

A STEEL TRAP

One of the more interesting aspects of being a pastor is the rich diversity of people who make up your flock. Every parish has its share of ... well, just decide for yourself.

Pastor Arnie Schmidt

With most of the long day behind him, Pastor Schmidt settled down behind the desk in his den, intent on finishing up some paperwork. He heard the doorbell ring, and he started to get up when he saw that Mary, his wife, had already opened the door.

“Oh, hi, Tony,” said Mary.

“Hi, Mary. Is Arnie home?”

“Arnie, Tony is here,” announced Mary.
“He’s in the den. Go ahead on back.”

“Thanks.”

“Hey, Tony,” said Arnie. “What’s up?”

“Are you busy, Pastor?” asked Tony. “I don’t want to interrupt anything.”

“That’s okay, Tony,” said Arnie. “Just doing a little never-ending paperwork.”

“Well, I won’t take up too much of your time. I was doing a little cleaning up at my house and I found this old Sunday School book. It just reminded me of a lot of things way back then, and so I thought I’d drop by and show it to you.”

Taking the book from Tony, Pastor Schmidt said, “Yeah, boy. That was a long time ago. It does bring back a lot of memories.”

“Do you remember Nancy Thomas?” asked Tony.

“Nancy Thomas ... yeah,” replied Arnie. “I wonder whatever happened to her.”

“Do you remember that you and I both had a crush on her?”

“No-oo,” said Pastor Schmidt. “I can’t say that I remember that.”

Looking a little indignant, Tony said, “Well, we did. And I still remember when they took that

group Sunday School picture, and you pushed me aside so you could stand next to her.”

“I don’t remember that either. If I did, I’m sorry, but that was so long ago. You aren’t still holding a grudge for that, are you?”

“No, of course not. I just want you to know that I still remember it. You know, it’s kind of remarkable how much of this old book I remember. Here, why don’t you test me?”

“Oh, Tony, I don’t really have time right now, uh ...”

“Aw, come on, Arnie. You’ll probably find it amazing.”

“Oh, okay. Let’s see ... alright. The Ten Commandments.”

“The Ten Commandments,” repeated Tony confidently. “The Ten Commandments ... the Ten Commandments. I suppose we should start with the First Commandment.”

“I think so,” stated Pastor Arnie.

“The First Commandment is ... the First Commandment ...” Leaning over to Arnie, Tony

spoke in a hushed voice, “Can you just give me the first word to kind of get me started?”

“Sure. It’s thou.”

“Thou?” questioned Tony. “Are you sure?”

“I’m looking right at it, Tony.”

“Thou ... maybe you could just give me the second word.”

“Shall.”

“Thou shall,” repeated Tony. “Not. Thou shall not.”

“Well, that’s close,” said Arnie. “Thou shall have no other Gods before me.”

“Thou shall have no other Gods before me,” stated Tony, with a smug look on his face.

“That’s good, Tony. Now, the Second Commandment.”

“The Second Commandment ... the Second Commandment is ...”

“Thou,” said Arnie.

“Of course, it’s thou,” said Tony. “Thou shall not take ... wait ... thou shall not take the name of the Lord, Thy God, in vain.”

“Al-l-l right, Tony. You’re on a roll now. The Third Commandment.”

“The Third Commandment is Thou shall not ...”

“No.”

“Thou shall no?” questioned Tony.

“No, Tony. It doesn’t start with Thou shall not.”

“It doesn’t?”

“Remember,” reminded Arnie.

“Remember what?” asked Tony.

“Remember the Sabbath.”

“Remember the Sabbath ... Remember the Sabbath ... Re-mem-ber the Sab-bath ...”

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” said Arnie. “The Fourth Commandment.”

“The Fourth Commandment is ... the Fourth is ...”

“Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”

“Well, okay, Pastor. I suppose if you want to use the King James version.”

“The Fifth Commandment,” said Arnie.

“The Fifth Commandment is ... the Fifth Commandment is ...”

“Thou shalt not kill.”

“Thou shalt not kill,” repeated Tony.

“The Sixth Commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery,” said Pastor Schmidt. “The Seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal. The Eighth is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. The Ninth is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house. The Tenth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.” Looking up at Tony, who sat back in his chair with a smug grin on his face, Arnie asked, “Do you think you’ve got it, or do you want to go over it again?”

“I’ve got it,” bragged Tony. Pointing to his head, he said, “Once it enters up here, it’s like it’s in a steel trap.”

“Amazing,” said Pastor Arnie.