

Voting for God's Candidate
c. Mike Fedel 2008

connection/reading:

faith and politics/assumptions

props:

none

personnel:

Mildred - (intellectually curious, pro-Obama)
Ethel - (McCain)
Reverend Johnston
Mike - (wordy, pro McCain)
Bob - (pro Obama)
Roger - (small walk on part, unknown affiliation)
Misc voices at the back of the church

STAGING NOTES:

Part of the impact we want here is that the people involved are not dumb, not sheep. They are bright people with a blind spot when it comes to faith and politics.

Mildred, Ethel and the Reverend are sitting at a table sipping coffee and nibbling from a plate of pastries on the table in front of them.

MILDRED: So, I was reading the other day at "The Jesus Police dot com" that Jesus might have been in his *forties* when he died.

ETHEL: Who in the world are the Jesus Police?

MILDRED: They're a group of scholars who are *finally* using scientific research to establish true facts about Jesus.

ETHEL: We've been through this before - faith and reason, reason and faith. Do we have to go through it again?
[*pause*] Oh, well, so what do they say?

MILDRED: They say that if John the Baptist died in 35 A.D. and if Jesus was born around 6 B.C., that would put him in his 40's when he was crucified. [*flustered, throws her hands up*] It's like everything we know is wrong!

ETHEL: [*laughs*] No, everything we know is NOT wrong, they just have an opinion.

MILDRED: [*defensive*] No, it isn't "just an opinion", these are scientists.

They both turn to Rev Johnston who freezes in mid-sip.

ETHEL:

MILDRED: What do *you* think?

Rev Johnston sets his cup down quickly and stands up.

REV: Looks like you could use a refill...and you too...

Rev Johnston picks up their cups and heads for the kitchen. The women laugh.

ETHEL: He does *such* a good job of keeping his own counsel.

MILDRED: [*good natured ribbing*] He just didn't want to embarrass you! [*chuckle*] But I agree, he doesn't try to tell us what to think.

ETHEL: Most of the time. He speaks up when it's important.

MILDRED: I know, like this morning's sermon. It's nice to have a minister who isn't afraid to take a position at election time.

ETHEL: Oh, I completely agree. And it's nice to finally have a

chance to vote for a candidate who will return the government to the people. Who really understands what it takes to be a Christian Nation.

MILDRED: That's right.

ETHEL: I'm proud to be an American - we're God's favorites, you know.

MILDRED: That might be a bit much, but I understand your point. And, like the commercial says, it certainly IS time for a change.

ETHEL: We've got to get the government out of the hands of those special interest groups and back into the hands of good God-fearing Christians.

Two men walk up, carrying coffee cups.

BOB: [*laughing*] Did I overhear you talking politics? Here during Fellowship Time!?

MIKE: Yeah, isn't that dangerous?

ETHEL: Well, that *was* the sermon topic today.

MILDRED: It certainly seemed appropriate.

MIKE: Oh, it is. That's why we came over. People are so often reluctant to get into discussions about politics. You see, the political and the religious are often conflated by an unsuspecting...

BOB: Mike! Enough...

MILDRED: Well, Ethel here is certainly not reluctant to talk about her political ideas. Uninformed as they may be...

All laugh.

BOB: I was watching the debates the other night. [*dismissive*] Energy policy! As if there's a lot to say about that!

MIKE: [*shaking his head*] Yeah, yeah, and did you see the

commercials during the debate? The level of political discourse in this country has certainly devolved into...

BOB: Mike!

MIKE: [*pauses*] Well, come on. All the mud-slinging and innuendo in those ads. Despicable.

BOB: Well, not *all* of them.

MIKE: You know the ones I mean. From the [*motion with fingers*] "change" candidate.

ETHEL: The only change I want to see is for him to quit twisting the truth around to make his point. If our guy did that, they'd be all over him!

MILDRED: Isn't that the truth!

ETHEL: And I for one am glad to finally see some diversity in the ticket! This is an historical moment and I'm just glad God finally got around to it.

MIKE: Yes, I agree. People have too often been polarized by the overwhelming emphasis on categories of race and gender, not to mention social status and longevity. How long will it be until we desist from substituting race for gender or gender for status or status for race? Whereas it's easy to see how the one can be more appealing in a television presentation, the other seems to leave an impression of...[Notices nobody is listening and stops and takes a sip of his coffee.]

The others all look at him puzzled, but don't want to pursue it.

BOB: Well, all I can say is that it's about time we had a candidate we could feel good about.

Roger walks into the group.

ROGER: [*innocently*] Who can we feel good about?

MILDRED: We were talking about the Reverend's sermon today.

BOB: You know, his political endorsement.

ROGER: Of...?

They others chuckle.

BOB:

MIKE: "Of...?"

More chuckling.

ROGER: No, I'm serious. Who was he endorsing?

ETHEL: [*looks at Mildred, mocking*] I was "wondering" the same thing. Who do you think he was talking about?

MILDRED: [*trying to keep from breaking out laughing*] Well, I'm glad to hear you ask. It was all so very subtle and confusing to me.

ETHEL: [*suppressing laughter as well - mocking*] When he said "look into your own heart", that's when I knew who he meant.

MILDRED: And "who do you think will best steward not just us but the planet God gave us?" That gives it all away, doesn't it?

ROGER: Right, right! [*pause*] So who do you think he was talking about.

BOB: [*claps Roger on the back*] Roger, you're a riot. OK, listen, if you figure out who he was talking about, you get back to us, OK?

With a gentle nudge from Bob, Roger walks away, shaking his head.

BOB: He's such a kidder.

MIKE: But I get his point. It's like the way people pretend they're listening to the debates. As though it helps them make up their minds. I'm pretty sure that we all know who we're going to vote for long before any debates start. The latest statistical and psychological studies show that...

MILRED: *[interrupts him]* I read that it's genetic - your predisposition toward voting one way or the other.

ETHEL: Everything is scientific for you, isn't it? I just pray about it. God got me through the last five presidents.

MIKE: What about all that stuff on TV about "lack of experience"?

MILDRED: I don't think we're looking at a lack of experience.

MIKE: Neither do I. And besides, as long as one of them has it, that's pretty good, right?

ETHEL: Right, I'd just prefer that it was the president who had the experience, not the vice president.

MIKE: *[puzzled]* But, that's what we've got, the president...

MILDRED: I agree! Experience is an important question.

MIKE: That's right. And, think about it. If the vice-president and the president *both* had no experience that would be very bad. But if rather, the president had extensive experience and the vice president had somewhat less extensive experience...

BOB: Or none...

MIKE: ...yes, or none, or if you turned it around and the president had very little experience but the vice president had a lot of experience, that would be better than both of them having no experience. And, if both of them had a lot of experience, that would be bad too because that might be too much experience between them resulting in a superabundance of experience which could lead to discord.

ETHEL: *[pause]* What did he just say?

MILDRED: *[spies Rev Johnston approaching]* Oh, look who's back.
Rev. Johnston returns with two coffee cups.

REV: Here you go. So, what have you been talking about while

I was gone?

BOB: Politics.

MILDRED: Your fearless sermon today.

ETHEL: Yes, we were all quite impressed.

REV: Well, thank you. It isn't always easy to talk about politics in church.

BOB: And most of the time it IS talked about, they dodge the obvious topic...

MIKE: [to Rev] ...you included...

BOB: ...yes, you included - in the past [*wink*].

REV: Well, as I said...

MIKE: [*a bit puffed up*] Historically, too many in leadership positions have stood inactive on the sidelines of history, afraid to stand up for their beliefs and help move this country toward that glorious reintegration of state government and Christian destiny. But your fearless support of Senator McCain this morning [*everyone freezes*], demonstrates a...

Mildred, Bob and the Rev freeze in mid-sip (or whatever), Ethel just nods her head.

MIKE: ...what? (as in: "*what? did I say something wrong?*")

MILDRED: It's...just...that...he wasn't talking about McCain, he was talking about Obama.

ETHEL: Why...that's crazy talk! He was talking about the God Fearing Candidate.

BOB: That's right - Obama! Why he's got more Jesus in his little finger than McCain has in his whole bald head. You know, "feed the poor", that kind of thing?

It slowly gets heated.

MIKE: You're nuts! That's socialism, not Christianity!

ETHEL: And he's NOT bald!

MILDRED: Not yet, anyway.

ETHEL: Well, at least he's not a jet-setter, flying around the world having his picture taken all the time.

BOB: We're a world power! We have to talk to people in other countries! It's what Jesus would do!

Rev. Johnston tries to get control. Everyone can adlib to add to the confusion.

REV: Hold it, hold it, calm down. Take it easy.

Everyone slowly calms down and waits expectantly.

REV: Now, I don't want to let you down or anything, but that isn't what I was talking about at all. Remember what I said: politicians will come and go. They'll tell us what we want to hear, they'll play to our fears and hopes, but in the end, they'll be gone and the next one will come along. But Christ's love is constant - it has no boundaries, no party lines. God isn't a Republican or a Democrat. But we can still vote in a spirit of prayer - even in this polarized political culture. In fact, that's not only what we can do, but what we must do. [pause] I wasn't endorsing one candidate or the other.

ETHEL: Well, not directly! But isn't it pretty obvious that...

Rev. Johnston just stands, shaking his head 'no'.

BOB: But, what about...? [pause]

MILDRED: You were talking about... [pause]

MIKE: You mean, you weren't...

Shouts from the back of the room.

SHOUTS: "...no, he's talking about Obama!..."
"...NO, he's talking about McCain..."
"...NO, he's talking about Clinton..."
"...CLINTON?!! Are you insane? He's not even in the

race..."

"...SHE you idiot!..."

REV: *[to audience] Oh no, here we go again...[starts walking
toward the noises at the back of the church...]*

THE END

NOTE: Rev Johnston's closing speech is mostly stolen from Mark's suggestions.