Before Abraham Was, I Am

By Terri Dill

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DEDICATION

I honor my parents with this dedication. Without your love and encouragement, none of this could happen. You believed in me before I believed in me. Thank you for inspiring me to do my best for God and for the church. Because of you I became His disciple. I have truly lived because of His gift.

STORY OF THE PLAY

After the crucifixion, believers and nonbelievers were filled with doubt. Followers asked how Jesus could leave, even after promising that He would not? Nonbelievers questioned themselves— what if they did kill the Christ? Yet among the chaos and grief Christ came to them and comforted them. He continued to teach about faith and trust. With the ascension, for those who would witness and believe, the Holy Spirit would come upon them, marking the beginning of Christianity. Hallelujah! The cross is empty. Jesus lives. This Biblically inspired play runs about 90 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

First performed March 22 and 23, 2013
United Methodist Church in Fort Morgan, Colorado

With the following cast and crew: Terri Dill (Director), George Saiter, Bob Kula, Alan Meyer, Mitch Church, Sarah Butler, Julie Weimer, Jarry Schaefer, Zach Jackson, Dan Schiller, John LaPorte, Christian Hecker, Carolyn Camp, Laurie Hecker, Leandra Neb, Erin Hecker, Pam Nestor, Mary Lou Schomburg, Anne Overturf, Jeremiah Saiter, Lily Bullard, Makenna Carlock, Gaige Stroh, Mike Hecker, Norma Saiter, Shirley Bowles, Jody Meyer, Sue Schaefer, Janice Musgrave, Mary Zorn, Terri Eades, Deb Polansky, Shaun Geisert, Erik Sagel, Tyler Shaffer, Chris Marymee, Bob Fisher, Patty Kuretich, Joanne Tarman, Kelly Geisert, Kaelin Kuretich, and Angie Keefe.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast of 34: 16 m, 13 w, 3 teen boys, 2 teen girls, and extras as townspeople. With doubling, cast of 26: 10 m, 11 w, 3 teen boys, 2 teen girls, and extras as townspeople)

NARRATOR: (doubles as Man 2.) Any aged man.
MAN 1: Older man.
MAN 2: (doubles as Narrator.) Any aged man.
MAN 3: (doubles as Andrew.) Middle-aged man.
JESUS: Middle-aged man.
WOMAN 1: (doubles as Angel 1.) Any aged woman.
WOMAN 2: (doubles as Angel 2.) Any aged woman.
CHIEF PRIEST: Older man.
GUARD 1: (doubles as Unknown disciple.) Man in 20s or 30s.
GUARD 2: (doubles as Cleopas.) Middle-aged man.
PHARISEE: (doubles as Thomas.) Middle-aged man.
NICODEMUS: (doubles as James.) Middle-aged man.
MARY, **MOTHER OF JESUS:** Older woman.
MARY, MOTHER OF JAMES: Middle-aged woman.
MARY MAGDALENE: Woman in 20s or 30s.
SALOME: Any aged woman.
JOANNA: Any aged woman.
NAOMI: Older woman.
ANNA: Older woman.
BENJAMIN: Boy, early teens.
AARON: Boy, 11-12 years old.
SARAH: Girl 11-12 years old.
ELIZABETH: Girl, 11-12 years old.
ASA: Boy, early teens.
ANGEL 1: (doubles as Woman 1.) Any aged woman.
ANGEL 2: (doubles as Woman 2.) Any aged woman.
ANDREW: (doubles as Man 3.) Middle aged man.
PETER: Middle-aged man.
CLEOPAS: (doubles as Guard 2.) Middle aged man.
UNKNOWN DISCIPLE: (doubles as Guard 1.) Man in 20s or 30s.
MARTHA: Older woman.
REBEKAH: Middle-aged woman.
THOMAS: (doubles as Pharisee) Middle aged man.
JAMES: (doubles as Nicodemus.) Middle aged man.
TOWNSPEOPLE: Adults and children of all ages.
OPTIONAL: John (non-speaking) Middle-aged man.

SETTING

All scenes take place in the days before and after the crucifixion. Various settings include the Temple, a home, the tomb, a garden, a road, a seaside, and a boat. Each area can be indicated with simple props and area lighting.

SCENES

Prologue
Scene 1: Sanctification
Scene 2: Holy (Kadosh)
Scene 3: The Witness of the Children
Scene 4: Hear, O Israel
Scene 5: On the Road to Emmaus
Scene 6: You Have Seen Me
Scene 7: You Are My Son
Scene 8: 153
Scene 9: Peter is Reinstated
Scene 10: Can it Be?
Scene 11: Receive the Holy Spirit

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Prologue

(AT RISE: ALL actors are in place, frozen in action. Off to one side are the TEMPLE LEADERS and TEMPLE GUARDS, watching the scene. JESUS is speaking to a CROWD and is partially raising His arms to the heavens. NARRATOR is center stage. Dramatic MUSIC plays. After a beat, the music comes down slightly but still plays under the NARRATOR. LIGHTS up on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!" Deuteronomy 6:4. I don't know what has brought you here tonight. I do know that you have been led to come, *(Pause.)* and His spirit will open your heart to what you are about to experience. Place yourself in Jerusalem, some 2,000 years ago. Close your eyes so that you may hear the sounds and feel the sun on your face. Can you feel the warm sand under your feet? *(Pause.)* You are in a huge crowd of angry people. Many are speaking out against a man named Jesus. Some believe in Him and want to hear more. Come with me now; *(Pause.)* come to the Temple. Will you speak up for Him? *(Pause.)* Listen now, and open yourself to the love of the one and only, our Lord; the Prince of Peace, the Almighty God, the King of all Kings, our Lord and Savior. *(Exit.)*

Scene 1: Sanctification

(LIGHTS come up on the stage. Action begins spontaneously. SFX: Crowd noise, or TOWNSPEOPLE speaking and arguing, which dims when MAN 3 speaks.)

MAN 3: How did this man get such learning without having studied? I ask you, men of God, how is this possible if He is not favored?

JESUS: My teaching is not my own. It comes from Him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teachings come from God, or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the One who sent him is a man of truth.

(The CROWD once again begins to talk all at once.)

MAN 1: *(Loudly, irritated.)* Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?

MAN 2: But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where He is from.

WOMAN 1: *(To CROWD.)* He is a good man. Why do you question him? You listen as arrogant men; knowing the answers without asking the questions.

(JESUS continues to teach those listening. The DISCIPLES surround Him to protect Him from the angry CROWD.)

JESUS: Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but He who sent me is true. You do not know Him, but I know Him, because I am from Him and He sent me.

(Some of the CROWD try to seize JESUS but are unable to. They are kept away from Jesus and the disciples by OTHERS in the crowd.)

End of Freeview

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