**Church Life**

**Build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,   
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.**

***(Ephesians 2:20)***

**The bulletin board on the lawn of a New Jersey church reads “We reserve the right to accept everybody.” *(John Kazmark)***

**A synagogue or church that admitted only saints would be like a hospital that admitted only healthy people. It would be a lot easier to run, and a more pleasant place to be, but I'm not sure it would be doing the job it is here to do. *(Harold Kushner, in Who Needs God)***

**At the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, only 7 percent of the people in America's 13 colonies belonged to a church. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**At Halfmoon Bay, Ontario, an aquatic church service is held on Sunday at 4:30 p.m. during July and August. A minister conducts the service from land while the sailing fraternity gather on the decks of their yachts or in the shells of their punts. The pulpit sits on a large rock, and loudspeakers carry the service to the water-borne congregation. Boy Scouts paddle from boat to boat to collect the offering. Then, as the last notes of the closing hymn come from a hundred swaying decks, anchor chains rattle and diesels hum into action. And another interdenominational aquatic worship service has ended. *(John Fisher, in Council for Canadian Unity newsletter)***

**Every Catholic church in town but one had its Mass schedule posted in front. The exception announced the time weekly bingo started. I phoned the priest to complain. “My son," he replied, “our parishioners know when we hold Mass, but we have to be sure the Protestants know when we hold bingo.” *(James A. Daily, in Reader's Digest*)  
   
The minister prays from the pulpit: “Bless the ladies' group in the church, bless our assistant pastor and heaven help the trustees if they don't get on the ball and repair the roof!” *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**If fishing is a religion, fly-fishing is high church. *(Tom Brokaw)***

**Who builds a church within his heart and takes it with him everywhere, is holier by far than he whose church is but a one day house of prayer. *(Morris Abel Baer)***

**George Burns recalls his first success as an entertainer: When I was small I was singing with three other Jewish kids from the neighborhood. A nearby department store held a talent contest representing all the local churches. When the Presbyterian had no one to enter, the minister asked the four of us to represent them. There we were, four Jewish boys sponsored by a Presbyterian church, and our opening song was “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.” We followed that with “Mother Machree" and won first prize. The church got a purple altar cloth, and each of us got a watch worth about 85 cents. I was so excited I ran home to tell my mother. She was on the roof, hanging out the wash. I rushed up and said, “Mama, I don't want to be a Jew anymore!" “Do you mind my asking why?" she responded calmly. “I've been a Jew up until now and never got anything. I was a Presbyterian for 15 minutes today and already I got a watch," I said, holding out my wrist. “First, help me hang up the wash," she said, glancing at the watch. “Then you can be a Presbyterian." *(Epistle)***

**Medieval ecclesiastical calendars had the important saints and feast days highlighted in red ink. These memorable days became known as “red-letter days.” *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 128)***

**The chair on which the bishop sat was called a “cathedra." Whence its building's name: “cathedral." The saint's cape was called a “chappelle," Whence its building's name: “chapel.” And the guard at that building's door was called a “chaplain." *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Like school, church is another way to give parental guidance a boost. Of course, I can't say that attending church has made my kids less sassy or more grateful. But giving children the means to reach inside to pray, to start the search for solace when there seems nowhere to turn, is like enclosing a favorite blanket in their luggage. *(Jaaquelyn Mitchard, in Parenting)***

**Why must all the churches be closed at night? How often has the wanderer groaned in front of those closed doors? *(Paul Claudel, French author)***

**A little girl leaving her first church service was asked by the minister how she liked it. “I liked the music,” she replied, “but the commercial was too long.” *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Some people think a church service is like a convention. So the family sends a delegate. *(Inspiring Quotations, Compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)***

**Church council lament: “Why, when motions require seconds, and votes are recorded in minutes, do the meetings last for hours?” *(Inspiring Quotations, Compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)***

**Religious cult: The church down the street from yours. *(Johnny Hart, in B. C. comic strip)***

**Dennis asks the minister on the way out of church following the service: "My Dad wants to know if you fall asleep when you're writing your sermons." *(Hank Ketcham, in Dennis the Menace comic strip)***

**One Sunday morning the pastor noticed little Johnny was standing up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The young man of seven had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up and stood beside him and gazing up at the plaque he said quietly, “Good morning son.” “Good morning pastor,” replied the young man not taking his eyes off the plaque. “Sir, what is this?” Johnny asked. “Well, son, these are the names of all the people who have died in the service,” replied the pastor. Soberly, they stood together staring up at the large plaque. Little Johnny’s voice barely broke the silence when he asked quietly, “Which one sir, the 9:00 or the 11:00?” *(Claire Chanel, in On Course magazine)***

**For a shocking account of some-straight-from-the-shoulder denunciation that leaves little doubt as to where Jesus stood on the matter of ecclesiasticism, read the entire chapter of Matthew 23: Other than the reference to the church being founded on Peter (Petros), which is a symbolical reference to an inner organization of spiritual ideas, Jesus devoted his time, not in stumping for the establishing of a church organization, but in teaching Truth, in helping people to formulate that aggregation of spiritual ideas within themselves -- toward healthier, happier, more prosperous lives. *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 6)***

**A newspaper copy editor was handling a story about the Church of St. John the Baptist. Not having time to write the headline at the moment, he sent the copy out to the printers with this written at the top: “John the Baptist -- Head to Come.” *(Herb Cain, in San Francisco Chronicle)***

**I like the silent church before the service begins better than any preaching. *(Ralph Waldo Emerson)***

**Bad times are boom times for evangelical churches. Congregation growth at evangelical churches jumped 50 percent during each recession between 1968 and 2004, according to a new Texas State University study. *(Foreign Policy, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 6, 2009)***

**As many people are looking out over the platform at the beautiful scenery, Billy says to his Mom: "This is like a church, Mommy. Everyone's whispering." *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**I’ve never seen anyone excluded from church. On more than one occasion a tiny worshiper has burst into tears. Sometimes I resent the interruption, yet Christ was very clear in his preference for children. He would have welcomed their noise. *(Benjamin Cheever, from Joyful Noise, edited by Rick Moody and Darcey Steinke)***

**Grandma: "I'm considering getting my eyebrows tattooed on. I know some women who've had it done. That would make getting ready in the mornings a lot easier." Grandpa: Good idea. And I'm considering getting some eyeballs tattooed on my eyelids. That would make sitting through church a lot easier." *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Board member: “Sid will now present the Treasurer's Report." Sid: “Once there was a beautiful maiden who lived with her evil stepmother, and her two ugly stepsisters. The poor girl spent all day cleaning while her ugly stepsisters. . . ." Board member: “Sid! That's not the Treasurer's Report -- that's Cinderella!" Sid: “I figure one fairy tale is just as good as another.” *(Bud Grace, in Piranha Club comic strip)***

**Favorite hymns of**

* **Dentists – “Crown Him With Many Crowns"**
* **Meteorologists – “There Shall Be Showers Of Blessing"**
* **Contractors – “The Church's One Foundation"**
* **Tailors – “Holy, Holy, Holy"**
* **Golfers – “There Is A Green Hill Far Away"**
* **Politicians – “Standing On The Promises"**
* **IRS Agents – “All To Thee"**
* **Electricians – “Send The Light"**
* **Shoppers – “In The Sweet By And By"**
* **Optometrists – “Open My Eyes That I May See" *(The Calling Newsletter)***

**A sign in the church next to the fire extinguisher says: “In case of fire and brimstone break glass.” *(Dana Summers, in Bound & Gagged comic strip)***

**A pastor of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster opened a local government meeting in Alaska with a prayer while wearing a colander on his head. "I'm called to invoke the power of the true inebriated creator of the universe, the drunken tolerator of all the lesser and more recent gods, and maintainer of gravity here on earth," said Pastafarian" pastor Barrett Fletcher, ending his prayer with "Ramen." The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster was formed as a satire on other religions and has won court rulings that it must be treated equally. Some politicians, Fletcher said, "seem to feel they can't do the work without being overseen by a higher authority." (*The Week magazine, October 4, 2019)***

**Scholars are now crediting a religious revival as critical to why crime rates went down in the late-19th-century America and England, despite urban upheavals brought on by the Industrial Revolution. *(Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr.)***

**The seminary that I attended required us to gain practical experience by having us intern in one of the local churches. A classmate was assigned to a church whose pastor had originally come from Germany. My friend was nervous and a bit anxious conducting his first service. In announcing that the pastor would give the morning message, he said, “I will now turn the service over to your German shepherd.” *(Rev. Donald K. Schell, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to the garage makes you a car. *(Laurence J. Peter)***

**The Vatican received an invitation for a friendly but high-level golf game to be played in the spirit of friendship by representatives of Catholics and Jews. None of the cardinals was good at golf, so they decided to make Jack Nicklaus, a devout Catholic, a cardinal so he could represent the Vatican -- and win the game. Nicklaus was honored and agreed to play. The day after the game Nicklaus went to the Vatican and reported to the pope that he had good news and bad news. The good news was that he had played the best golf of his life; the bad news was that he lost by three strokes to Rabbi Tiger Woods. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**My grandmother, a staunch Southern Baptist, had marched me off to Sunday school and church regularly. So when I switched to the Episcopal Church after marriage, she challenged me: "What's wrong with the Baptist Church, son?" "Well," I explained. "Carole and I flipped a coin to see if we would go to her church, or mine, and I lost." "Serves you right," said my grandmother. "Good Baptists don't gamble." *(J. E. Bedenbaugh, in Reader's Digest)***

**Minister says to a parishioner who is about to leave church following the church service: "Good to see you again, Mr. Sims. Have a nice six months!" *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The Grand Ole Opry had become so popular that it was held in the Ryman Auditorium, a massive red brick meetinghouse built in the 1890s by a reformed steamboat and saloon owner named Tom Ryman in honor of the Nashville street preacher who’d converted him. Ryman had gone to heckle the preacher one day, only to end up being brought over to the Lord. No wonder the Ryman Auditorium looked, and felt, like a church! Though the Opry doesn’t broadcast from the Ryman today except on special occasions, you still can find me there from time to time. It’s been refurbished a little, but the Ryman has those same wooden pews that Tom Ryman put in for his preacher friend more than a hundred years ago. The building Tom Ryman built to honor the Lord may not see so many revival meetings these days, but if you ask me, there’s still a touch of divine going on in it. I’ve got a real strong feeling just about every performer who’s ever sung from that old wooden stage would second me on that. *(Porter Wagoner, in Guideposts magazine)***

**The young minister, new to town, got lost trying to find the cemetery for a graveside service for a man with no family or friends. When he finally found a backhoe and its crew, they were eating lunch. The hearse was nowhere in sight. The minister ran to the open pit and, feeling guilty for being tardy, preached an impassioned, lengthy service. As he was returning to his car, he overheard one of the workmen say, “I've been putting into septic tanks for 20 years and I've never seen anything like that." *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The Church is like a great ship being pounded by the waves of life's different stresses. Our duty is not to abandon ship, but to keep her on course. *(St. Boniface)***

**My husband's cousin Larry is legally blind and has a golden retriever named “Amos" for a guide dog. We go to church together every Sunday and Amos lies quietly in the aisle next to Larry. After church, we go back to our house for breakfast and conversation. During the Sunday breakfast, Larry said he and Amos were on a walk when he heard one boy say to another, “Hey, that dog goes to our church." *(Dennis McCarthy, in Reminisce Extra magazine)***

**And did you hear about the bishop who hired a secretary who had worked for the Pentagon? She immediately changed his filing system to “Sacred” and “Top Sacred.” *(Ira N. Briggs)***

**In 1887, minister Harvey Wilcox and his wife Daeida founded Hollywood, California. Liquor was banned, and free land was given to anyone who agreed to build a church. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Minister Preacher: “How come I never see you in church anymore, Morris?" Morris: “There are too many hypocrites there, Reverend." Preacher: “Don't worry, Morris; there's always room for one more." *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Once a minister and his organist made a plan to expose the inappropriate chatter by the congregation during that period of time just prior to the worship service. The organist was to build the prelude to a loud fortissimo, then stop suddenly. When the music abruptly halted, one lady was heard to say, “I fry mine in lard!" *(Freda Cavendish)***

**Did you know that a recent national survey shows that 80% of all church members were first invited as guests? *(Unity on the Avenue, Denver, Colorado, newsletter, September 10, 1991)***

**A 6-year-old girl ate too much candy on the way to church and during the service she suddenly said, "Mommy, I'm sick: I have to throw up!" "Goodness," whispered Mommy, "run quick to the garden behind the church!" The little girl ran and was back in a few moments. "What?" said Mommy. "Were you there and back already?" "I didn't have to leave the church," said the tyke. "They have a little box on a stand next to the door." "What?" exclaimed Mommy, horrified. "You didn't!" "Yes, I did, Mommy. There's a sign right on the box. It says, 'For the Sick.'" *(Midland Cooperator)***

**Some people can create lives of holiness all by themselves, the way Mozart could create immortal music without taking piano lessons, but most of us need a structure and the company of other people to do it. *(Harold Kushner, in Who Needs God, p. 16)***

**Massachusetts passed a law in 1675 to lock church doors during services. Purpose was to cut disturbances not by latecomers, but by early goers. Nothing so infuriates the pulpit personality as this drift of departing people. *(L. M. Boyd)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A man moved to a new city and started looking around for a church he would like to join. He was about to give up finding just the right one until, one Sunday, he dropped into a church and heard the preacher say: “We have left undone the things we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done!” The newcomer slipped into a pew and, with a sigh of relief, said to himself, “Thank goodness! I’ve found my crowd at last.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Our minister, looking for ways to increase Sunday-morning attendance, offered a prize to the person who invited the most guests. A tally was made pew by pew before the service started. The congregation was quiet as the results were counted. Just then the door opened, and three latecomers slipped into the back pew. The minister looked up. "You folks who just came in -- who invited you?" *(Ann Shroll, in Reader's Digest)***

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**In 1870, you could buy a mail-order church and get it delivered by train, boat and wagon. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Many come to church to bring their clothes rather than themselves. *(Proverb)***

**One day, I was teaching the external signs of the seven sacraments to my fifth-grade class. After explaining that the pouring of the water and the words of the priest are the external signs of Baptism, the class caught on quickly; they did well, in fact, until we got to Matrimony. All the students were stumped except Joshua, who raised his hand excitedly. “I know, I know,” he said. “The outward sign of Holy Matrimony is the limo outside the church.” *(James Souza, in Catholic Digest)***

**After a long, dry sermon, the minister announced that he wished to meet with the church board after the service. The first man to arrive was a stranger. “I think you misunderstood," said the minister. “This is a meeting of the board." “If anyone here is more bored than I am, I'd like to meet him," said the man. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The Christian church is the only society in the world in which membership is based upon the qualification that the candidate shall be unworthy of membership. *(Charles C. Morrison, in Moody Monthly)***

**Monks in medieval abbeys perfected the craft of cheese making. Had to, maybe, after they swore off meat. Did I tell you “munster" is just a corruption of “monastery"? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**When Joseph Smith, the founder and spiritual leader of the Mormon Church, ran for the U. S. presidency he promised that if elected he'd outlaw lawyers. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Real church names:  
\* The Lizard Methodist Church (United Kingdom)  
\* Falling Asleep of the Ever-Virgin Mary Church (Anaheim, CA)  
\* 24-7 Church (Seffner, Florida)  
\* Boston Spa Methodist Church (United Kingdom)  
\* Old Wegee United Methodist Church (St. Clairsville, Ohio)  
\* Rope of Hope Cowboy Church (Duluth, Georgia)  
\* Towel-N-Basin Christian Church (Lake Tahoe, Nevada) *(World Features Syndicate)***

**One man says to another after the church service: "Church attendance is fabulous this morning! Was there a news bulletin I missed?" *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**A man is struck by a bus on a busy street. As he lies dying, he calls out, “A priest! Somebody get me a priest!” A police officer checks the crowd – no priest, no minister, no man of God of any kind. Then out of the crowd an elderly man comes over. “Officer,” he says, “I’m not a priest. I’m not even a Catholic. But for 50 years I’ve lived behind St. Elizabeth’s Church, and every night I’ve listened to the Catholic litany. Maybe I can be of some comfort to this man.” The officer agrees, and the elderly man kneels down over the injured pedestrian and solemnly intones: “B-4, I-19, N-38, G-54, and O-72…” *(Jewishmag.com, as it appeared in Reader’s Digest, October, 2023)***

**In our parish the pastor was delighted when the town doctor, who had been an irregular churchgoer at best, began attending Mass every Sunday. It wasn't long before they were helping each other -- the priest referring people to the doctor, and vice versa. One referral, sent by the doctor, called on the pastor with a note prescribing his last four sermons. The priest was delighted -- until he discovered the patient's problem was insomnia. *(Colin Jeffrey, in Catholic Digest)***

**When I arrived at church in our small Minnesota town near the Wisconsin border, I was surprised to see the pulpit adorned in green-cloth while the lectern was draped in purple. “I don't want to show any favoritism," the pastor told me with a smile. “The Packers are playing the Vikings today.” *(Rory L. Raymond, in Reader's Digest)***

**Since 1939, the religious drama Black Hills Passion Play has been presented under the stars at the Spearfish Amphitheater, among the world’s largest outdoor stages with seating for 6,000, in Spearfish, South Dakota. *(American Profile magazine)***

**Recently, our pastor fell asleep at the wheel and awoke just as he sideswiped a guardrail. When he got home, his wife peppered him with questions, trying to figure out what had happened. "Were you sleepy when you started to drive?" she asked. "No," he answered. "Then how did you fall asleep?" "I'm not sure," he said. "There I was, going over my sermon. . ." *(Margaret McGlaun, in Reader's Digest)***

**Pets aren't always necessarily cuddly. They may also have spiritual callings. Scientists in Ireland have discovered that distinct types of bats categorize themselves as Protestant or Catholic. Really. Natterer's bats like to nest in stone walls common in big Protestant churches, and the little guys prefer their warm-up flying space in the enclosed roof spaces of those buildings. Long-eared bats like to squeeze into cozy little nests between roof slates and beams such as those usually used on Catholic cathedrals. Scientists have also found that lesser horseshoe bats have aristocratic leanings since they seem to like the big 17th-century homes that feature grand roof spaces in summer and cozy cellars in winter. *(J. C. Walker, in Tidbits)***

**Thanksgiving Day was approaching, and the family had received a card picturing a Pilgrim family on their way to church. Grandma showed the card to her young grandchildren and remarked, “The Pilgrim children liked going to church with their parents.” “Oh, yeah?” her grandson replied. “Then why is the dad carrying that rifle?” *(Quoted in The Joyful Newsletter)***

**Preacher: "Mrs. Jones, will you please wake up your husband?" Mrs. Jones: "Wake him up yourself! You put him to sleep." *(Anonymous)***

**Perhaps the most lasting pleasure in life is that of not going to church. *(William Inge, American playwright)***

**Two-thirds of churches in America delivered at least one overtly political sermon or message in the last two months before the 2020 election, a recent Pew Research Center analysis found. In evangelical churches, 48 percent of sermons that referred to the election also mentioned specific political issues or candidates, including pleas to "pray for our president." *(Axios, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 23, 2021)***

**I see the church as a field hospital after battle. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. *(Pope Francis, in Catholic Review)***

**Coming out of church, Mrs. Peterson asks her husband, “Do you think that Johnson girl is tinting her hair?" “I didn't even see her," Mr. Peterson admits. “And that dress Mrs. Hansen was wearing," Mrs. Peterson continues. “Really, don't tell me you think that's the proper costume for a mother of two." “I'm afraid I didn't notice that either," Mr. Peterson says. “Oh, for heaven's sake," Mrs. Peterson snaps. “A lot of good it does you to go to church." *(The American Legion Magazine)***

**The main purpose of the church is to help people to get along without it. *(Henry Drummond)***

**I lived with my grandparents in Celina, Ohio in the 1940s. My grandfather was pastor of the local Church of the Nazarene. The church was on a large plot of land that we were allowed to farm to help put food on the table. We raised everything that would grow in that area, including sugarcane that was turned into molasses. We used to say that we raised cane behind the church and got away with it. *(Dick Moore, in Reminisce magazine***

**A Yale University study of 2812 elderly people found that those who never or rarely attended church had nearly twice the stroke rate of weekly churchgoers. *(Malcolm McConnell, in Reader’s Digest)***

**One of the toughest tasks a church faces is choosing a good minister. A member of an official board undergoing this painful process finally lost patience. He'd just witnessed the pastoral relations committee reject applicant after applicant for some minor fault . . . real or imagined. It was time for a bit of soul searching on the part of the committee. So he stood up and read this letter purported to be from an applicant. “Gentlemen: Understanding your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for the position. I have many qualifications. I've been a preacher with much success and also have had some successes as a writer. Some say I'm a good organizer. I've been a leader most places I've been. I'm over 50 years of age and have never preached in one place for more than three years. In some places, I have left town after my work caused riots and disturbances. I must admit I have been in jail three or four times, but not because of any real wrongdoing. My health is not too good, though I still accomplish a great deal. The churches I have preached in have been small, though located in several large cities. I've not gotten along well with religious leaders in the towns where I have preached. In fact, some have threatened me, and even attacked me physically. I am not too good at keeping records. I have been known to forget whom I have baptized. However, if you can use me, I promise to do my best for you." The board member turned to the committee and said, “Well, what do you think? Shall we call him?" The good church folks were appalled! Consider a sickly, troublemaking, absent-minded ex-jailbird? Was the board member crazy? Who signed the application? Who had such colossal nerve? The board member eyed them all keenly before he replied. “It's signed, The Apostle Paul." (Dear Abby column)**

**Preacher: "Brother Purvis, I noticed you fell asleep during the sermon yesterday." Brother Purvis: "It was a very restful message." Preacher: "I don't know why you even bother coming to church when you always fall asleep." Brother Purvis: "I need the nap." *(Jerry Bittle, in Geech comic strip)***

**Rules for Church Killing:  
1. Don't come.  
2. If you do come, come late.  
3. Try to make lots of noise.  
4. Don't imagine the front seats were meant for you;   
people might think you conceited.  
5. Come bound to find fault.  
6. Don't for the world ever think of praying for the church.  
7. Don't sing.  
8. Don't take any part in the service.  
9. Don't encourage the pastor, but tell their faults to others.  
10. Visit other churches half the time.  
11. If somebody said a good thing and it helped you, don't tell them, it might make them vain.  
12. If you see a stranger in the audience make them as uncomfortable as possible.13. Don't believe in missions.  
14. Don't give much to benevolence.  
15. Let the pastor do all the work.  
16. Don't give your preacher anything, it may spoil him.  
17. Try to run the church yourself.  
18. If you think everything is harmonious, try to do something to engender all the strife you can. *(Brethren Family Almanac, 1897, page 23)***

**Sharma, my cousin, was telling me about an evening service at the church we’ve both attended for years. She and her husband usually sat in the back, but this time they moved up front to be sure to hear the Scripture reading. They sat beside a longtime church member who cheerfully said, “Good to have ya with us! Where y’all from?” Taken by surprise, Sharma mumbled, “The back.” *(Lauren Grisham, in Reader’s Digest)***

**It seems to me that many people attend church on Sunday with the same feeling that they attend a theater. They just sit there and enjoy what is going on. *(Charles M. Schulz, Creator of Peanuts)***

**Humanitarian work should call on the people as such and not on their capacity as members of any particular church or nation. *(Albert Schweitzer)***

**One parishioner asks another during the church service: “Are the seats cheaper back here?" *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**In a tiny one-church community, there was a couple, Steve and Rose, whose devotion to each other lasted through more than 50 years of marriage. They seemed to differ only on one point: every Sunday, Steve would drive his wife to church, then wait outside in the car reading the newspaper until the service was over. When Rose died, the congregation missed her and missed the green car that always had been parked across from the church on Sunday. After a few months the car appeared again, but this time Steve came into the church and sat in the last pew. As is the custom, the minister announced “sharing time," during which people offer special prayers or special thoughts. That morning, the church was silent until a quavering voice sounded from the back. Steve was singing “My Wild Irish Rose, the sweetest flow'r that grows. . . ." The entire congregation joined in the loveliest, lovingest “hymn" we had ever sung. *(R. Marlatt, in Reader's Digest)***

**Another Saturday-night snowstorm had diminished the number of people in attendance at our church on Sunday. The assistant pastor remarked, "This snowstorm may not have separated the sheep from the goats, but it has certainly separated those who have four-wheel drive from those who do not." *(Carol D. Gallagher, in Reader's Digest)***

**Statistics show that a church filled to 80% capacity stops growing. We are and have been at 80% for a long time. "Status quo" must change to "status grow". *(Rev. Gerry Comstock, Unity minister)***

**Everyday people are staying away from church and going back to God. *(Lenny Bruce)***

**The congregation of a small stone church in England decided that the stone which formed the step up to the front door had become worn by its years of use, and would have to be replaced. Unfortunately, there were hardly any funds available for the replacement. Then someone came up with the bright idea that the replacement could be postponed for many years by simply turning the block of stone over. So they did just that. And discovered that their great-grandparents had beaten them to it. *(The Motivational Manager) 4239810***

**The little boy says to the minister following the church service: "I slept in church because I'm striving to be more like God, and on the seventh day He rested." *(The Lutheran Witness)***

**Grandson: “How come you never got any tattoos, Grandpa?” Grandpa: “Actually, Nelson, I did.” Nelson: Where are they?” Grandpa: “I had eyes tattooed on my eyelids so no one can tell if I’m awake. In fact, my eyes are shut right now. Yeah, it comes in handy at church.” Grandson: “Cool!” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**On the first Sunday after the terrorist attacks, people filled the pews at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Louisville, Ky., seeking solace in a sermon about grief and joining together to sing “America the Beautiful.” That day, the church drew 200 people, significantly more than the average attendance of 150, and for the next two Sundays the crowds kept coming. But by Sunday attendance was back to normal at St. Andrew's, an average-sized American church, as it has been in recent weeks at houses of worship across the country. Americans, who after the attacks turned to religion in an outpouring that some religious leaders hailed as a spiritual “great awakening," have now mostly returned to their former habits. “I just don't see much indication that there has been a great awakening or a profound change in America's religious practices," said Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll. *(Rocky Mountain News, November 26, 2001)***

**While I was touring with an international repertory theater, we performed in a small village church in Scotland. Our program to a packed house began with several short, humorous plays. No one laughed at the first one, or at the second. By the end of the third play, the leader of our troupe said, “They must hate us. They're not even smiling. We'll cut the program short.” At a reception following the performance, we were puzzled when everyone said how much they had enjoyed us. I finally understood the problem when I overhead a kilt-clad gentleman say to his friends, “Och, they wir so funny it was all I could do not tae laugh in the church.” *(Terri Michaels, in Reader's Digest)***

**The science of yoga will take hold in this age more than anything else. The entire religious trend will be away from churches as we know them and into schools and quiet places where people will go to truly find God in meditation, and not just to have a sermon. Instead of big costly churches with intellectually trained ministers intent on securing more and more religious “customers," small meditation centers should be started in quiet places where a few truth seekers will come and learn the way to commune with God in the company of a few other deeply earnest and deeply meditating persons. *(Yogananda)*-**

**On a church bulletin board: “If you have troubles, come in and tell us about them. If you have none, come in and tell us how you do it.” *(Quoted in Voice for Health)***

**127 mph: Not speeds reached by your typical Sunday driver. But a man got behind the wheel of his tan 2000 Audi, fastened his seatbelt and led Wyoming and Colorado state troopers on a wild, 83-mile chase from north of Baggs to just west of Steamboat Springs, running several drivers off the road. The car wasn't stolen, and there were no warrants for the man's arrest. He had a valid license, and he wasn't under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The man identified by authorities as Jay Peterson, 45, of Frisco, allegedly told a Routt County detention deputy that he had to get to church on time in Silverthorne. *(Rocky Mountain News, July 25, 2005)***

**The Rev. Billy S. Martin, pastor of a church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was asked about his congregation's church attendance during the vacation season. "Up and down," he replied. "Up in the mountains and down at the coast." *(Patricia C. Agee, in Reader's Digest)***

**Vision statement: We are a church living from an open heart by learning, teaching and practicing the law of receiving and giving in all aspects of life. *(Unity of Springfield, Illinois newsletter)***

**“I hope you didn't take it personally, Reverend,” an embarrassed woman said after a church service, “when my husband walked out during your sermon.” “I did find it rather disconcerting,” the preacher replied. "It's not a reflection on you, sir,” insisted the churchgoer. “Ralph has been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child.” *(Nuggets)***

**Boy: "Dad, what's a religious traitor?" Dad: "Someone who leaves our church and joins another." Boy: "Then what do we call someone who leaves his church and joins ours?" Dad: "Oh, in that case, we call him a convert." (L. Thomas Holdcroft)**

**A church usher was escorting parishioners to their seats before the service. When he came back to the entrance, he found two strangers. Greeting them with a smile, he asked where they would like to sit. Looking confused, one stranger said, "Nonsmoking, please." *(Lois Horn, in Reminisce magazine)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service. "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping." *(S.C.U.C.A. Regional Reporter)***

**In our parish the pastor, apparently fed up with all the excuses given over the years as to why people don't go to church, included “Ten Reasons Why I Never Wash” in the Sunday bulletin:**

**1. I was forced to wash as a child.**

**2. People who wash are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else.**

**3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is right.**

**4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.**

**5. I wash on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.**

**6. None of my friends wash.**

**7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.**

**8. I don't have time.**

**9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.**

**10. People who make soap are only after your money. *(Mary O'Connor, in Catholic Digest)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**There was a pastor who wished his Easter congregation a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. He was certain he wouldn't see many of the attendants again until the following Easter. *(Edward F. Cox)***

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