

STAND UP GUYS: THE MODERN PASTOR

BY JOHN COSPER

INT. PASTOR HARRY'S OFFICE

Pastor Harry sits at his desk. A big movie poster is behind him.

HARRY

Time was when a pastor needed to go to seminary. He studied Greek and Hebrew, studied the great thinkers like Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, and simply got up and preached the word. Today's church is a little different. They don't care how many degrees you have or what the original Greek may say. They want to be entertained. And that's my job.

INT. HARRY'S CHURCH

Harry walks on stage dressed like Neo from *The Matrix*.

HARRY

My name is not Pastor Harry. My name is Neo... and I've come to save the world... Whoa!

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE

HARRY

It started when the video screen was installed. We were using it for announcements and worship song lyrics, when my associate pastor suggested we could show movie clips as illustrations. You know, like the one where Indiana Jones taking the leap of faith? The next logical step was not showing the movies, but acting them out. And people responded.

INT. HARRY'S CHURCH

Harry is dressed up like Indiana Jones, acting out the leap of faith scene.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE

Harry sits beside his wife Joyce.

JOYCE

He's a great actor. Yeah, I'm real proud of him. Considering when we met in Bible College, acting wasn't even a required skill, he's done well.

HARRY

Thanks to you.

JOYCE

Well... I did dabble in acting back in high school. I was in Godspell.

HARRY

And that comes in handy too.

INT. HARRY'S CHURCH

Harry and Joyce are dressed like Aragorn and Frodo.

JOYCE

I'll take it! I'll take the ring, Gandalf! I will take it to Mt. Doom, even though I do not know the way.

HARRY

I'll go with you.
(looks at audience)
And also with you.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE

JOYCE

The pastor's wife's job has evolved too. It's no longer hosting winter teas and quilting bees. Now I'm a part of his preparation, doing research and keeping him relevant.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE

Harry and Joyce are facing each other.

HARRY

...Teri Hatcher, Eva Longoria, and Nicolette Sheridan.

JOYCE

Who was married to Jessica, Nick Lachey or Drew Lachey?

HARRY

Nick?

JOYCE

She stole Hilary Duff's boyfriend.

HARRY

Lindsay Lohan!

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

Pastor Jeff stands out front.

JEFF

You know, I never was too good a learner, so when God commence ta call me to tha pulpit, I had no idear how I's gonna fulfill it. Thankfully, it's not about what

ya know. It's about connectin'
with people, makin' em laugh so
they wanna come back. And we've
found a great formula here.

INT. REDNECK CHURCH

Jeff is on stage with a mic. There is canned laughter in
between his jokes.

JEFF

The Lord came here for sinners.
So how do you know if you're a
sinner? If you think that
adultery is the opposite of a
nursery, ya might be a sinner.
If you think Hell is the place
that'll freeze over if your
husband takes out the trash, ya
might be a sinner. If you think
the Last Supper was the beans
and cornbread Uncle Buddy ate
before he got the chair, ya
might be a sinner.

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

JEFF

It was just amazin' how well we
connected ta people in the
beginnin'. The church started
growin' like crazy, and we
needed other pastors to come on
who could connect with our blue
collar congregation. Pastor Bill
was a great addition to the
staff.

INT. REDNECK CHURCH

Pastor Bill is on stage.

BILL

People have always tried to do
their own thing rather than obey
God. Like Jonah. He thought he

could run away from God. He gets on a ship, up comes a storm, then he gets swallowed by a fish. Here's your sign!

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

JEFF

And folks just love Larry the Youth Guy.

INT. REDNECH CHURCH

Larry the youth guy is on stage with a teenage girl.

LARRY

Everyone, this is Tiffany, and she wants to get baptized. Yeah, GIT-R-DUNK'D!!

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

JEFF

There are some who think we're sellin' our people short by not goin' deeper in the word. Them people should see some of the other folks out there. Like the prop pastors.

INT. PROP PASTOR CHURCH

Pastor Carrot is on stage with his props, getting canned laughs. He holds up a blue and pink book.

CARROT

Worship for men and women: hymnals, and her-nals!

No laughs. Holds up a pair of tongs with a ribbon and bow.

CARROT

Has anyone here received the

gift of tongs?

No laughing. He pulls out a Tickle Me Elmo.

CARROT
 Anyone heard of Tickle Me Elmo?
 It's Slain in the Spirit Elmo!

He turns on Elmo and drops it on the floor, vibrating.

INT. CHURCH - AFTER CARROT'S SHOW

CARROT
 I, uh, I gotta stop playing
 these Methodist churches. Or get
 some less charismatic jokes.

INT. PASTOR HARRY'S OFFICE

HARRY
 No, the worst we saw was at that
 summer camp. Remember Pastor G?

JOYCE
 Oh, don't remind me.

EXT. CAMP STAGE

Pastor G has a sledge-o-matic. He puts a watermelon on a stump.

PASTOR G
 This is sin! This is what I
 think of sin!

He smashes the watermelon.

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

JEFF

I dunno. I guess there are folks who think we're dumbin' down the word, and wish we'd be smarter. But them churches are still out there. And like that feller in the movie said, people always have a choice.

INT. HARRY'S CHURCH

Harry is dressed as Neo, holding a red pill and a blue pill.

HARRY

You take the blue pill - the story ends, you leave church and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill - you meet Jesus, and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.

EXT. REDNECK CHURCH

JEFF

Someone actually did that Matrix thingy? Man, we gotta use that!

THE END