



SURPRISING??

Knowing my penchant for gathering information that can be shared either in a sermon or on the front page of this newsletter, a number of people regularly send me articles they think I could use. From one shared source, the magazine *GQ*, comes "Of Vice and Men: The 2005 *GQ* Poll." One thousand men 21 and over were interviewed randomly by Global Strategy Group, Inc.

The results made for a good article in *GQ*, primarily because the editors said the results were surprising:

All we ever hear is that, as a nation, we've misplaced our Moral Compass . . . But when the numbers started coming in, we were shocked by how righteous and understanding you guys claimed to be. Apparently, not only are you in full possession of your Moral Compasses; you're also packing Decency Canteens and Ethical Swiss Army Knives.

Some examples:

- 81% feel it's a parental obligation to raise children with religion. Who would have thought that? Sunday attendance numbers don't confirm that statistic, but the claim is encouraging.
- 66% of the men surveyed said they would give up sex for one year if it would end the war in Iraq. Hypothetical, yes, but who would have imagined that much concern about the war?
- 18% say they would feel justified in cheating on a partner who cheated on them first. That means 82% say they would feel an obligation to be true to their marriage vows even if their partner was not. That's impressive!
- Number of men who have claimed to be sick or "working from home" in order to take the day off: 19%. That means 81% never have. Surprising!
- 3% say they have used their office computers to download pornography. A lower number than expected, though the related statistic, that 54% use pornography, is not encouraging.
- 7% would pretend to be more religious than they actually are if they thought it would impress the boss. I would have feared that number would be higher.

The point: don't believe everything you read and hear. The Judeo-Christian ethic is not a relic from the past, praise God! *G. Crowe*

What God Wants

I find it interesting that many people say things like, "If I only knew what God wanted me to do, I would do it!" Or perhaps you have heard someone say, "I wish I knew what God wanted for my life." Or maybe you have even caught yourself saying, "I'm not sure what it is yet, but I know God has a plan for my life."

Have you ever heard or said statements like the ones above? I know I have. I find it so ironic that we are still searching for what God wants in our lives, when he has made it so evident already. I find it tragic, in fact, that we want to know what God wants for us, when God has done everything that He can to communicate that very thing to us from the dawn of creation.

It is actually very simple, and yet we make it complex. God wants us to surrender our lives to Him, to be like Christ in all of our thoughts and deeds, and to use the gifts that he gave us to glorify Him. God doesn't concern himself with whether you are a businessman or a firefighter, a UPS driver or a minister. He does not mind if you own a shoe repair store or if you are an engineer. Rather God wants you, whatever path you choose, to be *faithful*. He wants you to be a *Christian* firefighter, a *Christian* businessman, a *Christian* minister. He wants you to put his kingdom first no matter what choice you make!

The question is not what God wants. Rather the question should be how can I glorify God in every situation no matter what path I choose?! And if, in what you choose, there is no way to glorify Him, then you can rest assured, that is not what God wants. ~Dan

Prayer Concerns....

Kaden Koebcke, grandson of Jack & Sue McCoy, remains in neonatal ICU at Riley Hospital in Indianapolis. Your prayers are appreciated as he has new hurdles to overcome almost daily....**Natasha Risley's** traction has been so helpful!! This Wednesday, January 25, they will move her to St. Louis Children's Hospital for the 8-10 hour spinal surgery on Thursday. The address is 1 Children's Place, St. Louis, MO 63110. Phone: 314-454-6000....**Doris Swensen** is home recovering from back surgery last week. It went very well!....**Kay Tavana's** surgery on her left elbow was successful....**Terry Spenard** has had a couple of surgeries recently, and is scheduled for carpal tunnel surgery on **both** hands this Friday, Jan. 27....**Earl Leech**, grandfather of Kinley Boyd, continues chemotherapy for colon cancer....Continue praying for **Marie DeWoody, Leah McClain, Sarah Watts, Neta Guthery, Jim Beghtol, Mark Eddy, Anna Dale, Eunice Whitesell, Ramona Farris, Irene Fox, Carrie High, and Delpha Allen.** Those in Rosewalk Village: **Paul & Ruth Marks, Minnie Scott, and Burnell Gulden.** Serving in Iraq: **Loren Sniffen, Dustin Holley, and Brad King.**

Focus on the Family Programs

Upcoming **Focus on the Family** programs are heard on local radio, WHPL-FM 89.9 at **7:30 PM Monday-Friday.**

- Jan. 26 & 27* **What Husbands Need Most**—Todd Wilson shares helpful advice on how to make marriage work in the midst of the unique dynamics found in home-schooling families. (Parts 1 & 2)
- Jan. 30 & 31* **Building a Christian Home**—Robert and Bobbie Wolgemuth, along with their daughter, Julie, talk about what a Christian home looks like and how to build one. (Parts 1 & 2)
- Feb. 2 & 3* **Radical Motivation for Losing Weight**—Dr. Nick Yphantides, a medical doctor who formerly weighed 467 pounds, shares how he made radical changes in his life to combat his obesity and lose over 200 pounds. (Part 1 & 2)
- Feb. 6 & 7* **Why You Shouldn't Live Together**—Minister David Gudgel discusses the important reasons why couples shouldn't live together before marriage. (Part 1 & 2)
- Feb. 8* **JAACD: Defending Christians from Defamation**— Don Feder discusses the work of his organization, Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation.

January 22, 2006

Class: 264 Worship: 320 Contribution: \$7,702
Budget: \$8,100



The food pantry is in need of **boxed dinners** (Hamburger Helper, etc.) and **soup.**



Lisa Baird recent left the Attica/Lafayette area for sunny California. She is going to film editing school at Video Symphony in Burbank, California. It is a 14 month program—entirely about film editing. Godspeed, Lisa! (*Mom, Elaine, will get her address to us soon.*)

Philip Devine has an address where we can now send mail. It is:

Recruit Devine, Philip
3rd RTBN India CO PLT 3069
39003 Midway Ave.
San Diego, CA 92140-3001

Hedi says, "no packages of any kind, just plain letters, but do write him. It is important to give him emotional support. Recruits live for the letters they get. Keep it positive!"

LUM Meal Providers

Serving dinner at Lafayette Urban Ministry on Monday night were: **Lynae Stafford, Gina Boyd, Baker Family, and Mandy Anderson.**



Registration - Winterfest Gatlinburg 2006

Okay, it's time to get with it. Here are the current projected costs for Winterfest in Gatlinburg, TN - February 17-19. First, you will choose which package you want; see the registration form below. Second, transportation and lodging will be \$85.00 each. That covers two night's lodging and the rental of an additional 15 passenger van and trailer. If we chartered a bus, it would be about \$40 to \$50 more than that. Remember that a completed registration form and \$50 saves you a place in a bed till we run out (about 10 places left as of Sunday). A form without money only saves you a pillow case. Meals and souvenirs are extra...we may do some meals at the townhouses to help with costs. For those interested, Tait is the concert group for Friday night. You can check them out at www.taitband.com.

-----Cut here and return to Lee-----

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

T-Shirt size: Small _____ Medium _____

Large _____ X-Large _____ XX-Large _____

XXX-Large _____

____ Package A: Includes Registration, T-Shirt, Concert (\$38.00)

____ Package B: Includes Registration, T-Shirt, (\$29.00)

____ Package C: Includes Registration, Concert (\$31.00)

____ Package D: Includes Registration (\$21.00)

Hey! Write Philip and Natasha (notice she is moving to a new hospital for the surgery and recovery). See their addresses on the facing page. - Lee

The Elmwood Boys in Concert



The Elmwood Boys (Ben, Patrick, Josh and Andrew) will be singing at Elmwood on Sunday night, February 12, at 6:00. Invite family and friends for this "free" concert.

Thank You!

Thanks for the kind words and cards received at the death of my brother. They are appreciated very much.

-Margie Moffitt & family

Like to Travel?

The Lubbock Christian University Excursions program is offering a trip to Central Europe July 24-Aug. 2, 2006. Highlights include Neuschwanstein Castle that inspired Walt Disney's Fantasyland castle; Salzburg, home of Mozart, the von Trapp family and breathtaking scenery; Munich, where the Nazis opened the first concentration camp; and picturesque Prague, the newest must-see city in Europe. Cost: \$2,750 per person, based on double occupancy, with airfare from Houston included. For more information, contact Jamie.milstead@lcu.edu or call 806-720-7210.



Jan. 25, 7 PM....Bible classes for all

Jan. 25, 7 PM....Good \$ense Budget Class

Feb. 11, 7:43 AM....Men's Breakfast at Elmwood

PLEASE NOTE: LIFE GROUPS WILL MEET ON FEBRUARY 5. WE WILL MEET AT THE BUILDING ON FEBRUARY 12 AND BE TREATED TO THE SINGING OF "THE ELMWOOD BOYS"

Read:
Mark 7-16; Acts 1-12
Proverbs 4-9

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 6: February 5-11

Wisdom and Folly

Proverbs is a book that invites repeated study because it has so many wise observations about life. The writer says, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life"* (9:10-11). Wisdom and understanding come through "knowledge of the Holy One." What characteristics of the Holy One are listed here? He says *"I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech"* (8:13). *"There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers"* (6:16-19). On the other hand what does folly say? *"She is undisciplined and without knowledge,"* ...and she says *"Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious"* (9:13,17).

What is wisdom? One dictionary I consulted defined wisdom thus: "Sagacity, prudence, good judgment; great learning." A second dictionary gave a similar definition: "Knowledge of what is true or right coupled with good judgment." Good judgment is the ability to accurately predict the consequences of your actions, and to behave in ways that bring about desirable outcomes and avoid disastrous outcomes. I have recently been reading a book by Phillip Tetlock, ***Expert Political Judgment***, describing a study in which he asked 284 experts to make predictions of the outcome of various political-economic situations over a 15 year period. He followed their predictions to find out how accurate they were. Most of the time they were wrong. He then asked them to explain how they happened to have been so mistaken. He found that most of the time they were rather ingenious at explaining how they weren't really wrong even though things didn't turn out as they had predicted. As the Bible points out, the wisdom of this world is often folly and learning often merely produces an improved ability to rationalize folly.

-Rick Swensen



This Week's Highlight: Spiritual Gifts

"For the Sake of the Call"

Achievement, merit, competency, credentials, and professionalism are highly valued in our culture. Yet are those the values Christ has given to his church? Competency and giftedness are not synonyms. Both can be used in service, and both are blessings from God, but they are very different. "Competency" is rooted in aptitude and training. It is an area of strength. "Giftedness" is rooted in God's sovereign grace. We may grow in the use of a gift, but it exists solely by the power of God. Gifts are given in our weakness. It is God alone who has promised to support us in the use of his gifts. No such guarantee is made about competencies. We may enjoy our career, be successful, and be blessed by it, yet still be incompetent when that same ability is used in Christian ministry. Gifts are odd. They may be given to the most unlikely characters. It may not meet professional or academic standards, it may not be logical, but that is the way of grace.

Also, we're tempted to think that being a ministry leader is a kind of "job." This tempts us to bring the same attitudes, expectations, and ambitions to ministry. We think "good training," "hard work," "good organization," and a "good skill-set" equal success and advancement. In such circumstances, one's career-skills are often the greatest single predictor of what you will be asked to do at church. Being competent, we like to have competent people around us running things. We go for proven success. We feel safe. We are comfortable. It affirms our values. Ministry is not a job but a calling of God. We are not called to be competent and safe, but to be gifted, putting everything at risk for the one who risked everything for us. What servant of God in scripture was looking to go where God ultimately called him/her? For example, Paul was probably headed for a seat on the Sanhedrin. What we want and feel comfortable doing often has little to do with God's calling. We have to grow into that comfort by trusting God and stepping out in faith. Our calling might be the last thing in the world we WANT to do. Competency says, "Here, let me do that because I am good at that kind of stuff and I don't feel threatened. I trust my abilities." Calling says, "I know I am afraid, but if I

step out in faith, into this scary and unknown area of service, God will support and sustain me in ways that can't be known in advance."

Don't get me wrong—gift and competency can converge. Twenty-five years ago I experienced a calling to be involved in the ministry of teaching adults, but my formal training was not in teaching. Yet, I began to teach classes at church. First, I substituted. Then, I taught teens for a few quarters. Next, I offered my first solo class on Prayer. Two showed up, bless their hearts. I was scared to death. I went home and threw up. "Why am I doing this?" I thought. Then, I decided I wasn't ready yet. I need to be better equipped. The problem was that Elmwood didn't and doesn't offer formal training for teachers or Bible study classes geared for teachers of adults. So, I changed my career goal to education. I gave up time devoted to other interests like sports, and then devoted my new "free" time to Bible study. It was tough going at first, but after about ten years, I tried again. First, I taught off-and-on in existing classes for several weeks at a time. During one such episode on a Wednesday night, the class began with 20 people, and, eventually, rose to about 60 attendees. I was by then a professional teacher in my mid-30's, but guess what? I still got sick. Later, in my early 40's, I tried a Sunday morning class on the Psalms, spending a whole year in preparation. Six showed up. Then, a class on the Book of Job after a year's preparation. A dozen showed up. And now there are 15-17 people who regularly attend my class. Yes, training and competency may converge where calling is honored. But you know, I am still scared to death each Sunday. I am frightened before and after class. I don't "feel" competent and safe. But, during class, I feel at peace. God sees me through, and people tell me that they are blessed when they come to my class. I hope only to help people see the great God I have come to know, and never settle for a lesser god. It doesn't make sense. It does not have to; it is grace and gift.

—Dave Hunt