

AN ANGRY BUDDHIST AT A BIBLE STUDY

by  
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INT. NURSERY ROOM OF AN EAST TENNESSEE CHURCH - NIGHT.

The CIRCLE of SEVEN is sitting in CHILDREN'S CHAIRS. They are in one of the new "MEGA-CHURCHES." Bright, fluorescent lights are overhead, with BABY CRIBS around.

TIM SIMMONS is breathing heavy. He's a racist, overweight, redneck with terrible manners. DOUG WOOD sits across from him. He is tall and skinny and the leader of the group. SANKO NALI sits next to Tim. He is a cynical Indian man who proclaims to be Buddhist and is desperate to meet women. He works with Tim. JEFF JENKINS is Tim's sidekick. He is very dumb, overweight, and short with a thick lisp on top of his southern accent. He has an ugly moustache, lives with his parents, and hasn't had sex since high school. VIVIAN PRICE is a Filipino and has a thick accent. She is tiny and sexy, having the habit of touching every man she meets after just casually meeting them. She doesn't understand the first thing about Church, but the group accepts her. JOHN is disabled and in a scooter, a regular member. He just keeps smiling and is socially awkward. ED sounds like "~Ned Flanders" on the Simpsons. He is TOO nice.

The first-half "worship" part of the evening is over and now the groups have split off into "SMALL GROUP BIBLE-STUDY." Introductions have been made and it is time to get down to business.

DOUG  
(looking chipper)  
Well, hello everybody! I like to  
open the group by welcoming the  
newcomers with a prayer.

Jeff looks at Tim to make sure he is going to bow. Tim smirks at first but does. Everyone bows their heads except Sanko.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lord, (speaking softly and slowly)  
we ask that our new friends feel  
welcome here.

CLOSE SHOT ON DOUG

His eyes are closed and he is serious.

DOUG  
Come into our presence, father. We  
seek you in this silence.

INT. NURSERY ROOM. NIGHT

Tim's mouth is hanging open.

DOUG

We feel you in the silence, father.  
Like the wind, like the sound of  
snow falling in the forest, like...

A bizarre chanting sounds begins to radiate out from SANKO as Doug is praying.

SANKO

AAAAAHHHHH. OOOOHHHHH.

Sanko continues to chant. The regulars in the group keep glancing up to see what is going on. Doug is confused but decides to keep praying.

DOUG

Lord, we welcome you to this group  
with open...

Sanko goes into a really loud chanting mode now. It appears utterly ridiculous and not to follow any actual religious tradition, just utter gibberish. He is moving his arms about in some absurd fashion while doing it, as if trying to be spiritual.

TIM

Dude, shut the hell up with the  
chanting!

The others almost jump out of their seats and all open their eyes.

SANKO

Why won't you just let me pray?

TIM

(shaking his head)  
Pray ta' who? Buddha?

DOUG

Oh -- Sanko, are you, are you  
Hindu?

TIM

He don't know what he is. Cept'  
goin' ta' hell. Sanko, why don't  
you keep that "harmony" crap to  
yurself' and accept that fact that  
life SUCKS? Only harmony I ever  
felt in life was when my ex-wife  
got run over by the ice cream man.

JOHN

Gosh, that must have been really awful. Sorry ya' had to go through that.

TIM

Som' bitch drivin' it was so drunk, he hit er' dead-on - and was still peddlin' juicies' to the niggers down the street fore' the cops got em'. That was some Kharma, right Sanko?

Sanko quits chanting but is staring off into space, not paying attention to the group at all.

DOUG

So, Sanko. You're from India? Which part?

SANKO

Why? Were you there? Let me guess. You and a group of Christians went over there to hand out food in a village. I bet you felt all warm and fuzzy for a few days and got to tell your friends what a good deed you "did for Jesus." I'm touched.

DOUG

Well, that's an interesting point. People do go on mission trips naively. That sort of reminds me of a...

JEFF

When do we get to meet the girls?

DOUG

Excuse me?

TIM

Yeah. Them cuties' we saw when we sang them songs earlier. Where'd they go, man?

JEFF

Yeah, man. That one was lookin' at Sanko.

SANKO  
 (getting excited)  
 What girl? When?

JEFF  
 Out front, dude. She went inta'  
 nother' group. You know er'?  
 (nudging Ed)

ED  
 Um, I'm not sure which...

Ed is looking at Doug in a state of confusion

TIM  
 Well, maybe this'll jar yur' memory  
 there, Ed. She had a bout' as nice  
 a shitter' on er' as I've seen all  
 week.

DOUG  
 So, anyway, uh, guys. Don't mean  
 to interrupt but we are sort of on  
 a schedule. (Pausing) Vivian...  
 how are you doing tonight?

VIVIAN  
 (huge smile)  
 I do good. I go to movie last  
 night.

DOUG  
 Really? What did you see?

VIVIAN  
 I see Lord of Ring. Is good.

DOUG  
 Oh, that's the first time you've  
 seen it? I think it's interesting  
 - the use of spiritual metaphors  
 that Tolkien used to...

JEFF  
 I wanna' know what they did ta'  
 Gollum.

DOUG  
 To Gollum?

TIM

Yeah. Y'all member that scene when ey' tied ol' Gollum down and he's yellin' "Shiiiiire" and "Baaaaagins?"

JEFF

How the hell do they know how ta' speak English? They sit around all day in Mordor at English class goin' over verbs and fuckin', uh, verbs?

TIM

Ya' just said verbs, man. And watch yur' mouth.

JEFF

Someone had ta' teach em' Orcs how ta' speak and it sure as hell wadn't Sauramon, man.

The group doesn't say a word. Doug looks around to see if anyone is responding.

DOUG

Is that a question?

JEFF

Huh?

TIM

Jeff and I like ta' leave the Bible out as much as possible of our Christian walk. Tends' ta' complicate things with rules and such. Know what I mean? We exist on a higher plane anyway. Just live and talk freely, man. Whatever happens, man. (looks around group) I'm talkin' about sompin' beyond our solar system.

SANKO

What the hell are you talking about?

VIVIAN

(laughing)  
I like hobbit.

TIM

You like hobbit? Me like hobbit,  
too. Huh, huh. (Looking at Jeff  
to make sure he's watching) Tim  
like hobbit. Tim like woman. Tim  
need woman. Vivian need man?

SILENCE

JEFF

(reaches over to pet her  
like a dog)  
Yur' nice. Tim, look at her.  
She's bout' a midget. Whad ya'  
weigh, baby? Seventy five or so?

VIVIAN

Ninety-pound.

TIM

Yeah, maybe wearing body armor.  
(To rest of group) I bet ten bucks  
I could curl this rat.

Tim stands up and lifts Vivian off the ground. She screams  
in laughter as he puts her in his arms to CURL HER LIKE A  
DUMBBELL.

VIVIAN

YOU CRAZY! Put down!

TIM

Here we go, little girl.

The others sit in shock as Tim curls Vivian and yells out:

TIM (CONT'D)

Somebody cough up ten bucks!

JOHN

Gosh, you guys really have a lot of  
energy.

Tim sets Vivian down, breathing hard.

TIM

Jeff, I Told ya' to wear that shirt -- the one at' says "is your seat in eternity smoking or none?" I bet in five minutes tops that som' bitch over er' in the scooter ol' be tellin' Ed here how the three of us are sinners and don't got no business bein' here. Ain't that right, buddy? (Glaring at a John) Ah Hell, ol Sanko over der' hadn't had any pussy since he's been in the U.S.

SANKO

You are such a bully! What is the good in telling these people this?

TIM

He can't even cook Indian food. Y'all believe that? An Indian cook at an Indian restaurant that don't know shit about Indian Food. Dumbass.

SANKO jumps out of his chair and ATTACKS Tim. He hits like a girl as he screams

SANKO

That's it! You son of a bitch! I'm going to rip out your throat and burn it, you vulgar man!

Tim pushes him back as Doug and the rest of the group sit in a state of shock over the behavior they're witnessing. Tim sets Sanko back in his seat, laughing.

TIM

Sorry, ya'll. Won't happen again. Sanko, I'm sorry. Speak freely, man. Just say what's on your mind. This is Holy Ground we're in.

SANKO

I hate you with every fiber of my being!

TIM

Well, that's just the reason I brought cha' here, Sank.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

See, if you'd jump on board with Jesus, ya' might learn that hate ain't a godly choice. Ain't that right there, Doug?

DOUG

Uh. yes. Guys, are you going to be okay? Maybe we should let you guys go work this out?

TIM

Sanko's just kiddin' around to try ta' be dramatical'. Fact is, out' me and Jeff, Sanko'd be sittin' at home tonight watchin' an "adult film" with one a' them "roman" candles he gets burnin' behind em'. This worm likes to have a romantic mood goin' when he shines his own pole! (Laughing) I don't know how ya' get anything out of them soft-porn channels, buddy.

JEFF

Yeah, man. It's like two people in the dark rubbin' each other.

Doug and Eds' faces appear really tense. John and Vivian are still smiling, actually entertained by the comments.

TIM

Hell, ya' already committed the sin once ya' handed the dude at the video store yur' money. Why not go ahead and get a film with some penetration? Sanko here thinks he's gonna sneak his way inta' heaven by not wackin' off ta' triple x'ers or steppin' on ants like em' Monks we saw en' at' Brad Pitt movie.

JOHN

(trying to be assertive  
and help out Doug)

Guys, uh... Doug? Maybe we should pray cause' it sure sounds like we all have some issues to deal with tonight.

VIVIAN

Yah, we should pray.

DOUG

That's probably a good idea.  
(Glancing around the room) Uh,  
Jeff, would you start us off in  
prayer?

ED

The Lord hears all prayers, even  
the ones that you think aren't  
important.

TIM

Oh, ya' mean like - Sanko prayin'  
to a different God, who isn't  
real?

Vivian bursts out laughing.

VIVIAN

You guys! You guys are crazy.

SANKO

Do you really believe your God is  
more real than mine?

TIM

Well, I'll put it to ya' this way.  
If yur' Buddha's so real, how come  
he ain't given ya' yur' first  
girlfriend, man? Heck, y'all.  
There's plenty a' decent lookin'  
Indian girls at' come in Curry he  
could go out with.

SANKO

You don't know what it was like  
growing up in India, you Buffoon!  
I was picked on every day by the  
larger boys.

SANKO STARTS TO CRY

SANKO

I only came here to meet women. I  
don't care about being a Christian  
unless I get women.

DOUG

I can tell you're really hurting,  
Sanko. You know, it's time like  
this that I've seen the Lord really  
just jump in at prayer and make  
miracles happen. Speaking of that.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

I have a good idea. Jeff, how about, why don't you starts us off there, Jeff?

Jeff has a stupid expression on his face. Tim nudges him as the rest keep glancing up to see why he hasn't begun praying.

TIM

(looking at Jeff)  
Dude, yur' sposed' to say sompin,"

JEFF

I don't know what to say, man. I guess, (now louder) A raise would be nice and maybe a cooler car and...

TIM

For God's sake... (Loudly) Lord, uh, forgive Jeff here for bein' himself. Oh, and please forgive Sanko for bein' a Buddhist. I just want him to taste steak, Lord, and have sex with sompin' other than an ice cream carton and a blow dryer."

SILENCE - Doug looks up to see if anyone else has anything to say.

JEFF

Lord, uh... I wanna' pray for my neck and Tim's ass.

TIM

(looking up)  
Do what?

JEFF

Ya' said yur' ass was hurtin' ya', man. Member?

TIM

If you ain't careful I'm gonna' take Ed's Bible and smash ya' a good one with it, ya' loud mouth!

DOUG

(trying to break in and just end it at this point)  
Uh, Lord, I thank you for Tim and Jeff and Sanko.  
(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

Thank you for allowing them to come here tonight not knowing any of us and opening their hearts. I pray that the hostility inside of each of them is replaced by the Holy Spirit. I pray that...

TIM

Hostility?

SANKO

Why don't you shut up and let them pray, you idiot. You ARE hostile. And obnoxious, and vulgar.

TIM

And Lord, forgive me for wantin' ta' reach over and knock Doug's head off if he calls me another name for' the evening's over.

DOUG LOOKS UP, TERRIFIED.

TIM

Lord, Sanko is, as we all know, a Zen. (Trying to be articulate and failing miserably) What that means, in short, is that while the rest of us are slidin' down waterfalls and having cold ones with Jesus, poor Sanko ol' probably be shovelin' rocks while wearin' ski boots and eatin' oats - thout' no water bein' allowed on em' oats. Just dry oats.

SANKO

This is insanity! Do you really believe this nonsense? (to rest of group) I live a good, honest life. I hurt no other creatures. I don't eat the flesh of animals or even step on insects. But you, especially you, Tim, are an offensive, self-destructive waste of oxygen on this planet. But you get eternity in heaven and I only get suffering? In all of your heart you truly believe this?

JEFF

(pause)

Yes

TIM

Yeah. I mean, it ain't like we made the rules up, man. Hell, if it was up to me your whole country could come to heaven. But the Bible don't lie, right guys? Buddha's are in Hell, forever. (Looks around the room) Sorry. (Looks over to Doug and laughs) Glad I ain't goin'.

SANKO

Okay, I will do it. I become Christian.

TIM

Praise the Lord! That's the ticket, buddy.

SANKO

What do I do now?

TIM

Just repeat after me, Sanko. Ready?

SANKO

I'm ready.

TIM

Say, "Lord, come into my heart."

SANKO

That's it? I say one sentence and I will suddenly be diverted from evil to good? (Shaking his head) This is the most ridiculous thing imaginable. Doug, Ed, John, do you actually believe this to be true?

ED

Well, the Bible does make it clear that the only way to salvation is through accepting him.

SANKO

But what the hell does that mean? (Looking at Doug and pointing at Tim) Do you mean to tell me you believe this buffoon has "accepted" anything good into his body? Look at this man. Or him... (looking at Jeff)

Jeff is DROOLING.

TIM  
 (to Jeff)  
 Wipe yur' mouth, mutt.

SANKO  
 Just to prove you idiots wrong, I  
 will do this.

TIM  
 Now, Sanko, come on. Say it.  
 Don't wig out on us, man.

SANKO  
 (rolling his eyes)  
 "Lord, come into my heart."

TIM and the rest of the gang burst out cheering and clapping.

DOUG  
 (Closing his eyes and clasping  
 hands together to pray) Thank you,  
 Lord. Bless you, Lord.

ED  
 Oh, Lord. We are so blessed to  
 have these three men with us  
 tonight. Thank you, Lord.

SANKO  
 So this means I can do anything I  
 want now?

TIM  
 Sanko, you can eat steak. You can  
 step on ants. You can have sex  
 with young girls after eatin'  
 steak. You can cuss, fight, drink.  
 It don't matter, dude. You are in  
 with the man in sandals. You're  
 forgiven.

SANKO  
 Good. Tim, would you hand me that  
 chair behind you? (Pointing to  
 chair)

TIM  
 This one? Why?

SANKO  
 Oh I just want to prop my feet up.

Turns around and grabs the CHAIR and hands it to Sanko.  
Sanko sets it in front of him for a moment.

SANKO (CONT'D)  
(Calm and serious) Thank you, Tim.  
It feels very good and I couldn't  
have done it without all of you  
helping me to see the light.

The group sits for a second or two in silence. Everyone is  
smiling and happy for Sanko as he gives his speech.

DOUG  
Why don't we end in prayer?

Everyone bows their heads again, including Sanko this time.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lord, I pray you have touched  
Sanko's heart tonight in a deep  
way, that he would find serenity in  
the face of chaos, that he'd give  
love away freely, that...

Without hesitation or warning Sanko stands up, picks up the  
chair quite calmly and raises it over his head while walking  
over towards TIM. Sanko SMASHES it as hard as he can right  
on to TIM'S head. The chair shatters and Tim SCREAMS IN  
AGONY. The rest of the group jumps back in terror and shock,  
except for John, because of his scooter.

VIVIAN  
OOOOOOH! He got em' real haaaaad!

TIM  
Aaaaaah shiiiiitt.....

Falling to the GROUND and CRYING like a BABY

TIM (CONT'D)  
Get em' off me...

Sanko KICKS him as hard as he can in the GUT, finally, for  
the first time, towering over TIM.

SANKO  
(Smiling and looking up  
with a demented look on  
his face)  
Forgive me, Lord. Forgive me.

Doug and Ed have run to the corner of the room and begun  
praying for the madness to stop, holding each other.

Jeff is hiding behind John's scooter. Sanko picks up another chair over his head, about to smash it again.

SANKO (CONT'D)  
(Yelling and suddenly  
empowered)  
I want to rid the world of stupid  
rednecks, God. I want to end the  
world of bullies!

Sanko begins to SWING the chair down on Tim's helpless body.  
Tim tries to put his hands up to defend himself.

TIM  
Jeff! Help me, Jeff!

SANKO (YELLING)  
I like being Christian! I like  
being Christian!

TIM  
JEFF!

SANKO  
I am forgiven!!