

## **Transcript of Mel West at Herbert Sauer memorial 10/23/2010**

Thank you Dr. Rikli. Each year as we celebrated Herb's birthday, the Rikli's have been honored guests at that occasion, and they'll remember many of these stories.

In my 86 years I have made many friends around the world, some in high places I guess you could say, but none have I regarded, or respected more highly, than my friend Herb.

None.

We had much in common in our background, I won't dwell much on that because I want to give you a big picture today friend, I want to give you a big picture of this man and his wife.

We're both rural and talked about windmills. Their farm had a silo he said was 75' tall and we argued about that. I said they just don't make 'em that tall. He said "yes, they do." You go back there I wish somebody would measure that thing.

We talked about baby chicks in the spring, and planting, and silo filling in the fall with a 75' silo, ... and rural health issues. Herb was a true professional.

I say "Herb, what do you think" about such and so, and he'd say, "Well, I just don't have enough data to make a decision on that." It was hard to argue with.

So dear friend, I and we all will miss you. I was his chocolate man. He loved chocolates. And we all decided that at his stage in life he could eat about all he wanted though Lucy slowed me down one time.

I'm going to be talking about Herb and Doris together, mostly. I have trouble separating them, in death as in life. They were one couple, one unit, similar passions.

When I try to evaluate a person or a life, I ask this question, "What kind of world would it be, if everyone in the world exhibited the values, lived out the kind of values they exhibited, what kind of world would it be?" If everybody in it had the values of Herb and Doris Sauer, and lived them out as they did...

Are there values that could be encompassed by all religions, all nationalities, all cultures, all races? ... I think there are, and they're on the back of your bulletin – I want to share that story with you.

What kind of world would it be? Tony Campolo, in his forward to *No More Shacks* written by Millard Fuller, spoke of *shalom*, and he described the kind of world it is where everybody has all they need, not necessarily more. They live out of respect for each other, and they live in dignity and give dignity.

I dream of the world that in which everyone is guided by the values that I saw lived out by Herb, ... and Doris Sauer. My message is, friends, that Herb and Doris modeled the kind of lives we must live to create a shalom filled world.

If you want to flip your bulletin over look at the back, it's free. Don't throw that away when you get home, stick it up some place, share it, put it on your refrigerator. John Wesley wrote this years ago, and I guess I treasure it more every year, and I guess I treasure it more as I reflect on what this was lived out in the life of the Sauers.

"Work hard, and make as much as you can, along as you don't hurt somebody." Herb and Doris traded well. As Dr. Rikli has said, and I would add, they were both highly regarded in their professions. Got a note the other day from somebody who had heard of his death and said "Doris was my teacher in nursing school, I entered later in life and took a nursing course and she was my teacher."

They were related to public health and did their work well. They did #1, they worked hard.

John Wesley said second "Live thriftily and save all you can." Their bumper sticker and the one on my old pickup is the same, ... "Live Simply So That Others May Simply Live." I get so many comments on that, "Mel, I like your bumper sticker." I don't ask people what I'm tempted, "How are you doing with it? Are you doing that?"

We can tell a lot of stories of how they lived thriftily. They didn't eat out a lot. They took no cruises that I remember. They drove cars a long time – one of them with a rubber bumper that made it safe if you bumped somebody. Herb rode his bicycle for years to work.

They were environmentalists, they saved the scraps, and buried them in the garden, they lived simply, so that others could simply live. And because of Herb's uncanny ability with figures, and data, and numbers, they were able to take some of that that they saved by living thriftily and invest it. Jesus commended that in the New Testament. "Get interest in what you have," he said, "invest it."

Their concerns in giving encompassed an *amazingly* wide variety of special issues, social issues. Some have been mentioned: health care, I served on the Visiting Nurses Association board, peace, justice, capital punishment, inter-faith issues, poverty and hunger, children, senior citizens, ... the humane society, over there on the north side of town and the one in their home. Lest you don't know, any cat that came by in trouble, Doris grabbed it. They had their own little humane society over there, to the dismay of some neighbors some times, I think. Inner city concerns, they worked with them they worked with us, some wonderful people in Columbia, racial issues.

And the main thing is, their check book reflected their concerns.

I had a special relationship with the Sauers that not many people knew about. It was such a blessing to me, it was a blessing to so many. After we got to know each other, they came to me one day and said, “we want to talk with you.” They said, “We know how to make money and save it, Mel, you know how to spend it.” I like that. “You know how to spend it to do the most good for people that hurt the most.” Isn’t that a gift of trust? Isn’t that a gift of trust?

So for years, we worked together, I was their broker on giving and social issues and charity. And the world will never know what blessing that did, I only touch on three or four here. And briefly – In the north part of Columbia there was a little handicapped person – we used the term “dwarf” back then, we don’t use it any more but I just did. (He) lived in a little broken down 6’ wide or 7’ wide by 20’ mobile home, water came in through the water holes in the window, I don’t know what he did in the winter. A bucket was his toilet, there was no ramp to get in or out. And there he was, maybe thirty inches tall, legs almost non-existent, in an electric wheel chair that was broken down or stuck or out of electricity much of the time. Not a good situation, and Family Services sent our work camps out there, to build him a lovely little home, designed for him especially, with two ramps he wanted, he was afraid of fire. Where do you for money on something like that well you need just some more, you know, you know...

We started TRAG, a little pickup for the third world that was a blessing for so many, where do you go for startup money for something like that? I think every time I visited Herb his passing comment was, “let me know how else I can help, ... how else can I help?”

That was a trust, I didn’t over do it, dear friends, as you know. But what a blessing.

Barb and I, we worked with the Guyami Indians in Costa Rica, with Alfalit. I sent a letter to report, I didn’t ask for money, I sent it to several friends, telling about the plight of these Guyami Indians. They lived in a mountain, terrible ... you can’t describe their housing hardly. At the bottom is a little community center, the only physical thing they had. In between that and the mountains there was a river that they couldn’t cross except when it was low. Their doctor came out once a month for health care, but there was no facility except for this little community shelter which was a calf shed. I sent a story back about that, describing it, just so people would know, and, you know, here came a check. Thank check built an adequate little health center, not fancy, concrete block, but so every month when the doctor came he had a place, he had an examining room that was private, he had a place to store things. It rebuilt the community center so it was decent, and it paid for materials for Cleo Klopwitz (sp?) and his work camp to build a bridge across that river, a swinging bridge, the Mennonites helped with.

What a blessing to have somebody you can turn to. PET started up and where’d the money come from to help – you know. And it’s not ended.

In Nicaragua, there is a village of – Chuck, how many houses? – 24 houses – Chuck’s been there. *Colonia la Paz* – the village of peace. Why’d they name it the “village of

peace” do you think? Because a couple, whose aim is to build peace in this world funded it, 24 houses.

If you want to stay ‘til 7, I think I could tell stories about those – these are just a few, and it’s not over. Because of their continual caring, through their will, thousands crawling on the ground now, dear friends, will arise with dignity, pride, comfort, productivity. Because of them. More doctors will give more care to more people in rural Nicaragua. Malnourished children will be better fed, St. Francis House in Columbia will better serve its homeless and discarded people, discarded animals and the Humane Society will have better care, those working for world peace will have more resources, and that’s just a part. I say to you the quiet and positive impact of Herb and Doris Sauer on a hurting world is a model for us all, I think is one of the greatest reflections of the spirit of Jesus that I have known.

I might want to close with a story. Ray Truhn was in Uzbekistan, distributing PETs and wheelchairs. We distribute them together, he’s from Michigan, his daughter’s in Tajikistan in the Peace Corps. A woman came in, carrying a little boy over her shoulder. Nine years old, he had, had had Polio. She came for a wheel chair, she’d never heard of a PET, but it so happened we had PETs there. There was a waiting line of about an hour, and Ray put the little boy on a little blue PET Larry Wilcox made, to wait for an hour. Now, you probably know what happened an hour later when he was asked to move from that PET to a wheel chair. We had a nine-year-old rebellion. And Ray said to the mother, it looks like we have a problem here, it looks like that’s what he needs, why don’t you let him try it out. The mother said “fine”. He took it over the bridge, over the canal, through the big parking lot, back – he was *ecstatic*. He had mobility; he had hope. The mother said “yes” they’d take it and he told her how to care for it. And then Ray said, “she looked me in the eye.” She said, “Ray, there are five things we Muslims think we have to do to go to Heaven, and the most important one is to go to Mecca. Ray, because of what you’ve done for our boy, you don’t have to go to Mecca.”

I think it is one of the most beautiful stories for our time, it tells what we have to do to build this world for peace. A Muslim woman and a Christian man just unwrapped religion. And I say, to Herb and Doris Sauer, “because of what you’ve done for the world, you don’t have to go to Mecca, you don’t have to go to Mecca.”

Have you learned the lesson I have? This is religion 101.

Almighty God, we praise you that came not with lectures and words and all of that alone, but you came in the name of Jesus, in the person of Jesus, that knowing him and his teachings and his life and his words that we might know what you are like and what life is intended to be. We thank that you send us mentors that show us the way and teach us and leave us to follow. We thank you for the lives of those two we honor today, remember today. Thank you in the name of our Lord who leads us all in his name. Amen.