

EUPHORIC WORSHIP

By Rod

This sketch is supposed to illustrate the wide gulf that can exist between the worship being offered in a traditional Anglican church and the culture in which teenagers live. The differences are deliberately exaggerated to make the point. No offence to those who enjoy choral music, for example, is intended.

CAST

Narrator 1 male or female

Narrator 2 male or female

Nicky teenager, male or female

Chris teenager, male or female

Sidesperson male or female. Needs to act being elderly

Vicar male(!) Wearing full ecclesiastical garb.

Narr 1 It was Sunday evening. Nicky and Chris were out on the town. [*Enter Nicky and Chris looking cool and relaxed. As if looking for a 'bit of action'*]

Narr 2 But the town was shut. [*Nicky and Chris look around in despair and start to look bored*]

Narr 1 They were bored. So bored that they decided to go to church. [*Nicky points. Chris nods in resigned agreement as if to say 'We might as well since there's nothing else to do'.*]

Narr 2 Wow, they must have been bored! [*Nicky and Chris head off to 'church' part of set, passing table where sidesperson is standing with books*]

Narr 1 They went to the local Anglican Church, St Michael and All Angels. As they entered an elderly man/woman greeted them and handed them each two books. [*Sidesperson looks at them suspiciously, mimes greeting 'good evening' and gives each a Prayer Book and a Hymn Book – the older looking the better*]

Narr 2 The church was almost empty so they sat in a pew about three rows from the front. [*Nicky and Chris mime deciding where to sit before sitting down and starting to look through their books. The Sidesperson fusses with the books but then looks round to see where they have landed, looks horrified and rushes over to them.*]

Sidesperson You can't sit there.

Nicky Why ever not?

Sidesperson Mr and Mrs Brown always sit in that pew. They have done for 33 years. Why don't you sit over here? *[Sidesperson points to adjacent pew. Nicky and Chris get up resignedly and move with a little discontented muttering]*

Narr 1 So they moved.

Chris Excuse me asking – but could we have the rest of the hymnbook please? *[Holds up hymn book]*

Sidesperson Whatever do you mean?

Chris Well, it's called 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' but I've looked through the index and none of the hymns were written after 1952. So I guess the Modern section must be missing.

Sidesperson Oh, no, the book is quite complete. If we do sing hymns of a more contemporary nature we put the words up on the screen.

Nicky You've got a VDU screen have you? What's your resolution?

Sidesperson Well, my resolution this year was to stop drinking sherry And I've been pretty good so far.

Nicky No, what's the res. on your screen? What software operation system have you got? Is it state of the art Windows XP? How many Megabytes RAM?

Sidesperson I think this evening's operation system, as you call it, is Mrs Jones. She'll be putting up the OHP slides for us. *[Nicky and Chris understand and look disappointed]* I don't think she's ever had a bite from a ram – although her Pekinese, Trixiwoo, did once give her a nasty nip on the finger. Anyway, I have things to do. Enjoy the service. *[Sidesperson returns to table]*

Narr 2 Nicky and Chris settled into their seats and got themselves comfortable.

Narr 1 Or at least they tried to get themselves comfortable. It wasn't easy on a cold wooden bench with a sharp ridge that jutted out into their backs at shoulder-blade level. *[Nicky and Chris go to exaggerated lengths to get comfortable in a 'teenage slouch' while prevented from so doing by the confines of a wooden pew. Plenty of visual comedy possibilities here!]*

Narr 2 Just then a man dressed like Lily Savage entered the church from a side door. *[Enter vicar. He talks to sidesperson. Nicky and Chris look at him suspiciously, point and giggle. Vicar notices them and approaches them.]*

Vicar *[In exaggerated melodic vicar's voice]* Hello, welcome to St Michael's. I'm the vicar.

Chris Why are you dressed like a woman?

Narr 1 *[Vicar needs to mime showing his garb to them]* The vicar then explained that he was simply wearing the traditional robes of an Anglican priest and had obtained his from a Russian Red Army store.

Narr 2 *[Very surprised]* From where? What are you talking about?

Narr 1 Cossack Army Surplus. *[Nicky and Chris do Cossack kicks with arms folded].*

Narr 2 Cassock and surplice, you fool! It's what vicars where.

Narr 1 Oh, sorry. No wonder Nicky and Chris were confused. *[Nicky and Chris stop Cossacks, look confused, etc as vicar mimes correcting them]*

Nicky I gather we've got some modern songs tonight.

Vicar Oh, yes indeed, we're singing 'Lord of the Dance'. It always makes me want to get up and dance.

Nicky What sort of dance music is it? Progressive, Retro, Old School, Hard House, Euphoric?

Vicar *[Hesitantly]* Well, I'm not sure. Euphoric, I suppose – it's quite a catchy little number.

Chris What else happens in the service?

Vicar Well, it's Evening Prayer from BCP.

Chris What's that, British Car Parks?

Vicar No, Book of Common Prayer. It's the other book you were given. It was published in 1662.

Chris *[Sarcastic]* Wow, that is hot off the press!

Nicky Be fair, Chris. *[Pointing to watch]* After all, it is only 1825 now. *[They laugh together]*

Vicar *[Ignoring them]* In it you'll find this evening's Canticles.

Nicky Can Tickles! That sounds fun. *[Tickles Chris]*

Vicar *[Continuing oblivious]* This evening we'll be singing Cantate Domino ...

Nicky Excellent – I love a game of dominoes.

Vicar And the Nunc Dimitis.

Chris Dunk yer biscuits?

Vicar No, Nunc Dimitis. It's Latin.

Chris Latin! Isn't any of this stuff in English?

Vicar Of course it is, don't worry. My sermon, for example, will be entirely in English. I'm basing it on some words from Genesis.

Chris Oh great, I love Genesis. They were a really cool band.

Vicar *[Still continuing oblivious]* And tonight there's a real treat in store for you as the choir will be singing two special anthems.

Nicky What, 'God save the Queen' and 'The Marseillaise'?

Vicar No, the first is 'Bist du bei mir?' by J.S.Bach.

Chris You what?

Vicar It's German. It's his BWV 508.

Nicky The BWV 508, eh? You've got to hand it to the Germans, they do make great motorcars.

Chris *[To vicar]* What's the other one?

Vicar It's 'The Hallelujah Chorus' by Handel.

Chris *[Doubtfully]* Hallelujah?

Vicar *[Enthusiastically]* Yes indeed, Hallelujah. I can see you young people are really going to enjoy tonight's service. Hallelujah!!!

Chris & Nicky *[Unenthusiastically]* Hallelujah.

THE END