

Director's Statement/Commentary.

Alfred Eaker
on
"Jesus and her Gospel of Yes"

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<http://gospelofyes.collectivekitz.com/>

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A Hollywood 'insider' once wrote that any film that can't be summed within a paragraph isn't worth looking at.

I digress, and feel that the problem with the majority of films is that they can indeed, all too well, be summed up within a couple of sentences or less.

My own taste in art tends towards aesthetically challenging work.

I cannot absorb a Kandinsky in a single viewing or Artaud in a singular reading.

Boulez's interpretations of Mahler and the moderns demand repeated listening and consistent re-evaluation.

Like wise, one cannot approach the films of Anger, Brakhage, Deren, Ken Russell, or Jodorowski with the mindset of a casual experience. One must look and hear.

My main goal in this, my first film, was to make a surreal collage of both spiritual irreverence and provocative aesthetics.

This film also endeavors to offer a 'seemingly' callous commentary on the parody that this religion has become while seeking a goal of optimism (within the religion) by progressively putting on new eyes and new ears regarding the Gospel itself.

I approached this film very much in the way I approach painting, as an organic composition. We went through numerous edits, tweaking and re-working the film, which changed much through those edits, eventually becoming the film we now have.

Director's Commentary.

The film opens with BlueMahler gliding slowly across a watery screen. Behind him is a clock, which reads a few seconds before twelve. Rolling yellow text at the bottom of the screen reiterates the mystery of the foreboding clock; 'Ten seconds `til ShowTime!'. We will not see this follow up image until more than halfway through the film, right after the closing argument prosecuting attorney Moses gives in Jesus' trial. We then will see the repeated image of BlueMahler, the water, the clock, and the rolling text, which then

will read; 'It's ShowTime!'. The clock is of a spiritual design and therefore does not obey our concepts of time.

Christian apologists often explain away the illogic of Genesis' statement that the Earth was created in seven days by supposedly reminding us that God's concept of time is different than our own. Hence, a day to God, may be a millennium to us. BlueMahler's clock is a clock of spiritual, rather than earthly perception. So, when we next see the clock, ten spiritual seconds have passed rather than an earthly hour.

BlueMahler then begins narrating text from the Gospel of St. John. As we hear his narration we see the image of the face of Christ, crowned in her crown of thorns. The screen is yellow and yellow equals passivity, a Buddhist color. The image fades and we next see Christ hugging God the Father. This opening foretells a great spiritual quest on Jesus' part. throughout the film, Jesus longs to be one with a distant heavenly father.

This is very much in spirit with Mahlerian aesthetics. Unlike, the spiritually self assured Bruckner, Mahler was plagued with doubts and uncertainty, making him the quintessential Freudian, modern composer.

In essence, Mahler, for me, is the dawn of modern man.

Thus, the opening of the film is structurally inspired by the epic, paradoxical hodgepodge of pathos, bathos, banality and nobility found in the typical Mahler symphony.

Next, we see BlueMahler before a group of children. He feeds two balloon carrying boys strawberry wafers while narrating from Gnostic creation myths.

We see two girls sitting in chairs. BlueMahler and the boys circle the two girls, feeding them the wafers. The feeding gesture is much like the feeding of seals.

The significance of the color scheme and the sex of the children is related.

BlueMahler is, of course, blue. The strawberry wafers are pink.

Blue and Pink are the established symbolic colors for boys and girls, boys being blue and girls being pink, much like the Ying Yang symbol. Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus is another expressive pop variation, of course.

The narration is as wacky and as colorful as any found in Gnostic literature and the actions of BlueMahler in this vignette are as self indulgent and as exaggerated as we expect the music of Mahler to be

in a world that just seems absurd.

The iris opens on God. He speaks seemingly nonsensical dialogue. This is very indicative of the character of God throughout the film.

God is essentially an omnipotent artist. He created a world which confounds and frightens him. Shyly, he hides behind a colorful totem pole.

We see God's popcorn machine flying up into the sky. First the heads of Adam and Eve pop up, followed by numerous other heads. God is cooking here. However, scripture tells us God's creation of man went very askew.

A sinister giant head (complete with dark sunglasses) appears in the sky. The giant head opens its mouth and the Adam and Eve heads fly into the awaiting mouth, which devours them. This symbolizes the fall of man and sin entering the world and so we return to BlueMahler and the children, foretelling the new Adam (or in our case, the new Eve).

We return to a second vignette with BlueMahler and the children. This scene again opens with Gnostic creation myth narration. The two boys continue eating their wafers and bouncing their balloons. However, the two girls are now drawing figure 8s. The significance of the number 8 symbolically foretells the coming of Christ. In Greek numerology, very popular during the time of Christ, numbers had literal significance. Names often had a numerical equivalent. The name Al would be 13. A being 1, L being 12. The name of Christ (aka Joshua Bar Joseph) was 888 and so the children are foretelling the coming of 888.

BlueMahler is now gesturing towards the girls, who continue drawing their figure 8s. He inspires them, like an orchestral conductor, to quicken the pace of the coming of 8. Their drawing becomes more frenzied and excited. The narration now resumes back to the Gospel of St. John and foretells the imminent coming of a messiah, who will free all from sin.

We are then introduced to John The Baptist. We see John dancing in a trailer park. Behind him are statues and pictures of black panthers.

As John dances, he holds a native American spear. I've always seen The Baptist as bit trailer trash like and the fact that many Southern Baptists claim their doctrines derive from John only compounds my thoughts there (Southern Baptists being The Quintessential trailer park Christian denomination).

The Indian artifacts are like the black panther images in that these are motifs that a lot of white trash like to identify with. 'Grandma says we're related to Crazy Horse' etc. Too, a lot of males like to identify with a powerful animal. That's

their motif. Usually, it's a big cat or a bald eagle and since we have the Paraclete as a cat, I thought the image of a panther would suit John well. He certainly wouldn't identify with Jesus' little pussy, hence the panthers.

Behind John we appropriately first see a Pollock inspired painting (old Jackson pretty much sums up the romantic ideal of a macho abstract expressionist).

The Gospels tell us that the Baptist lived off a diet of bugs and so we see John chowing on gummy worms. Being alone in the trailer park all those years had to have made John a little stir crazy so he gets a wee bit excited and smears the worms all over his face.

John baptizes Jesus.

We see Christ in the sacred tub being baptized by a serene looking John. John baptizes Jesus by washing her hair, which, of course, is a tender ('Out of Africa' type) gesture.

John probably has a bit of a romantic thing for Jesus, since he's been cooped up in the trailer park for so long, and the image of this beautiful messiah in the sacred tub inspires John to grab the shampoo.

The accompanying narration from the gospels leads us to the Paraclete descending like a dove. Our kitty holy ghost parachutes down from heaven.

By the way, the image of the spirit being a cat, comes from Buddhist thinking and the Diamond Sutra. We now hear God rambling (he has to have his say, you know) and briefly see a watery close up of him interrupting the hair washing.

The repeated images of water are of course related to baptism, re-birth and all that. The scene closes with eccentric birds slowly flying around our two heroes and up to heaven.

Jesus must now go into the desert to face THE DEVIL!

We hear the narration (and see accompanying text) which introduces us to the first temptation; 'If you're truly divine, then turn the rocks into bread and feed the starving children of the world'.

This was inspired by a homily given by Fr. Hilary Ottensmeyer. He compared this temptation to an event from Nazi Germany.

A Bishop was preaching against the Nazi youth. Hitler warned him if he continued then he would kill all the Bishop's Catholics and so asked the Bishop to sign a concordant. the Bishop did so. Of course, Hitler killed his Catholics anyway. Now, compare this to Christ being offered to turn the rocks into bread to alleviate his hunger.

Now, let's put more at stake and let's have the devil tempting Jesus

to turn the rocks into bread to feed all the starving children of the world. But, of course Christ would not have done so, because Christ knew when you go dine with the devil, you need a long spoon'. (We quote this verbatim a little later).

We now see Christ walking toward Satan's cave. She confronts the Devil in his suit of poetry. THE SAME, THE SHAME he says, indicating the cycle of child abuse.

Cheryl Townsend's narrated poem 'Blessed are the pro choice children' then flows over the scene as psychedelic images torment Jesus.

Upon first reading the poem I knew exactly what to do with it. This powerful poem compounds the whole suffering of both Christ and the children. Christ is tormented because she had to make the choice she had to make.

This choice (refusing to transform the rocks into bread) will inevitably cause the children further suffering. Christ spoke repeatedly of the suffering of children. So with Cheryl's poem we go beyond the suffering of hunger into the suffering of abuse.

Despite knowing all of this, Jesus cannot make the deal. It's a bit like the mother being asked by the Nazis officers which of her two children will she choose to die. Of course, she knows both will die, regardless. And so, when Jesus walks away from the scene, she feels very small indeed.

The second temptation begins with the narration and accompanying text; 'If you're truly divine, then you should be so perfect, so elevated, so illuminatingly beautiful, that no one can touch you. You should be a Pharisee!'.

We then see Jesus, dressed in a Roman Catholic collar and shirt. Behind her is the Devil and he torments her by repeating 'The Shirt, the sheet'.

This was also inspired by a homily by Fr. Hilary; ' A Satanic theology transforms Christ into a Pharisee. The Pharisees were so elevated that no one could touch them. Of course Christ was the anti-thesis of the Pharisees. Ironically, enough much theology has indeed transformed Christ into what he was against'.

I explained the meaning of the scene to both Cheryl and John and asked John to come up with abstract text that would give a clue to all of this. Of course, Satan wanted to tempt Christ with life. Christ's mission was to die, and so Satan utters 'The Shirt, the Sheet', the shirt being the garments of her priestly robe which will lead her to the shroud (the sheet). To the Devil, the whole concept is absurd and he treats it as such, sticking out his tongue as he mocks her. Christ does not flinch.

The third temptation centers on Satan showing Christ a city and offering it to her in exchange for her worship. Of course, no city is

worth that much and to demonstrate the black joke of it, we show Satan escorting Jesus down a dilapidated railroad track.

Again, I explained the meaning of this to John, told him basically what I wanted, and he improvised his whole dialogue here. He presents the 'dead ducks down there and the spoilage seeping into your beautiful brain' and it is at the end of this scene that we hear Fr. Hilary's tongue in cheek comment, 'Of course Jesus knew when you go to dine with the Devil, you need a long spoon!'.

Mike Hovancsek's atonal music intensifies the next close up we see of Jesus. She weeps as blood runs down her face. We see a flash of young Christ, wearing a crown of thorns. Then, we see Cheryl's suffering Christ again. This leads to a 'bonus temptation' which actually occurred many years before.

'So, you really think you are a goddess? Then, let me show you this. You were born of no Virgin!'.

Young Jesus stands before Satan in the cave. Jesus repeats nonsensical dialogue after Satan 'LAND, FOAM SHIRTS, AND LIPS'. Like Vanna White presenting a game show prize, he shows her an image. The image is of her mother brushing the face of a sailor.

We hear Cheryl's poem ' I Am a Cockaholic'. The nonsense dialogue sets up the confusion of the scene. People, in general want simplistic answers. Satan, avant-garde poet that he is, will have none of it, of course.

By the way, that's a further joke regarding the casting. I once was asked by a woman what kind of paintings I did. When I told her my work was fairly abstract, she asked me with utmost sincerity if I was a devil worshipper. So, the idea of an avant-garde poet as the devil appealed to me to no end.

Anyway, we now see the full image of Mary and the sailor, 'Your mother Mary and TRUE Father, Panthera; a Roman Sailor. Your mother really liked the sailors you know'.

The rumor of Christ being the illegitimate son of Mary and a Roman Soldier by the name of Panthera sprang up around the second century. I believe it was a Gnostic 'heretic' who was given credit for starting the rumor. The story made it's way into a couple of 'apocryphal ' Gnostic books.

A narrated erotic Townsend poem fills the scene as we see Mary caressing the sleeping Panthera. Mary hears an intensifying wind, and then a crash! She looks up and sees Joseph and his brothers observing her.

Now, we show Joseph and his brothers as Mormons, complete with white shirt, black slacks, ties, and a bicycle. The scene switches back to The Devil and Jesus. An animated wind is blowing and Mormons on bikes are riding through the wind. The Devil says 'Look, THE HAND, THE HAND!' and we see a MORMON NEWS newsletter flying from the bike of one of the Mormons. Jesus storms off.

I like the image of Joseph and his brothers as Mormons because the sect is so comical to me.

The clichéd image of Mormons trekking through the neighborhoods with their proselytizing pamphlets fit well with the scene I think and yes, the bikes riding through the over-bearing wind like the never stopping pony express is an intended joke.

The two young lovers being caught by Joseph and his brethren has, of course, origin in the whole Romeo and Juliet/ Pelleas und Melisande legends.

'Here is Charlton Heston, also known as Moses'. We are introduced to Moses now. He sits looking quite constipated. Next to him are two ceramic country geese. This is a play off the image of Hollywood's ultra conservative, fundamentalist view of Moses.

Next we see Moses spewing into the ear of Joseph, seducing him. What follows is indeed a mental seduction of Joseph by the ultra right Moses. Moses is the law of NO.

The words he flings into Joseph's ears are some of the more horrifying texts from the old testament. Joseph sweats, his anger builds upon each word Moses spews in his ear.

I told Kelly Parker to think of Lon Chaney as she played this scene.

The quip 'Don't step on it, it might be Lon Chaney' came to mind and my direction to Kelly was ' I want you to play it like you're a fucking spider and you have Joseph in your web'.

Later, another image of a spider, Moses and a web will be seen.

At the end of this seduction Moses switches to a perverted new testament text,

'And the most important thing; Let your women be silent in church!'.
'

Joseph has been stroking a sword he has been holding for a bit now and upon Moses' final words and departure, Joseph crashes the sword down to the ground and we see a flashed image of a bloodied, dead Panthera on the ground.

The reason I included the new testament text is that it came from St. Paul. I believe Paul perverted the message of Christ. He seems to

have married Christ to the (often) old testament image of a god of wrath and vengeance.

Several people have seen my portrayal of Moses as being a slam on the old testament, despite repeated comments in the film regarding Christ being inspired by David. For me, the inspiring figure of the old testament is indeed the very human, very flawed David, not the stern, unforgiving Moses.

Paul is as stern a figure as Moses, and indeed I think Paul is to the New Testament what Moses was to the old.

Too, I think it more likely that the book of Revelations stemmed from Paul's church, rather than the church of John. The message and style is far more Pauline than Johanian and we go back into that later in the film. So, I think the text from Paul to be apt here.

Again, playing up on the whole idea of Mormons as Christian geeks, I asked the actors playing the Mormons if any of them knew how to dance. When they confirmed they couldn't, I told them that was perfect as I wanted this to be the dumbest dance imaginable (I was thinking of the absurd, surreal dance in the heaven sequence from Chaplin's 'The Kid').

They are dancing in celebration of their murdering Panthera. We see Joseph holding a pack of peanuts which reads 'NUTS FOR JESUS'. I actually bought this in a bible book store , it was too good to pass up since it reiterated the absurd tone. Joseph holds the nuts up. We see a repeated, flashed image of the dead Panthera. He rips the bag, flings the peanuts into the air, and the dance begins. They slam into each other and dance badly. The image then fades into Mary mourning her slain lover. Again, very Pelleas und Melisande like here.

Mary now stands before her Mormon judges. Mary is prepared to die. One Mormon holds a sword. She grabs the sword and pulls it towards her. 'Love give me strength' (Juliet's words). But, she then feels the child within her kick; Panthera's child. She knows she cannot die now and so must come up with a story to quickly save her life. Since they're Mormons, the more absurd the story, the more they will buy it.

Mary's got the advantage in that she has seen more movies and viewmaster reels than they have and so she tells of the visit from the angel Gabriel, ' Hail Mary, full of grace, you shall bear a child named the Christ the king, King of Kong. I know you're afraid but you can't look away. There's no chance for you to escape. You're helpless Mary, Helpless'. Gabriel/Angel Panthera then points to a bouncing boy in a monkey mask who says 'Anna Saba Kong'. Most of this is purely a satire on King Kong. The dialogue of ' I know you're afraid' is

directly from the words Robert Armstrong tells Fay Wray on the ship headed for skull island. 'Anna Saba Kong' is a chant from a skull island native. Mary, Gabriel and kong boy are framed within a viewmaster. The viewmaster clicks and the image changes. Panthera/Gabriel is in a chair 'Oh, the girl there is the bride of Kong', again, dialogue from King Kong. The view master clicks again. Mary asks 'How can this be? I am a virgin!'. Panthera can only answer ' Oh Kau Besa Pour Kong'. She doesn't understand and Panthera explains that he hasn't mixed up the viewmaster reels, 'You are the blessed O. You are...'.

We see Mary sitting in a chair. A headless God stands beside her. He rambles as he impregnates her. She begins chanting 'Honey Nut Cherry Rolls' because she likes her nuts dipped in honey for a roll in the hay. 'Yes, I am Honey Nut Cherry Roll, the Queen Goddess' she tells the Mormons.

Mary's already fancying herself a Catholic goddess with delusions of grandeur, the murder of her child's father making her a bit loony. She has told her story, hoping the Mormons have bought it. They look at each other and then; 'Cool, we have a whole new gospel'. They give her the thumbs up sign. She rolls her eyes, unable to believe they actually bought it, and walks off.

She puts her head on Panthera angel's shoulder. He shrugs ' Uh, I'm dead. I gotta go'. She nods and comforts herself by eating some cereal.

'Oh, holy night'. We see Mary and the Christ child in the manger. The Christ child has blood on her face and body, symbolic for the purpose of a messianic death. BlueMahler then reappears and with his cardboard ukulele strums and mouths ' Oh Holy Night', quite Tiny Tim like.

Young Jesus visits the place of her birth, the Christmas Cave and finds both Joseph and Mary there.

We see the childhood playmate of Jesus 'attempting' to color the cave wall with a red crayon, red being a cheerful Christmas color. But, the cave is a monochromatic bluish gray and dark cartoonish figures lurk in the background. Joseph looks none too happy about the birth of the Christ child, knowing it to be the daughter of the dead Panthera.

Young Jesus sees herself as an infant and the image of the holy family on Christmas night.

She narrates (quite ghost like, similar to Ebenezer Scrooge being unable to talk directly to the phantom images of the past), ' Joseph, Moses is not the starfleet admiral and you're not my dad. You're just old fat Captain Kirk and Mom is Sophia, the wisdom whore, the Queen of heaven, the great Lt. Uhura. She deserves a ship and not just in a

badly drawn cartoon and don't you ever kiss her again, you ass!'. The references here are of course to Gnostic images of Sophia and Star Trek. Jesus equates her mother to the Gnostic Sophia and to Lt. Uhura, who only got to co-captain the Enterprise in a Star Trek cartoon. When reading the Gnostic creation myths and apocalypses, one always feels like you're reading a long lost Star Trek book. Wacky space hippies trying to find Eden or something like that, so I felt combining references to Trek and Gnostic literature a natural.

Mary is back before the Mormons (again in a viewmaster). She is behind a pulpit, preaching the sermon of the birth of a heavenly savior. Her sermon mixes the Gospel of Luke and King Kong. The Mormons love it and all jump up at the end, exclaiming 'Honey Nuts, Milk and Fruit, There will be peace on earth!'.

We visit the Christmas cave once again. Joseph is with Mary. His arms are crossed and he looks like he desperately need to take a sacred shit.

Young Jesus arrives, waves her arms and transforms the dark cartoon characters into technicolored, transgendered jack asses who worship her mother.

From that day on Old St. Joseph hated all the poor little jack asses of the world. Much of the narration here is satirizing the old Rankin Bass Rudolph film. 'Jesus gathered all of her little Jack Ass friends'. Also, an element taken from a Gnostic gospel. In that gospel, we see Jesus calling upon mules to worship her mother.

Then, we see the image of Republican Elephants with the heads of Old St. Joseph, Pat Buchanon, George Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon on a safari hunting the democratic Jack Asses of Bill & Hillary Clinton, George Bush, and Al Gore.

Next we see Jesus signing up for God School. The satire here of Superman is pretty obvious. Superman, of course has a lot of parallels to Jesus. Superman enters the fortress of solitude as a teen and is not seen again for another fifteen years, returning as a savior.

Here we see the transferal of power from God to Jesus in exercise bit, Go decreases as little Jesus becomes the amazing colossal girl.

Christ in the lettuce is another symbolic play off Christ as the Eucharist. Christ is our lettuce, which is befitting since Jesus is a veggie. Of course God does all of his clever plays of words here. Poetry of lettuce and letters. Like the devil, God is an abstract poet who simply refuses to give us fundamentalist simplicity and instead only compounds the spiritual complexity.

And of course, there is a further play off religious 'home schooling'

here.

Now, Jesus takes a break from God's home school to reflect on the word and enters the temple. Since the Pharisees were very stern Mosaic priests, I simply have Moses as one of the two elders observing as Jesus tears pages from the old testament. Jesus is inspired by the psalms of David, and she finds Moses enforcing the letter of the law to be a cruel and resounding 'NO'. But, since Jesus came to fulfill the spirit of the law, she drops a rose petal into the wounded, open pages in order to 'heal' it. The second elder, played by a naked, shaved performance artist, represents the poetic line of old testament, humanist figures, such as Abraham, David, Esther, and Job. She admires Jesus' efforts as Moses damn near has a heart attack. The music here, from the Pointless Orchestra, is called 'The Last Supper' and it has an appropriate, cynical contemporary text which I feel perfectly compliments the scene.

The pink, blue and yellow figures of Jesus are again representing the male, female, and passive spirits. Moses can stand no more and hastily departs.

Moses sees the stern law, that he has so zealously built, in danger of being destroyed. Yet, he cannot deny the presence and charisma of Jesus. He is haunted by images of accursed women. He almost goes mad. He withdraws into his closet and emerges as... Moses, Queen of the new gospel!

It almost appears as if he has taken the 'if you can't beat them, join them' approach, but this is a clever ploy on his part to pervert the new gospel. More on that later.

God and Moses argue. God's point being that 'you got it all wrong, Moses!'. They argue in a spiritual movie theatre with images of Moses' life being shown on the screen.

The images from Moses' past allows us a little sympathy for Moses. He didn't want to be chosen and God at times even jokingly torments his sense of insecurity.

The killing of Aaron by Moses refers to Schoenberg's take on the subject (from his opera Moses und Aron).

Moses sternness was his own undoing and in the end we see Moses as only being able to express his original, well meaning inner vision by forceful, judgmental means.

Jesus dealing of Joseph is inspired by yet another Gnostic gospel. In it, Joseph finds Jesus making clay birds and yells at Jesus to 'get to work'. Angrily, Jesus claps his hands, making the birds come to life and fly off.

In several of the infant gospels, Jesus is a holy terror. Since we never hear of Joseph again, many theologians have concluded that Joseph must have died while Jesus was a teen. Playing off all that, we have Jesus and her playmate admiring a group of birds flying around a Kabala tree. When Joseph interrupts all of this, Jesus claps her hands. The birds fly off and Joseph drops dead. Now Jesus didn't really intend to kill Joseph, but she certainly isn't going to reverse the done deed.

It was pretty customary to have a funeral showing in the deceased party's home and so we see Joseph laid out in his study. On the wall above the dead man we see trophies of dead mules, indicating what Joseph has been doing in his spare time (obviously he kept hunting all the poor little jack asses of the world).

We also see crackers and barrels in the parlor, a little slam on a certain restaurant's known discrimination against gays.

God is helping Jesus practice the raising of the dead on Jesus' playmate.

Joseph's brothers appear from nowhere and ask 'What about Joseph?'. Jesus and God ignore their request to resurrect their dead sibling.

God has something else in mind. He will do Jesus one big favor, but first she must not lose sight of her mission.

Jesus and God go deep into the sea where the dead Panthera has rested for many years.

Upon being resurrected, Panthera prays to a Roman god for thanks. Mary lets him know that it was their daughter's god that raised him. Panthera feels obliged to convert and develops a fixation for his wife, just like Mahler developed a virgin Mary obsession upon converting (and was treated by Freud for it). So, Mary becomes his Pinkfreud and he is her BlueMahler. Here we finally connect Panthera to BlueMahler. It is he that has been spinning this whole yarn. And it is here that we show that the yarn is indeed inspired by the structure of a typical Mahler symphony. A Modern, complex, confusing brew of pathos, bathos, banality and nobility.

Now it's time to say good by and all our company... and to rejoin the world.

Jesus is now an adult and has finally left the confines of god school. Her re-emergence was at the baptism, followed by the temptations.

Scripture says angels came and ministered to Jesus after having been put through the ringer by Old Nick, so here she gets the royal

treatment, right before her first miracle, at Cana.

Mary gently pushes her daughter into the turning of water into wine and one can see the guests certainly enjoyed it.

From here we get a sort of orthodox telling of Jesus mission. First, she comes upon 2 possessed in a graveyard.

The two are so grateful that they immediately join the Jehovah's Witnesses and start spreading the news with watchtower pamphlets.

As usual, Moses is never far off and we mix two stories here. We take the burning bush of Moses and mix it with the story of Jesus and the fig tree. Jesus comes upon the floating head/bush of Moses. He's ranting as usual and not really doing any thing that's productive or progressive. So, she rips off a branch and asks him to be quiet.

This leads us into the retelling of the good Samaritan. This is inspired by Bunyan's image (from Pilgrim's Progress) of Moses bashing a sinner and Jesus arriving to assist and forgive that sinner. By the way, the abuse wall behind the actors is from Kent and was torn down just a few months after filming.

The first of several tic tac toe matches between Jesus and Moses. X being No, O being Yes, of course.

News Flash:

Herrod gives up the head of John for a lurid dance.

We took some liberties with Salome's dance. Ever since Maria Ewing's pulse pounding turn as the Strauss/Wilde heroine we have been seeing increasingly hyper erotic performances of the seven veiled dance, so I didn't want to go there.

Besides, I've always seen Herrod as kind of backwoods Pentecostal type trash anyway, so Salome here gets the holy ghost and the spirit driven bouncing of those knobby knees gets the better of the poor guy, and so, like Alice's Queen in Wonderland, Herrod screams out 'Off with his head!'

We see a second vignette of abuse, which leads us into a vignette, which unfolds a bit like a tone poem.

According to legend (and a couple of Gnostic gospels) the two who hung at the side of Jesus' cross were thieves who attempted to rob Mary and Joseph on the way to Egypt many years before. Here, we play off that and have confederate flagged face Mormons attempting to beat up a Jewish girl. Jesus stops and blinds them. Since this is all symbolic anyway, I have the actor who played Joseph

as one of those abusive Mormons.

The scene is juxtaposed against a backdrop of a small group of progressive thinkers. Their leader is a Muslim who quotes passive passages from the Koran, along with something my psychologist once told me. They burn a confederate flag as they chant 'hate the hatred'.

We see a brief, old image of Panthera burning a confederate flag with his daughter from years before, indicating that this new group has been inspired by the actions and message of Christ.

Note that all the participants here, both antagonists and protagonists, will wind up as crucifixion victims later.

We are now introduced to Magdalene. She is a painter and her work depicts angst ridden women. Like Bunyan's hero, she carries her 'burden' into a dark abyss (her burden being represented by her art).

Jesus kisses Mary and Mary's sins are washing away as she now paints kitty cats (being inspired by the spirit).

By the way, that kiss was inspired by 'Love American Style'.

Fr. Justin Belitz gives us an erotic sermon. Fr. Justin is, admittedly, a bit of a guru to me and possibly the most profound influence I've had in my life. He is certainly not a typical priest and in short, his is an avant-theology. Many of his homilies focus on sensuous spirituality and meditation. Fr. Justin also never refrains from displaying a sense of humor and here we have all that in abundance.

This ends this somewhat abstract vignette, which began with an act of violence towards women, moved into a portrait of a troubled woman, befriended by Christ and ends with a sensual sermon.

St. Thomas here quotes briefly from the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, leading us into two vignettes concerning Jesus and children. Jesus once said that to enter the kingdom one must have the innocent enthusiasm of a child and here she pushes away a dish of communion wafers to eat peanut butter sandwiches with the kids. The watery imagery is again symbolic of baptism, and spiritually, baptism is far more peanut butter than communion wafers, (or it should be).

The second vignette was written by Cheryl. This scene very much contains the pathos that one finds (with abundant consistency) throughout her work. Cheryl wanted to show that deep down Jesus would have preferred a normal life with children. But, this is not to be and Jesus is haunted by nightmares of her

impending martyrdom. Mary tries, to no avail, to comfort her daughter.

The Corndog of Life.

Instead of fish, we have the Devil's corndogs. Jesus comes out, dressed as a yellow clown. This is a play off Gauguin's Yellow Christ. Yellow, being passive again. But she is dressed in a Kong blanket and the sacred heart is painted on her hands. She is a comical superhero here, a pathetic clown, and inevitably, a tragic martyr.

At first the crowd loves the corndogs. but, it's all a very circus like atmosphere. Moses narrates the beginning, introducing the new prophet. But, he does so with no enthusiasm and quotes from DeMille's 'Greatest Show on Earth'. Of course, Charlton Heston starred in that film and Heston played Moses, so....

When Christ spoke of her symbolically being meat and wine for all, the sacrificial lamb, the Gospel of John informs us that many in the crowd freaked out and fled. Here, one very vulnerable, sensitive woman shields her son's ears, so as not to hear this blasphemy. The Devil shows up to confuse and inspire the simplistic masses. They react and turn on their benefactor all too quickly. Jesus is hurt by the rejection and withdraws.

Now, Jesus and Thomas come upon the very two men she blinded earlier. They are begging. Much to Thomas' surprise, she stops to heal them. She explains that SHE is the light.

One of the two thieves is grateful and follows her. It is he who will walk with her in paradise on good Friday.

The second, ST. Joseph-like thief has learned nothing, shoves the money into his pocket, and walks off, unchanged.

Jesus and follower burn money. While there are many contradictions in both the old and new testament, one thing in particular is indeed consistent in all four gospels and that concerns Christ' attitude towards money. Christ held materialism and love of money in complete contempt.

Ironically enough, the USA, supposedly a nation built on the precepts of Christendom, is perhaps the most capitalistic of all nations and we touch on that repeatedly later in the film.

St. John gives us a story not touched upon by the other gospels and that is the washing of the apostles feet.

The whole scene disgusts Judas and he walks off to become possessed by the devil. We start this scene showing that Judas had a big drug problem. He finds the Devil in his syringe and this is how Judas deals with his confusion, which naturally, only compounds the issues he already has.

We juxtapose this scene of Judas' torment with a related shot of the

Devil tormenting his wife and son in Hell. EARTH, CORNDOG, PUKE!
Satan makes his spouse and offspring repeat after him.
He is a bit corndog obsessed now and this meaningless game is a black
joke on his family, tormenting them with vague, abstract poetry, when
all they want is suburban clarity and maybe even a nice meal together.
But, the Devil says "NO" and Judas repeats his "NO".
Judas is truly possessed now and has lost "Yes".

The Last Supper.

Jesus parables were so abstract and vague that we can consider them
to be indicative of the avant-garde poetry of the time. To emphasize
this even more, I had Cheryl read one of her most abstract works. The
lack of fundamental type clarity only drives Judas further way, into
the lair of...

Dubya (aka the village idiot, aka Ciaphas). Now, Dubya seems to have
all the answers. He who dies with the most toys, wins. It's all about
money, Judas.

Actually, we did this scene before the war began. We were shooting in
Kent when I read in the morning paper that Bush had gone dove
hunting. Now, there's really not enough meat on a dove to eat it
(unless you kill a ton of them) so he was killing the birds for
leisure. The fact that doves are symbolic of peace only seems more
prophetic now.

Jesus senses her hour is near and prays. But, God, coldly, turns his
back on her.

The symbolism of the chalice haunts then she sleeps in the garden of
olives, putting the inevitable off in her mind for a brief moment.

The kiss of betrayal seals the passion.

Since Mary gently pushed Jesus toward her fatal mission I have
PinkFreud symbolically doubling as Pilate with a Gaugin painting on
her face.

Pilate attempts to pass the call off onto Herrod. Herrod has already
grown bored with Salome. Apparently, those Pentecostal dances have
worn out their welcome. The subway sandwich doesn't exactly quench
his belly for entertainment either. He has heard much of Jesus and
wears a shirt bearing her name to welcome her.

But, she's not interested in performing magic, so Herrod sends her
back. All the action is now in the public eye and we have an outer
limits styled presentation of the Jesus' persecution unfolding before
us.

Christ or Barrabas?

News on the march! Jesus stands trial.

Moses is the prosecuting attorney and he has Jesus in his web.

The dialogue Moses is spewing is straight from a Promise Keeper's sermon.

The Gauguin faced Pilate amusingly keeps the proceedings going with satirical jabs at fundamentalist commerciality.

Numerous references to Gauguin abound. I see this painter in a certain relationship with Mahler.

Like Mahler, Gauguin was plagued with spiritual uncertainty and sought his paradise on Earth. Of course, he did not find that paradise or his answers, but

with Gauguin, the questions are more profound than the answers.

Again, like Mahler, Gauguin was aesthetically progressive, far more than his contemporary; Van Gogh.

The repeated iiiiiiiiii indicates 'I am'.

It's Showtime!

Jesus is a sideshow freak. The kitty kat Paraclete comes to comfort her as she awaits execution.

The soldiers played dice at the foot of the cross, which we briefly substitute with Jesus Bingo.

Jesus' fellow crucifixion victims are those from the confederate flag burning scene.

Jesus in her tomb quotes a bit from the diaries of Alexander Scriabin. I am god...

Jesus has a little sympathy for her brother, Lucifer. After all, he's God's red headed step child. But, Jesus cannot get her mind off Papa. Old Nick senses her distraction, as she glances at a picture of their daddy. Frustrated with her longing for a Father he has been disowned by, Satan smashes the picture. Jesus feels his pain and tries to comfort him.

The day of Pentecost came round.

Pentecost leads us into the apocalypse, which, is apt, as anyone who has experienced the Pentecostal religion, knows.

One fault I found in Duvall's " The Apostle" was the portrayal of the charismatic's intense love of God manifesting itself in glossolalian antics.

That occasionally happened in the Pentecostal church I attended in my youth, but, those charismatic outbursts were, more often than not, inspired by apocalyptic fears and conservative paranoia.

A perverted and cynical play off the Promise Keepers' promises.

'We're taking over the new testament now' again reiterates that Christnaity, has, in a sense, perverted Christ into a old testament Pharisee.

The bubble gum machine/broken cross sermon was literally lifted from a sermon I heard many years ago in the afore mentioned Pentecostal church.

Jesus finally reunites with God. Everyone (but Moses) is enjoying themselves in Heaven while God retires to his eccentric, reclusive throne and shyly observes the proceedings from afar, via television.

I feel, if there are any doubts regarding the positivism of the film, then those doubts are quashed with the Greg Brown song "Gotta have an angle".

This last image of Jesus with the apple is directly from the Gauguin painting, whose title we quote on the TV set. This was one of Gauguin's last paintings and it was indeed a painting he finished right before a failed suicide attempt.

We fill the credits with a few deleted scenes.

"Meals and Meals" was the most difficult to cut from the context of the film itself.

I originally had it right after the first temptation, reiterating the temptation of turning the rocks into bread. I felt Bennett's poem was perfect as a perverse commentary on that temptation.

However, we do have this theme repeated throughout and it works as a reminder now in the credits.