

## Funny I'm Not

*By Sheila Johnson*

I've always wanted to be able to put my nerdy sense of humor into words – lively, funny words that would make people laugh. I'm the one who understands the jokes ten minutes after everyone else at the party gets it. Not funny. I'm the one who asks the person telling the joke to repeat the punch line over and over, until the comic walks away. I'm sure that is so very annoying! Not funny. I'm the one who tries to correct the punctuation in the sentence of the joke being told. And that surely erases anything that could be remotely funny in the jokester's storytelling. Not funny. I love a good joke, if and when I can understand it, but I am not good at being funny – at least not intentionally.

In my profession, I officiate over many funerals, or home-goings, as they are referred to in the Black community. There was a period of time when my aging Church had more than its share of deaths. In fact, one of my dearest friends who was serving in the ministry along with me, would call me in the middle of the night after receiving a call from the mortuary, and ask if I wanted to do the home-going service on Friday, and she would take the one on Saturday, or vice-versa. The deaths were never funny and seemed to be unending and overbearing for the congregation, as well as for the clergy – but oh, the amusing stories we could tell! God does, in fact, allow for some levity. We were sure we could co-author a best seller by simply using the humor and downright ridiculousness of the circle of people in the lives of the deceased!

Take the time when a woman was crying so hard and literally shaking the casket at the viewing – not because of her grief or remorse, but because the deceased, her ex-husband, was still wearing the ring she had given him and she wanted it back! Or take the time when Ms. Jones, unknown to anyone in the family, processed in *with* the family holding the hands of her three young children who all bore a striking resemblance to the angelic-looking corpse in the casket.

Sometimes, when I serve as a supply clergy at various mortuaries, people I've never seen before will ask me if I'm a Priest or a Rabbi. That always makes me wonder if they even knew the dearly departed!

I should stop now. My mind is going down a jagged, hilarious road that may end at a hot spot. And that would not be funny!