

3-23-2001

## Interview with Bob Meldrum

Chris Meyers

Bob Meldrum

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digital.kenyon.edu/elfs\\_interviews](https://digital.kenyon.edu/elfs_interviews)

---

### Recommended Citation

Meyers, Chris and Meldrum, Bob, "Interview with Bob Meldrum" (2001). *Interviews*. 8.  
[https://digital.kenyon.edu/elfs\\_interviews/8](https://digital.kenyon.edu/elfs_interviews/8)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Foodways at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Interviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [noltj@kenyon.edu](mailto:noltj@kenyon.edu).

Accession number: ELFS-CWM-A032301.A  
Event: Interview with Bob Meldrum  
Place: Rural Life Center Admin. Office, Gambier.

CM: This is Chris Meyers interviewing Bob Meldrum, it's the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, and it's about 3:30 pm. Could you ah, start by telling me about the history of your group that goes to the Village Inn and how you guys got started?

BM: Yeah, this particular group we became involved with after we moved here when I retired in October of 94. And as we visited various churches looking for a church home, ah, one of the churches we visited was the Presbyterian Church. And after a couple of visits and meeting a few people, we were invited to go to brunch after church at the village inn. And at that time, the primary people who attended were older people from the congregation and pretty much a fixed crowd of 8 people, including Howe Clausen, who was very actively involved in the community in Mt. Vernon. It was kind of known as the Clausen group. And they just went to brunch at the village inn after church on Sundays. It was nice to do.

CM: I'm sorry...can you spell Clausen?

BM: I believe it's c-l-a-u-s-e-n.

CM: And before you spoke of coming here. Could you maybe tell me about before you arrived in Mt. Vernon and the similar types of experiences you had?

BM: Yeah...we had been involved in a church some 30 years ago and went through a Lenten experience with other people. And, as a result of that experience, that particular group had decided to continue to meet every couple of weeks and read books and discuss and so on and so forth. So we did that starting on Friday evenings around desert and coffee and ah later, going to a soup and sandwich circle dinner, and then ah going out to eat together on occasion, and then 30 years later, we continue to meet every other Sunday night at somebody's home and have dinner together...continue to read books and discuss.

CM: Why do you think that people eat out? Why do you guys feel that you'd like to eat out after church?

BM: Well I think first of all, this particular age group is...we're all pretty much retirees. And the group has changed since the original invitation 5 or 6 years ago. And ah, its now grown to in the neighborhood of 20 people. It seems that it's just a convenient time to...we're all at church – we're all together anyway. It's just a convenient time to spend another few hours together and chat.

CM: What do you think that food has to do with social interaction?

BM: I've read various theories on this subject and a lot of people seem to think that it's just by breaking bread together, people get to know each other and are more relaxed and

are willing to talk about things. Ah, maybe that's true. Or maybe it's just a convenient excuse. Since you have to eat on occasion, why not just kill two birds with one stone.

CM: Do you think that, ah, it's a matter of laziness at all – that people would want to not prepare food, or do you think that it's more that there is something about going to a restaurant together that's a separate experience.

BM: No...I think that it's ah...well by the way, there have been several occasions in the five year period where we went to somebody's house. Um...it's a little difficult to prepare a brunch for 20 people when you're sitting in church for an hour or so. So I think it's a matter of...eating out is a matter of convenience number one. Number two, I think in the economy that we live in today, people do eat out more often because they can afford to eat out more often. So I think that it's a combination of factors.

CM: How often, when you're not actually at the restaurant eating with this group of people, do you get to see them during the week? Is this the only time you guys spend together, or...?

BM: Some of the people in the group, this is the only time we see them, would be on Sunday after church, or during church. Ah, there's another segment of the group of maybe 12 – 10, 12, 14 people who ah live in Apple Valley and we see regularly at various functions or, we socialize with them from time to time.

CM: Now, is there something significant about after church besides the fact that I guess it would be convenient because you guys would all be at church together so you could just go from there?

BM: No, I really don't think so...it ah, it just happened.

CM: What does a typical meeting at the Village Inn look like?

BM: You mean when we get together?

CM: Yeah...when you get together.

BM: Well the Village Inn, for the most part, has expected us, having done this for all these years. And they try, they're not always successful, but they try very much to have a long table or numbers of tables put together, so a long table setting. And in that environment, you can't have one conversation where everybody hears. So normally, it breaks down to multiple conversations with those around you. And normally, what happens is each week; people will purposely or otherwise switch positions to have a chance to visit with everybody over a period of time.

CM: And how long do you end up staying there, would you say.

BM: Oh, I would say, we probably arrive in the neighborhood of 12:30 and probably leave around 2:00 when they close. So there's a lot of talk.

CM: Pastor Fullerton had joked around about when the early service was instituted how the ah time of the late service was shifted back a little bit, and how that was something that they had to think about, cause, he jokingly said that the Methodists were going to be able to beat you guys to the restaurant.

BM: And there's a lot of truth to that. There's some people who would like very much to start church 15 minutes earlier. Yes.

CM: I guess that's really all I have, but if there's anything that you feel...maybe even not this particular group, but your experience eating out either with friends and family elsewhere, about the dynamics of that are they any different, or do you feel like that's the same?

BM: No, I that ah, I think that it's very similar. I think maybe if you go out with your family – with your children and grandchildren. Maybe you have a particular subject that you want to discuss, or something like this, as opposed to random subjects – whatever comes up. I think – this may not have anything to do with your project, but I think the Village Inn is particular attractive to a number of people going out to eat brunch after church, and there are other church groups that are doing the same thing...but it's attractive because they have a lot of single tables that they can move around and put together in various combinations to accommodate. And there really are not other restaurants in this immediate Mt. Vernon area that can do that. That are open on a Sunday. So it might be...more groups would do it I think if there were more restaurants with accommodations and ability.

CM: And do you find yourself eating out more often with somewhat more time on your hands no that you're retired?

BM: Well I think that first of all, my wife loves to cook, and she loves to try different things. So, we probably, even though we have more time, and we can afford to do it, we probably don't eat out more than two nights a week.

CM: And usually do you guys go into Mt. Vernon when you're eating out?

BM: It depends...sometimes in Columbus, sometimes we'll drive to Mansfield, sometimes drive down to Newark. We just like to try different places.

CM: So do you find that outside of the county you get more of a variety?

BM: More of a selection, yes, is available. It's been limited in Knox County for a while, in the Mt. Vernon area, but there seems to be a new restaurant called Jake's now. And I know there had been some interest of other restaurants coming in, but they up till just recently did not have liquor licenses available for restaurants. So places like the Olive

Garden, or Red Lobster, you know that kind of restaurant had not come here. Applebee's.

CM: And Jake's is the first, I guess, who got their liquor license?

BM: Jake's is the first, yeah.

CM: Well that's actually all I have, do you have anything that you feel...?

BM: No, not really. I've just enjoyed it.