E.J.'s Journal

by James E. Cook

There are a few things in life that really get me upset and make me angry. Prejudice and religious persecution are two of them. One of the others is insensitivity.

Last Friday afternoon, I stopped at a local bank to cash a check and to make a deposit. As I was driving through the parking lot, I noticed a bake sale stand with a couple of ladies selling homemade goods. By their dress, the ladies appeared to be Mennonite. The temperature was very cold, and there was a brisk wind blowing. I thought how dedicated these ladies must be to sit outside on a day like this for several hours for their cause, whatever it might be.

I pulled my car closer to their table, and got out. I'm a sucker for bake sales, anyway. It gives you a chance to help out a charity, as well as sample some delicious food, too.

As I scanned the table with a variety of baked goods and homemade jams, I noticed another lady there as well. I thought she was there to buy, but as it turned out, she was from the local health department. She was less than pleasant with the two merchant ladies, and was really "raking them over the coals". The ladies appeared to be somewhat surprised to be treated in this manner. I was caught right in the middle. The longer I listened, the more I wanted to say, "Why don't you go and find someone else to harass?" However, I didn't. I obeyed protocol.

After I got home, the incident continued to run through my mind. I told my husband about it, and it angered him as well. I wished I had spoken up in the defense of these ladies in person, but I'll do it now.

A great big "Shame on you", health department! These ladies weren't twisting anyone's arms to buy their goods. I've never seen the health department at any other bake sales harassing those who were benefiting mainstream religious groups, civic organizations, or school clubs. The health department was also absent from the Bittersweet Festival food vendors. Could it be we just get our jollies harassing those who are the underdogs and who don't fit in with mainstream society, especially if it is of a religious nature? By the way, everything I bought was absolutely delicious. I lived to write this article without any ill consequences, and plan to buy more of these ladies' goods at Granny's Bulk Store near Crab Orchard.

Some of us such as myself don't always fit in, anyway. Sometimes we go out of our way to be nice, do things without having to be asked, and sacrifice more than what anyone will ever knowajust to be accepted. Just about the time you think you're accepted and fit in, you get smacked down right out of the blue. Sometimes all it takes is a bit of recognition, acknowledgement, or a thank-you which some of us have been denied. I say that's when you quit going out of your way, quit sacrificing, and let the chips fall where they may. When you have done all you can do, that's all you can do. You don't have to be angry. The Good Book says, "Be angry, and sin not." I've come to the point when I say, "I quit" and I'll keep my distance for my benefit. I know we all must forgive others in order for our Heavenly Father to forgive us. However, I hate to say it, but I do have a very, very long memory. "Once bitten, twice shy," as they say.

I'm glad to know there's a God in heaven that knows even the intent of

(Cont. to A-9).

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

I wanted to send a great big thank you to the staff of the Wayne Stewart Adult Health Care.

My mom has Alzheimers and other health problems and this center provides her with much needed interaction with other people.

They offer many activities such as reading the Bible, games, crafts and, last week, they had a gospel group to come and sing.

They also offer balanced meals and there is a nurse on duty at all times.

My mom isn't happy sitting at home all the time. Since she has been going to this center, she is a much happier person.

The staff is always smiling and cheerful and I know I can take mom there and she will be very well taken care of.

This is such a wonderfu place. I would highly recommend it to everyne who would like a safe, happy place for their loved one to go.

Thank you so much.

Patty Vance
Mt. Vernon

Dear Editor,

We, at Northside Baptist Church, would like to express our appreciation to the residents of the neighborhood surrounding Mt. Vernon Elementary School for their cooperation, participation and support in this year's youth event, The Underground Church. The Underground Church is a game that simulates the horrible persecution that our Christian brothers and sisters experience everyday worldwide. So many Christians do not have the freedom to worship God as we do. Often times, they are forced to worship in secret locations, known as the Underground Church. Around the world, Christians face more persecution today than any other time in history.

"More Christians have been martyred in the 20th century than in all of church history. There are abuses taking place in over 60 countries and affecting over 200,000,000 Christians worldwide. These Christians are imprisoned, often tortured and held without being charged or given a trial. Some are given death penalties or they simply "disappear" after being arrested. Other Christians suffer massacre, rape, brutal torture, beatings, mutilations, extortion, harassment and family divisions *(Open Doors International).*

We would also like to thank Mayor Clarice Kirby, the Mt. Vernon City Police, Trooper Ryan Loudermilk and the Kentucky State Police for their support, participation, and for ensuring the safety of the game. There were over 30 adult characters involved that helped supervise the students who participated. There were 72 middle school and high school student participants that tried desperately to find the Underground Church while adults, who pretended to be Christian-persecuting police, chased them. This was the third straight year of playing the game and, as in previous years, it was a great success. The purpose of the event is to teach our students and adults to pray and have compassion for our fellow Christians who suffer for Christ's sake and, at the same time, never take for granted the wonderful freedom we have in the U.S. to worship our risen Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Once again, thank you all and God bless you.

All for Him,
Jon Burdette
Youth Pastor
Northside Baptist Church

Dear Editor,

Beginning December 1st, the Rock of Ages Mission will start their Christmas Share-A-thon. We ask anyone who would like to help us fill Christmas baskets to please give at this time.

We will accept canned hams, turkeys and food items for a Christmas dinner, gifts, for men, women and children. Gifts may be used but must be in good shape. Monetary donations will also be accepted and appreciated.

We will announce donors names in the paper (unless otherwise specified) after Christmas.

We don't have much time so please clean out your closet and basements and tell your family and friends to join in and share with others this year.

Remember, the Share-A-Thon will start on December 1st and will run until we receive a gift and meal for everyone on our list. Please call us and we will pick up for your convenience.

God bless all of you kind folks for caring for others. Without you, some people wouldn't have a dinner, not to mention gifts. Thank you.

Please call or write:
Rock of Ages Mission
P.O. Box 490
Mt. Verfion, Ky. 40456
758-4203/758-8546
Share! Share! Share! Share!

This is a plea that you help me help a kindred soul and an invitation to join me in Renfro Valley on Noventber 23 in the early afternoon to show a special person how wonderful she is and just how much she is loved. I hope you'll mark your calendars now. 1:30 PM at the old barn in Renfro Valley.

The best musicians I know playing the old, wooden acoustic instruments and singing the tightest vocal harmony known to God—call themselves "Bluegrass" Musicians.

The combination of vocals and stringed instruments is so wonderfully resonant that it is almost like a drug. Actually, this music is so habit forming that it may be some sort of addictive thing. In which case, it is a disease that I acquired when I was young back in the early 50's and it has never let me go.

"Blueeeeeeeeeeee Mooooooooooouuuuoooooooooon of Kentuckeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee, keep on shining. Shine on the one who's gone and left me blue. Blueeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee Mooooouuuunne of Kentucky! Shine on the one that's gone and proved untrue.

For sure, I know that my skin tingles and I go agape and weak in the knees when I hear a good Bluegrass band. I try to sing along but my voice cracks because I am so often overwhelmed.

"Cryyyy