

Devotional—day 2

"The answer is...joy"

Forward

To the script of *Godspell*

GODSPELL as conceived by John-Michael Tebelak is a **jubilant celebration** of the Gospel as told by St. Matthew. It is a religious experience to be felt **joyously**. It is a release of one's spirit into the larger heart of mankind. In brief, it is the belief of John-Michael and his generation that the passion of Jesus Christ was to teach love and **joy** in the hearts of people rather than hate and sadness.

In staging these well-known sayings and stories of the Bible, John-Michael calls on many theatrical devices - pantomime, children's games, charades, puppetry, vaudeville antics, the question-answer technique of minstrel shows, tap and soft-shoe dancing, and songs and music of many colors - folk, ballad, pop, rock, light musical comedy, and dramatic. His people are cast primarily as clowns, in improvised costumes, to enact the simple stories, sayings, and parables of the Gospel. The main advice to the players is to speak honestly with open simplicity, but never coy nor naive; not to push for exuberance, but to be **exuberant**; not to play to the audience, but to be one in a party of celebration with them; and when the moment comes for the symbolic crucifixion, to feel deeply man's anguish for his sins.

Lawrence Carra
Professor of Play Directing
Carnegie-Mellon University

A word of advice...performing Godspell

From John-Michael Telebak:

“The basic structure must be adhered to, and there are certain qualities that must be maintained. The honesty of each performer—trying to find a clown within himself, as opposed to adding a clown character on top of what is inherently funny about that individual. Trust is one of the most important elements in the show. As long as the cast has that image of trust, and friendship, and working ability, and ensemble among themselves, I don’t think that there could be a bad *GODSPELL*. The important thing to do is to **enjoy** the experience—**enjoy** each other!”

From Stephen Schwartz:

“I could go on forever, of course, but let me say the three things that I think are most important: First, the creation of a family feeling between all the cast members is vital. It’s very important that the audience feels the connection between the cast members on stage. If everybody is out there doing his individual ‘shtik’ then the whole fabric of the show will disintegrate. It is very hard to create that kind of family feeling. Off-stage exercises and theatrical games—I would recommend that very highly. The second thing to bear in mind, and this is advice to the director, that the story of *GODSPELL* is almost entirely sub-textural, and therefore it’s very important for him to know what kind of development he wants to see and be able to put it on stage. By that, I mean that really what happens in *GODSPELL* is that ten separate individuals come together and then turn to the audience and attempt to get them to also become a unit—with them. This happens very slowly. Once again, I think that if everyone’s out there just making jokes, doing ‘shtiks,’ and has no overview of the show—it will fall apart. The third thing I would advise is that the director exercises as much taste as he possibly can. With a show like *GODSPELL*, it is very easy to go for cheap gags—what I call television humor.”

From Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools*:

“The festival, the special time when ordinary chores are set aside while man celebrates some event, affirms the sheer goodness of what is, or observes the memory of a god or hero, is distinctly human activity. It arises from man’s peculiar power to incorporate into his own life the **joys** of other people and the experience of previous generations. Porpoises and chimpanzees may play. Only man celebrates. Festivity is a human form of play through which man appropriates an extended area of life, included the past, into his own experience. (p7)

New Testament "JOY":

John 15:9-14

9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Remain in My love.**10** If you keep My commandments you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love.**11** "I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.**12** This is My commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you.**13** No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends.**14** You are My friends if you do what I command you."

John 16:21-22

21 "When a woman is in labor she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world.**22** So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will rob you of your joy."

John 17:11-16

11 "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are.**12** While I was with them I was protecting them by Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, that the Scripture may be fulfilled.**13** Now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have My joy completed in them.**14** I have given them Your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.**15** I am not praying that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one.**16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

Romans 14:16-19

16 Therefore, do not let your good be slandered,**17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.**18** Whoever serves the Messiah in this way is acceptable to God and approved by men.**19** So then, we must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.

Romans 15:13

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia:**2** during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity.**3** I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and beyond their ability,**4** they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints,**5** and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,**23** gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Time for personal reflection (Day 2):

*** Be prepared for Group Discussion*

What specific thoughts or memories do I need to recall prior to rehearsals and public performances to remind myself of the “joy” that *Godspell* should bring, not only to others, but myself as well?

There will be hard times and tough days ahead, what can I do in these situations to bring “joy” to others?

How can I retain an attitude of “joy” on a daily basis throughout this tour and into my life beyond?

Which of the scriptures concerning “joy” speaks to me most? Why? Is this verse important enough to spend the time to commit to memory and hide in my heart for the summer?

Based on Harvey Cox’s description of “festival,” how do I see *Godspell* as a festive celebration?

What attitudes do I need to adopt to truly “celebrate” the story of *Godspell* everyday for the next 78 days?