



# Reflections

## Opportunism & the Church

By Stefano Mugnaini

Many of the strangest experiences of my life happened while I was living in China. One in particular sticks out: the day I was approached by an Amway salesman. He had been introduced to me by a mutual friend, and later cornered me in the market to do a toothpaste demonstration. What followed was truly bizarre. He took a cigarette and crumbled it into a jar, added water and shook it up. The water turned a tannic color. Next, he added a squeeze of Amway toothpaste. By this time, a crowd had gathered. After shaking, the jar of water turned roughly the color of the toothpaste. Lacking the Chinese language skill to explain that it was simply the density of the toothpaste, and not some magical ability of Amway toothpaste to vaporize tobacco, I went ahead and bought a tube. Plus, he was so excited I just couldn't resist. Ultimately, this was a bad move. Somehow, he found out where I lived—since I was one of seven Americans in the city, I figure he pretty easily narrowed it down—and became a frequent (uninvited) visitor to my apartment. I never bought anything else.

There is a spiritual application to all this. If you've known an Amway salesman, then you know that this Chinese salesman shared a few qualities with most: Persistence and Opportunism. It is perhaps an understatement, but most individuals whom I have known that were involved in "multi-level marketing," as it is officially called, had these traits in excess. They are in possession of an overwhelming tendency to share their "business" with you, and a nose for any opportunity to point out its advantages. "Got a cold? It must be because you don't take our vitamins."

While I think there is a fine line between persistence and pushiness, opportunism and obsession, I believe Christians could learn a little from the Amway approach. Too often, we wait for people to ask us about our faith, rather than bring up the subject ourselves. In Acts 8, Philip approached the Ethiopian eunuch and simply asked "what are you reading?" The work on church growth done by Flavil Yeakley confirms that people will not likely get involved in church unless they are invited, and even

then, numerous invitations are required. Paul told Timothy "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season..." I highly doubt his words were intended only for Timothy, or only for preachers; they were intended for all to whom the "Great Commission" was given.

One great opportunity for outreach falls on December 25<sup>th</sup>, every single year. While we recognize that the birthday of Jesus is impossible to determine, that Christmas traditions are rooted in denominational and pagan festivals, and that the holiday itself has been commercialized *ad nauseum*, we must ask ourselves a serious question: How many souls have we saved by refusing to sing *Joy to the World* in December? Let it be known, I am not calling for a live nativity scene in the churchyard; I am simply pointing out that we let so many opportunities to share the faith pass us by. Let us not bar the door against those that would only worship with us on Christmas, but rather use every possible opportunity to explain the amazing significance of the birth which the world, once a year, pauses to celebrate.

Church Office : 843-556-1792

Church Fax: 843-556-6085

Email: church@essexvillage.org

Website: www.essexvillage.org

### Schedule of Services

Sunday

Class: 9:00 am

Worship: 10:00 am

Worship: 6:00 pm

Wednesday

7:00 pm



## For the Record Week of 12-09-07

## Communion & Baptismal Garments

## Program of Worship

*Ava Bullard*

*Helen Embry*

*Mark Embry*

*Scotty Hall*

*Mildred Inabinett*

*Leonard McNeill*

*Lois Ott*

Bible Classes: 72  
AM Worship: 134  
PM Worship: 53  
Wednesday Evening: 68  
Contribution: \$3,085.00

### Prepare Communion:

Christine Herman

### Baptismal Garments:

Faye Spence

### Elder of the Month:

Howard Streets 766-7727

### Announcements:

Howard Streets

### Song Service:

Keith Dee

### Opening Prayer:

Andy Streets

### Communion:

Jim Lamm

### Sermon:

Stefano Mugnaini

### Closing Prayer:

Chuck Spence



## We Are Praying For...

### Military

*Robert Bagley*

*Kristopher Black*

*Adam Bowles*

*Chris Branham*

*Adam Carlucci*

*Russell Coble*

*Barry Collins*

*James Dalton*

*Mark Fiorey*

*Ellis Flenoid*

*Steven Hilton*

*Michael Hilton*

*Matthew Lemieux*

*Katie McCaskill*

*Kevin Mitchell*

**Nikolas** is in remission but will undergo chemo for two years and has a long road ahead. Nik is the nephew of Angela Noyes.

**Dixie Akers**, Royce's sister-in-law, is now at home on medication to dissolve the 4 blood clots she has from her last surgery. Please send cards to 204 Edney Ridge Road, Greensboro, NC 27408.

**Mike Allen**, preacher for Chesapeake Church of Christ, has bone cancer. Gary Moody has requested prayers for him. **Martha Broom**, a friend of Ona White, is now cancer free and would like to thank everyone for their prayers.

**Durwood Collins, Sr.**, Durwood's father, is in Summer-ville Medical Center.

**Maxine Doll** had a pace-maker put in and has other health problems. Maxine is Pam Ragland's mother.

**John Donan**, Norma's cousin, has terminal bladder cancer.

**Dennis Flatley**, a friend of Jim

Lamm, is currently undergoing chemo to treat his cancer.

**Duke Gregory**, Doris & Janie's brother, is being transferred to an assisted living rehab hospital. Please send cards to G. Duke Gregory Moses Care Hospital, McMinnville, TN.

**Wesley Hahn** is in need of prayers for his health and employment. His mother is a close friend of Faye Spence.

**Clara Haselden** will have surgery on Tuesday.

**Judy Hennessee**, a family member of Carl Bowles, has finished her chemo treatments and is back at work now. Thank you for your prayers.

**Debra Langford**, sister-in-law of Carl Bowles, had a stroke. Debra lives in Georgetown.

**Nell McIntire** has cancer and is the sister of Lois Ott.

**Margaret Mills**, a member of Cairo Church of Christ, had a heart attack.

**Melissa Murray** is being treated for cancer, please keep Melissa and her family in your prayers.

**Lauren Parker**, a friend of Ginnie Streets, has cancer and is not doing well.

**Mac Patterson**, a family member of Earline Smalls, is in St. Francis Hospital room 311.

**John Price**, friend of Faye Spence, has cancer and is in stage 4. Faye has requested prayers for him and his wife, Pat.

**Candice Spence**, needs our prayers for health problems and is the granddaughter of Chuck & Faye.

**Marcia Steckel** is undergoing chemo for breast cancer. Marcia is a friend of Sharon Rush.

**John Torres**, Johnny Murray's brother-in-law, has cancer and is not doing well.

**Verdie Whitson** is recuperating from surgery. She is in Roper Hospital room 7039.



*Thanks for  
praying!*

## Here's What is Happening...

### Nursery

We have an attended nursery for anyone that has a need for one. If you would like to help with the nursery, please see Louise Rogers.

### Cookie Swap

The annual cookie swap will be on December 16, Sunday afternoon at 4:30. We'll make trays of fruit, nuts, etc for our shut-ins and bring cookies to share. Bring fruit and shelled nuts for the trays and 4 dozen cookies. We'll eat some cookies and share the rest.

### Baby Shower

There will be a baby shower for

Shelli Mugnaini on Saturday, December 29th from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm at the home of Michelle Porter. If you plan to attend, please sign the sheet on the bulletin board. Michelle will need the names of those attending to leave at the gate for your admittance. For more details please see Michelle or Sandy.

### Condolences

We extend our condolences to Royce and Doris Akers for the passing of Royce's brother, Donnie Akers. Please keep the family in your prayers.

## Bible Bowl

Bible Bowl Meeting today, Sunday December 16. If you are interested in participating or helping in any way with the 2008 Statewide Bible Bowl, please plan to stay today after morning services for a planning meeting. We will meet in the fellowship

hall. LUNCH WILL BE SERVED. Grilled Chicken from Keith Dee's Grill.

## Southeastern Children's Home

Essex Village has agreed to sponsor two teenagers from Southeastern Children's Home for Christmas. Their names are Kayla (15) & LaQuann (14).

If you would like to help, the wish list is on the bulletin board or you may contribute money to

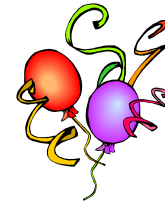
help purchase the gifts. All contributions need to be made by December 16th. Gifts may be left on the table in the foyer and contributions given to Christine.



*Happy Anniversary!*

12/20

Paul & Thelma  
Townsend



*Happy Birthday!*

12/17

Jill Rush

Russell Spence

12/18

Lynn Smallwood

James Thornley

12/20

Ethan Dee

Marvin Woudwyk

12/21

Sarah Polk

12/22

Peggy McLawhorn

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Youth Rally**

When: January 26, 2008

Theme: One Goal No Limits

Speaker: Craig Shackelford of Middleton, Tennessee

Where: St. Andrews Road Church of Christ in Columbia, SC

### **Berkeley Church of Christ Gospel Meeting**

Roy Knight was the speaker for the Gospel meeting held at Berkeley Church of Christ. We have received a copy of the lessons and will make a copy for anyone that would like one. Please fill out a slip.

#### **ELDERS**

Larry Casbeer	795-0429
Howard Streets	766-7727
David Wakeland	766-3601

#### **MINISTER**

Stefano Mugnaini	329-3704
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#### **DEACONS**

Rick Porter	556-2679
Activities	
Jim Lamm	556-6756
Benevolence	
Lloyd McLawhorn	556-6709
Worship	
Roddy Akers	559-3565
Song Service	
Larry Polutta	795-5266
World Bible School	
Bill Ragland	556-6711
Building Maintenance	
Hilton Googe	766-4670
Lynn Smallwood	766-8579
Grounds	
Eddie Haselden	767-5511
Financial	
Durwood Collins	869-4199
Youth Activities	

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**Essex Village Church of Christ**  
**736 Savage Road**  
**Charleston, SC 29414**