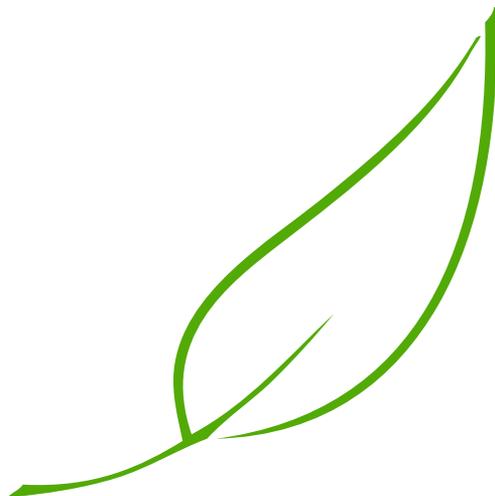


FAITH SLICED ON WRY

by Ken Bradbury



GREEN ROOM PRESS

greenroompress.com

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Green Room Press. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Green Room Press. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Green Room Press. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Green Room Press.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: *Produced by special arrangement with Green Room Press.*

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Green Room Press.

FAITH, SLICED ON WRY
by Ken Bradbury

FAITH, SLICED ON WRY
by Ken Bradbury

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4m, 8f): Jenna, Linda, Roy, Richard, Carol, Nick, Roberta,
Fran, Harold, Micah, Ann, Helen

ACT I

1. I Stand at the Door & Knock
2. The Seventh-Day Stretch
3. In the Beginning
4. I Stand at the Door & Knock
5. In the Beginning
6. A Bomb in Gilead
7. A Joyful Noise
8. In the Beginning:
9. The Seventh-Day Stretch
10. Now I Lay Me
11. A Joyful Noise
12. A Bomb in Gilead

ACT II

1. Table Guest
2. I Stand at the Door & Knock
3. In the Beginning
4. Now I Lay Me
5. A Bomb in Gilead
6. In the Beginning
7. Table Guest
8. A Bomb in Gilead
9. In the Beginning
10. A Bomb in Gilead
11. In the Beginning
12. Table Guest
13. Alpha & Omega

ACT I

(The set is a small room, yet multi-functional as it serves as the setting for various scenes throughout the play. Other accessories may be added or struck as desired, but the changes should be minimal and simple. There is a table at center with two chairs, an entrance and right and left. Upstage center is a window that may be turned during the blackouts, alternately portraying a sunny kitchen window, a stained glass window, and other backdrops as needed. One small table is located against the upstage wall.)

(The play is a series of blackouts, many related directly and others only by the Holy Spirit. Music of various sorts is played in brief snippets between scenes.)

Scene 1: Stand at the Door and Knock

(the scene: Jenna's kitchen)

JENNA: *(Enters, humming the music being played. She is wearing only a slip. She picks up a coffee cup, looks out the window, turns downstage and sees the minister standing in her kitchen.)* Oh, my God! *(she quickly exits left)* *(speaking from offstage)* Reverend Kinsey! I didn't know ... I mean. I didn't hear ... You knocked? Sorry. I had the music on and ... Oh God, this is so embarrassing. I'm really sorry. *(a silence ... she listens to him speaking)* No, I'm sorry, really. I should have. No, don't be embarrassed. It's just a slip. I just didn't know that ... you know ... you were out there. I uh ... I don't have any other clothes in here. It's the laundry room, but there's ... you know ... no laundry. No, you don't have to go. Was there something that ... I mean, did you want to talk about something? *(listens)* Oh. Just a social visit. Well, I'll bet you never had one like this before. I don't mean to be rude, but I really can't ... you know ... I mean, looking like this. I can't really come out and ... Sure. Have a seat. *(he does)* So ... *(it's awkward)* ... How's ... uh ... you know ... Uh, there's some coffee ... *(her hand is seen, pointing)* ... right there on the ...

DeCaf? No ... sorry, it's real. (*a long, awkward gap*) How's the wife? (Blackout)

Scene 2: The Seventh Day Stretch

(*Music under. It is Sunday morning in the kitchen of Don and Linda. We are in their kitchen. Roy enters in his undershirt, goes right for the coffee pot, and pours himself a cup.*)

LINDA: (*offstage*) Roy? (*Roy drinks.*) Roy? (*Roy exits right just long enough to grab the Sunday paper*) Roy can you hear me? (*he plops the paper down on the kitchen table and reads*) (*Linda enters and stares at him as he continues to read. She is nearly dressed for church.*) Why didn't you answer me?

ROY: Cubs lost.

LINDA: I know that. We watched the game.

ROY: In the paper. It's official now. (*to the paper*) You're losers.

LINDA: Better get ready. We've only got twenty minutes.

ROY: Losers.

LINDA: Roy, are you listening to me?

ROY: I can't believe it. Linda, this is the best team they're gonna have in my lifetime and they're still losers.

LINDA: About church.

ROY: Wouldn't help. Even God couldn't make a team outa these bums.

LINDA: I mean about us going to church this morning.

ROY: This is Sunday?

LINDA: Yeh. It followed Saturday again this week. Who'd a figured? Come on and get ready.

ROY: Not feelin' too good this morning.

LINDA: That's because it's morning. You never feel good in the morning. Now come on, get your shirt on.

ROY: How 'bout late church?

LINDA: You hate late church.

ROY: I do?

LINDA: You say the music's too slow.

ROY: It is. But it's later.

LINDA: The Cubs play at noon today.

ROY: Who cares? They're bums.

LINDA: Then we'll go to late church.

ROY: Can't. I'll miss the game.

LINDA: For God's sake, Roy. You're an elder. You're an elder in the church. We should go every Sunday.

ROY: Linda, I don't need to go to church every Sunday. Some of the worst people I know go to church every week.

LINDA: Good. That's where they should be.

ROY: White Sox fans.

LINDA: Put your shirt on, Roy. It's early church. You won't even need a tie.

ROY: I always wear a tie to church. You've gotta wear a tie to church.

LINDA: You don't care if you go to church, but you're worried about what you wear.

ROY: I'm not worried. (*reading something*) Yes I am. Zambrano's pitching today. That settles it. I'm going to church.

LINDA: (*beginning to exit to the bedroom*) Whatever it takes. Just get ready.

ROY: What if he blows it again today?

LINDA: He's a good preacher, Roy. Stop knocking him.

ROY: I mean Zambrano. He's dropped the last two games.

LINDA: We can't help that, Roy. But we can go to church. Are you getting ready?

ROY: What if it goes into extra innings?

LINDA: Good! That means the Cubbies finally tied somebody.

ROY: I mean church. Preacher gets wound up we'll miss the first pitch.

LINDA: (*entering with Roy's shirt*) Early church never goes over. The cinnamon rolls will get cold. Put this on before I bean you.

ROY: (*taking the shirt and putting it on with little enthusiasm*) Where's my tie?

LINDA: Live wild, Roy. Go without a tie.

ROY: I need a tie.

LINDA: Then I'll get your tie. (*she exits*)

ROY: Am I ushering today?

LINDA: You ushered last week.

ROY: (*a beat, then*) How'd I do?

LINDA: (*entering with a red necktie*) Not everything is a competition, Roy. You held the plate, you passed the plate, you came forward on the Gloria Patria. You were perfect, Roy. The Methodists even sent scouts to watch you usher. Put your tie on.

ROY: This is a red tie.

LINDA: I know. I just handed it to you.

ROY: Can't wear a red tie to church.

LINDA: (*a pause, then*) You've got be ...

ROY: (*exiting*) I'll go get another one.

LINDA: Why can't you wear a red tie to church?

ROY: Ask my Dad.

LINDA: He's dead.

ROY: Then we'll never know. (*entering putting on a blue tie*)

LINDA: What are you talking about?

ROY: Dad said you couldn't wear a red tie to church. That's all I remember.

LINDA: Your mother buried him in red tie.

ROY: See? I told ya it was a bad idea.

LINDA: He didn't say a thing. Ready?

ROY: (*taking a final sip of coffee*) Got the keys?

LINDA: They're in your pants.

ROY: How's my tie?

LINDA: Blue.

ROY: Good. (*with a bit of impatience*) Well, come on, I hate walking in late. (Blackout)

Scene 3: In the Beginning

(Solemn organ music under. The lights come up to reveal Richard in clerical robes, standing in front of the set. Controlled, but transparent anxiety.)

RICHARD: (*he stands there for a long moment, waiting for the prelude to end, then*) Good morning! (*waits for a response ... nothing*) Good morning! (*takes whatever response he gets,*

smiles and takes off) I welcome you in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord.

I suppose that every new pastor has to have a first service and this is mine ... with you, at least. I uh ... I've been happy to meet many of you this week at the welcoming reception, three or four committee meetings, then the rest of you at the high school basketball game last night. I mean, some of you were at all of those. I've uh ... been assigned as your pastor by the district office and I hope, God. (*he smiles...nothing*) (*searches a moment*) This is ... you know ... an embarrassing way to start, but I seem to have misplaced my bulletin. (*indicates his robe*) No pockets. (*smiles ... nothing*) But I'm pretty sure that the first order business is a hymn. And I do remember the number! 82! If you'd please stand and turn to number 82. (*he begins to move US to his "pulpit" then notices that nothing is happening*) (*turns to the organist*) Did I get the wrong number? No? It is 82 then? (*she answers*) But it's not time for the opening hymn. Oh. What is it time for? Other than maybe a new pastor? (*laughs ... but apparently no one else does*) (*sobered*) The announcements? Very well, we'll have the announcements. (*he listens ... no response*) Does ... uh ... anyone have any announcements they'd like to make at this time? (*hearing the organist again*) They're ... they're printed in the program. Okay. Could ... uh ... could someone loan me your bulletin? (*gets a bulletin from someone in the front row*) Thank you very much. And I mean that. (*looking at the bulletin*) It was 82. I got that right. (*reading*) "All the regularly scheduled meetings will be held at their customary times this week." That was ... uh ... the announcements. And now ... wait a minute ... I want to get this one right. Number 82. Turn in your hymnals to hymn number 82. (*nothing, then*) Please? (*the music cranks up and the lights dim out*)

Scene 4: I Stand at the Door and Knock

JENNA: (*from offstage*) Hold it! Hold it a minute. I found something to wear! Oh ... I think there's cinnamon roll on the table if you ... there. I think that'll work. (*Jenna enters "wearing" a curtain*) (*to the unseen minister sitting at her*

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

breakfast table) It's a curtain. When we bought the house we just threw all the old curtains in the laundry room. I look like Carol Burnett. *(tries to awkwardly sit in the other chair without dropping her curtain)* Probably the first call you've had like this ... I know it's mine. No, no please don't leave ... I mean, we've come this far. I mean, we're already ... you know. Tell me you know. *(laughs then cries and buries her head in her hands)* Oh, I don't know what I mean and I've never been in a situation like this in my life and I'm embarrassed and I hope to God my husband doesn't talk in right now. *(suddenly sobering)* You wrote a book once, didn't you? Don't put this in a book. Please God, don't put this in a book. Oh. Of course you wouldn't. Confessions are privileged, right? Does that count with Protestants? So ... uh ... Pastor. I guess we're ready to talk. I'd fix you some Decaf but I don't trust my curtain. I'm sorry, but I've never had an official clergy visit. The last guy ... oh, he was nice and everything ... good sermons ... but he didn't ... you know ... visit. Did I mention why I don't have anything to wear? Yeh. We just moved in and everything's in transit but the clothes on our back and ... well ... now not even that. So ... was there ... you know ... something in particular? *(a long pause as she listens)* My? My ... uh ... walk with Christ? *(a beat, she looks at herself)* You mean right now? (Blackout)

Scene 5: In the Beginning

(Music under)

RICHARD: That was really quite lovely. It's nice to be in a singing congregation. And I've never heard The Old Rugged Cross as a march. *(laughs ... the organist apparently doesn't)* I'm afraid I still can't find my bulletin ... I ... uh ... I hope you're understanding with it being my first Sunday as your pastor. *(looks at them)* Or not. Perhaps if one of you could just give me a ... oh, I don't know ... a hint as to what's next. *(looks at them ... no one is helping him)* Or maybe you've lost yours, too. Okay, how about the offering? I mean, you can't go wrong taking up an offering. *(a forced laugh)* Maybe you can. If the ushers would please come forward we will now take up the offering. *(he stares ... they stare back)* I'm just guessing here,

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

but it's my guess that it's not time for the offering. We do things in order, don't we? (*a long pause*) Look, perhaps if I just told you something about myself ... I mean something that you can't already tell ... (Blackout)

Scene 6: A Bomb in Gilead

(*Music in under*)

CAROLE: (*storming in, right behind her son*) You did what?

NICK: I just walked out. That's all. I didn't make a scene.

CAROLE: You just walked out of church?

NICK: It wasn't a big deal, Mom.

CAROLE: How can you say that? How can you say that walking out in the middle of church is no big deal?

NICK: They were taking up the offering. Hardly anybody even noticed.

CAROLE: Three people called me to see if you were sick. Of course they noticed!

NICK: I was sick.

CAROLE: (*touching his brow*) Really?

NICK: (*brushing her away*) Mom.

CAROLE: Why did you walk out? Just tell me why you walked out and I'll leave you alone.

NICK: I don't know. Mom, I haven't missed church since I was five. Gimme a break. I just didn't feel like sittin' there any longer.

CAROLE: Why?

NICK: I don't know.

CAROLE: Not good enough.

NICK: (*exploding*) I'm bored! I'm just bored, okay? The whole thing! The service, the music, the ... the people. My God, Mom ...

CAROLE: Nick!

NICK: They're asleep! Everybody's asleep! I mean, they're breathin' and their eyes are open but ... it's ... it's just nothin'! Nothings happening, Mom! Nothing's happening in the church and nothings happening in me. I just ... I sat there listening to the same old music and the same old speeches and ritual and

stand up and sit down and do it like we've done for a thousand years because that's the way we like and please don't bother us with anything new or we might wake up!

CAROLE: (*a long pause, then*) Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?

NICK: (*a small laugh, then*) I'm sorry.

CAROLE: You know that just infuriates me when you do this.

NICK: It was the first time I ever walked out!

CAROLE: It infuriates me when you make good sense. Why can't you be like the children on T.V. ... self-centered, spoiled. I just want to shoot them.

NICK: But you'd feel guilty shooting me?

CAROLE: Yeh. And I'd have to clean up the mess. I should have gone with you.

NICK: No. That's a cool arrangement. Dad'll go one Sunday with you if you'll stay home one Sunday with him.

CAROLE: I'm a coward.

NICK: You're a statesman, Mom.

CAROLE: What would you think ... now, I'm just talking out loud here. It may be a terrible idea. What would you think if we tried one of those ... you know ...

NICK: Noisy churches?

CAROLE: Well ... yes. One of those places where something happens ... where they demand something of you.

NICK: Dad'd never go back.

CAROLE: You suppose?

NICK: I know. He wouldn't last through the opening prayer. First time somebody shouted "Amen!" behind him and he'd tear a new aisle through the pews. (*a long beat*) So whatta we do?

CAROLE: Same old?

NICK: (*a long pause*) I can't, Mom. I can't. Not even for ... I'm sorry.

CAROLE: Your dad's faith isn't your responsibility, Nick.

NICK: It's yours?

CAROLE: (*a pause, then*) I've got to fix lunch.

NICK: Is it yours?

CAROLE: I've somehow convinced myself that ... yes, that it is. You think that's wrong?

NICK: I don't know. I'm scared of the answer.

CAROLE: Me too. (*checks her watch*) About ten minutes?

NICK: Yeh.

CAROLE: Sorry I was ...

NICK: No. That's okay.

CAROLE: Next time ...

NICK: Yeh?

CAROLE: The prayer. No one's looking. Walk out during the prayer. (*She exits and the lights dim out*)

Scene 7: A Joyful Noise

(*Music up*)

ROBERTA: (*a very choir-ish lady, entering in a holy huff... she wear a choir robe*) What am I supposed to do? Would somebody tell me just what I am supposed to do?

FRAN: (*entering right on her heels, similarly robed*) Bert, just calm down!

ROBERTA: Calm down? Did you see who's out there?

FRAN: Yes, and I don't see what difference it makes.

ROBERTA: The Bishop? How many times has the Bishop visited our church, Fran? I mean in your entire lifetime?

FRAN: Once.

ROBERTA: And when was that, Fran?

FRAN: Today.

ROBERTA: And when was he supposed to be here?

FRAN: Next Sunday.

ROBERTA: And just who told me he was coming a week early?

FRAN: No one.

ROBERTA: And why not?

FRAN: Because he's going to supervise the earthquake relief efforts next week.

ROBERTA: See? And for that he has to come early?

FRAN: It was bad taste, Roberta. Earthquakes just have no sense of propriety these days.

ROBERTA: And now you make fun of me.

FRAN: Let's just don't think about. The choir's ready and we'll struggle through.

ROBERTA: I shall not. I shall not give this matter another thought. If the Bishop doesn't like us with only a half hour's rehearsal, three sopranos golfing in Arizona and a substitute organist who plays too fast and can't read sharps, then that's just too bad. I shall put this completely out of my mind! (*takes a deep breath, then*) I am now the very picture of serenity.

HAROLD: (*entering in his choir robe*) Holy shoot. The Bishop's out there! (*Roberta lets out a howl of frustration and dismay.*)

FRAN: Harold!

HAROLD: What'd I do?

ROBERTA: That's it! Choir is cancelled!

FRAN: Roberta ...

ROBERTA: Church is cancelled!

FRAN: If you'd just ...

ROBERTA: God has just left the building!

HAROLD: Did I say something?

FRAN: Forget it, Harold. There's the prelude ... (*taking Roberta by the arm and leading her to the door*) come on, the others are already out there.

ROBERTA: (*stopping*) My grandmother started this choir.

FRAN: I know, Roberta.

ROBERTA: My mother made our first robes ...

FRAN: Roberta, the prelude is ...

ROBERTA: Night after night by the light of the television, she'd sew stitch after tiny stitch ...

FRAN: Roberta ...

ROBERTA: She only stopped for Ed Sullivan.

HAROLD: Roberta, I think ...

ROBERTA: Ed Sullivan! That's all that would stop my mother's fingers. Stitch, stitch, stitch ... Ed ... then stitch, stitch, stitch.

FRAN: They're motioning for us.

ROBERTA: No Bishop ever came to hear my grandmother

...

FRAN: Roberta ...

ROBERTA: No Bishop ever heard my mother sing ...

FRAN: Please ...

ROBERTA: Or saw her tiny stitches ... Twelve to an inch! Tell me who gets twelve stitches to the inch any more! The Bishop couldn't get twelve stitches to the inch if his life depended on it!

FRAN: They just finished the responsive reading. That's our cue.

ROBERTA: Dad always asked why she'd stop anything so holy just to watch Ed Sullivan.

HAROLD: I'm goin' ... (*he leaves*)

ROBERTA: Mother said that Ed Sullivan *was* holy.

FRAN: Bert, we've got to go.

ROBERTA: Go head without me, Fran. I see no reason to sing any longer. I've lost the will.

FRAN: You sure?

ROBERTA: I'm sure.

FRAN: Okay. (*she begins to leave*)

ROBERTA: Where are you going?

FRAN: To sing in the choir.

ROBERTA: Without me?

FRAN: Oh, come on, Roberta. Somewhere in heaven there's an organ playing right now ...

ROBERTA: In sharps?

FRAN: In sharps. And Bert, your grandmother's singing first soprano ...

ROBERTA: She was an alto ...

FRAN: Her voice changed. And she's looking down on you and she's so proud that her granddaughter is finally singing for the Bishop. And your mother, she's got a golden needle and she's spinning silver threads all through the crowds ... and Roberta! Oh, my goodness! Roberta!

ROBERTA: Yes! Yes!

FRAN: Leading the choir! Oh, leading that heavenly heavenly choir, Roberta!

ROBERTA: Yes!

FRAN: Ed Sullivan!

ROBERTA: (*in tears*) I can see it! I can see it! Praise God Almighty, Fran! I can see it!

HAROLD: (*poking his head in*) We're on ...

ROBERTA: We're on! We're on! Praise God Almighty, right here on our stage! (*Blackout*)

Scene 8: In the Beginning

(*Music Under*)

RICHARD: (*still in front of the pulpit, now sweating through his robes*) You know, an hour doesn't seem that long on paper. (*a long pause*) I mean, when you consider the entire universe was created in six days, one hour isn't ... you know ... But sometimes it is. (*a pause*) For today's scripture I have chosen from the 5th chapter of Matthew. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (*a very long pause*) I hope. (*Blackout*)

Scene 9: The Seventh Day Stretch

(*Music Under*)

LINDA: (*entering their kitchen*) Roy, you left the door unlocked again.

ROY: Who'd rob a house during church?

LINDA: An agnostic burglar. Roy, you've got to lock the house. This isn't the world you grew up in.

ROY: I know. The sermons are longer. That took forever. We already missed the pre-game show.

LINDA: Did you hear a word of the sermon?

ROY: Blessed are the meek. A perfect sermon for a Cubs game.

LINDA: You thought about baseball all through church?

ROY: It's easy. The warm-up, announcing the lineup, opening anthem, then a seventh-inning stretch for the Doxology.

LINDA: You're a genius, Roy.

ROY: Know what? I think the Yankees are the Pharisees.

LINDA: What are you talking about?

ROY: I'm making the Bible relevant in the 21st century. Christ and his disciples are the Cubs and the Yankees are Pharisees.

LINDA: You're out of your mind.

ROY: I'm a Cubs fan. It goes with the job.

LINDA: You want a sandwich for the game?

ROY: I can't eat before a game.

LINDA: Think of it as communion.

ROY: Think that'd work?

LINDA: Roy!

ROY: Whatta we got?

LINDA: Roast beef from last night.

ROY: Good. Put on some mustard and horseradish and ... still got the stewed cabbage?

LINDA: You don't eat before a game?

ROY: I'm thinking of Lazarus.

LINDA: You're losing me, Roy.

ROY: Lazarus ... resurrection ... the Cubs. It's all starting to come together.

LINDA: Roy!

ROY: I'm not kidding, Linda! I think I've got vision!

LINDA: Horseradish?

ROY: The Cubs! They're God's message to the world that redemption is at hand!

LINDA: Or the end is near.

ROY: Oh, ye of little faith!

LINDA: And much roast beef. You want chips?

ROY: I can't believe you can talk about food when the world is about to be set on its ear!

LINDA: It's Wrigley Field, not Armageddon, Roy.

ROY: (*beginning to exit*) The game's starting.

LINDA: Want your sandwich now?

ROY: The last supper! Bring it on, Linda! Bring it on! (*he exits*)

LINDA: (*looking around*) Dern. (*shouting off*) I forgot to get bread. All I've got is one slice.

ROY: Bring it to me. I'll divide it and we can feed the neighborhood.

LINDA: That's blasphemy, Roy.

ROY: (*from off*) I thought it was whole wheat!

LINDA: Roy!

ROY: Batter up!

LINDA: Roy, this is ...

ROY: And there's the pitch.....! (*Blackout*)

Scene 10: Now I Lay Me

(*Music Under*)

MICAH: (*a small girl, entering in her pajamas and holding a Teddy Bear or Dolly. She kneels.*) Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep and if I die before I wake ... (*stops ... looks up*) But I don't really want to do that. (*bowing her head again*) I pray the Lord my soul to take. God bless Mommy and Daddy and Grandma and Teddy and everybody in the world ... and ... and everything. (*looking up again*) Could I add some other stuff tonight, God? I mean about Mommy. She's lying and I want you to forgive her.

ANN: (*her mother, as the lights come up on her at another place on the stage, also praying*) Father, I'm sorry.

MICAH: She doesn't always tell me the truth.

ANN: I don't know what to do, Lord. I'm ... I'm out of ... you know ... options.

MICAH: I know she wants to but she thinks I'm not old enough.

ANN: People tell me, Lord. They say that things will work out and if I just put my trust in God then everything's going to be alright, but ... I mean, I do trust you, Lord. I really do. But then I look at the power bill and Micah's orthodontist bills and ... I ... I don't know where it's going to come from.

MICAH: I can see it in Mommy's face, God. She's really, really worried.

ANN: I'm really worried. And I've got to keep it from Micah. I mean, what good would it do? I'm not very good at telling my daughter that she can't go to her friend's birthday party because we can't afford a gift.

MICAH: She always kisses me goodnight and then goes to bed but last night I could hear her crying. I don't think she was hurt like a finger or something ... maybe it was her heart and I know you can fix those things, so would you?

ANN: (*sighs*) I won't give up. (*a beat*) I'll never lose faith in you ... but ... I really, really need some ... you know... encouragement or something.

MICAH: 'Cause I know when your heart hurts, it's real bad. Especially if you're old.

ANN: I can't hear anything, Lord. I hope she's gone to sleep. Look, if nothing else, please ... just don't let her know. Help me to stay strong enough to keep all this from her.

MICAH: Maybe if I just stay happy and pretend that she's not hurting. You think that would work, God? Just sort of ... you know ... help me smile a lot and not complain and pick up my room without being told and stuff? Can it just be a secret between you and me?

ANN: Just let it be our secret, Lord? (*Blackout*)

Scene 11: A Joyful Noise

(*Music Under*)

ROBERTA: (*entering with Fran, both still robed, and Roberta in an even greater state of huff*) Well? Did he like it? What was he doing? Were you looking at him, Fran? I couldn't look. I just couldn't bear to look.

FRAN: He smiled.

ROBERTA: That's all? Bishops smile all the time, Fran. Fran, a smile means nothing. They smile at anything. They smile when they remove preachers. The smile when they do funerals. That's how they get their job, Fran. Their smiles.

FRAN: He clapped.

ROBERTA: He started the applause?

FRAN: Yes, Bert.

ROBERTA: I was so nervous I didn't even notice who started it. I thought it was a mistake. Nobody's clapped in our church since last Easter when the Collin's kid brought in that rock group! The Bishop actually clapped? That's like ... well ... that's like God clapping isn't it?

FRAN: We sang beautifully, Bert. Ed Sullivan would have loved it.

HAROLD: (*entering, still robed*) Hey! That was great!

ROBERTA: She said the Bishop clapped.

HAROLD: Yeh. Scared the organist to death. He thought he was at a ballgame. I'd never heard (*singing the trumpet fanfare*) "Ya da da da da da! Charge!" for an offertory.

FRAN: The Bishop didn't clap for that.

HAROLD: I noticed.

FRAN: But he did it in sharps.

ROBERTA: Then you think ... I mean ... you really think everything was okay?

FRAN: It was better than okay, Bert. It was wonderful.

ROBERTA: Oh, no.

HAROLD: What?

ROBERTA: Christmas. How can we top that at Christmas?

FRAN: It's the middle of June, Roberta.

ROBERTA: I know. We barely have time to get ready.

FRAN: What?

ROBERTA: You think we need new robes? What if he comes back and we're wearing the same robes?

HAROLD: (*removing his robe*) He may not clap. He'll probably leave in embarrassment.

FRAN: You're no help, Harold. (*and they see that Harold was wearing just a Cubs T-shirt under his robe*)

ROBERTA: You wore that under your robe!?

HAROLD: Yeh. I got box seats in twenty minutes.

ROBERTA: With the Bishop out there you wore a Cubs T-shirt under your choir robe? What if it would have come off?

HAROLD: Roberta I haven't thrown off my robe in the middle of church since my sixth-grade Christmas pageant when

Loren Mueller stuck his hand down my collar because he didn't get to play Joseph.

ROBERTA: I can no longer be responsible for the actions of this choir.

FRAN: Face it, Roberta. We're a wild and crazy bunch. *(taking off her robe)*

ROBERTA: *(as Harold's about to leave)* Harold, go out the back way. He might still be out front.

HAROLD: I can't walk through my own church?

ROBERTA: Not today. Besides, you're parked in back.

HAROLD: But the cookies are in the front.

ROBERTA: You're gaining weight anyway. Go out the back.

FRAN: Harold, you don't have to ...

HAROLD: No ... no. When the choir director speaks, I listen. *(as he leaves)* Besides, I've got Twinkies in the car. *(he is gone)*

FRAN: Roberta, just chill.

ROBERTA: Responsibility, Fran! The church is losing its sense of responsibility.

FRAN: And maybe it's just losing its sense. *(exiting)* See you Wednesday night.

ROBERTA: You think I'm being silly, don't you?

FRAN: Yes.

ROBERTA: You could have put that more gently.

FRAN: Then you would have missed the point. *(smiles and leaves)*

ROBERTA: *(looking heavenward)* I'm trying, Mama. I'm honestly trying. *(taking off her robe)* But some days ... some days I truly wonder if I'm up to the job. *(looking out toward the sanctuary)* He's still out there. Maybe he'd like to tell me how much he liked the choir. *(She removes her robe. She is wearing a Cardinal shirt.) (as she leaves)* Oh, Bishop! *(Blackout)*

Scene 12: A Bomb in Gilead

(Music Under)

NICK: *(sitting alone in a church pew ... he stares a short while then yawns ... then stands and sings ...)* "Praise God from

whom all blessings flow ... praise Him all creatures ... (*but he's again overcome with a yawn and he hums out the rest of the stanza through his yawns.*) Ya ya. ya. ya ya ya ya. Father son and ya ya ya ... ya-men." (*he sits*)

(*to himself*) I'm trying. I'm trying. (*his eyes get very heavy and he begins to nod*) (*Then, suddenly, his eyes open wide.*) Boy, you know what'd be cool. I mean just once. Just once I'd like to see ... (*jumps up on his pew and shouts*) Hey everybody! Let's boogie! (*jumping down and strutting revival-style across the stage*) I mean is this the truth you're listening to or not? I said, Is this the truth or not? Listen to me, people! If you don't feel better going out that door than coming in, then just what the heck are you doing here? This is not the proctologists, office! It's the living church of Jesus Christ! Can somebody give me an Amen? Hey! No! Don't be walking out that door! Somebody shut the doors! Lock the doors! It's time we all woke up and got serious about this thing we call Faith! Can somebody give me an Amen!

Okay, let's start with a little game. Let's call it the Truth Game! Okay, now tell the truth. Let's make a list of the teachings of Jesus Christ that we just don't want to follow, that we just can't follow, and that we have no intention of following! You with me, brethren and sistern? Somebody got a piece of chalk? Never mind. Just write it down in your bulletin next to the bake sale and the car wash. Okay, let's begin. (*trumpet sound*) Ya ta da da da da daaah! "Sell all that you have and give it to the poor!" Whoa! What a place to start! There go most of us! But wait! Wait! We're on a roll! "Love your neighbor as yourself!" Look out, Mama! Did you hear what I said! I said to love that person who you really can't stand. No, don't look now, because they're looking right at you. Love THAT person every itsy bitsy teeny weeny little bit as you love the guy wearing your socks right now! Hello Dolly! How about "Turn the other cheek!" No! No! No gossip, no phone calls, no emails, just suck it up and take it, brother! Are we rollin'? I say, Are we rollin' now? Amen! Halleluiah! Roll on, Lord God Almighty! Roll on! Roll on! (*Music under at Blackout*)

END OF ACT I

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

Act II

Scene 1: Table Guest

(The lights come up to reveal Helen, an elderly lady, sitting at her kitchen table. She has a cup of tea and a muffin on the table in front of her.)

HELEN: *(a bit uncomfortable even though she's alone and this is her kitchen)* Uh ... I guess I'd might as well bring this up. It's a ... sort of an imposition, I suppose, but I've been thinking about his ever since Tom died and ... well, now's as good a time as any. *(a pause)* Lord ... I want you to have a seat. *(a pause)* I know this isn't exactly the prescribed manner of prayer, but ... well, the worst you can do is tell me no. *(a pause as she waits and wonders what the response will be, then.)* Okay, here's the deal: Tom and I sat across from each other at this breakfast table for 57 years and ... well, I guess this is just about the worst time of the day for me. We ate most lunches and suppers together, too but it seems like once the day is started and I can look out my window and see the world going about its business then things aren't so bad. But in the morning ... Tom and I always got up at five ... and the morning's just about the worst time. Nothing much else going on in the world. And I'd like ... well ... I'd like you to just sort of sit down there in the mornings and take his place. *(a pause)* If you don't mind. I'd like that, Lord. I'd really like that. *(she waits a long moment as she tries to discern whether her request has actually been granted. Finally, she takes a small but relieved breath)* I ... uh ... I usually read a little scripture before we eat. *(she opens her Bible, flips a page or two, then stops)* But ... I guess you already know this stuff. Maybe I'll read a short one for me. *(reading)* "Yea, though I walk through the shadow of death I will fear no evil. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." *(she cannot go on. She stops and tears well up)* I'm ... I'm really sorry, Lord. I should have picked another. They read that at Tom's funeral. I don't know why I ... *(her head has gone to into her hands, but she now looks up at the unseen guest at her breakfast table)* ... Read on? "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my

cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” *(she closes the Bible)* Forever. *(a pause)* And that includes ... *(she smiles as He has answered her)* ... and that includes breakfast. *(a pause, then she again smiles and offers him a plate)* Toast? *(Blackout)*

Scene 2: I Stand at the Door and Knock

(Music Under)

JENNA: *(sitting at the table, still in her curtain)* You know, if your first meeting with every new member was like this, it would change the tone of your congregation. I guess it’s better than ... you know ... being ignored. Oh no, you don’t have to go ... I mean, we’re already ... you know. Oh well. It’s been ... uh ... really unique talking to you like this, Pastor. *(she begins to rise then stops)* I think I’ll just stay seated if you don’t mind. It’d be a bad time for my curtains to ... you know. *(she carefully grabs her curtains and leans forward to shake his hand)* Yes. Oh, you’re welcome ... and really ... we’ll laugh about this ... I’m sure ... someday. *(waves)* Bye. See you in church. *(She watches him go.)* I can’t believe this just happened. My first real visit with a minister and I’m wearing a curtain. New church, new preacher, old curtain. *(she takes off her curtain and turns to get coffee)* I can’t wait to see what ...

ROY: *(appearing at the doorway)* Anybody home? *(Jenna turns ... she sees him ... he sees her)*

JENNA: Oh!

ROY: Oh!

LINDA: *(appearing behind Roy)* Oh!

ROY: We gotta go. *(he immediately turns and runs into Linda)*

LINDA: Roy!

ROY: Linda, she’s ...

LINDA: I know. I can see her. *(to Jenna)* Look, we’re really sorry... *(grabs Roy’s arm to exit)* ...



GREEN ROOM PRESS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

FAITH, SLICED ON WRY

by Ken Bradbury.

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

GREEN ROOM PRESS, INC.
customerservice@greenroompress.com
www.greenroompress.com