

The Lord of Ut.

Theater at the closing of the Celebrations
of the 125th year anniversary of the
Union of Utrecht
September 20, 2014

Utrecht
Pandhof

Introitus

When the audience is finding their seats, voices sound from speakers (soft, almost in a whisper):

Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.

(Let us hold to what has been believed everywhere, always, by all; for this is truly and properly catholic) From the Declaration of Utrecht – 1889)

Continues until everyone is seated

On the video screen a quote from Alberto Ramento, the murdered bishop of the independent Philippine Church:

Anyone who does not serve his neighbor, especially the poor, anyone who denies support to the deprived, the needy, the oppressed, the thirsty, the political prisoners, are not true Christians..

(Alberto Ramento)

A second quote:

A Church which worships God but fails to serve her country/people performs false worship, because the life of a person, his/her words and deeds in every minute of his/her life is his/her true worship...

(Alberto Ramento)

Suitmen sing:

Small, But Nice

Nobody knows of our existence

Small, but nice

Nobody notices our name

Suitmen roll in a oil drum, in it sits BisJob. He speaks:

Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.

Suitmen sing:

Small, but nice

Nobody knows of our existence

Small, but nice

Nobody notices our name

BisJob climbs out of the oil drum and is laid on a sort of stretcher; flatout as during an ordination. The suitmen surround him and bless him, arms outstretched.

Suitmen sing:

Small, but nice

Nobody knows of our existence

Small, but nice

Nobody notices our name

Disclaimer on video screen:

This is a work of fiction. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons or situations, gods, spirits, angels, bishops, churchleaders, politicians or organisations, living or dead, is either purely coincidental or considered to be a miracle. No legal rights are to be derived from this work of art.

The singing stops, only the marimba is playing. Musicmachines are brought on stage by the suitmen.

Narrator:

Once upon a time, there was a bishop,
an archbishop and bishop of the city of Ut.
He was a most charming man,
His name was Job
and he was the leader of a most charming little church:
The Union of Ut
Nobody knew him
and nobody knew of his church
But God knew him
and God knew his little church.
And that sufficed.

He was bishop over 7 bishops
but no one called him boss.
If he'd call himself boss
He'd soon to be called ex-boss
How ever much he had to preach,
He had nothing to say.

Suitmen sing "Small but nice" again, heavier.

Small, but nice
Nobody knows of our existence
Small, but nice
(and) Nobody notices our name

Narrator:

They were very traditional, yet modern
Protestant, yet catholic
Conservative, yet liberal
Simple, yet intellectual

They were the ultimate, the excellent,
Well let's put it this way:
They were the perfect church
And not only so in their own eyes,
But certainly in the eyes of God...

The church worked hard not to be known.
They even kept their name deliberately secret and if they were
forced to use it, they only dared to **whisper**:

Suitmen, whispering: *Old-Catholic, Oud-katholiek, Christ-catholisch, Alt-Katholisch, Vieille Catholique, Staro katolicki, Staro katolická*

Narrator:

It became clear to everybody: this was an old-fashioned, traditional, antique and uninteresting church. And they cherished that prejudice.

But in the early days! Ah, the early days! They stood up against the big powers! Against popes and kings. Their principles were more important than their personal wellbeing. They had never forgotten how brave they'd been and how, with God as their witness, they had rebelled against the Big Bad Mother Church. They were excluded and expelled but they shouted 'Freedom!', 'Independence'! O, how proud they had been!

Suitmen: 'Freedom!', 'Independence'!

Narrator:

But now the world had passed them by. No one interfered with their pleasant lives and they did not interfere with the world. What could possibly upset them?

Music ends abruptly.

Heaven-1

Vortex Canon blows circles of smoke towards Stage 2, heaven.
Suitmen are stamping rhythm of the song 'It's all about the power'.

Suitman – Narrator:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

Sounds of trumpets. The suitmen keep 'marching'
God sits in a comfortable chair, while satan is climbing up.

Suitman – Narrator:

And the Lord said unto **Satan:**

God: Ah, satan, my good man! To what do we owe the honor of your presence? Coffee? Beer? Tell me, where have you been?

Satan: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. I have taken the liberty of watching your cause with my own eyes.

God: Good for you! And what did you see?

Satan: What everybody can see who has two eyes. The usual hypocrisy, the common lying, the endless search for money, power and sex. And death of course. Like usual, everything dies all the time.. Not that I mind much...

God: Of course not..

Suitmen sing: 'It's all about the power'

They start with unisono 'hey hey!', as in a military march. One suitman sings:

its all about the power

its al about the cash

see the weakling crying

in the dirt and in his trash

its all about the power

and there is dying everywhere

everyone: everyone is lying just to be a milionair

right now, if you believe 2x

Suitmen keep stamping the rythm and 'hey hey'

Satan: So, it's none of my business, but If you don't mind me saying, that kingdom of yours: is it ever going to happen?

God: Business is a little slow lately..

Satan: Slow? Do you even follow the news? Do you ever read a paper? Have you seen the chaos down there? The crises, the wars, the hatred, the endless streams of refugees?

Do you actually listen to the prayers, adressed to you? Business is slow?? Is that all you can say? Wasn't your business the fate of the poor and the helpless, the widows and the orphans?

God: And the church. Don't forget about the church. The church is my business...

Satan: Ah, yes, the curch. Shall I quote you about the church?

Suitmen: whispering, singing: 'it's all about the power'

Satan, quoting the prophets Amos and Isaiah with a loud voice:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I can't stand your solemn assemblies.
Take away from me the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.
Bring no more vain offerings.
Incense is an abomination to me;
When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
Yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear.

--

Am I really the one to remind you of this?

God: You're right. My project isn't going quite as planned. I left it to the church and things aren't getting better... what can I do? But we still have time, we have all the time in eternity...

Satan: And precisely who of us is the cynic right now?

Suitmen: (High Volume) Everyone is lying just to be a millionaire!

Suitmen stop singing.

God: (walks to the railing of stage 2)
But come here! Look! Isn't this wonderful?

Satan: What is?

God: Look! The church of Ut! It's only 125 years since I cut them loose from the big church and planted them in my own little garden. I carefully watered it, pruned it with love and kept it small... My own little bonsai garden... What do you think?

Look! Do you see that woman, dressed as a priest? I planted her! See those two men? One is a priest, the other is his husband! And see

that bishop over there? He's not their leader, he's just their powerless servant. That's my doing, if I may say so...

This is my own little garden where I can walk on a sweet summer evening...

Satan: Yes, we all know about your little gardens....

(loud voice): Adam, where are you?

Look at them! They are believers, but none of them believes the same thing. They do all the things I forbid and still they love me and belong to me! No doctrines, no confession, no sins! And still they sing my name! My favorite church!

Satan: This is no church, it's a nursery! They have no responsibilities. They are a threat to nobody and nobody is a threat to them. They ask for nothing and nothing is asked from them. You have blessed them with invisibility. It's easy to be a perfect church like that!

God: So?

Satan: if this is your ideal church, why not make them big?

God: That would spoil all the fun!

Satan: Why don't you bless them with numbers? Why not give them power and status and a couple of millions of followers? See how they would heal the world!

God: I'm not so sure..

Satan: I thought you cared for the world, not necessarily for the tools!

God: That's a point...

Satan: You are just scared! You're afraid that if you make 'em big, they will become just like all the others: they will need leadership and hierarchy, clarity and convictions, not your beloved democracy! If they are big, It will become an institution with dogma's and confessions and fraud and abuse and sexual mishaps and corruption and power games, just like all the others in your precious flock!

God: No, not this one!

Satan: You want a bet?

God: With you? Again? You wouldn't dare! You lose every time!

Satan: I'll make that flimsy bishop ofr yours an offer he cannot refuse! He will be so big, that even if he humbles himself, people will applaud his greatness. Even as he kneels, he will be lifted into holiness.

Suitmen sing:

Make them big
Give them numbers
Make them big
and make him known

make them big
give him money
give him lots of money
til he has grown

make them big
give him power

its all about the power
its all about more

make them big
its all about the power
give him power
much more power than before

God: OK, the bet is on, but one thing: don't mess with Rome!

Satan: Don't mess with Rome? Why?

God: There are still some sensitivities lingering from the past that I don't want to stir. Remember: Don't mess with Rome!

Satan: Ok..

One of the suitmen helps Bisjob into a chair in the middle of the garden. During the next scene this chair will be lifted higher and higher. The suitmen wear helmets with little speakers. From the helmets:

Suitman1: Lord of Ut! A message from Canterbury: 'The church of England and all the Anglican churches are happy to place their churches under your full command! The queen of England has put down her position in your favour. Let us unite, be our leader!' they ask.

Suitman2: Lord of Ut! Message from the 'Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands'. In a long statement they propose to let the Union of Ut take full control over all of the protestant church in Germany! Frau Merkel also sends her warm greetings!

Suitman3: Lord of Ut! Message from the World Council of Churches in Geneva: As per now they want you to be the secretary general and president.

Suitman4: Lord of Ut! Message from de Protestantse Kerk van Nederland

Suitman1: Lord of Ut! The Polish National Church in the United States want to reunite again with the Union of Ut!

More of the same kind of messages from the helmets, Bisjob receives all kinds of paraferalia from the churches that want to unite with the Union. Bisjobs chair is winded higher and higher)

Suitman: (while reading from a pile of notes):

Sweden, Norway and the Baltics! Denmark and the crown of England. Protestants, Anglicans! Waldenzians, Lutherans, Pentecostal, Evangelicals, Episcopalians and Liberals and the Evangelical World Alliance! All under the reign of the Union of Ut!

Hus, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Knox,
they all want to hide under your cloak!

Lord of Ut, accept our pledge
Lord of Ut, unite us!
Too long we wandered in the desert,
too long we dwelled in our wicked ways.
Lord of Ut! Accept us.
Lord of Ut! Here is our crown!
Guide us with your authority
Lead us with your staff!
Lord of Ut! Unite us

Church under one bishop
Church under one God
Church of Ut!

The songs ends abruptly to full silence. The suitmen gather round BisJob's chair.

BisJob: What do you want? What do you expect from me?

From the helmets of the suitmen:

Suitman1: A word!

Suitman2: A command!

Suitman3: An order!

Suitman4: An opinion!

BisJob: OK then. Love one another!

From the helmets of the suitmen:

Suitman1: That is an ample statement..

Suitman2: A bit vague perhaps?

Suitman3: Rather generic, I would say

Suitman4: A touch oldfashioned?

BisJob: And think!

Suitman1: About what?

BisJob: About God, yourself and the world.
And don't believe everything they tell you.

Suitman2: A bit vague perhaps?

Suitman3: Rather generic, I would say..

Suitman4: Is that even christian enough? Just: think?

Suitman1: But we need rules, if only to break them at times

Suitman2: We need some dogma's, if only to question them

Suitman3: We might need some order, if only to break it down

Suitman4: Give us some miracles, to doubt and fight about

Suitman1: Give us some saints! If only not to follow!

The sentences are repeated over and over, but fragmented, they break up more and more, grinding to a halt..

Suitman1: Lord of Ut! We want to hear your opinion. Not what we already think ourselves.

Suitman2: We have to control the media!

Suitman3: What are you going to do with this beautiful new church?

Suitman4: A billion people are waiting for you!

BisJob: We will believe what the church has always believed. No more, no less. And don't always believe what they tell you. Look, it's very simple: Love one another!

Suitman1: Yeah, I heard you the first time

BisJob: And think!

Suitman2: Think. Of course, think for ourselves...

Heaven - 2

Starts the same as heaven - 1

Circles of smoke, suitmen stamping the rythm

Suitman – Narrator:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

And the Lord said unto **Satan:**

God: Well, what did I tell you? That’s my man! Faithful, unpredictable and, pardon my French, as cocky as hell..

Satan: Well, that wasn’t too hard for him. It’s easy. He now has all the protestants. They can think for themselves. They always did. They don’t need confessions and laws and dogmas and rules, they have always been free. It was too easy.

God: So?

Satan: Give him the Orthodox! The Russians, the Bulgarians, the Greek, the Syrians, the Kopts!

--

But even better: give him Rome!

Rythm suddenly stops, absolute silence

Satan: Give him Rome!

God: Rome! I knew you would come up with that.

Satan: Come on, what could possibly go wrong? If he is your hero, your precious hero, what is your risk? Your perfect church of Ut would rule your kingdom on earth!

--

My take is that he will collapse under the burden. That's my bet. But you? You are so damned sure of him...

God: OK, give him Rome, give him the Orthodox, give him everything!

Satan: Yesss!

Video Screen:

Paus Franciscus on the balcony of St. Peter's Church

Subtitles:

Brothers and sisters, tonight is a great night. A night of repentance and hope. Tonight, the Roman Catholic Church wants to repent from sins and mistakes from the past. We repent. We ask for forgiveness for expelling the Church of Ut, which has caused so much pain and hardship between our churches.

Tonight I state that the church of Rome is no longer the holder of power and truth.

Tonight, we repent for our historic mistake of calling ourselves infallible. I am not... I am not infallible.

Tonight, I will lay down my office as Pope and I will surrender myself under the authority of the church of Ut. Forgive us, brother Job, for the blindness that kept us apart for so long.. and accept our excuses for all the harm we did to you and the worldwide church.

(+ a similar message from the Orthodox Patriarch Bartolomeus I of Constantinople)

Chaos of sound and music. All instruments are being played, also by satan. BisJob gets more and more clothes from orthodox and catholic churches; his chair reaches the highest point.

Suitmen shouts:

1 billion, 2 billion, 3 billion followers are throwing themselves at your feet! They follow you every step you take, They listen to every word you say.

So what do you say?

What do we do?

Lord of Ut!

Total chaos, sounds of a siren, dies out to complete silence.

All suitmen kneel before the BisJob

BisJob: Let the day perish in which I was ordained,
The night which said, 'There is a bishop conceived.'

As for that night, let thick darkness seize on it.

Let it not rejoice among the days of the year.

Behold, let that night be barren.

Let no joyful voice come therein.

Why didn't I die the moment I was called?

Why didn't I give up the spirit when I entered the church?

Why Didn't I die at the moment I was ordained?

Who is this god, who lays so much burden on one man?

He who can reign the earth with the tip of his finger

Why does he give what a man cannot bear?

From the helmets of the suitmen:

Suitman1: We kiss your ring, all Holiness

Suitman2: You must have done something very right

Suitman3: Somehow you must have impressed

Suitman4: Show your leadership, show your authority.

Suitman1: Lead your people into the promised land.

Suitman2: Come on now, which staff do you prefer?

Suitman3: Wake up Job! He answered all your prayers!

BisJob: I did nothing right,
I'm not righteous

BisJob: I prayed
But who counts on being heard?
Who dares to trust in
Getting more than he asked for?
Ik did ask
But I did not ask
For what I received.
I did hope
But who counts on getting
what far exceeds one's hope?
Small favours I asked, A simple prayer.
And he answered with
laying upon me the burden of the world.

During the next scene, BisJob and the suitmen 'fight' for the height of the chair: the suitmen lift him up, Bisjob wants to coem down.

Suitman2: People are waiting for you!

Suitman3: Speak up man! What are we to do?

Suitman3: Lord of Ut what are we to do?

Suitman4: Lord of Ut!

BisJob: You! Take me down!

Finally, BisJob wins the argument and leaves the chair. He heads for Stage 2 (heaven) for an argument with God. While he climbs the stairs to heaven:

BisJob: This was not where I signed up for!
What am I supposed to do with a world full of followers? What am I to do with thousands upon thousands of people who want to hear what I think? I signed up for insignificance, because I thought therein lies the strength of a church: Let them be free. Let them listen to the voice of God in their hearts. What do I know? I am not trained for this job.

God: Who is this who my darkens counsel
with words without knowledge?
Why do you talk so much
when you know so little?

Ah. Job! Please sit down. Coffee? Beer?

BisJob: I have always thought you were a woman..

Music. Theme of the first song: 'small but nice'.

God: And you were right. But never mind that. My goodness! Look at you! Mister Church himself! Mister Word Council of Churches! All by yourself! How do you like your new position?

BisJob: Why do you feed me with a blessing that tastes like a curse? I was called to be a bishop of a small, insignificant church. I would be able to play around with liturgy and speak some words of ecumenism, I signed up for longing for your kingdom, not for being

your king! I don't want power, staff, servants and money! I never wanted his!

God: You never wanted what? That people listened to you? You never wanted your little church to be an example for all the others? You never wanted your vision of the world to be shared by others? You just thought you could do anything you liked, without taking the consequences? What is it that you never wanted?

JB: Well, of course I wanted some of those things, but...

God: You fool!

Were you there when I planted Rome?

Did you build St. Peters church with your own hands?

Do you keep all the worlds art in the cellars of heaven?

Did you call all the fathers to the great councils,

Did you invent the Apostolic Creed?

Were you the inventor of the Holy Trinity?

Answer me, you 'who did not sign up for the job'!

Do you, president of the Union of Ut, president of the international Bishops committee, do you, little bonsai-bishop, have any idea of the heat of the fire you played with? And now that you've burned yourself, you dare come here and complain?

BisJob: Excuse me God, you are not answering my question!

God: Right! Then I'll ask you a question! Tell me, bishop: what do you prefer? A small, marginalized church, or one that can change the world? A church no one listens to, or a church with a worldwide impact? It's up to you. You can change the world, little bishop of mine!

--

Where were you, when the Middle East caught fire?
Where was your little church when millions of people became refugees?
Where were you, when the Berlin wall came down and someone had to come up with new ideas?
Where were you, when springs of freedom turned into winters of hatred?
When churches burned like torches in the night and synagogues were destroyed again?
Where was your little synod when millions of people starved and perished? Did you raise your mighty voice?
Tell me 'bishop-know-it-all'! Now you have all the power, Lord of Ut, what can you do? Choose what kind of church you will be!

BisJob: But I am weak, I am no leader of the world
I asked for a voice, but it has shriveled in my throat.
Who am I to rule your people?
I am just a powerless servant with no brains.
I am nobody
Fool and leader of fools
King of clowns.
I have spoken once. I will not do it again...

God: (tone of voice: 'sorry, only joking')
Come on! I was just practicing my thundering voice. I'm glad it still works.

God: Come here
Look at them, your little flock.
What are your real questions?

BisJob: My real questions?
Where are you, if people behead each other,

out of religious fanaticism?

Where are you, if a mountain is flooding itself
as mud over thousands of people

Where are you, if cancer is taking away
everything that was good and beautiful in one's life?

Where are you anyway?

God: You can't raise that question!

You know I cannot answer those...

BisJob: How do I teach people to have faith,
if all their faith is put to shame?

How do I teach people to hope for a future,
if even today they have nothing to eat?

How do I teach people to love,
if all that they learned was hating themselves?

God: that's better..

If there is poverty, how do I feed them?

If there is war, what side must I choose?

If there is injustice, who speaks your voice?

God: Are you the voice of God, Job?

BisJob: I don't know.

There was this woman, waiting at my door. Her child is dead, her
husband killed, her bread is gone, her home destroyed. What good is
my church to her?

There was this man standing beside her. Waiting for me. He served
his God all his life but now he is forced to choose: get out of his
home town or give up his faith or be killed. Where should he go?
What good is my church to him?

There stood this girl at my door. From her earliest childhood on she was molested and raped. By her father, her uncle, her brothers... The only thing she is capable of is hate, utter hate. What good is my church to her?

I couldn't care less for power. I just want your voice to be heard. Tell me, what should I do?

God: Love one another.

BisJob: Isn't that too generic, too vague..?

God: Think!

BisJob: Yes, but what about?

God: About yourself, about the world. About me. And don't believe everything they tell you.

God: and now what? You want to wake up from this dream?

BisJob: Not yet. Can I really do anything I want in the church now? Well let me see.... what can I change? What are my first steps?

Music grows stronger, fades down to silence. Lights fade, voices from the speakers in the garden:

Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum. tot langzame fade out

Video Screen: two last quotes from Alberto Ramento:

What have the churches done? Or to be more particular, what have we, bishops with prophetic ministry done? Let us accept the bitter truth that we are not doing anything or if we have done something at all, it is very little and insignificant.

--

I know they are going to kill me next but never will I abandon my ministry to God and my duty to the people.

Alberto Ramento

Lights Fade out

FIN