

THE CHURCH, AH HA

By Rod

This sketch is based on Ephesians 5 vv 22-32. It draws out how Paul's parallel between Jesus and the Church being likened to a husband and wife's relationship might not mean much to many in the modern day.

CAST

Alan Partridge *An Alan Partridge impersonator would be best to play this part!*

Joan Smith *An expert in theology. Intelligent. The flippant remarks of the others pass her by.*

Betty Wood *Church member. Down to earth. Cynical – particularly of her husband. Not impressed by Joan's theological explanation.*

The scene is a TV or radio studio.

Alan Good evening, I'm Alan Partridge, ah ha.
On tonight's programme we will be discussing the absolutely fascinating topic: "What is the church?"
To help us, we have in the studio a professor of theology, the Reverend Doctor Joan Smith, DD. Hello, Joan.

Joan Good evening, Alan.

Alan What exactly does DD stand for? Is it something to do with your bra size.

Joan No, it means Doctor of Divinity.

Alan Oh, right. Or should I say "Ah ha!"
And we also have a member of one of the local churches, Mrs Betty Wood.

Betty Good evening, Alan.

Alan Hello, Betty Wood – or should that be "Betty Wouldn't". Boom boom. Ah ha!

Betty I'm afraid I don't understand you.

Alan Never mind. If I can turn to you first, Joan; how do you see the church?

Joan In the letter to the Ephesians, St Paul drew a parallel between the church and marriage.

Alan Well, a lot of weddings do happen in churches, so I suppose it's fair enough.

Betty Too many for my liking; all that confetti left littering the churchyard. It's a disgrace.

Joan I think he was meaning something deeper. He said that the relationship between Jesus and the church is the same as that between a husband and wife.

Alan 30% chance of ending in divorce, you mean?

Joan No, he likened Jesus to the husband, and the church to his wife.

Alan I can think of a few male members of the church who might not be too happy with that idea, Joan. What exactly did he mean?

Joan He said that Jesus is the head of the church, in the same way that a husband is the head of the wife and that wives submit to their husband.

Betty Huh. If my husband tried to tell me to submit, I'd soon show him who was boss.

Alan I don't doubt it.

Joan Christ loves the church in the same way that husbands should love their wives.

Alan You mean by buying them a bunch of flowers on their wedding anniversary?

Joan Not exactly. He goes rather further. He says that a husband should love his wife in the way that he loves his own body – feeding it and caring for it.

Betty What rubbish. I don't see how a diet of lager and crisps is going to do the church any good. That's all my husband feeds his body when he's in charge of the catering.

Joan A husband should make his wife holy by washing her with water ...

Betty I suppose a good back scrub wouldn't go amiss; especially in that bit you can never quite reach.

Joan *[Continuing]* ...presenting her as radiant..

Alan Bling Bling.

Betty I like the sound of that. My husband never buys me any jewellery. I'll tell him you said that, when I get home.

- Joan *[Continuing]* ...without stain, wrinkle or blemish.
- Alan The sales of Oil of Ulay would go through the roof.
- Betty Not to mention a bit of cosmetic surgery; I've always fancied a new nose.
- Joan I think St Paul is emphasising the depth of the relationship; a depth symbolised by the way that a man leaves his parents in order to set up an entirely new home with his wife.
- Betty That doesn't stop him sneaking back to his mother for a 'bit of home cooking'; or to watch football on the television with his dad because they can afford Sky and we can't.
- Alan Well we've no more time to prolong this fascinating discussion. So let me summarise. In answer to our question, "What is the church?", Joan has told us that St Paul says it is like:
- A romantic place for weddings, 30% of which will lead to a divorce.
 - A bunch of flowers.
 - A diet of lager and crisps.
 - A good back scrub.
 - Expensive jewellery.
 - Lots of beauty treatment.
 - Home cooking, and watching football on the telly.
- Joan *[Protesting]* I think that's rather too simplistic, Alan. St Paul does stress that this is a profound mystery.
- Alan I'm sure our viewers would agree that it is a mystery no more, thanks to this programme of "I'm Alan Partridge". And I am Alan Partridge, saying "good night – Ah ha".

THE END