

2WTL Drama.wpd, p.o. 2/3/98
Two Ways to Live Drama

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2WTL Skit Ideas

a relatively serious presentation, modeling a conversation where a Christian presents the drawing to a seeking friend. We'd like to make the dialogue witty and non-confrontational, but bringing up honest questions and anxieties.

2WTL #2

comment about room decorations

“cliff hanger” each week — some ridiculous reason for not being able to complete the story

1: Ok, 2, I've waited long enough. Have you learned the rest of that story from your guru yet?

2: He's not my guru. He's the staff worker.

1: “staff worker”? What's that? So is he a religious dude or a bureaucrat?

2: No, with InterVarsity

1: Oh, a *sports* staffer, does he cover the Packers? -- I heard a bunch of them are religious.

2: Huh?

1: Never mind. You religionists have the strangest lingo. I've been thinking about your first picture, though. I like it. Everything lines up so well. God made the world beautiful. We're supposed to take care of it. Knowing God personally. Being in perfect balance. I have to admit, that part about God being a loving ruler took some getting used to. I had to think about that part. I decided that benevolent dictatorship is the way to go — as long as the ruler is perfectly good and wise. I think God can handle it.

2: Well, I guess “benevolent dictator” is a way of putting it.

1: So what's happens next?

2: Ah, how did that superbowl party you went to come out?

1: Terrible. They lost. Just like at the one you went to. What happens next?

2: Boy the food was bad tonight, eh?

1: Why do I get the feeling you are avoiding my question?

2: Well,

1: Come on, out with it.

2: Well, you know. The story of Christ is kind of a is a sort of a bad news, good news kind of thing.

1: Oh, I see now. You don't like saying bad news. Like that time you never told me that we were almost out of gas.

2: Sorry. I didn't want to make anyone unhappy.

1: Like running out of gas in Weyawega makes people happy?

2: Ok. The problem is that things didn't stay the way they were in the first part of the story.

[draw & explain second picture: We all reject the ruler, God, by trying to run life our own way without him. But we fail to rule ourselves, or society, or the world. Say what the pictures represent. X out the crown to demonstrate our rejection of God's rule.]

1: You're kidding. *That's* the problem?

2: I'm sorry, I've offended you haven't I?

1: Well, no. I just thought you religious types thought the problem was that people weren't religious enough. That's what sin is, right? When you don't measure up to the religious group?

2: Not really. It's more personal than that. It's between us and God. It's rebellion against the way God set things up [refer to first picture].

1: Rebellion. I don't really think I'm very rebellious.

2: That's not my call. Like I said, it's between you and God.

1: Nobody is perfect. Is that what you mean?

2: No, it's a bigger deal than that. Do you really think things are such a mess just because we aren't perfect?

1: You're right, that's a cheap excuse. I just never thought of the problem as rebellion.

2: I'm not surprised. I think people are more likely to say that things are a mess because of lack of education or maybe repressed feelings. Or because we are victims of someone else.

1: Men! I keep telling you. It's all their fault! We are all victims of patriarchalistic institutionalized oppression!

2: Oh yeah, I almost forgot.

1: This rebellion idea — I think I need an example. How am I rebellious against God's rule?

2: Do you love God with all your heart and love others as yourself?

1: I don't know. I guess I like God okay — I don't dis him or anything like that. I care about people. You know I care about people.

2: um -- ah.

1: Come on. I care about people, you know that.

2: Yeah...

1: You're holding out on me, 1 — I can tell. You don't want to hurt my feelings.

2: I'm sorry, 2. I know you care about me. But I don't know that you love others as yourself. I don't know that you love God with all your heart.

1: Well, maybe God should just lighten up. I mean, come on! Those standards are too high. Can't you think of a better example?

2: Maybe that's not the best example, I don't know. But that's one that God said. Do you want to change the standard?

1: I guess so — just something more reasonable.

2: You asked me for an example of rebellion. If God is the ruler then He gets to set the standards. If we don't follow them, or if we try to change the standards he sets...

1: ...then that makes us rebels. But then, we should see a huge conflict.

2: Kind of like what we have.

1: You really blow my mind, sometimes, 2. I wonder why more people don't look at things this way.

2: I don't know. I guess people don't want to see themselves as rebels.

1: This is really extreme. I mean [indicates two pictures], these two parts of the story are really polarized. No wonder you didn't want to talk about it. This is really bad. [pause]. But maybe that's just the way it is. Maybe we should just get used to it.

2: But the first part of the story — how good things were — that must come from somewhere. I don't want to settle for this [indicates picture 2] — there is too much hurt there. And I don't want to give up on this [indicates picture 1] — it is just too beautiful.

1: So what happens next? Keep going!

2: [here is where we need a ridiculous excuse for a cliff-hanger...]

2WTL #3

Notes:

The punishment of God has a lot to do with human dignity, freedom, and responsibility.

Opener: some reason to re-establish the conversation. Something humorous would be great.

S: [sounding cool] Have you noticed the remarkable restraint I have shown this week?

C: [distracted studying] Um, yes -- er -- sort of. You are a remarkable roommate.

S: It's not every roommate that has to live in suspense from week to week.

C: No, I'm sure most don't.

S: I mean, here I am, dangling on a cliff-hanger, and I'm patiently waiting to see what will happen.

C: You are so patient... in a high-strung sort of way.

S: This is worse than Days, you know. I don't even care anymore if she dumps him because of her, whether he knows she knows, or deep down really cares, whether his heart will be broken, whether her mother's heart can take it, whether the affair will be discovered.

C: [interrupts] But you don't have time to watch soaps.

S: Of course not, that's not the point. My point is how well I am dealing with the suspense.

C: Uh huh.

S: I really like the way you've decorated your wall. It keeps me guessing. On the edge -- you know.

C: [finally understanding] Oh! It's Wednesday, and I haven't told you the next part of the story.

S: [immediately takes chair over] Ok, if you can't hold off, I suppose I'd have time to hear it now.

C: I'll just review for the sake of anyone who might be bugging our room [draws #1]. God is the loving ruler of the world. He made the world. He made us rulers of the world under him. But, things didn't stay so good.

[draw #2] We all reject the ruler -- God -- by trying to run life our own way without him. Essentially, we rebel against him, and make a mess of things.

S: So far, so bad.

C: Ok, here's the next part. [draw #3] The question is: what will God do about our rebellion and the mess? God won't let us rebel forever -- He cares about the damage too much for that. God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgment.

S: Ah – darn! I was afraid you were going there. You know, Christianity would be a lot more popular without that picture. It's so negative.

C: We could tune into the soaps if we wanted popular.

S: It's like – I see why it makes sense – but it's really hard to go there. Why do you think it's so?

C: Why do you think it makes sense to go there?

S: Because – because I think I might have a glimpse of what God's world could be like. How good things could be – with Him there, directly involved in the picture. But you're right on this second picture. We all just tell God to shove off, in one way or another. It makes sense that, if we are going to reject God, that He will reject us.

C: But you don't want to go there.

S: It's all like an incredible drama. Kind of like -- hey, did you see the final Star Trek: Next Generation episode? Where humanity is on trial by Q? A trial.

C: Yeah, I thought Q was a little too god-like for my comfort.

S: Forget Q. Let's do the trial. Humanity on trial. I need to sort this out. Here, "A" can be humanity. [places stuffed animal A on podium, C & S take opposite sides of podium]

C: OK. Do you, "A", swear to tell the truth –

S: No, no. We have already decided that he is guilty of rebellion. We already know the truth. This is a trial to determine what the sentence will be for rebellion.

C: OK. In that case, do you, A, swear to face reality, the whole reality, and nothing but reality, so help you God?

S: You be the prosecution.

C: No way! Christians always have to be the heavys – you be the prosecution. It was your idea.

S: All right. [they switch]. So what is your defense?

C: Um. Well, you see your honor [faces group]. Judgement is too harsh. I mean, look. They already are suffering terrible consequences for their rebellion. They can't rule the world, they can't rule society -- they can't even rule themselves. Just let them live with the natural consequences – that's punishment enough.

S: Objection, your honor! This trial is not about how humanity has inconvenienced itself – this trial is about how they have rebelled against God.

C: Postponement, then. Your honor, a ruling on this case should be delayed on appeal.

S: It seems to me, your honor, that God has already given them plenty of time. There is no evidence that they will not continue to inflict deep suffering on one another and continue in their rebellion.

C: [to S] You're tough.

S: You wanted to be the defense.

C: I've got it! Insanity. Your honor, they are clearly insane to rebel against God. Therefore, they are not fully responsible.

S: Look here, your honor. It would be unreasonable for God to change the way he treats humanity. God has treated them with great dignity, giving them rule over the world. It seems the defense would have you adopt a patronizing attitude towards them. To treat them like animals that have no freedom or conscience. It seems that they would be willing to trade the dignity of their humanity for their necks. This is just more evidence that they deserve judgement.

C: Whoa. I give up, S. You be the defense.

S: OK [they switch sides again].

C: You have any other ideas?

S: Nothing really. The only thing that I can think of is that – well – humanity doesn't want it. Doesn't want death. Your honor, they don't deserve to get off, but perhaps God should just continue to give them what they want.

C: Your honor, I –. I can't do this, S. God is the judge. God is God. We can never forget how God is always in the picture. God is the one, the only one, who gives life –

S: You're right. Life comes from God. We rebel against God. We rebel against life. God is just giving us what we want, isn't He? The defense rests its case. Humanity is self-condemned. There is no other way the drama can end. Death. [Takes animal off podium, rests head on podium]

C: [places hand on S's arm]. But that's not the end. There is another way. God loves us, he doesn't want it to end that way.

S: It's impossible.

C: Someone came and did what was impossible.

S: [looks up – lights down]

If it is possible, I think this ending would be most effective if it were serious. I'm not sure if we should try for a humourous cliff-hanger. Perhaps a "stage manager" could dim the lights at the end to indicate the sketch was over.

2WTL #4 Atonement

perhaps a dramatic reading of verses pertaining to Christ. Eliza and Sarah could alternate.
See other file

2WTL #5 Resurrection

This part of 2WTL deals with the resurrection of Christ – the completion of his work on the cross and his new role as risen ruler. Jesus rose as demonstration of God’s approval of his work and of God’s power. As “ruler” Jesus stands victorious over sin and death, is the source of new, re-created life, and is the rightful judge of humanity.

This portion of our ongoing drama explicates a concept not often associated with “rule”: that is, Christ as ruler is the life-giver. It does so by exhibiting our need for life-resources from God.

The scene opens with our heroines barely awake at some ungodly hour of the night, draped over their chairs, trying to study.

Seeker: Are you awake? [long pause, nearly falls asleep herself] Hey!

Christian: Umph.

Seeker: Are you awake? Are you writing your paper?

Christian: [head still down]. I’m thinking.

Seeker: Yeah, right.

Christian: I have to get just the right wording. I’m a perfectionist, you know.

Seeker: Tell me what you’re working on.

Christian: I’m, ah, ... [shuffles through papers]. Oh here it is. *The Failure of 18th Century Utopian Societies in America*. This must be my history paper.

Seeker: Must be.

Christian: What are *you* doing?

Seeker: Lucubrating.

Christian: What? Have you been drinking?

Seeker: No, lucubrating. It’s in the dictionary. Look it up. L-u-c-u-brate

Christian: You need help.

Seeker: I need sleep.

Christian: I need caffeine.

Seeker: I need more brain cells. I thought maybe I could solve these programming problems if I were sleep deprived.

Christian: We need time. A simple plot device, really. We just go back in time a few hours and get our studying done.

Seeker: Somewhere else, though. I couldn't bear to see myself this way.

Christian: So we need a time machine AND makeup.

Seeker: I'd be happy with a faster computer. I need a time machine just to watch the hour-glass. There's what's-his-face in my class...

Christian: Oh-oh, thinking about what's-his-face again, eh?

Seeker: Not all the time. I told you: I decided I was better off without him. Anyway, I think he has an 800 million megahertz pentium in his room. His t-shirt says "he who dies with the most toys, wins."

Christian: No, the most *energy* wins.

Seeker: Wrong. He who dies with the best *grades*, wins.

Christian: No, best job connections.

Seeker: Best looks.

Christian: Bombproof diet plan.

Seeker: Yuck. If we're going to die anyway, we might as well go to bed.

Christian: Not until after finals.

Seeker: Hey. You're a Christian though.

Christian: So? I still have to take finals.

Seeker: But you've got extra resources. You can *pray*.

Christian: I have been.

Seeker: Seriously.

Christian: I was, actually. But prayer isn't like magic. God isn't my genie that I rub to get good grades.

Seeker: But – I was thinking of those pictures you were showing me. There must be more. We need more resources. I'm sorry, you've got to do your paper.

Christian: No, it's OK. Utopia can wait. I need a study break.

Seeker: Thanks. This is why I think we need more. Jesus' death for our rebellion is great. Forgiveness is great. But I don't see how forgiveness alone can fix the mess we made.

Christian: Why don't you back up a bit?

Seeker: Ok. [draws picture #1] God is the loving ruler of the world. He made the world. He made us rulers of the world under him. But, things didn't stay that way.
[picture #2] We all reject the ruler – God – by trying to run life our own way without him. But we fail to rule ourselves, or society, or the world. So what will God do about it?

[picture #3] God won't let us rebel forever. God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgement. But God didn't want things to end that way.

[picture #4] Because of his love, God sent his son into the world: the man Jesus Christ. Jesus always lived under God's rule. Yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought forgiveness.

Which is great. It is a lot more than I deserve. But, it is still kind of sad. Sure, we don't end up here [points to #3], but we don't get back here either [points to #1]. Even if we could get back here [#1], we still need more resources. I mean, on the inside, I'm still the same. I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but I honestly don't see how people – or me for that matter – can avoid slipping into rebellion again.

Christian: I see the problem. [takes pen]. Let's take the picture a step further.

Jesus died as a substitute for rebels like us. [draw picture #5]. But that's not all that happened. God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. Jesus has conquered death, now gives new life, and will return to judge.

You see, Jesus isn't just some guy who lived a couple thousand years ago. He is risen. He is alive. He is now what humanity was always meant to be: God's ruler of the world. With Jesus as ruler, good will ultimately win. Evil, death, suffering, sin – Jesus defeated them.

Seeker: That's why Christians talk about life after death. Life with God.

Christian: Exactly.

Seeker: So it will all get set right eventually. After death. Life is kind of hard in the meantime.

Christian: I don't think you understand what Jesus' rule means. Maybe human rulers are a bad analogy here: human rulers can organize, inspire, and intimidate, but they have no real power to change things in a fundamental way. Jesus' rising from the dead demonstrated superhuman power.

The Bible puts it this way: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

There is so much hope for us! Jesus' rule can re-create life in us! God's life comes inside of us to turn us from rebels into friends of God.

Seeker: You sure have this knack for getting focus. I mean, here I am thinking about what's-his-face and you are talking about spiritual stuff.

Christian: But everything is spiritual stuff! Jesus can rule every part of our lives. He can re-create the little stuff and the big stuff.

Seeker: I don't get it. I'm sitting here with a brain that needs re-booting, a grade ulcer, and a broken relationship. Can God's power fix that?

Christian: I don't doubt God can fix the circumstances, but in my life he usually goes for the root causes.

Seeker: Which are?

Christian: I don't need grades, I need God's power to overcome my fear of failure. I don't need a guy, I need peace and security in the identity God has given me. I don't need stuff, I need to know, really know, that God loves me and will take care of me. That's why I trust in Jesus' resurrection. Because when I trust him to be ruler, he has the power to give me what I really need.

Seeker: You really do, don't you? Trust in Jesus.

Christian: By God's power, yes. Not all the time, though. Sometimes I play the rebel. God gave me you, though.

Seeker: What do you mean? I'm not even a Christian.

Christian: You are still a gift of God. Talking to you strengthens my faith. I don't think I can explain it.

Seeker: That's OK. You save some brain power to work on Utopia.

Christian: Are *you* OK? Should I heap some insults on what's-his-face for you?

Seeker: Nope, not necessary. I feel better than I have all night. If I can be God's gift to someone, I guess I can deal with a couple of buggy programs.

Christian: Happy lucubration.

Seeker: Happy lucubration.

THE END (for now...)

A couple of notes from the absentee director:

(1) Take your time in the very beginning. The humor will work better with some pauses and silence.
(2) once again, I have given you a difficult ending (though I know you are up to it). The difficulty is that it is a rather tender moment in the lives of these two roommates, where love is exchanged. While most of the sketch can be read discreetly from your script, you may want to take a little extra time to familiarize yourself with the last 13 lines or so, in order to be less dependant upon the script.

2WTL #6 Faith

[Transparency of 2WTL on. Seeker enters “dorm room.”]

Seeker: Howdy, roommate.

Christian: Howdy, roommate. What’s the situation out there?

Seeker: You heard it from here?

Christian: Impossible to ignore.

Seeker: A couple girls are doing primal screams in the shower. I think they are trying to relieve tension.

Christian: If it weren’t for finals, dorm life would make a good sit-com.

Seeker: If it weren’t for finals, our neighbor would not be “O.D.ing” on Nintendo, and her friend down the hall would not have locked herself in her room with two grocery bags full of chocolate products. Without finals, there would be no good material for a sit-com.

Christian: You’re right. It’s kind of like M.A.S.H. here. Comedy in the midst of tragic hardship.

Seeker: I can see it’s affecting you, now, too.

Christian: The irony is, that we chose to put ourselves through this.

Seeker: My parents would mumble something about “delayed gratification” at this point in the conversation.

Christian: It’s because they knew we were naive and didn’t know what we were getting ourselves into.

Seeker: Speaking of naive, I need your help. I’ve got to think something through.

Christian: Sure.

Seeker: You think I should become a Christian, right?

Christian: Of course.

Seeker: OK. I knew that. Even without your wall decorations and all your Christian friends praying for me. I knew that.

Christian: Have I been coming on too strong?

Seeker: No. Well, maybe a little. No, not really. It’s is a little hard to get used to someone who actually believes something strongly enough to try to convince someone else. You know?

Christian: But it wouldn’t make any difference if God wasn’t looking for you.

Seeker: Maybe I'm looking for Him, too. That's where I need your help. I'm not sure what I'm getting myself into, and I'm not sure how to get myself into it.

Christian: You mean, how to become a Christian?

Seeker: Yes. Like, say I believe all this stuff that we've been talking about. Obviously, some people are Christians and some aren't. How does faith work? How do I cross the line?

Christian: Well, I think it boils down to two choices about how to live: our way, or God's new way [refer to #6]. Look at the story. The answer is implicit in everything we've talked about.

Look at humanity's choice – our way of living:

[#1] God is the loving ruler and creator.

[#2] But, we reject God's rule. We try to run life our own way.

[#3] The result is that God gives us what we ask for and deserve. We are condemned by God. We face death and judgement.

God's new way is the opposite. Rather than rejecting God's rule, we submit to Jesus as our ruler. That's why there is a J in the crown here [#6]. Rather than trying to rely on ourselves, we rely on

[#4] Jesus' death, and

[#5] Jesus' resurrection.

The results are the opposite, too.

[#4] Rather than condemnation, we receive God's mercy and forgiveness because of what Jesus did.

[#5] Rather than facing death, we are given eternal life.

Seeker: So, which crown we are under makes all the difference. Christians are people who submit their lives to the rule of Jesus.

Christian: Yes, and by God's power, through their submission, they are re-created.

Seeker: God does that.

Christian: God does everything. Without God's loving initiative nothing would be possible.

Seeker: So, tell me again. How do I actually cross the line?

Christian: Pray. Tell God you agree with His point of view. Ask Him to make you His subject, His child, part of His family.

[#2] Admit that you are guilty of rebellion. That you don't deserve his mercy.

[#4] On the basis of Jesus dying for you, ask for His forgiveness.

[#5] Ask Him to give you new life. Spiritual life. Eternal life.

[#6] Give yourself to Jesus.

Seeker: OK. I get it. Now talk me out of it.

Christian: What?

Seeker: Talk me out of it. I need to know what I'm getting into. Try to talk me out of it. Why shouldn't I become a Christian?

Christian: That's a hard one. I don't usually do that angle. Let me see.... Here's a good reason not to become a Christian: Jesus says it is like dying.

Seeker: Dying?

Christian: Yes. Jesus says we have to die with him. Giving up our rebellion is like dying.

Seeker: How?

Christian: We have to give up our self-sufficiency. We have to give up our control of who sets the rules. We have to give up anything that is more important to us than God. We have to give up our pride.

Seeker: Our pride?

Christian: Yeah. Who wants to admit that they were so bad morally that Jesus had to die for them? Who wants to admit that they can't save themselves?

Seeker: I see. Giving God that kind of trust is really frightening.

Christian: It is kind of like getting married, like saying that you will commit your highest love to God for life.

Seeker: Except that there is much more at stake. Wow. I see that line. Is God's love worth dying for?

Christian: Absolutely. What else has value in comparison? There are just two ways to live. But, it's not an easy choice.

Seeker: [turns to audience]. It is not an easy choice, but it really is a choice that we all face.

[OK, that's it. If you can think of funnier examples of dorm life for the beginning, certainly go for it! Also, you probably saw this, but when I put the numbers (like #4) in brackets, that means point to that part of the picture as you are talking. That is probably the most difficult thing to do smoothly in this sketch. I will bring a complete transparency of the 2WTL thing.]

author's post-production reflection: this is too wordy – take out some of the review.