

She Speaks for God, but We Can't Print It

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by Dana Parsons

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The plan was to walk right up to the founder and ask why her quaint little Christian-based country store known as Piecemakers shouldn't abide by Orange County health codes.

Thirty minutes with 84-year-old Marie Kolasinski, however, and the story line of bureaucracy versus iconoclastic business seemed strangely irrelevant.

Instead, I came away with some advice for county inspectors: Leave her alone. You probably don't know what you're dealing with.

The 5-foot-tall, white-haired Kolasinski says she's merely following God and America's abiding principles. In short, that doesn't permit health inspectors to tell her what she can sell in an operation that's been around since the 1970s.

But it's in the telling that this woman of God distinguishes herself. I'd read in previous accounts that Kolasinski had a mouth on her. But until you hear it up close and personal and marvel at its breadth, reports of "salty" language don't do her justice.

"If you put your guts into your business, the hard-earned sweat of your brow, that becomes a living entity that serves the community," she says. "If the people don't patronize it because there's something wrong with it, it goes out of business. But government is nothing but a @club}*;% leech. Excuse my language."

I ask why the store shouldn't be subject to oversight. "They're stupid. They lord it over you. They're worse than Hitler. They terrorize you. They take away your pursuit of happiness, your privacy. They could give a @%\$# about our Constitution."

She didn't understand that, she says, until she "met Christ and reopened my eyes to the difference between what's righteous and unrighteous." She suggests that inspectors "run for their ;@spade}*;% lives because they're going to get lynched by somebody that's not going to be as gentle as we are."

I suggest her language doesn't bespeak gentleness. "I don't give a #*&%\$!" she says, cheerily. "I love it," she says, then mutters about "Christian religious pious £°%\$#!"

When I ask if she really wants to take on county authorities - who are currently considering whether to file charges - she replies, "I'd rather be in there making soup and baking pies. I'm so &¥*%\$#! at this government for disturbing my peace."

Piecemakers apparently grew out of a quilt-making and Bible study group. Its couple of dozen members live communally in the neighborhood and offer classes in such things as sewing, doll making, art and soup making.

Kolasinski says God once told her not to worry about using four-letter words. "He said, 'You are my mouthpiece, and I want you to say exactly what I tell you to say.' "

She then tells me that God has designated me as "Sweetsie baby."

Momentarily disarmed, I ask how the battle will end. "I have not a clue," she says. "We do the Lord's work every day. I think he is going to humble that health department and they're going to be happier than they've ever been. They're going to come and apologize to me for terrorizing us."

When I ask if she doesn't have better things to do than buck the inspectors, she says, "Would you please tell them that? That's exactly what I want them to hear. I have more important things to do than try and keep those {club}#*%* out of my place."

In parting, I tell her I can't tell if she's amused or furious. "I'm always angry," she says. "The joy of the Lord is my force, the strength that keeps me going. When I see all the things going on that aren't right, it makes me wonder, where is our God?"

Nobody asked me, but if I were the county, I might be inclined to quietly walk away from this one. I just wonder whether illegally baking muffins is worth stepping into this potential land mine near the corner of Harbor and Adams in Costa Mesa.

"You can take my business, you can take everything," Kolasinski says. "But you can't take my @*#%0 soul. That belongs to Christ."