

We have seen the enemy....

By David Radcliff

Based on Ephesians 4:1-6 and other New Testament texts related to Christian unity and conflict resolution

A skit for four (young) actors highlighting the root causes of conflict—whether in war time or in high school—and inviting Christians to take a different approach.

[Group is watching television as scene opens.]

1) War is so stupid. Look at what they're doing to each other over there—and they're even all Muslims.

2) It's not quite that simple—after all, Christians have fought Christians before.

1) Oh, yeah—like when!?

2) Well, there were the all the European wars of the Middle Ages, the Revolutionary War, the Spanish American War, the U.S. Civil War, World War I, World War II, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, the civil wars in Central America during the 80's...

1) O.k., but besides those...

4) (lying on couch—never raises head) Back to Iraq, didn't we kind of start it? So maybe we'd best not blame the Iraqis.

1) Yoo-hoo—we went there to save them!!

3) And it's not just between people of the same religion—you've also got deep ethnic differences between people of Persian descent, Arab descent and Kurdish ancestry. And then throw in some Iraqi Christians, the U.S. army, and who-knows-how-many jihadists from around the world—and you've got a mess.

1) But still—why can't they all just get along?!

3) Let me count the ways—oil, money, oil, political power, oil, racial differences, oil, different religious beliefs...

4) It's no different than what happens at school every day.

1) Would we be exaggerating just a bit here...!? Gum on the sidewalk is not exactly a roadside bomb...

4) No, I mean it's the same dynamics.

1) And how would you know...you just hang out with all your buds in the Honors classes and never associate with those of us at the lower end of the food chain.

4) Rest my case.

1) Wha.....!?

2) I think what he means is that right there was an example of how easy it is to divide people up based on any little thing.

1) Any little thing!? Everybody knows those people have a HUGE attitude, get all the best teachers, have the best shot at all the best colleges, and really aren't any smarter than the rest of us—just well-connected. And look (*nodding toward couch*)—lazy too.

4) Just like in Iraq. People getting stereotyped and then vilified. Anybody keeping score here?

3) That would be two points for you.

2) Can I make a point about religion?

1) Why do you have to bring religion into every conversation??

2) Because religion is already in every conversation.

1) (stunned silence for a moment) Oh cool, so we not only have an Honors kid right here on our very couch, but now we have a genuine religious guru before our very eyes.

2) I just mean that religious themes of love and hate and forgiveness and what we believe in and what we worship are in just about everything we do—and those are religious values. And sometimes religious faith takes the rap for bad behavior, when it's really not to blame.

1) Oh, the old "it's people who kill people, not religion" argument, eh?

3) Let's hear him out. I agree that religion is kind of a cover for people doing bad things for other reasons—and they hide behind a religious label—when usually religion is opposed to the very things they're doing.

2) You got it. Take Christianity for instance. People wearing the label "Christian" have caused all kinds of grief in the world—wars, hateful policies, one church putting down another one for being "sinful" or whatever, or even Christian kids who label other kids just because they're jealous of them or something—

1) Why is everyone looking at me!!!!??

2) —but what's that stuff got to do with Jesus? I guess it was Gandhi who said everybody in the world sees Jesus as a peacemaker except the Christians.

1) Well, that's all very cool, but what's it got to do with...with *us*.

4) Everything.

1) Oh thank you, your Eminence.

2) We all consider ourselves Christians, right? And we're all part of the same stuff that everyone else is doing—looking at other people as part of this group or that group; trying to put other people down just so we'd look better ourselves; being resentful of somebody else's good grades or spot on the team or nice clothes or whatever—

3) We have seen the enemy—and it is us.

1) Jesus?

4) Pogo.

1) (*after a moment*) So what we're saying is that the same things that are causing such problems in a place like Iraq also cause problems for us—competition, resentment, selfishness.

3) And that the same solutions apply—

2) Making things fair for everybody...

3) Thinking of people besides yourself...

2) Not getting so hung up over clothes or status or whatever...

1) Being happy for someone else's success—even someone not in your group—even if they are a lazy bum....

4) ...or at the bottom of the food chain....

2) Speaking of food—I say let's seal our little covenant of cooperation just as Jesus did in the Upper Room—a half gallon of Breyer's Vanilla...

1) nu-uh—what version of the Bible have you been reading?!

4) I believe that would be the NRBV—New Revised Brethren Version.

1) Who said you weren't a genius!