

Protesting PROFESSOR

Skit of the Week by Rich Melheim

SETTING: Anywhere

PROPS: Pom-poms, applause sign

CHARACTERS: Luther, Narrator, Tetzal, Crowd

NARRATOR: And now, the “(your church) Not-Ready-for-Anytime Players” and Heils-ge-schick-ta Theater proudly present, “Martin Luther and a Five-minute History of the Reformation, Part II” or “Protesting Professor” (Hold up applause sign) As we learned in Part I, Martin Luther was born in 1483 in the little town of Eisleben, Germany. As a young man, Luther grew up worrying that God couldn’t love him. Luther deeply desired God’s love, but he knew he couldn’t measure up to perfection. He knew he was a sinner.

LUTHER: Woe is me, oh, woe, woe! I’m a sinner. I’m a sinner! Woe is me.

NARRATOR: One day in 1505 while walking through the woods, Luther was nearly struck by lightning. Figuring God was out to get him, he went off to a monastery to become a monk. There at the monastery, young Luther lived a life of service, outdoing all the other monks in prayer (Luther falls to his knees) and study (Luther rises) and prayer (Luther falls his to knees) and study (Luther rises and picks up a Bible) and...

LUTHER: Enough of the prayer and study already! They get the point.

NARRATOR: Skip ahead to a night in 1513. Luther, now a priest and professor, is reading the Bible up in the Black Tower at Wittenberg U. Luther is reading Luke 1:78-79, and suddenly his eyes are opened to the truth of the scriptures.

LUTHER: (Eyes pop open) Faith? Faith? You mean to tell me, those who are living right in God’s sight aren’t the ones who are trying to deserve God’s love by

their own good deeds?

NARRATOR: You got it.

LUTHER: You mean to tell me that living right in God’s sight means simply trusting in Jesus for forgiveness and having faith in what he did for me instead of faith in how good I am?

NARRATOR: (To Luther) Correct-a-mundo! (To audience) Luther had been assigned to teach the books of Psalms and Romans at Wittenberg University.

LUTHER: (Cheering with pom-poms) Wittenberg! Wittenberg! Wittenberg U! If we can’t do it, neither can you!

NARRATOR: That’s lame.

LUTHER: Lame, yes. But also memorable. (Cheering with pom-poms) Wittenberg! Wittenberg! Wittenberg U!

NARRATOR: (Stuffing pom-pom in Luther’s mouth) Meanwhile, there was trouble looming on the horizon. Pope Leo X needed to raise some quick cash to rebuild St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome. He dispatched salesmen to all points of the Holy Roman Empire to sell certificates promising forgiveness of sins to anyone able to pay the price.

LUTHER: Hey! That’s not right! Forgiveness can’t be bought with a piece of paper. It’s a free gift from God, bought and paid for with the blood of Christ!.

NARRATOR: The church had a different idea. In those days, it was thought and taught that you could pay for sins with money. Not only that, you could pay money for the sins that you were about to commit.

LUTHER: Oh, pul-eeee-eeeee!

NARRATOR: Even the sins of your dear departed relatives could be covered for the right price.

LUTHER: Oh, pul... my dead relatives?

NARRATOR: You could spring your loved ones from the limbo of purgatory simply by tossing coins into a box. These cer-

tificates—called “indulgences”—would give the worried people proof from the church that their sins were all forgiven.

LUTHER: What a bunch of bull!

NARRATOR: It all came to a head one day in 1517 when an emissary from the pope named Johann Tetzal came to town. (Tetzal approaches with crowd swarming in to give him coins)

TETZEL: Forgiveness for sale! Get yer forgiveness here! Thievery, 50 guildens! Murder, 80 guildens! And adultery—this week only—200 guildens!”

CROWD: Ooooooh! Aaah! Wow!

LUTHER: Wait a minute! You can’t sell forgiveness!

TETZEL: Watch me, monk-boy. As soon as the coin in the money box rings, the soul from purgatory springs! Bling! Catchy, huh!

LUTHER: That’s lame!

TETZEL: Lame, yes. But memorable.

CROWD: (Chanting) As soon as the coin in the money box rings, the soul from purgatory springs! (High pitched voice) Bling!

NARRATOR: Luther was so angry about this unbiblical practice that he began to write 95 protests—statements about the sale of indulgences—which he wanted the church to debate. Now fast-forward to October 31, 1517, the day before a special “All Saints Day” indulgence sale was to begin. He went to the community bulletin board at the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

CROWD:(Grabbing pom-poms) Wittenberg! Wittenberg! Wittenberg Church! We’ve got the door if you’re in a lurch!

LUTHER & NARRATOR: That’s lame!

CROWD: Lame but memorable!

LUTHER: So I posted my statements about what I considered unbiblical on the chapel door. Then what happened?

NARRATOR: You’ll have to wait until next time to find out as the “(your church) Not-Ready-for-Any-Time Players” and Heils-ge-schick-ta Theater proudly present, “Martin Luther and a Five-minute History of the Reformation, Part III” or “You’re in Trouble.” Good night and please remember to tip your waitress! (Applause sign and music)