

# Three Actors Portray Benjamin Franklin During The Same Moment In Time

*by* Chris Okum

## **Tom Bosley**

Benjamin Franklin was a fundamentally decent man trying to explain himself to his fundamentally decent wife, which is why he used the word "discovered" instead of "invented." "I am very happy right now," he said. Ben had discovered electricity. It was there to be discovered and he was the man chosen by God to discover it. His wife didn't care. "You've discovered what," she said. Ben explained how he had discovered electricity. His wife was not impressed. "What does that have to do with anything," she said. Ben tried to explain, once again, that he had discovered electricity, and how the discovery had made him happy in a way nothing had for years. "You're drunk," she said.

## **Tom Wilkinson**

Ben had discovered electricity, and then, to celebrate, he got drunk by himself under the stairs. He told his wife about the bottle he found under the stairs, concealed in a sack, how there wasn't much to begin with, and how he drank it all, very fast and without thinking. He offered to show his wife the empty bottle, which was still under the stairs. "You think I'm stupid," she said. "You think I come home and I can't smell it on you. You think I'm not going to notice. I can tell when you've been drinking. I can always tell,

Benjamin. You think I'm dumb." But Ben didn't think his wife was dumb, and she knew it. He treated her like an equal, never spoke down to her, always asked her for advice, listened carefully when she had many things to say. "Or you don't care," she said. But he did, he did care, he cared a lot, which is why he was hardly ever drunk.

### **Orson Welles**

Ben was sure there was a connection between being drunk and discovering electricity. Or maybe what had happened wasn't a "discovery." Maybe if he hadn't discovered electricity, no one would have, ever. The possibility existed. This was one way of explaining what had happened. Ben was the one responsible, not God. "We did it, Father," said Ben's son, William, who had assisted Ben with his kite experiments. Ben had no idea what his son was talking about. "There is no we," said Ben. "There is only me."

