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# Ambivalence About Jon Stewart

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 28, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Some people seem very excited about Jon Stewart's (and Stephen Colbert's) upcoming rally in Washington this weekend. And, snagging President Obama for an interview on his show was a clear win for Stewart, earning him tons of coverage in the rest of the media, from the front page of USAToday to the lead spot on the Politico.com website to every cable news show. And, from the President's point of view, he was able to reach out to a host of young voters via one of their favorite shows and defend his record.

But, am I the only one who thought the interview with the President was bad television? On one side of the desk, a funnyman trying to bring levity. On the other side of the desk, a serious man trying to discuss serious issues.

There was not a desk between the two, there was an abyss. I am all for comedians making fun of politicians, but "interviewing" them falls flat. Obama is not looking for a laugh; he is looking for a way to get the economy going. It made me uncomfortable watching the two pursue their divergent aims at te same time. I had the same feeling when Colbert testified before Congress, in character, last month.

Stewart is insanely smart. And, I can think of no two comedians with a greater capacity to use their humor to deliver incisive political and cultural critiques than Stewart and Colbert. But, blurring cultural distinctions is not always a good thing. We live in serious and sober times. We need humor to alleviate that seriousness and sobriety, not to get in on the game of solving the problems that beset us.

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