

The Meyer Minute for February 1, 2002

Keyword: Church

Going to church...boring! Super Bowl party...exciting! Perhaps, but which will benefit you more?

"Every day brings to the Christian many hours in which he will be alone in an unchristian environment. These are the times of testing. This is the test of true mediation and true Christian community. Has the fellowship...transported him for a moment into a spiritual ecstasy that vanishes when everyday life returns, or has it lodged the Word of God so securely and deeply in his heart that it holds and fortifies him..." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *For All the Saints*, I, 286)

An old pastor told about the swimming hole on his family's farm. Some summer days the water on top was agitated but when he dove down to the bottom all was peaceful. May your Super Bowl excitement be on the surface of a heart that is calm, at peace and spiritually prepared to face the coming week.

Lord, bless my worship. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 4, 2002

Keyword: Peacemakers

Congratulations to the Patriots...Now back to real life. The President's budget delivered today will be criticized. Ken Lay will be eaten alive in a congressional hearing. Foreign leaders grouse about America's international conduct. All this and more...Dissension hits the fan!

Such high profile strife doesn't touch most of us but dissension at home does. We can drop bombs on al-Qaida but dropping verbal bombs at home fuels conflict. Hearings and lawsuits have their place, but not in family squabbles, not in your home.

Yes, this is real life and you have a role to play. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9) Since Jesus ended the rift between us sinners and God, God looks favorable upon His people's efforts to end dissension. Blessed are you for your peacemaking efforts today!

"Spirit of Life, of Love, and Peace, unite our hearts, our joy increase. Thy gracious help supply!."
Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 6, 2002

Keyword: Scrambled

Prayer has always been popular with Americans, especially since 911. I've just come to Washington D.C. for tomorrow's National Prayer Breakfast.

Claiming to be "spiritual" without practicing any organized religion, many of us have not examined our beliefs over groups that have struggled with faith questions, groups like churches, synagogues and mosques. The result is a national fuzzy faith, a prayer breakfast of scrambled spirituality.

This is much like first century Roman society in which political correctness taught that all religions had equally valid insights into truth. That being so, what got the first Christians persecuted? Not their belief in Jesus but their conviction that Jesus alone, Jesus alone reveals the most important truths of God. That they weren't making up. Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

Thank you Eternal God, for the religious freedoms we enjoy in America. May your Spirit keep me from a scrambled spirituality that denies my Savior Jesus. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 8, 2002

Keyword: Help

"I lift up my eyes to the hills..." (Psalm 121:1)

The Winter Olympics begin today and millions look to the Wasatch Mountains...for sports, for entertainment, for national pride.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills--where does my help come from?"

More often than the coming of the winter games, we throw up our hands or ...stare blankly into the distance because we simply don't know how to handle a ...problem.

"My help comes from the Lord."

When you don't know WHAT to do, know WHERE to turn...

"The Maker of heaven and earth."

Turn to Him who sits enthroned above the mountains and all He made...

Whose Son showed the coming glory on the mount of Transfiguration...

Who died for our sins on Calvary but burst from the rock-hewn tomb with the ...hope of life..

Who sat on a mountainside to remind us that the Father cares for you, for...me.

"Look down from heaven and see from Your lofty throne, holy and glorious." (Isaiah 63:15)

"I lift up my eyes to the hills." Amen

The Meyer Minute for February 11, 2002

Keyword: Scandal

The front page of Saturday's "Belleville News-Democrat" reported that a Southern Illinois woman is suing her priest for fondling her. Then this headline on page 2, "80 Boston priests accused of sexually abusing children." There's more. The February 11th "National Review" reports a "discreet but powerful homosexual network within seminaries and chanceries" of the Roman Catholic Church, huge payouts to victims of sexual abuse by priests, a laity alienated from the hierarchy, and more, depressing more.

Be still, Protestants. "There is no evidence to suggest that celibacy turns normal people into pedophiles--and there's plenty of evidence that married men can be pedophiles as well." (p.30)

Catholic or Protestant, how can anyone who sincerely bears the name of Christ be complacent? For the faithful, Mardi Gras is trivial. Welcome Wednesday's beginning of Lenten reflection and penitence with the greatest urgency.

Heal those hurt, O God, and grace us to bear Christ's name with uprightness. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 13, 2002

Keyword: Ashes

Nothing wrong with it, but no ashes on my forehead today.

"Two men went into the temple courtyard to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector." (Luke 18:10)

That tax collector, despised by others and ashamed of himself, was Jesus' favorite. Honestly, I identify more with the Pharisee. The word "Pharisee" has a negative connotation now but didn't back then. They were religious people, upstanding citizens. They prayed, did Bible study, spread their religion, did good works and so on. Good things that religious people today are still doing.

Those are the things I'm so prone to trust. "God, look at all the good things I'm trying to do for You. Deep down, Lord, You can see that I am better than other people."

You hear it? My forehead isn't the problem. My heart is. Isn't yours too?

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Amen. (Luke 18:13)

The Meyer Minute for February 15, 2002

Keyword: Golden Rule

She wasn't allowed to speak at a temperance rally in 1852 simply because she was a woman. That experience pushed her to work for equal rights and women's suffrage. Still, it wasn't until 1920 that the 19th amendment gave women the vote. Her name was Susan B. Anthony and she was born on this date in 1820.

Today women vote but so much commercial media and so many ingrained attitudes still treat them as chattel. Scholarship has shown that Jesus treated women far better than His first century contemporaries. Do we? In His "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus teaches us, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12)

Lord Jesus Christ, although You are God, You became a servant to raise us to an eternal salvation. In this minute remind us to treat all people with the caring attitude You continue to show us. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 18, 2002

2:43 a.m. That's when the House of Representatives voted on campaign finance reform last Thursday morning after 17 hours of debate. That's a tribute to George Washington. He could have used the Continental Army to become a dictator but instead surrendered his command to Congress. In 1789 Washington was pleased that attempts to establish a monarchy failed. So this Presidents' Day we honor him as President Washington, not as an American King George.

Under a dictatorship, free political speech wouldn't exist. The Bible teaches that government is more than a social contract; it is a divine institution. "The authorities are appointed by God." (Romans 13:1) So it's a great blessing that Washington and others bequeathed to us a form of God's gift of government in which we can freely speak and debate, even into the wee hours of the morning.

Help us, O God, use our freedom of speech to advance what is good and right. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 20, 2002

Keyword: Resurrection of the Body

Ghastly, that discovery of bodies at a crematory in Georgia.

One out of four Americans is cremated, a growing practice with spiritual implications. Challenges to the traditional Christian preference for burying the body have historically come from people who "affirmed the immortality of the soul rather than the resurrection of the body...As faith in bodily resurrection and the psychosomatic self all but disappeared in mainline churches, the practice of cremation swelled...Where once virtually all Americans saw themselves as intriguing entities in which, in the words of Aquinas, 'soul and body are one being,' today many Americans (including many Christians see themselves as immortal souls." (Stephen Prothero, author of "Purified by Fire: A history of Cremation in America)

The Bible teaches you're not just a soul; you're a body and soul, one being. Body and soul now. Body and soul in eternity. Check it out in 1 Corinthians 15.

The Meyer Minute for February 22, 2002

Keyword: Living Together

From last Sunday's N.Y. Times: "Jill Dauenhauer and Brian Sandifer, who have been together 11 years and have a 3-month-old daughter, began planning their Vegas wedding six months ago." (A16)

Jesus, speaking to a woman who had sex outside of marriage, said this: "I do not condemn you. Go your way. From now on sin no more." (John 8:11) According to that, Jill and Brian have been...yes, "living in sin." Old Fashioned?

From William Bennett's new book: "in the case of couples who cohabit before marriage...virtually all research has concluded that contrary to the by-now-longstanding popular wisdom, the chances of a subsequent divorce are significantly *greater*-indeed, almost double-than in the case of couples who marry without prior cohabitation. And when children are involved, the odds of a couple breaking up are higher still." (The Broken hearth, p. 77)

Lord, statistics agree with You. May we promote Your ways. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for February 25, 2002

Keyword: Failure

Olympic figure skating? I couldn't watch. Someone going for the gold stumble and fall? Disappointment? Tears? Too much for me! I don't do failure very well.

Sometimes people talk about failure as if it were a sin. It's not. Sin is our instinctive rebellion against God. It caused us to fall from God. Some failures in life are a result of sin but others aren't. For example, sin didn't cause Michelle Kwan to fall.

This Monday morning remember that Jesus picked you up from your fall from God. Therefore trust that any disappointments you might judge "failures" are the stuff He can turn into unanticipated good.

"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" (Psalm 27:13-14)

The Meyer Minute for February 27, 2002

Keyword: Lent

Are you still keeping Lent, still meditating on the almost unbelievable love God brings you in Jesus?

Richard Baxter, a 17th century Puritan, imagined what someone might say who missed out on heaven because of wasted spiritual time on earth. "How many weeks and months and years did I lose, which if I had improved, I might now have been happy! Could I find no time to study the work for which I had all my time? No time, among all my labors, to labor for eternity? Could I take time to secure the world and none to try my title to heaven?"

The Lenten message of God's great love is almost unbelievable. Almost. Through Christ-centered devotions the Spirit of God works in you the faith that helps you now and leads to heaven. Continue using Lent to prepare for your eternal Easter!

Heavenly Father, help me seek first your kingdom. Amen.