

Humor: The Most Difficult Case

Two psychiatrists were talking and one asked the other, "What was your most difficult case?" His colleague answered, "Once I had a patient who lived in a pure fantasy world. He believed that a wildly rich uncle in South America was going to leave him a fortune. All day long he waited for a make-believe letter to arrive from a fictitious attorney. He never went out or did anything. He just sat around and waited." "What was the result?" asked the first psychiatrist. "Well, it was an eight-year struggle but I finally cured him. And then that stupid letter arrived..."

Some people are afraid to open their eyes. And some just keep their eyes closed no matter what. (by Billy D. Strayhorn from *From the Pulpit*, CSS Publishing Company, Inc.)

The Blind Pastor

Steven E. Albertin told the following story. He said, in my church secretary's office there hangs a modernistic picture composed of a maze of colors and shapes. I realized these sophisticated, modern, and abstract pictures were supposed to contain some profound artistic or philosophical message, but I never was able to figure it out. It just looked like a jumbled mass of confusion. If there was a message there, I was blind to it. One day while I was standing in the office, waiting for the copier to warm up, one of the congregation's **kindergarten-age boys, Adam**, stood beside me and said, "Do you see what I see?" "Do you see something in that picture? I sure don't." Adam looked at me with glee in his eye, "Pastor, can't you see him? It's Jesus hanging on the cross." I stared as hard as I could, until my eyes actually hurt from staring. I wanted to believe Adam and that there actually was the image of Jesus hanging on the cross hidden somewhere in that mass of color and shapes, but I couldn't see Jesus anywhere. "Adam, I'm sorry but I must be blind. You will have to help me see." Directing his finger to a mass of color in the center of the picture, Adam said, "There, Pastor. Do you see what I see? There is Jesus, his face, his arms outstretched on the cross." And then, like an epiphany, the image began to appear. Yes, there hidden somehow "behind" the colors and the shapes was the barely visible image of Jesus, hanging with arms outstretched on the cross. "It's amazing, Adam. You have helped one blind pastor to see Jesus. Yes, I can see what you see, Adam." (by Steven E. Albertin from *Against the Grain*, CSS Publishing Company)

Triumph in the Rubble

Carlton Fletcher tells about his Uncle Walter who lived in Waldorf, Germany, during the Second World War. Uncle Walter was the descendant of Huguenots that had run away from France during the persecution of the Protestants in the 1600's. During the war he

wanted to build himself a house, but all the necessary materials were reserved for the army. You couldn't build a house for yourself. To a member of Germany's middleclass, a house is most important. Building a house and getting out of an apartment is a priority. And nothing -even a world war - would deter Uncle Walter, even if it meant building a house and hiding it under a junk pile. Here is how he did it. He bought a lot and loaned it out for people to throw junk on it. And then he would go there at night and build, layer by layer of brick, and cover it up with junk. When the end of the war came, there was a big pile of junk, but there was a house under it practically completed. All it needed was a roof. In 1946, when the war was over, he raised the roof like a madman. And he was jubilant. He said, "I beat the Nazis, I beat them. I got my house."

Don't you admire the spirit of a man like that - to be able to build a house amid the rubble of life? I suspect Bartimaeus was such a man. (by King Duncan from *Collected Sermons* at www.Sermons.com)

I Heard My Brother Crying

Some years ago in a small village in the Midwest, a little twelve-year old girl named Terri was babysitting her little brother. Terri walked outside to check the mail. As she turned back from the mailbox, she couldn't believe her eyes. The house was on fire. So very quickly the little house was enveloped in flames. Terri ran as fast as she could into the flaming house only to find her baby brother trapped by a burning rafter which had fallen and pinned him to the floor. Hurriedly, Terri worked to free her brother. She had trouble getting him loose as the flames were dancing around their heads. Finally, she freed him. She picked him up and quickly took him outside and revived him just as the roof of the house caved in. By this time, firemen were on the scene and the neighbors had gathered outside the smoldering remains of the house.

The neighbors had been too frightened to go inside or to do anything to help, and they were tremendously impressed with the courage of the twelve-year old girl. They congratulated her for her heroic efforts and said, "Terri, you are so very brave. Weren't you scared? What were you thinking about when you ran into the burning house?" I love Terri's answer.

She said, "I wasn't thinking about anything. I just heard my little brother crying."

Let me ask you something? How long has it been? How long has it been since you heard your brother or sister crying? How long has it been since you stopped and did something about it? (by James W. Moore from *Collected Sermons* at ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc.)