

# The prodigal prophet

And it came to pass in the land called America that there were many prophets who spake the word of the Lord. Multitudes harkened unto them, and greatly were the righteous uplifted. Satan was sore vexed.

So the devil went forth and sought across the great land a tool to perform his bidding. And lo, did he find such a tool in the person of a comely jezebel called Jessica, whose skin was whiter than the sands of Sinai and whose radiant tresses were more alluring than the gold of Herod. And Satan took this temptress and put her in the path of the Prophet Jim.

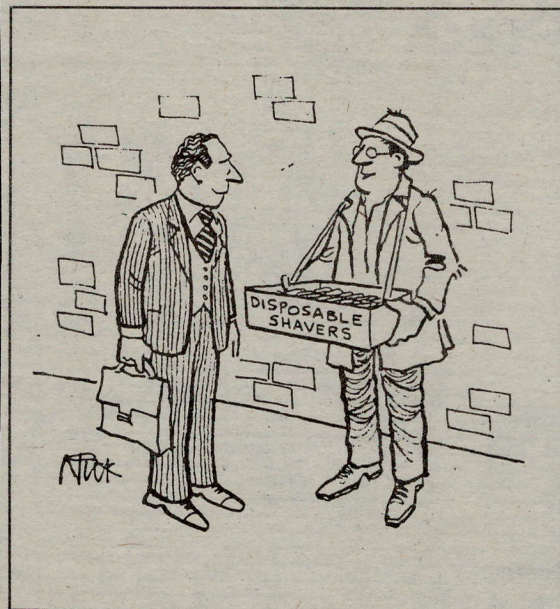
Now Prophet Jim was a messenger of the Lord and a great collector of His revenues. These the Prophet Jim used to rear up a great temple in the land called Heritage wherein the faithful could worship the Lord by taking water slides. Much did the unfaithful and ungodly fear Prophet Jim and his wife, the Prophetess Tammy, she of the dulcet voice, she whose eyes were more blue than the opals of the Land of Punt.

Yet Satan contrived that Prophet Jim should meet the temptress Jessica in an accursed place called Motel. Lo, the prophet coveted her. There did his spirit grow weak and his flesh did burn hotly with lust. And, alas, did the prophet have knowledge of her and drink deep of the cup of sin. Greatly was Satan pleased.

And then it came to pass that evil tongues spake of Prophet Jim's sinning and it also came to pass that the Prophetess Tammy did sniffeth and drinketh overly of myrrh, frankincense and lotus, and verily did she see things that were not there.

Jim and Tammy did gnash their teeth and rend their hair but it was as for naught. Cast out, were they, from the land of Heritage into the wilderness where they could not their hair bloweth dry.

## Punch



"And I liked it so much, I bought the company."

ERIC MARGOLIS



Came then the Prophet Swaggart, a man whose voice was as a trumpet of Assyrian brass. He did mightily covet the land of Heritage and spaketh ill of Jim and Tammy, saying, verily, those who do fornicate and besot themselves deserveth not to be high priests of Heritage Land. The Prophet Swaggart did tendereth for Heritage. Truly, Swaggart would be holiest and greatest in the land.

And lo, far off in the place called Virginia, the Prophet Jerry did gird his loins and take up buckler and spear. And so came he to the land of Heritage, and there spaketh to the Prophet Swaggart, saying, "get ye hence, false prophet." And the faithful were greatly in awe and did hide their heads in fear as their prophets prepared to join battle. And came yet another great man of God, the Prophet Oral.

And this mighty clarion of God did thunder from his Tower of Prayer, hurling anathema at the Prophet Swaggart, "get ye gone, ye false priest, ye Pharisee, ye spawn of the sorcerers of Chalcedon." As he spake, a great wind came up, the earth groaned mightily, and fire did pour down from the sky. The faithful were sore afraid.

And the Prophet Swaggart did thunder out, "Harken unto me, ye faithful, that ye may know that I alone speaketh for the Lord. Know ye as well that I alone collecteth for Him and do His works. Render unto me gold, spices and silver lest ye burn in hell's everlasting fires. And forget ye not that cheques must be certified.

"Nay, nay," cried back the Prophet Oral, "I am His word and I alone collecteth his tithes.

"Nay, nay," did cry out other voices, for verily other prophets had come, and each knew he spaketh for the Lord. Verily, this clamor did cause the prophets' flocks much sorrow and fright. Some did eschew their prophets, crying that these men of God were no better than the High Priests of Babylon. Others of these good men did seek deep in their purses for more gold to give their prophets. Some did cry out to forgive Jim and Tammy. Yet others of the flock went off to worship new idols of copper and gold.

And lo, came then the men of King Reagan, those who collecteth the taxes, and they said unto the prophets, "Hark ye men of God who receiveth tax-free donations, open ye your scrolls to our gaze so that we may see if the gold ye receiveth from your flocks does verily go to do God's works. For rumors have we heard from as far as the lands of Moab and Elam that some amongst our prophets haveth things like new chariots and great palaces or concubines."

And verily, the prophets who were set to do battle relented at these words, and they too were sore afraid.