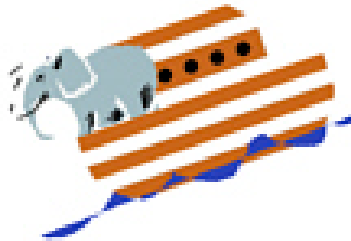


## Gum Popping Professions of Faith

The folk who became members of the church last Sunday were a typical young family. The pastor announced they were joining after having been baptized earlier the past week. Dad held junior and Mom stood next to him. They were so typical. Dad had a nicely shaved head, junior wore neat little bibs, and mom sported the right look for an upwardly mobile couple. I suspected they had driven to church in a black or cream colored high-end SUV. They were way too cool.



Mom was especially cool. Her flashing white teeth shined like pearls under the bright lights. This allowed everyone to better appreciate her gum chewing. As the pastor introduced the couple she perfectly coordinated grinning with gum chewing. As they repeated the standard profession of faith Dad hiked junior higher in his arms while mom maintained perfect timing between grinning, gum chewing and professing. They were so cool. They were so typical.

I don't have a thing against shaved heads, high-end SUVs, toothy grins, cool looking young couples or even gum chewing. Most especially, I don't have anything against little children being nicely dressed, and young couples being baptized and joining the church. It's just that the event set me to wondering. It set me to wondering because this young couple is so typical... disturbingly typical.

I was wondering why it is that I have to stretch my memory back years and years to recall the last time anyone...young or old...made their profession of faith without perfect poise. Way back then, many of those professions were not made with poise. They were messy...very messy. We used to keep tissue boxes at the front of the church because it was so often so messy. Of course, in those days we had a place to keep tissue boxes at the front of the church...next to the altar. We did not have any place for gum.

What I was wondering about was whatever happened to contrition, broken heartedness over sin, the burden of guilt, and those blubbing tearful chest shaking confessions of faith that poured out of a heart set free from a body of sin and death that was so wretched it had fouled every ounce of the person held in its awful grip.

By contrast, there is something about a toothy, grinning, gum popping profession of faith that sets me to wondering...wondering about the difference between it and a Holy Spirit enabled sin hating, Christ loving, profession of faith. Wondering about the difference between toothy grins and tear filled eyes. Wondering about the difference between the church as a place where the perishing may be rescued and a safe place to mix with nice people. It's something to chew on. **MJ**

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Editor's Note about *ArkRocker VIEWPOINT*:

*The content of this column will always be very thought provoking, stimulating and maybe even a challenge or call to action. The author will never be revealed, so don't ask because we'll never tell.*

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