

# GOD, INC.

I hear about hostile takeovers, shakeups in the board of directors, sex and money scandals. Is this an episode of Dynasty? No, it's just business as usual in the big money world of selling God.

I have no qualms with those who believe in God and aren't hypocrites. I plan on making it to heaven someday myself (God will have to be really forgiving.) But these TV ministers are nothing but hucksters. If they weren't selling God they'd be selling used cars or running a TV auction. The TV pulpit is the last refuge of the snake oil salesman.

Take Jim and Tammy Bakker. Please. They presided over a \$129 million empire. What did they sell? What was their raw material cost? Their business is tax free and they live in several palatial houses. When GM sells a car, they have to get all the raw materials, deal with hostile labor unions and compete with well-managed foreign competition. What are the Bakker's expenses? Granted, Tammy does have a monstrous bill for makeup, but that can't come to more than \$1 million a year. Throw in another million a year for her Valium and hard drugs and I think she's pretty well set.

Jim doesn't need much more than \$1 million himself to spend on vitamin E, oysters, spanish fly and he needs an American Express Card on

which he can charge the motel rooms. I hear that Tammy is very mad at Jim because much of his missionary work was done in the missionary position.

Fortunately, Jimmy Swaggert has been keeping a close eye on the Bakkers for us. It seems one of his agents actually followed Jim Bakker and

## Cynicism & Humor



Alan Pincus

Jessica Hahn to their famous tryst in the motel room. The agent made a terrible mistake though. He listened outside the motel room door but all he could hear was a woman's voice yelling out, "Oh, God!" He then concluded they were doing religious business and went home.

Jessica seems to be doing well

on the deal too. She may have received \$250,000 and TV movies and magazines are clamoring for her story. Can it be long before she poses for Penthouse?

She claims she is a victim. However, where I come from they don't call a woman who takes money for sex a victim. However, Jim Bakker categorically denies that PTL stands for Pay the Lady.

The sad part about it is that if Jim came before his audience and made a tearful apology they'd take him back in a minute. He may be in the back room now thinking up the proper strategy for the second coming. The type of people that he appeals to are very vulnerable and forgiving. A talented con man can turn even an embarrassing situation like this to his advantage. We may not have seen the last of the Bakkers.

I always use my own rule of thumb when I listen to a sales pitch or someone claims they are going to do something great for me. I listen attentively. But if the bottom line is that to help myself buy a better mousetrap or to get into heaven I have to shell out big money, the snake oil alarm goes off. I keep my hands on my wallet and walk out of the room. For every Jim Bakker there are hundred more that want to take his place. If people like him are the true road to salvation, God help us all.

# Joke's On You

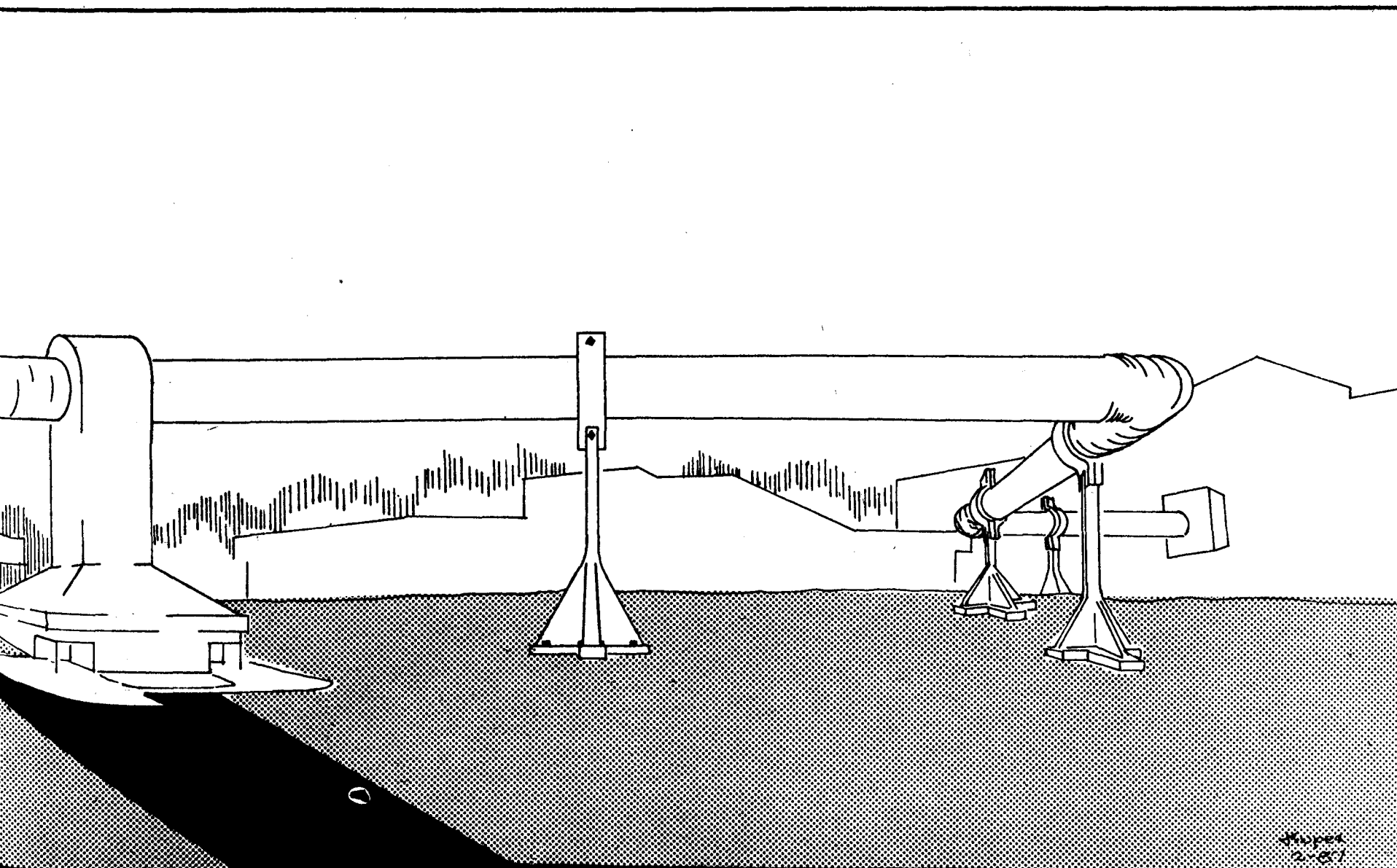
By Thalia Cook

*The first of April, some do say  
Is set apart for All Fools' Day;  
But why the people call it so  
Nor I, nor they themselves, do know.  
(Poor Robin's Almanac, 1760)*

As we all know, April first is also known as April Fools' Day. Remember the day we are supposed to play harmless jokes on our friends. The observance originated in France when Charles IX reformed their calendar in 1564. New Year's was celebrated from March 21 and ended April 1. After the adoption of the new calendar the new year's celebration was changed to January 1.

As you can guess there were some stubborn people who still celebrated it April 1. Can you guess what these people were called? Correct. April fools.

The custom of fooling friends and relatives spread from France. In France, the victim is called "April fish" and in Scotland they are called "April gowk."



Huber  
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