put a stop to it. The early church clergy also tried to put a stop to sacred cakes being baked at Easter. In the end, in the face of defiant cake-baking pagan women, they gave up and blessed the cake instead. Easter is essentially a pagan festival which is celebrated with cards, gifts and novelty Easter products, because it's fun and the ancient symbolism still works. It always struck me that the power of nature and the longer days are often most felt in modern towns and cities, where we set off to work without putting on our car headlights and when our alarm clock goes off in the mornings, the streetlights outside are not still on because of the darkness. What better way to celebrate, than to bite the head off the bunny goddess, go to a "sunrise service", get yourself a sticky-footed fluffy chick and stick it on your TV, whilst helping yourself to a hefty slice of pagan simnel cake?

*(to audience)*

I hear the dividing thoughts as it relates to Easter, so I had to do the research myself. Apparently, some form of celebration had a pagan origin. We are not disputing that. The question asked is, What does Easter mean to me? *(points at iPad)* It sure ain't this!

*(Pause to think)*

I have some questions. Did Jesus actually come to earth, as God in the flesh I mean? Did He suffer and die after being betrayed by one of His own? Was He crucified on a cross, between two thieves? Was He buried, and resurrected on the third day? If the answer to all these questions are yes, and we do believe what the Bible says, then how can we be wrong to celebrate all that during Easter?

Let's put this into context. Is it okay if I speak controversially? I will even if you say no. Friday to Sunday is not three days and three nights. Jesus said, just like Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so would He be in the tomb. Now, if we are wrong about anything, it is celebrating His death on Friday, and His resurrection on Sunday --- but I am not here to dispute or disqualify anybody's doctrine. We inherited that practice, I get it. So, we just continue along those lines, but anyone who is seriously looking at the scriptures, and doing the math will figure out something's off. A lot of things will be off for those who practice this kind of study.

The thing I wonder about is, how important is it to be historically accurate? Is it acceptable, by God, to just celebrate, even if we have the days, dates and times wrong?

***(A beat)***

I know, it's a lot to swallow, but at least it will provoke some thought. Controversy aside, I love Easter. For me, it's a time of reflection. I'm sure others have already said that, but it calls for us to engage our imagination --- being able to see what transpired during this time. Movies try, but which movie maker is going to do an actual film with Jesus hanging naked from the Cross? Oops! I am so sorry. You didn't know Jesus was naked? Can you imagine how well knitted, and tied what they wore as under garments would need to be to stick to Jesus body throughout that ordeal?

I like to be real when it comes to spirituality. There are so many stories, myths, doctrines and thoughts out there, that if you research one thing, you must sift through a myriad of information just to find some cohesion that will put your enquiries to rest, and even then, you question your acceptance of the material that you found. Am I speaking the truth?

***(A beat – Pastor swipes on his iPad)***

I like Wikipedia's take on this matter: (He reads) *The New Testament states that the resurrection of Jesus, which Easter celebrates, is a*

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*foundation of the Christian faith. The resurrection established Jesus as the powerful Son of God and is cited as proof that God will judge the world in righteousness.*

The Cross is good, but the cross is also a path. The end goal is resurrection --- renewal --- restoration --- revival. It is a rebirth of humanity from death to life; a divine transition made possible by the only thing that could, the Blood of Jesus.

***(Pastor takes out a communion set.)***

So, for me, Easter is a partaking of the body and blood of Jesus with the goal of total transformation in mind. Paul says, *I labor with you until Christ is fully formed in you.* The first Easter was the beginning. Our responsibility is to carry that on. I will not be the judge of how well we have done that, but there is always room for improvement, right?

***(Pastor smiles, and exits)***

**BLACKOUT**