

## **The Meyer Minute for May 1, 2002**

Keyword: Timing

"License plates that celebrate Nevada's nuclear past are being criticized as an example of bad timing. The plates to be introduced this summer depict a mushroom cloud...Critics...note that Nevada officials are fighting the Bush administration over its decision to dump 77,000 tons of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain." (Congressional Quarterly Midday Update, April 26, 2002)

Bad timing may be humorous but good timing is a part of a life well lived. How's your sense of timing?

"The length of our days is 70 years--or 80, if we have the strength." (Psalm 90:10) Have you thought through where you're at in life's journey"

20 or 30, 70 or 80, the ages of life, like the days of the week, are all unique. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Are you acting on the uniqueness of your present season? "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

How's your timing?

## **The Meyer Minute for May 2, 2002**

Keyword: Satisfied Customer

Today's the National Day of Prayer and someone somewhere is sure to talk about legislating prayer, or at least quiet time, in our schools. I have my doubts.

OK, I know there are anti-Christian forces trying to strip every vestige of Jesus Christ from American public life. Against those efforts we should avail ourselves of constitutional guarantees of the free exercise of religion.

What troubles me, however, is trying to achieve a religious goal through legislation. Romans 4:15 says, "the law brings wrath." That is tell someone they have to do something and they'll get angry. But...convince them something is good...win over their hearts...and you'll have them as companions, not adversaries.

How shall we promote prayer in this country? Do you pray only because you should...or because you've experienced the benefits of prayer? Through Jesus, God hears your prayers like a father listening to his dear child. The best salesman, they say, is a satisfied customer.

"Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1)

## **The Meyer Minute for May 3, 2002**

Keyword: Mother's Prayer

"Mom!" Once in a while kids call out "Dad," but we all know it's mom who wins the calling contest.

Besieged mothers should call out too...to God...for their children. Tomorrow, May4th, the church remembers Monica, a great pray-er for her child. Like many young people, her son gave up the Christian faith to sow his wild oats.

Monica went to a priest for counsel. He told her, "Let him alone for a while; only pray to God for him." She pestered the priest more. "Go your way," he finally said, "and God bless you, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should be lost." And her son wasn't lost. Her son Augustine became one of the greatest leaders of the early Christian church.

Remember how you kids call to you? Mothers, besieged by their needs, worried about their life, call to the heavenly Father for them. "Your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

## **The Meyer Minute for May 6, 2002**

Keyword: Repentance

Herbert Morrison was a reporter for WLS radio in Chicago. 65 years ago today Morrison was broadcasting live from Lakehurst, New Jersey. The occasion was the arrival of the Hindenburg, a huge German dirigible. As that great airship was mooring, routinely so it seemed, it suddenly burst into flames. 35 people on board were killed. A navy crewman on the ground also died. As the tragedy unfolded, Morrison cried out, "Oh, the humanity!"

Jesus was once asked about an accident. A tower had fallen, killing 18 people. He said, "Unless you repent, you too will all perish." (Luke 13:5) Death is always lurking near us. Not just the possibility of an accident, but an eternal death, an eternal separation from the kindness of God. Acknowledging how close death is...and then trusting the One who died for our sins and rose to give us eternal life...That's repentance. Oh, how humanity needs repentance.

Our Father, deliver us from evil of body and soul. Amen.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 7, 2002**

Keyword: Peace

"Peaceful and quiet lives," 1Timothy 2:3-4 tells us, please God "who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."

The Tel Aviv office of "Jews for Jesus" reports that a woman invited to come and "tell her about the gospel. We noticed she already had many books about the messiah. We asked if she understood all the books she read. She said yes, and that she always knew Jesus was the Messiah, but her father would beat her when she read the New Testament. She prayed with us to receive Y'shua (Jesus)." (April newsletter)

Sharing Christ with non-Christians is controversial but the goal of the Prince of Peace is to be Prince of Peace for all people. Today Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon talks with President Bush in Washington.

God, we pray, guide their discussions toward peace. And thank You for blessing every effort to unite people in peaceful and quiet lives in Christ. Amen.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 8, 2002**

Keyword: Show Love

Yesterday Ariel Sharon, today Jordan's King Abdullah visits President Bush. While they're talking, God's Spirit is working to unite people in Christ's love.

Mercy Khan of Lansing, Michigan, tells about an Afghani girl who asked her, "Why are you people helping us?' She was so confused and kept asking why Christian people help Muslims. Since her childhood, she'd been told Christian people--and their God--are not good. 'But then I came here and saw that you Christian people are so good,' she said."

Ms. Khan asked, "Do you know why Christian people are good? It's because our God is good. Our God is a God of love, and we represent our God. That's why we have no concern whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, or whatever. We don't care. We just show love, because our God is a God of love."

Thanks to People of the Book Lutheran Outreach for that story from their May newsletter. "We just show love." Can that be said of you and me?

## **The Meyer Minute for May 9, 2002**

Keyword: Ascension

Last week in Washington D.C. I heard a presentation by Dr. Charles Wilson of St. Olaf College. His lecture was fascinating, a talk about what we Americans really believe.

Dr. Wilson observed that we've turned religion into a private person affair with little public consequence. We've domesticated God, Wilson said, turning the Almighty into a nice God who lives on our nice suburban street. To make his point about the diminution of God, he asked, "Who prays to the God of the ozone layer?"

Today is Ascension Day. Christ was taken up to the glorious right hand of God, a biblical expression for the full exercise of His divine power. Although He withdrew His visible presence from us, He's still here. But have you domesticated, have you suburbanized Him? Just before ascending, He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." (Matthew 28:20) He is the Lord of all, including the ozone layer, the nations of the Middle East, this nation, all things.

Is He your Lord...or your docile suburban neighbor?

## **The Meyer Minute for May 10, 2002**

For this Mother's Day weekend, consider what Martin Luther wrote about honoring parents.

"To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction...that He commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them. With respect to brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general He commands nothing higher than that we love them. Thus He distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to Himself.

"For it is a much greater thing to honor than to love. Honor includes not only love but also deference, humility, and modesty, directed (so to speak) toward a majesty hidden within them. It requires us not only to address them affectionately and reverently, but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and of body, that we respect them very highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place. Young people must therefore be taught to revere their parents as God's representatives."

## **The Meyer Minute for May 13, 2002**

More on Mothers...

A loving mother's heart for her children is so large that hurts enter from many sides. Simeon told the new mother Mary, "a sword will pierce your soul." (Luke 2:35) How intense her emotional pain must have been some 30 years later when she watched her son Jesus executed on a cross (John 19: 26) But how her mourning turned to gladness, how her heart must have burst with amazement when she heard that her Son had risen from the dead!

Easter, resurrection, hope for children centered on a Savior alive and present...These fill the heart of a Christian mother. For the gift of such a mother, keep praising God!

"Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,

Who wondrous things has done, in whom His world rejoices;

Who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way

With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today." Amen

## **The Meyer Minute for May 14, 2002**

Keyword: Anger Energy

The Cubs and Cardinals have a rivalry that heated up last week when the Cards accused Cub coaches of stealing signs. Now everyone's watching to see if the anger erupts as the teams play each other in St. Louis. Commentators in both cities noted that the flap might energize the loveable losing Cubbies.

How do you use your anger energy? We get angry when we feel threatened or when some value we hold dear has been violated. Sometimes we throw a tantrum for selfish reasons. Cool it. Use that energy to live a godlier, more selfless life. Other times, however, we get angry because something good and right, some godly principle has been transgressed. In that case, forgive the person who's wronged you, just as Christ has forgiven you, and then use anger energy to improve the situation.

Who will win the series, the Cubs or the Cards? Use you energy to make sure you win the ultimate victory. "In your anger, do not sin." (Ephesians 4:26)

## **The Meyer Minute for May 15, 2002**

Keyword: Anti-Semitism

In Sunday's Chicago "Sun-Times" Alan Judd quoted anti-Semitism officially promoted by Arab governments. The Egyptian government daily paper, "al-Akhbar," wrote this: "They are accursed in heaven, and on earth, a catastrophe for the human race. They are the virus of the generation..." I just can't read anymore of that. It's despicable.

And it's happening, not in the era of the Nazis but now. That's official government propaganda. You know how powerful the media is. No wonder teen-agers put on bombs and blow themselves up.

It is not contrary to the Christian faith when governments use force to restrain the acts that spring from hatred. Romans 13 teaches that God instituted the government and gives it the power of the sword to restrain evil. That's the first moral of today's minute.

The second is this. "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." (1 John 3:15) Lord Jesus, root out any hatred, any anti-Semitism from our hearts.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 16, 2002**

Keyword: Parenting

Two Seattle researchers analyzed a 15-year program designed to instill self-esteem in 800 inner-city school children. They report in the "Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine" that those in the program "had less history of violence in their life-times, less heavy use of alcohol and that fewer had multiple sex partners."

Researcher Heather Lonczak said, "It teaches children that they are competent, can succeed and go on to college, get a job and have a future." (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 14)

This project was not, aimed at the children. It was directed toward parents and teachers. We should never underestimate our influence on young people. Did your kids ever tell you...as they often told me, "Dad, you embarrassed me?" You're their model, for good or for ill. To crank it up a notch and be religious: You are God's representative to your child. Be a good one!

## **The Meyer Minute for May 17, 2002**

Keyword: Boundaries

Water is climbing the steps of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis...Floodgates are closed. Sandbaggers are hard at work. It's an effort, but nature needs to be kept within its boundaries.

The same is true in our relations with one another. Not making an effort to restrain nature can lead to personal devastation. What are the Ten Commandments? They're boundaries. Natural desires aren't wrong, but let your desires sweep over these limits, these commandments and you'll hurt yourself, not to mention offend God.

Living as we do in a time of biblical illiteracy...people don't know the Ten Commandments, let alone the Bible...isn't it time to close the floodgates, to relearn the boundaries for civilized living? Publicly posting the Ten Commandments isn't as important as knowing them, living them, and talking about them.

So when you watch reports of the flooding, give some thought to shoring up the moral boundaries in your life. It'll be for your own good.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 20, 2002**

Keyword: Religion

The buzzword these days is not religion but spirituality.

Spirituality is good; religion is bad.

Spirituality is divinely inspiring; religion is institutional.

Spirituality is eclectic. A little here, a little there, a personal potpourri of warm fuzzies. Religion makes so many impossible demands. "Oh, wretched man that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)

Yesterday the Church observed Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2. This Spirit, Jesus said, brings words of sin and guilt, righteousness and judgment into our world. He is, Jesus said, the Spirit of truth, objective truth, not eclectic warm fuzzies. Adherents of the Christian religion have amply demonstrated their faults, but the source book of the Christian religion, the Bible, does deal with the most important human realities...realities that contemporary spirituality is too naive to tackle.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 21, 2002**

Keyword: Fear

The headlines this weekend report that our intelligence agencies have picked up a pattern of al-Qaeda communications similar to patterns before September 11th. Vice President Cheney said, 'the prospects of a future attack against the United States are almost certain.'

Here's a response to our natural fears: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." (Isaiah 59:1)

O God, our Father and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, extend Your hand to thwart the evil designs of our enemies. Guide our leaders and armed forces that they may successfully and safely overcome those who would terrorize us. When we are attacked by fear, may our folded hands and bowed heads find refuge in the shadow of Your presence. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou are with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4-5) Amen.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 22, 2002**

Keyword: Thankful

Because my wife is on the City Council, I got to accompany her last Saturday to a dinner-auction put on by the Collinsville Police Department to benefit the Special Olympics. A Special Olympian spoke to us. From his wheelchair, in halting sentences, Tony Captivated the crowd. He reminded us how much we all take for granted. So, here's a Minute to remind you to be thankful and not take it all for granted.

Waking up in the morning...being able to get up in the morning, and for most of us, walk...to step outside and breathe deeply the springtime air...to see a friend...to hug and kiss someone you love...to read...to think...to pray...to know the presence of God in good times, and especially in the bad...to know forgiveness for Jesus' sake...to have the sure hope of heaven...

Yes, Tony, we have much to be thankful for. Thank you for reminding us.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 23, 2002**

Keyword: Hatred

Because we're Americans, because we're Christians or Jews, there are many people around the world who hate us. Hard to believe, since we've been raised in a tolerant society and taught that God is love. But 9-11 has shown how hated we are by many.

"If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed but praise God that you bear that name. Those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." (1 Peter 4:14ff)

God, give us strength from your Word to withstand hatred. For Jesus' sake, turn the hearts of our enemies. Amen.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 24, 2002**

Keyword: Doorstep

It's something parents do, stand at the doorstep and wave good-by to our children. They might be toddling off to the school bus or, now that they've graduated, leaving in their car to go off and live the life entrusted to them. We stand and wave good-by.

It's hard to admit that it's their life, not ours. While the commandment to honor parents gives us some rank over them, it fades quickly. In the eternal scheme of things, our children are equal to us before God.

So the graduates drive off and we wonder what more can we do for them. I suggest that we cross over the doorstep and pray for them. Pray that they will know the faith, hope and love that can sustain them on their journey. Pray that they will hear that faith, hope and love from us. And pray remembering that their heavenly Father loves them even more than we do.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 27, 2002**

From President Lincoln's address at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863:

"We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.

"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 28, 2002**

Chandra Levy's memorial service has many storylines that the media are covering. Here's one they won't: God expects justice to be done.

The Old Testament prophets thundered when people in power didn't pursue justice. Amos, for example, complained about "you who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground...you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth." (Amos 5:7ff)

Injustice is a failure of love. When we tolerate injustice, we're blocking God's love from reaching others. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made." (Psalm 145:17)

God wants Chandra Levy's murderer found...and God expects us to practice justice today in all our ways.

"Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream." (Amos 5:24)

## **The Meyer Minute for May 29, 2002**

Keyword: Faithful

Another word of church jargon, "faithful" simply means you can trust God to Keep His promises.

What a mess we'd be in if God doesn't keep His promises! We might worship God, but out of fear, not out of love. We'd face the struggles of our lives with a wishy-washy hope that things might get better...instead of charging into each day with confidence in our religion. Hmm...Now that I write that, aren't we too often timid, assuming God isn't faithful to His promises?

"If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself." (2 Timothy 2:15)

God doesn't break His word, doesn't renege. Think about it. He's a perfect being. To break a promise would go against His nature. In His own way, in His own time, God will make good on His promises to you in the Bible.

God is faithful. Let that be your boost of confidence today!

## **The Meyer Minute for May 30, 2002**

Keyword: Sign

Cleanup at the World Trade Center ends today as an empty, flag-draped stretcher is carried from the site. The stretcher is empty to symbolize all the victims whose remains could not be found.

When Jesus met a funeral procession in Luke chapter seven, He stopped those proceedings, did a miracle, and restored the dead to life. Why then? Why not now?

The answer is in the word sign. Jesus didn't raise all the dead or heal all the sick. The miracles He did He did as signs...that's the word the evangelist John pointedly uses...signs to direct people to Jesus.

"Christ has indeed been raised from the dead," Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, and at the end of time He will hand "over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

To the followers of Christ, today's flag-draped procession is another sign. Yes, the day is coming when death will be no more.

## **The Meyer Minute for May 31, 2002**

"The Sum of All Fears" opens in movie theaters this weekend. Based on a Tom Clancy novel, it stars Ben Affleck as a fresh CIA recruit fighting terrorists trying to blow up the Super Bowl with a nuclear bomb. The movie was produced before September 11th but was held back, understandably, until now.

"The Sum of All Fears", what a great title! Add all your fears together, the big ones, the small ones, our national dread or terrorism and your personal worries...added together the sum seems overwhelming.

The Gospel lesson that will be read in many churches this weekend is Jesus' story about two builders. One foolishly built his house on sand and it collapsed when a storm came. The other, the one Jesus wants us to emulate, built his house on rock. When the storms came, it survived because "it had its foundation on the rock." (Matthew 7: 21-29)

"The Lord is compassionate, merciful, patient, and always ready to forgive." (Psalm 103:8)

Use this weekend to build on that rock and you'll overcome the sum of all your fears.