

MR. PASTOR

A Comedy in One act

By

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CHARACTERS

ADRIAN:	church member and bookkeeper
PASTOR MITCHEL:	pastor of the Pentecostal church
HAROLD:	Adrian's neighbour
BODYGUARDS:	two pastor Mitchel bodyguards.
VOICE OF ALMIGHTY:	one of pastor's bodyguard
CHOIR AND THE CONGREGATION:	performed by women
A Woman's voice:	the woman in the office

ACT I

UPSTAGE CENTRE THERE IS A WHITE CROSS AND A CENTRE STAGE PULPIT. DOWNSTAGE RIGHT THERE ARE THREE BLUE CHAIRS FACING THE AUDITORIUM, DOWNSTAGE LEFT THERE IS A TABLE DECORATED WITH WHITE CLOTH AND TWO BLUER CHAIRS.
USPTAGE LEFT, A BOOKSHELF.

PRESENT DAY, ANYWHERE IN THE WOLRD. THE ACTION TAKES ON FRIDAY EVENING BETWEEN SEVEN AND NINE IN ONE OF THE NEW PENTECOSTAL CHURCH.

LIGHTS UP WE SEE PASTOR MITCHEL ON THE PULPIT, PREACHING. ON BOTH HIS SIDE, STAND TWO BODY GUARDS WEARING LIKE GANGSTER.

THERE IS A CHOIR, ALL WOMEN, WEARING BLUE GOWNS STANDING IN THE FRONT OF THE CONGREGATION.

VOICE OF PASTOR MITCHEL: When the Lord gives everything to you, you say 'Amen! Is it enough?

PASTOR MITCHEL: 'Beloved! One day, Jesus turned water into wine and stone to bread, you said 'Amen!'. When he gives you the daily life, you also say 'Amen!' Beloved! Do you think saying 'Amen!' is enough?

THE CONGREGATION: (VERY ALOUD) No.

PASTOR MITCHEL: No, my brothers and sisters. You have to pay back to the Lord what he gave to you with mercy. Well! Last night, God revealed me something very important. He said: "Oh Mitchel! I am ordering you to build for me a big temple, such as the one King Solomon dedicated to me. Dear brothers and sisters! Commit to the Lord what you owe him is a very important commitment. Give what you have, golden or money. Don't hire it because God knows how much you have in your pocket. He also knows know how much you saved in your depository financial institution account. Commit everything to him and he will bless you. Hebrews chapter 10:22-25 says" Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ... For he who

promised is faithful. No! And let us think how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of exercising, but furthering one another—and all the more as you attend the Day approaching’.

LIGHTS GO OUT. WHEN THE LIGHTS UP, ADRIAN, 45, WEARING A WHITE SHIRT AND A BLACK TROUSER, SITS ON THE CHAIR BEHIND THE DESK, DOING THE CHURCH BOOK. HE IS WHISTLING A CHURCH TUNE.

ENTER PASTOR MITCHEL, WEARING A CHIC COSTUME, A SHIRT WITH A BLACK COLLAR. ON BOTH HIS SIDE, TWO BODY GUARDS WEARING BLACK T-SHIRT AND BLACK SUN GLASSES.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (EMBARRASSED) New technology, uh! When they make all those laptops and sophisticated mobile phones. Do they think that they are more intelligent than God himself? When start using them, problems begin. What a foolish waste, eh!

ADRIAN STOPS WORKING. HE LOOKS AT PASTOR MITCHEL.

ADRIAN: How can I help you, Pastor MITCHEL?

PASTOR MITCHEL: (WITH PROUDNESS) Nothing, Adrian! I don’t need anything from human being. The Lord is with me.

ADRIAN: Oh! Stop it. I know when you start blaming things. That means something is wrong. Please, put your stubbornness behind you. That is what the Bible says.

PASTOR MITCHEL: All right! My laptop is freezing. Do you know someone who can fix it?

ADRIAN: I have a friend who can check it for you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Great! Call him for me, please. Oh! Is he a Christian?

ADRIAN: I can’t believe it. Do you mean all your doctors are Christian?

ADRIAN DIALS A NUMBER FROM HIS MOBILE PHONE.

ADRIAN: Yes, Harold. It's Adrian. I have a problem with one of the laptop here. Can you come and check it for me, please? Yes, here in the church. Oh, Harold! Come on, the church will not bite you. Perfect. I am waiting for you now.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Is he coming?

ADRIAN: Well, yes he is.
PASTOR MITCHEL STARTS SINGING A GOSPEL AND DANCING AT THE SAME MOMENT.

ADRIAN: Is everything okay?

PASTOR MITCHEL: My dear, Adrian. I would like to tell you something, I have never told anyone.

ADRIAN: Okay, pastor. Shout!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Did you know that music come from heaven?

ADRIAN: No, but I heard people saying that.

PASTOR MITCHEL: That is good. You know. Elton John, Johnny Halliday, Manu Dibangu, Whitney Houston, Jacko. All those musicians have copied music from heaven. That is a pure plagiarism.

ADRIAN: Wow! Who are heaven music celebrities?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Good question. I have only one example to give you. It is King David.

ADRIAN: Ah! I thought he used to live in Jerusalem.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yes, but he did live in both Jerusalem. The one in the Middle East and the one in the Heaven.

ADRIAN: If you say so. You are the pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why do you say that? Don't you believe me?

ADRIAN: I believe you, of course.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Wonderful. Every day, when I think about the marvels of the Lord, I am so happy. Oh! I forgot something. Did you know that King David was dancing for the Lord? 1 Samuel 16:16 says: "As a young man, he played the sitar.

ADRIAN: As far I know, he was playing a harp, and not sitar. And I have never heard that he was dancing. Was he dancing the Rumba? Let me think, Reggae.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Don't make a word of God funny. Besides, you are wrong. It was Sitar.

ADRIAN: I thought you knew about it. It's all in the Bible. By the way! How do you know he was dancing?

PASTOR MITCHEL: It's written in the Bible.

ADRIAN: Sure! It's useless asking you for a biblical evidence then. I am sure you have one.

PASTOR MITCHEL: According to the King David, it is an obligation for Christians to dance in the church.

ADRIAN: How can he oblige Christian to dance if he was not Christian himself?

PASTOR MITCHEL: King David was a full soul who accomplished good work for the Lord.

ADRIAN: You did not answer my question.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Oh the wonderful Kind David!

ENTER HAROLD, CARRYING AN LAPTOP BAG.

HAROLD: Isn't it the guy who sent a general of his army to die, so he could commit the adultery with his friend's wife?

PASTOR MITCHEL LOOKS AT HAROLD WITH DISGUST.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO ADRIAN.) Who the hell is this guy?

HAROLD: It's the one who will save your life.

ADRIAN: Pastor Mitchel, meet Harold. He is the one who will check your laptop.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Jesus Christ! How could you do that to me?

HAROLD: Oh, pastor! What do you do with the love of your neighbour? The one who will fix your laptop.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't want you to fix my laptop.

HAROLD: It's up to you.

ADRIAN: Stop what you are doing, pastor. You need to make peace.

.HAROLD: It's not a problem for me. I am a peacemaker.

HAROLD TENDS HIS HAND TO PASTOR MITCHEL, BUT H REFUSES.

HAROLD: Shit! Your pastor is not really a pastor at all.

ANGRILY, PASTOR MITCHEL LEAVES THE SCENE. ADRIAN HANDS THE LAPTOP TO HAROLD. HAROLD PUTS HIS BAG ON THE FLOOR AND SITS THEN STARTS LOOKING AT THE

LATOP SYSTEM. ADRIAN IS CONTINUING WITH THE CHURCH BOOK. SUDDENLY, HAROLD STARTS SINGING LOUDLY, WEARING EARS PHONE IN HIS EARS.

ADRIAN: Do you mind lowering your voice, Harold? We are in God's house.

HAROLD: What did you say? I can't hear you.

HE CONTINUES SINGING LOUDLY.

ADRIAN: (Loudly) For God sake - why are you singing aloud?

HAROLD: What did you say?

ADRIAN: (LOUDLY AGAIN.) We are in God's house. You can't

HAROLD: I like singing. Beside we are in a free country.

ADRIAN: Yes, I know we are in the free country, but there is no democracy in the House of God. It is a theocracy. You can't do what you want.

HAROLD: Oh! I see. I am practicing for the music contest.

ADRIAN: Mister Music contester. I don't care. You need to stop. You are getting on my nerves. I need to concentrate for the bookkeeping work I am doing. If I do some mistake, God will punish me.

HAROLD: Rubbish!

ADRIAN: Not rubbish. It is true.

HAROLD TAKES OFF THE EARS PHONE.

HAROLD: I like singing when I am working.

ADRIAN: Well, not here. We are in God's house.

HAROLD: Stop repeating God's house. It's a church.

HAROLD APPROACHES ADRIAN THEN PUT HIS RIGHT ARM ALONG ADRIAN'S SHOULDER.

HAROLD: I have a plan tonight, after ten.

ADRIAN: A plan? What plan is it?

HAROLD: My girlfriend has a very beautiful friend. She can introduce her to you if you want. So when we can join them in the club.

ADRIAN: Negative.

HAROLD: Objection, your honour.

ADRIAN: Rejected.

HAROLD: Why is that?

ADRIAN: I don't club and I don't girlfriends.

HAROLD: What's wrong with you, man? We are in the 21st century. Even pastors have girlfriends.

ADRIAN: I am a man of principle. I decide not to have sex before I meet the person I really want to get married.

HAROLD: Did I mention sex? I just said girlfriend that is it.

ADRIAN: What do you think boyfriends and girlfriends do? Do they just watch cartoons together? May I remind you that we are in the church? Those kind of chat can't happen.

HAROLD LAUGHS LOUDLY.

ADRIAN: Why are you laughing at me? What is wrong?

HAROLD: That pastor yours transformed you.

ADRIAN: No chance to convince me, Harold.

HAROLD: You deserve to enjoy your life. Marriage is a complicated business. People who are inside want to quit and people who are outside want to get in. My God!

ADRIAN: I want it to be legal.

HAROLD: You are not serious, are you? Find a girlfriend and enjoy your life.

ADRIAN STANDS AND WALK.

ADRIAN: You can't change the way I feel. I am Christian and I am devoted to God. I don't intend to violate Lord's law.

HAROLD: Lord's law? Are you listening to yourself? What law? Are you really listening to yourself? You speak like Moses. People transgress laws every day. Sometimes laws are meant to be bypassed. Look! You need a break. Have some fresh air and meet someone. Look. Just give her a try and see

for yourself. If you don't like her, you are free to move on. She is sweet as honey. You know, having a girlfriend provides you with energy.

ADRIAN: What energy?

HAROLD: You will become emotionally stable.

ADRIAN: Look, Harold! A woman is one of the very dangerous human being. It's because of Eve we are suffering today.

HAROLD: How can you be so misogynistic?

ADRIAN: She gave the forbidden fruit to Adam.

HAROLD: Stop telling yourself stories. Why didn't say no? She didn't force him.

ADRIAN: yes, she did. You know how they are.

HAROLD: It has been just a sex story.

ADRIAN: that is very outrageous. They were married.

HAROLD: Who preceded their marriage? Boris Johnson, Bertrand Delanoë? Come on.

ADRIAN: Stop blaspheming in the God's house.

HAROLD: You are missing something.

ADRIAN: Like what?

HAROLD: Kissing... cuddling... some different stuff. You see what I mean, right?

ADRIAN: Didn't you say it wasn't because of sex? Unfortunately, I do not have enough time for that.

HAROLD: Let me tell you a little story.

ADRIAN: Oh my, yes. Made up stories as usual?

HAROLD: No. This is a true story, I swear.

ADRIAN: I don't believe you when you swear to God.

HAROLD: Not to God! I swear in the name of my grandmother.

ADRIAN: Go on then.

HAROLD: One day, a guy was every time ill. Check-up after check-up, no doctor could heal him. And then he

decided to see a Chinese doctor. The Chinese doctor asked him if he was sexually active, he said no'. 'What a shame', said the doc. 'That is the cause of your illness.' He prescribes him some secret drug, advising him to pick up a prostitute and stay with her all the night. You're excited now, aren't you?

ADRIAN: No.

HAROLD: You are not normal, man. All right. The same evening, he went to visit a prostitute, doing everything asked by the doctor. On the following day, he returned to visit the doctor and said: 'I feel good'.

ADRIAN: (LAUGHING.) I have never heard a silly story like this. What are you trying to do to me? So, it was all about sex.

HAROLD: What?

ADRIAN: Asking me to go to the club with you.

HAROLD: Come on! I just want you to open your eyes.

ADRIAN: I don't want to be a hypocrite like most religious people. I don't want to be Rudolf Valentino.

HAROLD: Who is that guy, again?

ADRIAN: I thought you know everyone.

HAROLD: Can you tell me who that guy is?

ADRIAN: He was a handsome actor, who liked to have sex with all women, even the married ones.

HAROLD SEEMS VERY INTERESTED.

Where does he live?

ADRIAN: He died years ago.

HAROLD: Oh! Did he?

ADRIAN: Yes.

HAROLD: Shame. He should be alive. Don't take everything in the religious viewpoint.

ADRIAN: I am a Christian, Harold. I have to.

HAROLD: All right! I saw your friend the pastor with a

girl.
ADRIAN: What did you just say?

HAROLD: Last night, I saw your pastor with a beautiful girl in the cinema.

ADRIAN: You have to be kidding me, right?

HAROLD: Nop. Sometimes the people you think they are saints, they are not in reality.

ADRIAN: Maybe she was a church member.

HAROLD: Do pastors kiss their church members? I heard him saying 'Good things are made to be tasted.'

ADRIAN: You must be lying! Pastor Mitchel is my childhood friend. I know him. He can't do such things.

HAROLD: Well! People can change. If only you had seen that woman! She had everything a woman should have.

(DESCRIBING GESTUALLY THE GIRL.) She is the kind of girl who can make you forget everything. She has everything perfect; attractive legs, beautiful breasts, lips, eyebrows, cheeks, butt, waist... Oh my God! Oh, what I would give to smell her shoes!

ADRIAN: Stop, Harold. Show some respect to your God.

HAROLD: Your pastor is a con artist.

ADRIAN: I know him better than you.

HAROLD: Yes. You already said that. Obviously you don't, because it's not the first time I've seen him. I caught him coming out of a hotel with some other young woman. You are like a mother who is saying to the police officer 'I know my son very well'. You can't know someone very well.

ADRIAN: Bible says do not judge.

HAROLD: Oh! That is church member talk. You can't judge the pastor, you can judge everyone else.

ADRIAN: Let's not pay attention to small talk. They are kind of Chinese whispers.

HAROLD: Are you listening to me? I told you I saw him

ADRIAN: Okay. If you saw him why didn't you call him?

HAROLD: I did not want to embarrass him.

ADRIAN: That implies, it was not him.

HAROLD: What do you mean it was not him?

ADRIAN: If you called him, you would know if I was really him.

HAROLD: I know, for you he may be a saint, but trust, me he is not. He's not an honest guy, Adrian.

ADRIAN: If he was a bad man, I would know that.

HAROLD: Growing up in the faith, reading the Bible every day, attending church every Sunday, busy childhood life, no girlfriends. How awful! How can you believe me? My father was a Pentecostal Church pastor. You can't imagine what I have been through. You sit there and you don't see that you are becoming just like an alcoholic or a drug addict. I am happy today, because I quit the church and put it all behind me.

ADRIAN: Whatever you say, I am not quitting the church, Harold.

HAROLD: I want to save you before it becomes too late. It's a kind of magic. At the end you start seeing a psychiatrist like a mental case.

ADRIAN: I will surely not consider myself being addicted to something. I just go to the church, and listen to what the Bible says.

HAROLD: Religion makes people do such crazy things. Remember what Karl Marx said? 'Religion is the opium of the people!

ADRIAN: That one was a sick man.

HAROLD: Do you know the story of the esoteric sect, the Solar Temple?

ADRIAN: No.

HAROLD: What do you mean 'no'?

ADRIAN: Because I don't know him.

HAROLD: All the members of the sect committed collective suicide organized by their founding father Joseph and Luc Jouret.

ADRIAN: You said yourself it was a sect.

HAROLD: It doesn't matter, whether a sect or a well-known religious group. All of them have the same objectives, maintaining their supremacy over others. They're all hypocrites and cheats. They have all false modesty and piety. Most of them have sex with married women or with small boys. Think about the Vatican and the priest scandal? To deflect public outrage, they think it is better to commit sin in private, not in public, but commit sin they do.

ADRIAN: I am a Pentecostal.

HAROLD: What difference does it make, Pentecostal, Catholic or others?

HAROLD: Think back what you told me one day! Your family were very religious; and you suffered a lot because the way they were acting with hypocrisy. We have something in common.

ADRIAN: People react differently. I admit that we have a similar problem, but that cannot make me become an atheist. I can't walk without God. The Bible has rules and I attend to follow them without myself inappropriate questions. It is true my father wasn't an example for me, but what I went through helped me to become an honourable soul.

HAROLD: Honourable soul? Maybe your father was not like mine. At a young age, we had to attend the church regularly. Okay, He was forcing us. Any refusal had a consequence, a punishment, the deprivation of meals. My step mother treated me badly, accusing of being responsible for all bad things which were happening in the house. Were reared with the idea 'God said you have to do everything your parents ask you. You should not doubt on God's word, otherwise you get to Hades. I realised today it was a kind of child abuse- disguised. I still ask myself the question, why some religious behave badly in the name of God?

ADRIAN: It is not my place to judge them.

HAROLD: I have to. I can't forget it. Adrian, don't let him turn you into the fanatic. You are clearly an intelligent man. That guy Mitchel and his church are using you. You know what? For me, the church only means three things: G.H.H.

ADRIAN: What are they?

HAROLD: Gossip, hatred, hypocrisy. That is the reason people enjoy gathering here.

ADRIAN: (LAUDLY LAUGHS.) You also hated your father.

HAROLD: It is different.

ADRIAN LLOKS AT HAROLD'S BAG. HE OPENED IT. HAROLD TAKES IT BACK.

ADRIAN: What is it in your bag?

HAROLD: Oh! I forgot that I brought for you, something which change your mind about the religion.

ADRIAN: Show me your bag. What else are you carrying in your bag?

ADRIAN WANTS TO TAKE IT AGAIN, BUT HAROLD KEEPS IT STRONGLY.

ADRIAN: (Laughing.) Maybe you are hiding employment service forms.

BOTH LAUGH

HAROLD: No, I don't do the employment service thing. I am a business man.

ADRIAN: I saw you entering there.

HAROLD: It wasn't me.

ADRIAN: Yes, it was.

HAROLD: If it was me, why didn't you call me?

ADRIAN: I don't know.

HAROLD: That means it was not me. Exactly when I did not call your pastor when he was with a girl.

ADRIAN: What business man? What products do you sell?

HAROLD: (WHISPERING ON ADRIAN'S EAR.) It's a secret.

ADRIAN: Come on, Harold. What secret?

HAROLD: (WHISPERING ON ADRIAN'S EAR.) I offer services.

ADRIAN: (WHISPERING ON HAROLD'S EAR.) What services?

HAROLD: (WHISPERING AGAIN) I'm...an escort.

ADRIAN: (LAUGHS LOUDLY) What? You an escort? What a shame that would be, eh?

HAROLD: Not out loud, Adrian, please. People will hear you. It is a very good job.

ADRIAN: A job? It's a con job, mate.

HAROLD: It is not. I entertain women and give them joy and all the pleasure they need.

ADRIAN: Are you serious?

HAROLD: It is better than getting money from poor people in the church.

ADRIAN: It is crazy the way you hate the church.

HAROLD: I don't hate the church, but people who pretend to be pious.

HAROLD OPENS HIS BAG AND TAKES AN INTERNET PAPER.

HAROLD: Let me read it for you.

ADRIAN: Is it in English?

HAROLD: Of course, yes.

ADRIAN: I can read it by myself.

HAROLD HANDS THE PAPER TO ADRIAN.

ADRIAN: A Christian priest busted for raping girls. Yamata, Kyoto - Christian... He's Japanese. Why didn't you say so?

HAROLD: What? Have you got problems with the Japanese?

ADRIAN: No. Just... hmm, they are not really Christian.

HAROLD: What do you mean by that? Are they not human beings?

ADRIAN: I did not say that. Just... Hmm... Hmm... They are not proper Christian.

HAROLD: What do you mean not 'proper Christian'?

ADRIAN: Their religion is Shintoism.

HAROLD: What's Shinto?... Whatever!

ADRIAN: Shintoism comes from Shinto. Shinto is the original natural spirit of Japan. It is a set of.....

HAROLD: (INTERRUPTING.) I don't need your lecture, Mister Lecturer. Check again. The article says: 'Christian priest'. A Christian is a Christian. A Christian can be Japanese, Chinese or Burmese.

ADRIAN: (CONTINUE THE READING) 'Christian cult leader Tamotsu Nagata, the suspected rapist of several elementary school age girls, was arrested on Wednesday, police said.' (To Harold.) Like I said, he is just a Japanese Christian. I need an article about proper Christians, like American, European, African...

HAROLD HANDS HIM ANOTHER ARTICLE.

HAROLD: What about this one?

ADRIAN: Definitely you are ready for anything to make me accept your viewpoint. (READING) 'The Catholic Church abuse cases are a series of allegations, investigations, trials and convictions of minor sexual abuse crimes committed by Catholic priests, nuns and members of Roman Catholic orders against children as young as....

ADRIAN: You're not telling me anything new here. I've known that one since I was a kid. Anyway, I am not Roman Catholic. We were calling our Parish Church 'Sango Bidoba'.

HAROLD: 'Bidoba'?

ADRIAN: A priest who was sleeping with children.

HAROLD: Wow! That's horrible. Do you mean the priest who shag boys?

ADRIAN: This is a church. Stop saying those words.

HAROLD: Why? Everyone says that.

ADRIAN: Anyway, my family was Roman Catholic before my father opts for Protestantism.

HAROLD: (SHOWING HIM ANOTHER NET DOCUMENT) This guy does not belong to the Roman Catholic. He is pure race protestant. 'Gregory Ivan Hawkins, 54, is the pastor....

ADRIAN: How do you know that?

HAROLD: Read it, please.

ADRIAN: (READING.) Gregory Ivan Hawkins, 54, is the pastor.... of Zion Plaza Church in Tulsa, Okla. He was charged in July the 23rd, 2013, with four counts of lewd molestation and two counts of assault involving the misuse of a teen relative.

TO HAROLD.

ADRIAN: Okay, you made a point. I will read it later.

HAROLD'S MOBILE PHONE IS RINGING.

HAROLD: Excuse me for a moment. Sounds like I need to answer this call.

(ANGRILY ON PHONE) Why? What made you change your mind? Tired, eh? I don't believe you. You should call me around six o'clock. What are you up to? Are you sure there's nothing else?

He HANG UP THE PHONE. HE APPROACHES ADRIAN.

ADRIAN: Why are you so upset?

HAROLD: She's not going to the club tonight.

ADRIAN: Who?

HAROLD: My girlfriend. She is not coming with me to the club tonight.

ADRIAN: Maybe something came up.

HAROLD: Or maybe she found someone else. Women change their mind like the weather.

ADRIAN: Have a seat Harold. Don't make yourself depressed. Anyway, what makes you think like that? Has she cheated on you once?

HAROLD: No.

ADRIAN: What is the problem, then?

HAROLD: Just, hmm... I love her so much.

ADRIAN: Trust her and think positive. Everything will be good. Do you need some advice?

HAROLD: (LAUGHING) Advice from you?

ADRIAN: Yes, why not? Don't even give one hundred percent

of your love in a girlfriend. Give her sixty percent and keep forty. So when she decides to leave you, you will not suffer a lot.

HAROLD: Where did you learn that?

ADRIAN: I saw it on the television.

HAROLD: Son of a bitch.

BOTH LAUGH.

ADRIAN: Take a glass of wine, drink and forget about that this evening. You will see tomorrow everything will good.

HAROLD: Shit, you are incredible.

HAROLD: Now you are talking.

ADIAN: I'll try.

HAROLD: That is what I was talking about.

ADRIAN: Shit. You know what, Harold? Try to read the Bible sometimes.

HAROLD: Oh no, Adrian! I read that a lot.

ADRIAN: It is good for your spirituality.

HAROLD: What spirituality. I meditate all the time. Isn't it the spirituality? I need some fresh air, not spirituality. Let me repair your pastor's laptop.

ADRIAN STARTS READING AGAIN THE INTERNET PAPER.

ADRIAN: Gregory Ivan Hawkins! Yamata Kyoto! Jesus-Christ.

Enter PASTOR MITCHEL.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yamamoto? Are you learning Japanese now?

ADRIAN: No. We are talking about those bad pastors in Japan.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What is this again? Japanese cannot be pastors. They do something else like Kendo, karate.

ADRIAN: Kendo and karate are sport, not religion.

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is their religion.

ADRIAN: Come and read.

ADRIAN: ADRIAN HANDS THE PAPER TO PASTOR MITCHEL.
You, pastor. There are too many questions without
enough answers in the religion.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What are you up to, Adrian? Are you losing your
faith?

(AFTER THE READING) Bullshit!

ADRIAN: Pastor!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Oh, sorry! Bible always answers every single
question.

ADRIAN: Give me some answers after you read this.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Shit!

ADRIAN: Pastor! You can't swear.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Oh, sorry! Don't you understand that your
neighbour wants to put in a deep shit with the
Lord?

ADRIAN: Pastor!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Oh shit! Sorry again.

HAROLD: (TO ADRIAN) Why is saying sorry all the time? That
is awful.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO HAROLD.) You, shut up ... (TO ADRIAN)
All those articles are fake.

ADRIAN: Why can't you envisage the possibility that they
are authentic?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Maybe it is just kind of racism.

ADRIAN: That is what I thought when I first read the
article.

HE HANDS ANOTHER PAPER TO PASTOR MITCHEL.

Read this one.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Japanese again? I have never heard about Japanese
Christians in my life.

ADRIAN: Well! You are wrong.

ADRIAN'S MOBILE PHONE RINGS.

ADRIAN: (ON THE PHONE.) No, I haven't seen anyone yet. I know, but I don't want to get married at the age of twenty-five year like you. No. I don't need a post pack. I will let you know when I am ready. No. I don't want to get married right away. I am telling you I don't necessitate a post pack. I will choose myself, my wife when I will be ready. I don't need your money, dad. Church? Yes, I am actually still attending. I will speak to you later. Yes. Call me in half an hour. I am very busy now. Yes. I know that.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Who was it?

ADRIAN: My dad. He wants me to find a woman. I am even surprised he called me. He never showed an interest in me. Pastor, I need answers.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Well! You can call on God. I might confess that at any time I have some doubts, I call on God. God loves you, Adrian. The bible says: 'Everything you ask will be given to you.'

ADRIAN: Are you kidding? How? Do you have his telephone number?

PASTOR MITCHEL PUTS HIS PHONE ON HIS EAR AND STARTS TALKING.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yes, Lord. It is your servant. Yes.

HE WALKS TO THE CORNER OF THE SCENE.

I know he is a bit stubborn, but I will try. Yes, my Lord. I will tell him. I will give it to him. Amen!

HE HANGS OFF.

ADRIAN: Are you kidding me? I did not hear your phone ringing.

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is the miracle of God. This is the number. Call on him, he will answer you.

ADRIAN: Son of bitch!

BOTH LAUGH.

ADRIAN: Okay! What do you want me to tell him?

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are the one who is complaining, Adrian, not me. Use your brain instead.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: Is she alive or dead?

ADRIAN: She had been burned by English people. The One hundred year war, do you remember?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: Oh yes. I appeared to her once.

ADRIAN: But you did not prevent her being burned alive.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: I could not because she blasphemed.

ADRIAN: Against who?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: Okay! Maybe I had false information.

ADRIAN: I have another question for you. Why don't you prevent all crimes which happen in this world?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: I recognise that people are not happy thinking that I don't do anything about those crimes, especially committed by religious. But you know, everything has its moment.

ADRIAN: I know you are the Almighty, the Master of the universe. But in our country elders say adults can also dance in the sound of tom-tom play by the young. You don't mind me giving you some ideas, do you?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: Of course, not. You can.

ADRIAN: You know, Mister Almighty, you have all the power, can't you just help them to stop what they are doing?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: When I created Adam and Eve, I gave them a free will to accept or not for what I asked them.

ADRIAN: You mean kind of democracy.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: No. More than that. It is the theocracy.

ADRIAN: Theocracy is the dictatorship disguised. That is what some countries are.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: My theocracy is different. I give people the opportunity to express themselves like I did to Adam and Eve.

ADRIAN: I believe you, dear Almighty, but people continue to blame you because they suffer all the time.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: I know that. It is easy to blame me for the abuses and all misery. I am a God of patience and the

most theocratic of all. I am referring of god with small 'g'.

ADRIAN: I see.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: They have the right to blame me, but they are wrong.

ADRIAN: I understand that, but you are the leader and the omnipotent. In a country if the economy or health system falls down, everyone blames the regime. Have you got a government with ministers or something like that?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: Naturally, I have a government which is composed of my angels. They are like my ministers.

ADRIAN: Who is your premier minister?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: My beloved son Emmanuel is the premier minister.

ADRIAN: If he really is your beloved son, why did you make him killed?

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: It was a sacrifice and the only way to clear humans of their sin.

ADRIAN: I believe you could find another way to proceed.

VOICE OF ALMIGHTY: What would you do in my place?

ADRIAN: I don't know. Find a good procedure.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (OFFSTAGE) Are you talking alone, Adrian?

THE VOICE STOPS SUDDENLY. STEPS OF SOMEONE COMING.

ADRIAN: (LAUGHING LOUDLY AND REPEATING) I appear only once. Hum! He truly believed he could fool me.

ENTER HAROLD.

HAROLD: Who?

ADRIAN: No one.

HAROLD: I heard you talking with someone.

ADRIAN: I was on the phone.

HAROLD: Oh okay if you say so.

ADRIAN: I had some business with...

HAROLD: (INTERRUPTING) ... What kind of business was that?

ADRIAN: The kind of business which is not yours.

HAROLD: I see.

HAROLD: I need your help, Adrian.

ADRIAN: What do you want, now?

HAROLD: I am suspecting my girlfriend of cheating on me.

ADRIAN: It is normal. Does she know you do escort?

HAROLD: No.

ADRIAN: They always know.

HAROLD: What do you mean?

ADRIAN: Women always know when a man is cheating. Did you interrupt my business for that?

HAROLD: Stop, Adrian. What business, Adrian?

ADRIAN: If I tell you, you will not believe me.

HAROLD: Try me.

ADRIAN: I was talking with God, the Almighty.

HAROLD: (LAUGHING LOUDLY Are you serious?

ADRIAN: Yes, I am.

HAROLD: No. You are just kidding.

HE SITS.

Can't wait. Shoot.

ADRIAN: Nothing to shoot. What makes you think your girlfriend is cheating?

HAROLD: Don't dodge the question, please!

ADRIAN: Harold!

HAROLD: It's a kind of intuition.

ADRIAN: Intuition?

HAROLD: My intuition is always right.

ADRIAN: Oh, okay if you think so.

HAROLD: You see. I believe in it so strongly.

ADRIAN: Sometimes the intuition can be wrong. Maybe you are thinking so much negative.

HAROLD: I don't know. Sometimes her phone is turned off. When I get her finally, the only excuse she gives me is that 'It was in silent mode'.

ADRIAN: You are just jealous, Harold.

HAROLD: Me, jealous? No.

ADRIAN: You can't admit it. You know what?

HAROLD: Women do that most of the time.

ADRIAN: How can you be a misogynist? Men do that too. Most of the time when they are with someone else, they turn the phone off.

HAROLD: Please tell me what I can do.

ADRIAN: I can't believe the master of women is asking my advice.

HAROLD: Please!

ADRIAN: That's fine. The only way is to trust her.

HAROLD: You are not helping me.

ADRIAN: I don't know what to say.

HAROLD: How can you be so unhelpful Adrian? I am sure it is because you read too much into the Bible.

ENTER PASTOR MITCHEL AND HIS BODY GUARDS.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO ADRIAN) I heard you talking to yourself.

ADRIAN: Not at all. I was talking with the Almighty.

PASTOR MITCHEL SITS. HE PRETENDS NOT TO KNOW THAT IT WAS HIS BODY GUARDS VOICE.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you mean God, the Almighty?

ADRIAN: Yes. You told me to call on him and I did it.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are lying. You did not see him.

ADRIAN: Why should I lie?

PASTOR MITCHEL: To impress me.

ADRIAN: Impress you for what, pastor?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you mean God like God? The one who appeared to Moses appeared to you?

ADRIAN: Yes, his voice. Even Moses has never seen him. No one can see him my friend.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Maybe it was in your dreaming. A lot of people dream talking with kings, queens, presidents, celebrities... In reality, they don't.

ADRIAN: Do you remember what you told me? 'Ask and you will receive'. That is what I did.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I was joking.

ADRIAN: (IRONICALLY) Dear Church minister, don't joke with Lord's plans.

HAROLD: Lord's ways are always impenetrable.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Shut up. I am not talking to you. (TO ADRIAN) If God wants to speak to someone, it will be me and not you.

ADRIAN: Why is that?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why? Oh! You with your 'why'. It is because I am his servant.

ADRIAN: Well, this time he preferred me. He was so fantastic. He would tell me lots of things if Harold did not interrupt us.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Will he come back?

ADRIAN: You know better than me he never comes twice. Read well your Bible that is what he said to me.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Hmm!

HAROLD: Mister Pastor is jealous.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Me, jealous? No.

HAROLD: Why did your face change like that, my Reverend Pastor?

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is not your business.

ADRIAN: Don't be jealous my friend. One day, he will talk to you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you really think I believe you?

ADRIAN: Are you playing the Apostle Thomas?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am even worse than him.

ADRIAN: Man of not much faith.

HAROLD: (TO PASTOR MITCHEL.) You told him to call on God, didn't you? You said 'Ask and you will receive'. That's what he did.

PASTOR MITCHEL: This is a discussion between Christians. It is not your business. Anyway, I was joking when I told him that.

HAROLD
(IRONICALLY.) Dear Church minister, don't joke with the Lord's plans. His ways are impenetrable.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO HAROLD.) You shut up. I am not talking to you.
TO ADRIAN.
Tell me. What did you ask him?

ADRIAN: I asked him about the hypocrisy of the religious.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why asking God, a stupid question like that?

ADRIAN: Do you think hypocrisy is not a sin?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Not really.

ADRIAN: You are not serious, are you?

HAROLD: Did he give you any answers?

ADRIAN: He answered to some of my doubts. During our conversation, of course, he blamed Satan, but human beings are also responsible for the bad behaviour.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you see? He told you himself the world is under Satan's influence. The duplicity of the evil one is too complex for Christians, like us. Satan is a real strong being. God is really good. He loves you and gives you the opportunity to accomplish everything you desire.

ADRIAN: (IRONICALLY.) You are right. This is the reason

people act the way they do, so they can lay the blame on Satan.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You don't believe in Satan power, do you?

ADRIAN: No. And I don't want him to always be a scapegoat.

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is not because he is a God of love, he can't get angry. It happened in the past.

HAROLD: Rubbish! If God is good and love, he should be hefty enough to deal with Satan and all the evil in the universe. He must be evil himself, to have the capacity and do nothing about it. Do you know what? I'm not finished with him yet. I'd like to ask him some questions.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO HAROLD.) Shut up!

HAROLD: (TO ADRIAN.) This a challenge to God, Adrian. Call him again.

ADRIAN: I am not challenging him. I am challenging those who serve him with hypocrisy. He is not the problem. He gave to everyone, especially his servants to do well, but...

PASTOR MITCHEL: (INTERRUPTING.)...He is infallible, but we are not. Damn it! I already told you if God wants to speak to someone, it should be me, his humble servant!

HAROLD: Sorry, guys. I'm going to leave you specialists of God to iron out your differences. I don't want to be part of a fight between childhood friends. I have to finish the laptop.

ADRIAN: Stay, please!

HAROLD: I don't need to stay here.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Let him go this son of a bitch.

HAROLD: What did you call me?

HAROLD APPROACHES PASTOR MITCHEL AND WANTS TO GRAB HIM ON HIS SHIRT. PASTOR MITCHEL'S BODY GUARDS INTERVENE.

HAROLD: I'm not going anymore. I'll stay right here.

ADRIAN: You are so naughty a pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Jesus, when furious, scattered people who dealt in front of the temple.

ADRIAN: For God's sake! You are not Jesus. You are pastor Mitchel.

PASTOR MITCHEL STARTS JUMPING

PASTOR MITCHEL: Out from here, you evil spirit! Lord, bless this house. Bless my brother Adrian, let them not fall into this trap.

ADRIAN: I don't even recognise you anymore.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What are you talking about?

ADRIAN: I am talking about your way of life. You don't encourage people by acting like a criminal.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (FURIOUS) He will break him the way he did Egyptians when they enslaved Israel.

ADRIAN: You don't even believe in what you are talking about. If you read the holy book of the Egyptians, it will tell you a different side of the story.

PASTOR MITCHEL: The Bible is the only book which tells the truth.

HAROLD: What about the Koran, the Tanhak, the Tipitaka, the Vedas and the Kojiki?

PASTOR MITCHEL: You, again?

HAROLD: My dear friend, everyone tells stories in their way. That is strange.

PASTOR MITCHEL: God does not recognize those books.

HAROLD: Why?

PASTOR MITCHEL: They have rejected his son, Emmanuel.

HAROLD: Did they?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Everyone has to accept my son, Emmanuel, but they did not. They take him like a simple prophet. Sending him to the earth was an expiatory sacrifice, the lamb who has to free the world of its sin. And the salute comes from him.

HAROLD: Like a father, who has two children, but only loves one. Reminds me of the story of Isaac and Esau.

PASTOR MITCHEL: God likes testing his people. It is the best way to know if they still believe in him.

HAROLD: That is ridiculous. Does he like playing with

people's lives? I can't believe that.

ADRIAN: You got all wrong. God is not the one to blame.

HAROLD: Observing them dying?

ADRIAN: He created the life for a purpose, not for destroying people.

HAROLD: If he created life for a purpose, why end it before it can fulfil that purpose?

PASTOR MITCHEL: He recognises that he allowed the evil, but it does not mean he did it. Human beings need to be punished. They are all like children. You have to shake them a little before they listen to you.

HAROLD: Including you!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Did you start again? I will break your neck.

ADRIAN: Can't you two behave like adults? I am fed up to be your baby all the time.

PASTOR MITCHEL: He's corrupting you. My God! Can't you see that?

ADRIAN: I don't need your help. I am big enough to take care of myself.

HAROLD OPENS ANOTHER BOTTLE OF WINE. HE STARTING POUR ONTO PLASTIC CUPS.

HAROLD: I suggest peace now. Let's forget everything for a while. Cheers!

PASTOR MITCHEL STANDS AWAY FORM THE BOTTLE OF WINE.

ADRIAN: Chill out! It is just a drink after all.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you know that God's servant does not have to drink alcohol?

ADRIAN: I am not sure in what you are saying, pastor. You are wrong.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Am I?

ADRIAN: Give me your Bible. I will show what the Bible says about the matter.

PASTOR MITCHEL REFUSES TO HAND THE BIBLE TO ADRIAN. ADRIAN GRABS IT. HE OPENS THE BIBLE.

ADRIAN: The first letter of Paul to Timothy says 'No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.' And you know that during a party, Jesus turned water into wine. So what is the problem if you are Jesus' followers?

PASTOR MITCHEL: At that time, the wine did not contain alcohol.

ADRIAN: Rubbish! Wine contains alcohol since the beginning of the universe. Tell me, if the wine did not contain alcohol that time, how come people were sometimes drunk?

PASTOR MITCHEL: In another letter of Paul to Timothy says 'They must not drink the alcohol.'

ADRIAN: Who says?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Leaders of the church.

ADRIAN: Can you, please, give me the chapter?

PASTOR MITCHEL: (HESITATING) Hmm...Hmm... I will give it to you another day.

ADRIAN: The chapter in reality says that 'Deacons likewise must be dignified, not addicted to too much wine.' You see, all you pastors omit that voluntarily.

PASTOR MITCHEL: We don't.

ADRIAN: Yes, you do.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are misinterpreting the Holy Scripture.

ADRIAN: Let me tell you a little story. This happened during a wedding party in the North of France. While the pastor was there, everyone one had to drink orange or apple juice. No one could dance as the music was religious.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Stop lying Adrian.

ADRIAN: I am not. When the pastor left the party, it was a stream of alcohol and then the music changed rhythm. It was kind of when the cat is away, the mouse will dance. Is it not an example of the hypocrisy which occurs in most of your church? Are you sure the Almighty approves of this kind of attitude?

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are lying.

ADRIAN: I did not finish yet. He took off his clothes and

lay on the bed. Some minutes later, the woman, her husband and some friends came in. They found him naked, they started beating him, and then they sent him out naked in the street. Some Indian people gave him some clothes. The husband took the bottle of wine and whisky to the pastor. Do you know what happened? The pastor did not even take reprehensive decision. He protected his member.

PASTOR MITCHEL: How do you know that?

ADRIAN: I have my sources.

PASTOR MITCHEL: How come I have never heard that story?

ADRIAN: You are a pastor. They wouldn't tell you that.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You don't need to stick with that guy in criticizing God's servant who...

ADRIAN: What is saying is true. You mercilessly raise poor members' money to make yourself rich.

PASTOR MITCHEL: That is not fair, Adrian. I am your friend. You can't accuse me like that. You are one of us.

ADRIAN: Well! I am not anymore.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You have to rebuke yourself.

ADRIAN: If I don't tell you that, no one will do it. I am helping you and at the same time giving you the opportunity to correct your vice.

PASTOR MITCHEL'S MOBILE RINGS. HE HESITATES TO PICK IT UP.

ADRIAN: Your phone, pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yes, okay.

HE PICKS IT UP.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Hello. Yes, I understand. It is a matter of urgency. Give me fifteen minutes.

ADRIAN: What is the problem?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Nothing important. Just a little business.

ADRIAN: Are you sure you are not hiding something from me?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I have never lied to you before, Adrian. I will not start today.

ADRIAN: Hope that you did not put yourself in trouble.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Me, in the shit? No. It can't happen. I will be back. I have to bless someone in my office.

HE EXITS.

HAROLD: Why is he in rush? I already told you, your pastor is weird.

ADRIAN: (TO HAROLD) I can stake my life on it. He is not telling me the truth. I am sure that he is in trouble.

HAROLD; He is hiding something. I am sure he has no honest plans. He is also a womaniser. Seriously were you talking with God, the Almighty and the creator of the universe?

ADRIAN: No. I was just pulling his leg. I knew it was one of his body guard voice.

SUDDENLY HAROLD AND ADRIAN HEAR PASTOR MITCHEL'S VOICE FROM THE OFFICE.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (OFFSTAGE.) You will see the impossibilities being made possible. Every blockage barrier will become technical unblock for you. Everything you are looking for, you will get it. I pray for you that the ticket for Dubai comes. Let it go. You will have everything you want. Say amen in the name of Jesus.

THE WOMAN: (OFFSTAGE) Amen!

THEN PASTOR MITCHEL STARTS SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

HAROLD APPROACHES THE DOOR. HE LOOKS AT THE HOLE IN THE DOOR. HE SEES PASTOR MITCHEL WANTING TO KISS A WOMAN.

HAROLD: Oh my God! It's too intense and spiritual for me.

ADRIAN: What now?

HAROLD: Come Adrian. There is a woman inside. He's with the pastor.

ADRIAN APPROACHES HIM.

ADRIAN: So what?

HAROLD: It is not allowed.

ADRIAN: What do you mean not allowed? By who?

HAROLD: By the church, of course.

ADRIAN: They are just sharing God's word.

HAROLD: By trying to kiss her? Wow! What kind of sharing?

ADRIAN: He just wanted to bless her.

HAROLD: Using his mouth?

ADRIAN: Pastor Mitchel is a good lad. He does not interested in those kind of things.

HAROLD: What kind of things?

ADRIAN: You know what I am talking about. Stop pretending.

HAROLD: Wait a minute! I know that woman. She is the one I saw with him in the cinema. Adrian, come and look.

ADRIAN: Maybe he is blessing her.

BOTH LAUGH.

HAROLD: Do you know her?

ADRIAN: Yes, it is the sister Bernadette. She is in the choir.

HAROLD: I told you.

ADRIAN: Stop saying all the time you told me.

HAROLD: Because you did not believe me.

WHILE THEY ARE WATCHING, PASTOR MITCHEL OPENS THE DOOR. THEY QUICKLY LEAVE. PASTOR MITCHEL ENTERS THE STAGE. HE IS SWIPPING HIS FACE.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (EMBARRASSED) Oh my God! The devils who possessed this woman were really strong. In the name of God, they all left.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD LOOK AT THE PASTOR MITCHEL WITHOUT SAYING AWORD.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What?

ADRIAN AND HAROLD: Nothing.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What do you mean, nothing? Why are staring at me? Have you never seen someone is sweating?

ADRIAN: You, tell us.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Tell you what?

ADRIAN: We saw you trying to kiss that woman.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Oh that! I was just blessing her.

HAROLD: By trying to kiss her?

PASTOR MITCHEL I was just tempted by Satan.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD: Oh! Tempted by Satan.

PASTOR MITCHEL: So what?

ADRIAN: Couldn't you bless her here in the church?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Because in the office it is powerful.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD: Powerful! Oh that!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yes, powerful. Especially to avoid all the looks of the curious.

ADRIAN: (TO HAROLD.) Maybe we could give him the benefit of the doubt, Harold.

HAROLD: Do you think?

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD: Oh yes! It could do.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Guys! Everyone can be tempted by that kind of girl. Even Jesus was tempted by Satan.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD: We know, but not in that way, pastor Mitchel.

HAROLD: Pastor, you know...

PASTOR MITCHEL: (INTERRUPTING AND TO ADRIAN)...Is that your friend still here?

ADRIAN: It is not him the problem. We need to talk, pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What do you want to talk about?

ADRIAN: What is the mortal sin between refusing the Lord's word and committing the fornication?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why this question?

ADRIAN: You know why I am asking this question.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't know what you are talking about.

ADRIAN: Come on, Pastor MITCHEL! You know that very well.

PASTOR MITCHEL: If you need something, I told you I am ready to help.

ADRIAN: I don't want anything from you, PASTOR MITCHEL. I just want the truth.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am your friend.

ADRIAN: You can't corrupt me. I refuse to be an accomplice. One day, all the money you receive from the church members will put you in trouble. Everything will blow up on you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't do anything illegal. Second of the Corinthians chapter nine and verse six says 'But as to this, he that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that bountifully will also reap bountifully'.

ADRIAN: How come most of the pastors are cons? They use these kind of verses to con their members. Pity for those members who give ten per cent of their salary every month!

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't con church members. Besides, members freely give money for the Lord.

ADRIAN: Does the Lord need the money? Look at you, pastor. The television channel which supposes to be for the church community belongs to you. You have a nice car bought with the church money. I also heard that you own some hotels back home. You show off yourself when you send some packs in the third world.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I do what the Lord asks me to do. What exactly is the problem?

ADRIAN: Have you no shame when you receive money from poor people? You oblige them to pay ten percent of their money. Let me do the calculation for you. Hundred forty-seven pounds, time ten, divide two hundred.

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is only fourteen pounds seventy pence. So what is the problem? May I remind you that most of them have three to five children and they receive child benefit and child tax credit?

ADRIAN: They also give money every Sunday.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Adrian! They only give one pound every Sunday.

HAROLD: One pound a month? How many members do you have?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Shut up?

ADRIAN: All these years, I thought I knew you. Tell me about the three and a half million you collected for the church complexes? I heard that you build luxury flats with that money.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Eh Adrian! It is me, pastor, MITCHEL, your friend. I did not change.

ADRIAN: People should give voluntarily. And the money has to be kept in the church community account for expensive and helping members. You put it in your pocket. Look at your car, your dress and your jewels. You even have body guards. Did Jesus have body guards?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Yes, his apostles. Didn't you read that Peter cut one of the soldiers' ears?

ADRIAN: I also know that Jesus did not like it.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't approve all of the bad actions of my bodyguards. They are there to protect me. There are lots of competitions in our world.

ADRIAN: You mean in the world of false church ministers?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am not one of them. I hold a degree in the Bible High education. My ministry comes from Nazareth.

ADRIAN: I am sure from there you learn how to scam members, particularly women.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am a pastor, but I need to eat, pay my rent and my expenses.

ADRIAN: Ah!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Would you denounce me?

ADRIAN: No. You will do it by yourself.

PASTOR MITCHEL: No way!

ADRIAN: Yes, way.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I will lose everything, my members, my church, my television channel.

ADRIAN: God will appreciate it.

PASTOR MITCHEL: We are in the jungle, Adrian, don't you see? You have to eat people before they eat you.

ADRIAN: Oh my God! Harold was right. I defended you when he told me that you are not the one I was thinking you are. You are so heartless.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Are you even listening to your gay friend?

ADRIAN: You see. You are not even able to understand what I keep telling you. Harold is not a gay. He is far better than you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: He is an evil spirit and a womanizer.

ADRIAN: Are you not? After Harold saw you with a girl, I tried to find some information. The girl's name is Bernadette. Everyone knows that you go out with her. She is not the only one. Rumours say you are sleeping with more than five young women from the church. Do you know the silly thing? They started being jealous of each other.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't have time for gossips.

ADRIAN: Small talk? I wouldn't be so sure if I was you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: They are all liars. Some members of my church want to put me down and take my place. Be sure my friend, it won't happen. I am God. I am like Moses. I transmit commandments, and they obey.

ADRIAN: That is what I was talking about. Everything is about you. You think you are the centre of everything. That is too bad for a man who is claiming to be a God's servant.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am a human being, you know.

ADRIAN: Your church members trusted you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Many times, I gave you the opportunity to join me, but you have never accepted.

ADRIAN: You know me, pastor, Mitchel. I am not like that. I don't have the money, but I will not do such things.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are a very stubborn man I have ever known.

ADRIAN: I am not a stubborn person. I just want to be honest.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Honest people don't become rich.

ADRIAN: Thank you, God's servant.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why thanks me?

ADRIAN: You've given me the answer I was looking for.

PASTOR MITCHEL: What answer?

ADRIAN: To become rich, you have to con people. Whatever the means. Well! Being a church minister gives you the opportunity to ruin the most vulnerable. I now understand the reason why God permits bad people to get everything.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am not a bad guy. You are wrong. I regard myself as a 'conduit of God'. I help to find their passion, to cure impotency and infertility, help them to hold an advanced career and I make them even wealthy.

ADRIAN: That is why you use magic to impress your members?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Come on, Adrian. Join me.

ADRIAN: No. All my life I always try to do the right thing and do as many good works for people as possible without needing anything in return. But it seems like no matter how much good I do, I only receive bad karma in return. Other people I know who do bad things are prospering and I am still where I was five years ago. They get a lot, because they don't care who they hurt to get it. I hope that they will receive their punishment one day.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Maybe not in this life, but next time around, they will be born as a dew worm or some such and some guy will come along and use them as bait on a hook.

ADRIAN: It's a joke for you, isn't it? This is the reason, I started asking myself some questions about God and the religion.

PASTOR MITCHEL: In the near future, everything will be fine.

ADRIAN: When? In the paradise? I can't recognise you anymore. Where is gone this friend who was ready to help when people had problems?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am the same person. I suggested to pay for you your booking fees so you can work with me, but you refused. You are an intelligent man, Adrian. Stop your madness. You will not change the world. The world will remain as it is.

ADRIAN: I am not trying to change the world. I am just trying to stop people like you for taking advantage on poor and vulnerable people. Two years ago, a ten-year-old girl was sent back to Africa accused of witchcraft. I asked you if you were involved, you said you were not.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Have you been investigating of me now?

ADRIAN: I want my friend back.

PASTOR MITCHEL: It is too late. I can't give up on everything I worked for.

ADRIAN: For God's sake, you did not work hard for that. You are simply stealing money from your own members.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I would take a stab from someone else, but coming from you, I am very disappointed.

ADRIAN: I am not the one you have to blame. You have to blame yourself because you chose this path. I can't understand why the religion, in general, is full of hypocrisy. People who see themselves as religious hold some values, but fail to realise what those values mean.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you believe you hold the monopoly of morals?

ADRIAN: You are the pastor. I heard talking about your judicial setbacks with your solicitor. That is strange you are hiding it to me.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Everything is fine. Why should I hide something from you?

PASTOR MITCHEL'S MOBILE STARTS RINGING
INCESSANTLY, BUT HE IS NOT PICK UP.

ADRIAN: Why don't you answer your phone? Any trouble my dear pastor?

PASTOR MITCHEL: No.

PASTOR MITCHEL TURNS OFF THE CALL.

ADRIAN: Why can't you pick up the call? You are a pastor. You suppose to show a good and irreproachable

example.

PASTOR MITCHEL: For what are you blaming me? I serve my God every day.

ADRIAN: By flirting with church members? By not being tolerant? By being a hypocrite?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why am I listening to you, anyway?

ADRIAN: Do you really think I was born yesterday? It is true, I did not want to believe it when I heard everything, but now my eyes are opened.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I can't get it anymore. You are becoming crazy. I will be back when you finish with your frenzy. Damn it! I already told you they are all gossips.

ADRIAN: Gossips, huh!

PASTOR MITCHEL IS RINGING AGAIN. HE PICKS UP AND EXITS. AT THE SAME TIME ADRIAN'S MOBILE PHONE RINGS TOO.

ADRIAN: Yes. Not only is he sleeping with church members, he is also taking advantage of the church money. I heard that he built more than two villas there.

THE VOICE: Yes, I can confirm. He has lots of assets here.

ADRIAN: I know he is human and can be weak, but he need to give an example. That is why lots of people don't believe in the religion anymore. No. I am not becoming an atheist. I will always trust in God. I just hate all those pastors who work for money and forget the principle of honesty. I am talking to him, but he is denying all the facts. I am not quitting God, but I will quit the church.

ENTER PASTOR MITCHEL.

ADRIAN: Pastor Mitchel! I am quitting.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Pardon me?

ADRIAN: You heard me. I am leaving.

PASTOR MITCHEL: May I wait for you tomorrow?

ADRIAN: I said I quit your church. I don't want to work for you anymore.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You have no right to do this to me. You can't quit the Lord.

ADRIAN: I am not quitting the Lord, but your church.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why?

ADRIAN: Don't do like you don't know what is happening, pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: At least this son of a bitch is gone.

ADRIAN: Can you hear yourself what you are saying?

PASTOR MITCHEL: He is doing everything to separate us. Can't you see that?

ADRIAN: No. You are doing everything to separate us. Not him. You are exactly like Gregory Ivan Hawkins, Yamata Kyoto!

PASTOR MITCHEL: Gregory Ivan, Yamamoto. What is it all about?

ADRIAN: It is Yamata. No Yamamoto. They are like you. They don't respect God. They abuse their church members.

PASTOR MITCHEL: So what? We are all human beings. We can make mistakes. We pray every day because we want to stop making mistakes, but it is not easy. Now can we change the conversation?

ADRIAN: Why? That is bothering you?

PASTOR MITCHEL: We need to chat about something positive like God blessed our church. We now have three and a half million in our account.

ADRIAN: Is it the only thing which interests you?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Of course, not. How can you say that?

ADRIAN: God servants don't have to act like that. You know what, I need answers.

PASTOR MITCHEL: God loves you, Adrian. Through the Bible, he provides enough answers. Maybe you should talk to your father. The bible says 'Everything you ask will be given to you.'

ADRIAN: I know God exists. My problem is why he can't stop his servants committing sexual crimes and abusing women.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Are you blaming me for something?

ADRIAN: Are you blaming yourself for something? You said you did not abuse that woman in your office. So what is your problem?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't like the way you said it.

ADRIAN: Why?

ENTER HAROLD.

HAROLD: I told you. They all act weird.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Shut up. (TO ADRIAN) I will kill your gay friend.

HAROLD: I heard you. I am not a gay.

PASTOR MITCHEL: He is not a gay. I already told.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Why is he corrupting?

HAROLD: Is he your dad? (To the PASTOR) Remember! I am still repairing your stupid laptop. Stop being a weird.

PASTOR MITCHEL: (TO HAROLD.) Get lost.

HAROLD: Why?

ADRIAN: Yes, why?

PASTOR MITCHEL: I don't like him.

ADRIAN: Why? What did the Bible says about your neighbour?

ADRIAN: Fine. I am quitting

PASTOR MITCHEL: Because you asked him to leave.

ADRIAN IS GOING TOWARDS THE EXIT. PASTOR MITCHEL FOLLOWS HIM.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Please, Adrian. Don't go. We can have an arrangement.

ADRIAN STOPS NEAR THE EXIT AND LOOKS AT PASTOR MITCHEL.

ADRIAN: What arrangement?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Please for our friendship's sake sit down a bit.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I can help you to find a good job. I have good friends who can help. You will get a good salary. I need you in the church Adrian. Please, stay.

ADRIAN: Thank you very much for the offer, but I can't. I don't have any more time for the church. I have to concentrate on my studies.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I will pay for your studies.

ADRIAN: No, pastor. Do you think all is about the money? Emmanuel can take my place. He's a good guy.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I just don't have any confidence in him.

ADRIAN: (IRONICALLY.) Didn't Jesus say you have to trust each other?

PASTOR MITCHEL: He worked for me sometimes ago, but he wasn't honest. I need an honest man like you.

ADRIAN: What I am doing here is illegal.

PASTOR MITCHEL: God will understand because you are doing his work. Your God has to be in the first place. (Pause) What I am offering you will help you in your studies. I am sure you need something.

PASTOR MITCHEL TAKES MONEYS FROM HIS WALLET.

ADRIAN: I can't, PASTOR MITCHEL.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Please Adrian!

ADRIAN: No, pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: As you wish!

ADRIAN: My last advice as a friend is for you have to give up.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Give up? I already told you, I can't do that. After what I have been through by building this Church you are asking me to stop. What do you want to do after that?

ADRIAN: Find a proper job.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Do you want to do a kitchen porter, cleaning? Stop It, Adrian. I can't lose all my privileges.

ADRIAN: Then one day you will be in trouble. And don't come to me.

PASTOR MITCHEL MOBILE PHONE RINGS. HE CHECKS IT AND EXITS.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Don't go yet, please. We need to discuss.

HAROLD: Where is he going again? What's wrong with him? I don't understand why religious people act like witches.

ADRIAN: Maybe he went to check it or something else. He is so preoccupied.

HAROLD: Eh! This guy has a hell of a Jeep. It must have cost a fortune. Where does he get the money from?

ADRIAN: I don't know. Ask him.

HAROLD: Why do you keep saying 'ask him'?

ADRIAN: You are always asking me questions about him.

HAROLD: You said you know him better.

ENTER PASTOR MITCHEL.

PASTOR MITCHEL: I am in the shit. I am in the shit. I am in the shit.

ADRIAN AND HAROLD LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

ADR. AND HAR: How shit?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Very deep shit!

ADRIAN: I told you. I told you. I told you.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Stop repeating every time, you told me. Have you ever made a mistake? You suppose to help me.

ADRIAN: How can I help you after hiding things to me?

PASTOR MITCHEL: Don't take it seriously, Adrian.

HAROLD: Oh! Come on, pastor.

PASTOR MITCHEL: Shut up. It is not your business. You, better take care of your escort business.

HAROLD: Who told you that?

PASTOR MITCHEL: My little finger! I like my little finger.

HAROLD LOOKS AT ADRIAN You.

HAROLD: I will kill you.

ADRIAN: Sorry.

HAROLD: (TO PASTOR MITHEL.) Okay. How come your little finger didn't prevent you from being in deep shit? You know what? I'm happy you're in deep shit.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are an evil

HAROLD: No, I'm not, but you are.

PASTOR MITCHEL: You are because you don't know Jesus.

HAROLD: Well! You can ask Jesus to help you out when you go to prison.

PASTOR MITCHEL: God will be with me.

BLACKOUT, LIGHTS UP. THE CHOIRS IS ON STAGE SINGING.

CURTAIN

Synopsis

The religion scepticism is caused by those who pretend to be religious, but do not respect the commandments of God, they claim to love and serving. This is 'The Challenge.'

The Challenge is a comedy of manner. The action takes place anywhere. The play has one single space which is a closed space and a real time between seven and nine in the evening.

Adrian is the central character who is pulled between two people, his neighbour, Harold and his childhood and best friend, Mitchel, who is the pastor of a New African Pentecostal Church. Movingly, the play demonstrates how it is difficult for him to decide the way to act between his long year friendship with Mitchel and Harold he just known for living in the same building, and the impact this matter will set up conflict within this personal relationship.

THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

, politics ensues, we have a power struggle

It gives rise to a swath of complex issues. Perennials Church's faith tainted with capitalism ruining the vulnerable, taxing the poor and its pressures of the modern world. Braced in by fossilised traditions, keeping quiet, showing respect, anti-homosexual stances, but promiscuous exposes the hypocrisy of the African church, brave new world. Musical hybrid opera to gospel. Wit caustic. Harold the voice of temptation, trickster figure. Adrian tries hard to preserve traditional and genuine moral positions between the rock of his corrupted church and the hard place of Harold, tempter extraordinary and voice of modernity that everything is stories. Harold, who swears in the name of his grandmother a stark reminder of the lost mother religions of the past. Blurred line between saints and sinners. Harold exposes the power hungry and the hypocrisy of the church, a soap box modern. Gather together in the name of the GHH gossip, hypocrisy and hatred. Drama is in the slow erosion of Adrian's faith but is he a winner? Playful human pastor, serious Adrian. Harold is vulnerable when vesting so much in human love. Guard as a God political statement that those in power hide behind God to protect themselves. Theocracy/democracy.

Childlike faith challenges the exclusivity of the Bible and Christian faith, even Adrian is duped. Tug of war between the modern and the traditional church who almost come to fisticuffs. Peace brought about by modern mass of wine in plastic cups. Pastor Michael makes up stories to conserve his power.

Attacks tithing. The ultimate challenge not to God, but to its intermediaries. God the guard, God Adrian's literal father. MITCHEL turns out to be tempted with promises of protection, money, social mobility. Reversal of fortune he who builds his faith in money, or love of women will be prey to instability, loses friendship.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

John Tshiama NAMBOMBE, a Belgian citizen, born in Central Africa part. Started acting at the age of twelve before studying Drama at the National Institute of Arts. Worked as an actor and director in Kinshasa and Brussels. May 26th, 2013, performed as co-lead, in a political play at the Hay-on-Wye festival.

BA (HONS) in scriptwriting at the University Centre, Doncaster and he completed an MA in Scriptwriting for Screen Media and Stage at the University of South Wales, Newport.

Other plays: "Red is the Royal Blood" in April 2009 and "Question of Honour and Fidelity" in May 2010.