COMIC-STRIP PREACHER

Jack Hamm of Waco, Texas, with some of his cartoon sermons, which are published in 354 newspapers each week

JACK HAMM was always handy with a pencil. He has been drawing pictures since he was 5 and submitted his first cartoon to an editor when he was 13. Even though the cartoon was rejected, he was determined to become an artist. At high school he developed an interest in the Bible. With the passing years he felt an increasing pull toward the ministry, even though his urge toward art was as strong as ever. The result: a man who wavered between the drawing board and the pulpit for almost a quarter of a century, until 3 years ago, when he concluded that he could reach a much larger congregation with picture sermons than with words. So he created *Religious Drawings,* a series of cartoons to preach Christianity and fight Communism. They appear each week in 354 newspapers, and now reach a congregation of 29,000,000 newspaper readers in the United States and 14 foreign countries.

He refuses pay for his cartoons, even though the weekly bill for materials, production, and postage is around $100. He meets his expenses for both cartooning and his family—the Hamms have one 5-year-old daughter Dwana—from his salary as art instructor at Baylor University and through occasional contributions from friends. In his Waco, Texas, home he turns out 2 cartoons a week, giving editors a choice. His wife, Dorisnel, handles his correspondence, converting the Hamm dining room into a small post office once a week.

Hamm was born in Wichita, Kans., and after graduation from high school went to the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. When his funds ran out, he turned to cartooning for money and held down art jobs on small publications. One summer he earned $1 a week as the pastor of a rural Baptist church in Wichita. Returning to Chicago, he became one of the illustrators for the comic strips, *Boots and Her Buddies, Alley Oop,* and *Horace and Babe.* Soon after, he turned down the chance to do a detective comic strip of his own to enter Baylor University.

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