

VIEWPOINTS

Going to church is natural cleansing of the soul

When the weather is cold and damp, people will come to church; however, when it turns warm they will go every place except church.

When it gets extremely warm I always think I should be leading a better life. During peach season I come up with some slim excuses for skipping church. My preacher doesn't always buy my reason. He is like the preacher who was comparing his congregation with a fellow minister. His friend in the cloth said, "I had a great year, took in a lot of new members, the collections picked up, and the music took on a quality all its own."

The other minister was thoughtful for a few moments and he replied, "My congregation didn't grow in size, our collections were down and the music director listened to one member of the congregation and picked out songs which had only one verse. To top it off, we had some pretty sorry Christians to withdraw their membership last year."

To get folks to come to church, all kind of ideas are passed around at committee meetings. Everything from drive-in church, early church, come as you are. Incidentally I am never going to say anything again about how people dress when they go to church. When I went to Rio Vista, California to visit my brother, who is a minister, I attended his church on Sunday. I was the only one in the church with a tie. Most of the folks wore shorts, and clothes of all de-



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

scription — which was fine with me, although I must admit it takes some getting used to.

We are creatures of habits. Going with our Sunday best to church in the South is as natural as eating cornbread with collards or fatback with cabbage. Even when I was a boy and didn't have any say in whether I would go to church or not, we dressed in the best clothes we had, which consisted of a clean pair of overalls and a shirt which hadn't been worn but twice. Those worn twice had a smell if you had a mustard plaster put on your chest to cure a cold.

Although I am in attendance at some of these meetings where suggestions are made to get people in church, being contrary I am not in full agreement on some methods being suggested. Going to church should be as natural as taking a bath, you take a bath to clean the body, you go to church to clean the soul.

There are all kinds of excuses for not going to church. One of the oldest is "the church is full of hypocrites." That may be true, but the person who makes such a statement doesn't have to pay for the sin of the hypocrite.

The one which serves some non-church goers best is, "I don't like the preacher." You don't go to church to worship the preacher. He is not going home with you for lunch or sleep in your house at night. Most of them are not like the preacher in a small Methodist Church in the Tennessee mountains. He was educated at Yale Divinity School.

The congregation was proud. His first sermon was based on the letters Y-A-L-E. He said the Y stood for youth and he preached for 20 minutes on the promise of youth. "A" was for ardor for the Lord, another 20 minutes worth. "L" was for love, and another 20 minutes. He finished up with "E" for evangelism and went on for 20 minutes more.

The congregation was both exhausted and disgusted. The preacher, looking for a compliment, asked one lady on her way out, "Was my sermon effective?"

The lady stared at him and said, "I'm just glad that you didn't graduate from Tennessee Technological University."

Don't misjudge what I am saying. I have a lot of good friends who don't go to church. I haven't discussed the reasons with them. It is a decision each individual has to make. The great thing I love about God's charge to us is that each is responsible for his or her own soul.

My parting thought — See you in church.



We Get Letters

Cameron Heights seniors say thanks

To the Editor:
The Cameron Heights senior citizens would like to thank the East Freedom Masons for the fish fry they gave us on Wednesday, May 31. We enjoyed it very, very much. Thanks very much.

Seniors of Cameron Heights

Letters to Editor policy

The News Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor and encourages readers to express their opinions.

Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. The street address and phone number will not be published, but are required so we may verify authenticity. The name of the writer and, in some cases, the town the writer is from will be published at the end of the letter.

We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, as well as those that exceed 300 words. We will not publish letters that we consider to be in poor taste or slanderous. In some cases we may add an editor's note as a postscript when we believe a correction, explanation or amplification is warranted. We may also, at our discretion, limit the number of times an individual writer may submit a letter for publication.

Asheville cat-of-sorts was interesting character

Don't you wish sometimes that North Carolina had some "interesting" political characters who were just a little bit "naughty"?

Like the famous Louisiana Governor, "Kingfish" Huey Long, later a U.S. Senator? Or his brother Earl?

Or the current mayor of New York City, whose wife recently sought a court order to keep him from bringing his girl friend home to the official residence?

Other states have their share of these entertaining politicians, but North Carolina's recent governors and senators, however you feel about their political views, have been pretty low key. They haven't given us the kind of excitement in their personal lives that people in some other states get from their politicians.

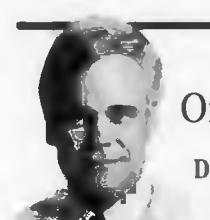
But it hasn't always been that way. Not too long ago, North Carolina had a U.S. Senator, one who served for 12 years and kept people all over the country entertained — and shocked — by:

1. Planting a big kiss on Jean Harlow, the famous movie star, right on the Capitol steps.
2. Getting married five times.
3. Snubbing the King and Queen of Great Britain.
4. Appearing in Lucky Strike cigarette advertising for a thousand-dollar payment.
5. At 57, marrying a wealthy 20-year old Washington socialite who often wore the famous "Hope" diamond, owned by her mother.

I bet you have never heard of this senator. But he was also incredibly audacious in his political actions and viewpoints.

1. In the years before World War II, he gained the reputation as a number one defender of Hitler and Germany's aggression in Europe and co-operated with German agents based in the U.S.

2. He published an anti-immigrant, anti-labor, anti-Jewish newsletter that was often sold at pro-Nazi rallies in this country.



One on One
D. G. Martin

3. He introduced legislation to demand that Great Britain cede Newfoundland, Bermuda, and its Caribbean possessions to the U.S. as a penalty for failing to pay its World War I debts.

When he was first elected to the U.S. Senate, he upset the incumbent Cameron Morrison, the powerful former governor, who had the support of the established political organizations in the state. Amazingly, our mystery subject ran on a platform calling for more government programs, more government spending, higher taxes on the wealthy, and pro-inflationary policies.

In fact, this candidate ran as an avowed "liberal." Yes, and he won the election. If you don't believe me, I will show you the campaign stationery that has the term right there on the printed letterhead.

This "liberal" ran a hard-hitting and very personal campaign against the wealthy Morrison, which reminds us that dirty campaigns are not a recent invention. He mocked Morrison's living habits, asking the crowds of depression-poor people at his political rallies, "What do you think he eats? He does not eat cabbage or turnips or ham, nor fatback like you and I do. My friends, think of it, Senator Morrison eats caviar."

Holding up a jar of caviar, he would continue, "This here ain't a jar of squirrel shot; it's fish eggs. Friends, it pains me to tell you that Cam Morrison eats fish eggs and Red Russian fish eggs at that and they cost two dollars. Now let me ask you, do you want a senator who ain't too high and mighty to eat good ole North Carolina hen eggs or don't you?"

After his election, when his "lib-

eral" image had faded into a "pro-fascist" one, he almost caused a national crisis when, thanks to the old Senate seniority system, he was elevated to the chairmanship of the Senate's Military Affairs Committee just before the country entered World War II.

This committee had responsibility for overseeing and supporting the preparation for the war that almost everyone knew was coming. Newspapers all over the country protested. North Carolina newspapers were particularly brutal against him. They poisoned public opinion so much that he did not even try to be reelected when his term ended in 1945.

Have you remembered his name yet?

Robert Rice Reynolds, from Asheville.

If you want to know more about his personal and political life, read the new book, "Buncombe Bob: The Life and Times of Robert Rice Reynolds." It is published by UNC Press and written by Julian Pleasants, a University of Florida history professor who grew up in Southern Pines, graduated from Davidson, and did his graduate work at Carolina.

There is much more to the Bob Reynolds story. Pleasants' book is the product of more than 30 years of work. It is more than just a story of an entertaining and bewildering political figure. It is a look at very troubled and very interesting times in our country and in our state.

The new book shows those times through the prism of Bob Reynolds' political career. For all of his wacky views, Reynolds was somehow able to get right into the hearts and minds of North Carolina voters — so much so that they twice elected him to the Senate by wide margins.

Those who wrestle with the question of how all this happened might gain some insights that will help them understand the puzzling ideas and people who populate our own times.

Navy, Marine and Coast Guard enlisted association meets

To the Editor:
Attention all enlisted personnel of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard active duty or retired!

Did you know that Fayetteville has a Branch/Unit Fleet Reserve Association? We have been established since 1997.

The Fleet Reserve is the organization that goes to bat for us in Washington, when the promised benefits are taken away. They were instrumental in getting back our medical and prescriptions.

The more members we have the more lobbyists we can send to Washington. There is power in numbers; we need you.

Branch president Joe Palmer is a dedicated leader. We meet the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the RMA building on 120 Elizabethtown Road, Fayetteville.

For more information, call Leonard Galloway, secretary, at 875-6020.

The Ladies Auxiliary meets in a separate room on the same night and at the same time. They are the backbone of the Branch, consisting of the wives of the Branch members. The ladies do a lot of charity work and have luncheons and lots of fun. Come for a visit; you will probably want to join.

For more information, call Ladies Auxiliary President Mary Lou Green at (910) 867-3820.

Thelma Galloway
Ladies Auxiliary Publicity
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