

## The Homecoming That Sent Everyone Back Home

In the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century homecomings were elaborate and much anticipated affairs at many churches. Many times there were guest evangelists, special singing, returns of long-departed members as well as former pastors. Church services always ended with a call for everyone to assemble on the lawn for the homecoming dinner. Tables were elaborately set with the best food that all the cooks in the church could prepare. Fried chicken, baked beans, boiled corn, deviled eggs, and potato salad could always be found at these feasts. Usually some of the young children were stationed along the sides of the tables with some type of fan to ward the flies and yellow jackets away from the food. Flies were a real problem since there was so much livestock around the area.

The story is told about a situation that developed at a local homecoming involving a male parishioner and a rather hefty female parishioner. After the morning service as the ladies of the church were preparing the tables of food, one of the local brothers visited the nearby Johnny house. In his rather vulnerable position inside the little building, he just happened to espy a coming threat to his domicile... Sister Bertha Heavier-than-you was approaching the Johnny in a lurching clumping walk as she was perched upon a pair of heavy heeled shoes that could not be classified as high heels, only higher heeled than flats, and those heels were suffering torture from the load imposed upon them from above..

The good brother in his vulnerable position inside the little out house quickly grabbed frantically for the edge of the door because the inside knob was missing. Only one spindly little arm attached to a body on a precarious perch separated him from horrifying embarrassment and exposure to the assembled parishioners in the yard. His arm quickly tensed up like steel cables holding up a suspension bridge.

Sister Bertha had by this time reached the privy and extended a well nourished arm that looked like a sow's leg and wrenched at the door of the little building. She felt a very rigid resistance to her more-than-gentle tug on the door, so she pulled again. Once again she felt a tug resisting her.

The brother of the faith inside the building was hanging on for dear life. The whole affair had come upon him so quickly that he had not been able to pull up the necessary clothing items, and he was hanging onto his pants with one hand and the door with the other. His neck muscles had by this time jumped out on his body, and his veins were so distinct that individual blood cells could be counted coursing through them. Jaw muscles were clinched as if he had lockjaw, and sweat was rolling down his face and standing on his forehead in shimmering drops. His legs were set in a staunch and resolute position as he struggled with might and main to hold the door shut.

Sister Bertha again tried the door from an off hand stance and once again felt the resistance to her pull. Therefore, she planted a foot crosswise to the direction of her pull, leaned toward the privy, placed a huge hand and arm appendage against the door, and gave a powerful thrust that could have ripped the armor belt from a battleship's hull. The resistance ceased inside the privy as the door almost came off its hinges.

**MOON OVER MIAMI!!!**

Never in the history of that church had anyone seen, heard, or experienced anything like what happened after that. The good sister let out a bellowing scream as a

half-clad man came flying past her. Her jerk on the door propelled the man ten feet out of the privy with his pants around his ankles. He was doing a little screaming himself as his whole body was ripped, tugged, and yeah, propelled through the air into the sudden embarrassment that he had tried so valiantly to avoid.

At the sight of a half-naked man lying on the ground, many other actions were set in motion. Many of the ladies pulled their aprons over their faces to shield themselves from the embarrassing sight. Children began pointing at the sight and laughing. Mothers grabbed children's mouths and covered them as well as their eyes with their hands as they tried valiantly themselves to avoid seeing the embarrassed brother and the half-crazed Sister Bertha who had been felled by the sight just as a lodgepole pine would hit the ground after being cut by lumberjacks. Pa-toooom-ba!!! Baskets, pots, and plates jumped as the ground shook like a B52 raid.

By this time Brother R.E. Vealed had jumped to his feet and was fighting to get his pants all the way up. More screams ensued which began to break up the event. The dogs left church and went to the porch as well as most of the parishioners. That homecoming was very long remembered as the Day of the Full Moon Noon.