

The Grantsville News

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-- The Parson Writes --

Dear Mr. Publisher:

In these days of great trouble I bring you good news — our Sunday School attendance has picked up. Things got so bad there for a while that I thought we was gonna have to boil our Sunday School down to one class. That would be a class for the teachers, cause they were about the only ones that showed up. It appears the more the government talks about education the less the church seems to have. Finally, one of our new members, Ben Worldly, suggested that we study all the pagan religions in our class. He said that most folks were more interested in other people's religion than they was their own.

Well sir, we tried it, and it shore turned out just like he said. We got people coming to learn about Buddhism that don't know the first thing about Christianity. Bill Longnoot has been teaching this course with fine results. The members are going out during the week and talking

about Buddha, Confucius and the like. Its a fine witness, and we've had some folks applying for membership to our church. In fact one lady wanted to be baptized in the name of Buddha.

I learned a lot from the course too. One thing was that long time ago people thought everything had souls — trees, rocks, and even water. That's the reason they knocked on wood to keep from having bad luck — that was just like praying to the wood spirit. And whenever they bumped their head on a door they would turn around and talk to it for the same reason. I shore am glad we don't live back in them days.

Another thing I learned from this class was that the Hindus don't believe in killing animals cause they think people's souls jump into these varments after death. Lots of 'em don't wear clothes cause they're afraid a bug might get mashed in the process. And to think all these years that I been criticizing the

nudists.

Studying about the Buddhists was real interesting. These folks are natural born pacifist. They don't believe in violence of no kind. Thats why they killed some of our soldiers in Viet Nam—they don't want no murderers over there. The Buddhist believe in this reincarnation business too. Mr. Publisher, if our souls really go into bugs and tree, it appears to me that our over-population problem is worse than I thought. In our little town it would be awful hard to list the true population. It would take us a hundred years just to count all the bugs. And just think they're getting by without paying any tax.

Most of our men really like the Mohammedan's religion! Ole Mohammed knew how to get the fellas on his side. He allowed every man to have four wives, and promised 'em that in Heaven they'd have more women than they could shake a stick at. Us Christians believe that we ain't supposed to have but one wife. (2)

Gotta close now. In the meantime leave the screens off your window — your relatives might come calling.

Parson Jones

We acknowledge a breif but pleasant visit from former Fayetteville minister and Mrs. M. Homer Cummings, who now make their home in Huntington. They were en route home after a visit to his sister, in Monroe County, we believe.

Rev. Cummings, now retired, was pastor of Fayetteville Methodist Church for many years. He is a man of many talents, and written more songs than probably any other person in West Virginia and perhaps the United States. In addition to his song writing, he writes many poems and was recently named Methodist Conference Poet Laureate and was requested to write a poem for the Conference, which he did, entitled "The Church."

Rev. and Mrs. Cummings live at 130 Cedar Street, Huntington

CORNER COUPLET

By M. HOMER CUMMINGS

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DON'T FIND FAULT

If there is one who has no fault,
He's buried in some grave or
vault.

CORNER COUPLET

By M. HOMER CUMMINGS

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A LIE

A lie is never white
But always black as night.

CORNER COUPLET

By M. HOMER CUMMINGS

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PUT THE SHOE ON

Don't blame the preacher if he hits
you
But put the shoe on if it fits you.

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**The Parson
Writes**

Dear Mr. Publisher:

I wish you coulda been with me tonight over at the Absolute Truth Church. Me and the madam went over there to hear a special Christmas message. This fella preached on "Christ is the Answer". It's the

same thing you see on a lot of signs along the highway. Every time I see "Christ is the answer", I want to ask the question, "The answer to what?" Well sir, I thought maybe this minister would answer my question in his talk. He spent 45 minutes telling us the same thing that his topic said, but he never told us what Christ was the answer to.

I got a little idea that it was sin, but then he never told us what sin was. Oh, he talked about the sins of Noah's day and the sins of Jesus' day, but I got the feeling he wasn't quite sure what our sins are, or else he was afraid to say. He sounded like that scientist who invented a cure for which there was no disease.

Back in the old days when Amos and Isaiah was preaching, sermons

didn't beat around the bush. Ole Amos pointed his finger at the overweight, over-dressed women walking down the streets and called 'em big fat cows. He claimed they were wallowing in money while so many folks were going hungry. Jesus told a rich man that his money was gonna keep him outa heaven. And he made the religious leaders mad by pointing out that their prayers wasn't worth two cents as long as they bragged about being good.

Now-a-days, it seems like preacher-like preachers ain't got strong enough backbones to poke their nose into real life and call a spade a spade. After all, these ole time preachers got killed for telling the truth. Jesus didn't last long when He started talking about race, money, and religious hypocrisy. He told his disciples if they followed in His footsteps they wouldn't last long either. Most of us don't mind talking for the Cause, but we ain't so eager to die for it. So, instead of wading out into the main stream of life where the waters deep and dangerous we just puddle around in the mud hole of surface issues like drinking, smoking, card playing and messing.

Don't get me wrong Sir, I believe Jesus is the answer too. But, it looks like we oughta have a few

questions before we'll see the answer. Well, I gotta close for now. I'm gonna preach this Sunday on "What does God say about War?" I may not give a perfect answer but you'll have to admit it's a awful good question. Until next time, don't burn your draft card.

Yours truly,
Parson Jones

The Parson Writes

Dear Mr. Publisher:

The last letter I got from you, you asked how I was getting along at my new church in the city. Well, as you know, Sir, I've always had a church in the country until I got this call to the city. I can honestly say I don't see much difference — folks are esually bad in the country and the city. Just ike changing a snakes roosting place ain't gonna help his personality much, so is the humans I've met. I used to think that maybe country churches were a little more set in there ways, but if any congregation ever got more set than the one I got now, they would probably hatch.

Back years ago churches use to fight tooth and nail to make sure nobody changed their doctrines. They had the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and such like. Well, there shore ain't nothing wrong with that, but now we done come up with all sorts of new doctrines.

First off, theres the doctrine of the holy hour. Church has got to be held at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning. I tried to change it to 9 o'clock at our church and it almost tore the congregation apart. They don't care much about the doctrine of the virgin birth one way or the other, but they don't want you fooling with the doctrine of the Holy hour. To hear them talk the Good Book has a commandment "Thou shalt worship at 11 o'clock." One woman swore I was trying to change the Bible by switching the time. I reckon if our folks had a been the shepherds when Jesus was born they would'a told the angels to go away and come back at 11 o'clock Sunday morning. Then, there's the doctrine of the Holy seat. We got some folks that won't set in but one seat. If somebody else gets it they'll stop coming. They don't mind what you preach. You can talk about Jesus setting on the throne as long as he or nobdoy else don't try to get their seat. I reckon holding on to that one seat is like a baby holding on to his blanket — it gives him a sense of security. So we been kinda cautious about taking folks sitting places away cause we don't want to make neurotics out of 'em.

I know you've heard of the doctrine of the holy comfort. Some folks believe that the Holy Comforter is the one who makes everything comfortable in church. Lotsa my folks won't come unless the heat is just right and the seats ain't to hard. They're more interested in heat than they are holiness. As a matter of fact, Mr. Publisher, we've got one group known as the cushion committee to make sure some of our soft reared friends don't become callosed.

Well I reckon you can see how the church has come along way. We've still got "holy" things in the church but they've changed a mite.

I've got a go now. By the way, would you be interested in a pocket watch that chimes at 11 o'clock. Holy smoke, its later than I thought.

Yours truly,

Parson Jones

POETRY TODAY

By DORIS MILLER

ANOTHER POET LAUREATE: During its recent busy session, the West Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church took time in its later hours to name itself a poet laureate, the Rev. M. Homer Cummings of Huntington, pastor of the Cox's Landing Church.

Papa Cummings, who is another of the gentlest and best men imaginable, has been recognized by this writer as the Edgar A. Guest of West Virginia for a good many years. He can spin rhymes on a moment's notice, verses which delight with their kindly humor and homeliness.

Now retired, though still serving a church here, Mr. Cummings sang his "swan song" at the 1959 Conference in verse, some of which was reprinted in this column. He is the author of many hymns, among them the following one to the Father of all mankind, which was sung at the conference meeting this year.

HOW GREAT THOU ART

*How wondrous are the works of Thy creation!
In wisdom Thou has planned and made them all;
I stand amazed in awe and adoration
When I Thy greatness and Thy deeds recall.*

*The universe—the worlds and constellations,
The sun and moon which beautify the sky;
The tribes of earth and people of all nations
Are guarded ever by Thy watchful eye.*

*Thy love divine surpasses comprehension!
'Tis marvelous, it reaches even me;
I cannot grasp such gracious condescension —
Christ took my place and died on Calvary.*

*When by Thy grace I see Thy face in glory
And humbly kneeling at Thy feet I bow;
I'll worship Thee, I'll bless Thee and alone adore
Thee
And cry, O Lord, my God, how great art
Thou."*

—M. Homer Cummings