

# Street Street MAGAZINE UW-STOUT EDITION

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### WELCOME TO WOTS

Somehow you have stumbled upon a copy of Word on the Street (WOTS) Magazine. Maybe it was an accident, maybe you are just bored, but maybe it's because you want to know if it contains something worthwhile. We hope it does.

We exist as an outreach of Street Level Ministries, a college Christian ministry with groups in various cities.

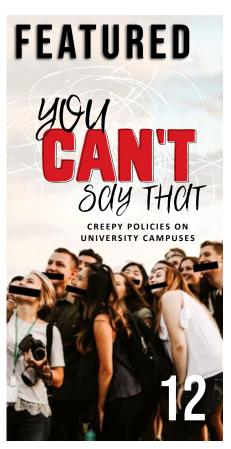
This magazine is written, laid out, and printed by young adults

in cities around the Midwest as well as in the Philippines and parts of South Asia. What brings us together is our love for Jesus. Our desire is to write about topics focusing on God, life, and college. We hope this magazine is helpful, challenging, and thought-provoking as it encourages you to pursue a strong relationship with God.

WOTS has been published since 1999. All credit goes to God. We're not sure how else to explain it!

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### BELIEVERS JRCH

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# BELIEVERS

## THE VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH THAT COLLIDED WITH CANCEL CULTURE

**OCTOBER 2022** 

valedictorian from a university in Mexico is finally receiving his degree and license to practice psychology after a group of faculty members tried to end his professional career before he could even get started by labeling his valedictory address as "hate speech."

Professors at the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) in Mexico demanded that the school withhold Christian Cortez Pérez's academic degree and psychology license for what he said during his commencement speech, according to ADF International, a faith-based legal advocacy organization.

At the top of his class at the university's School of Medicine and Psychology, Pérez earned the right to deliver the commencement address at his graduation ceremony last June. In his speech, he expressed his deeply held moral convictions regarding the state of the world today on many issues, including the importance of the family, and the sanctity of life. Cortez Pérez also called for the rejection of the redefinition of the family and radical gender ideology.

"Today we are deep into a real anthropological struggle to redefine the human being, the human person, man, through the implementation of ideologies and fashions of thought that always end up undermining dignity and freedom," he said. Pérez also quoted G.K. Chesterton on the destruction of the family: "People do not know what they are doing; because they do not know what they are undoing."

He further noted that "to attack life and the family is to self-destruct, it is an attack on civilization itself," calling on his peers to live in solidarity with one another: "You have to love, no one seeks the good of the other if he does not love him." In response, a group of professors published a "manifesto,"

calling for an effective ban on his professional practice as a psychologist. They called on the university to sanction Pérez's so -called "hate speech" by 1) withholding his academic degree and professional license 2) withdrawing his merit award, and 3) alerting psychology associations across Mexico regarding his actions.

The university followed through with the requests by initiating formal proceedings to address withholding his professional license, withdrawing his merit award, and alerting psychology associations across Mexico about his statements. Cortez Pérez submitted a counterclaim to protect his rightful interests.

"If the campaign to punish Christian is successful, it shows that anyone who dares to speak in public in Mexico is in danger. This is a clear violation of international human rights law, reminiscent of dictatorships, not democracies," Kristina Hjelkrem, legal counsel for ADF International, said at the time.

Pérez stated, "What happened to me shows how dangerous it is when professors with agendas try to punish students with whom they disagree. Academic institutions must respect the free speech rights of all students, and this is a great win for fundamental freedoms."

The University Council ruled that, "The arguments presented by the aggrieved party are unfounded, as well as the sanctions requested, for which reason the appeal filed is dismissed." Now Cortez Pérez is finally able to move forward with his psychology practice.

"I am overjoyed that the University has recognized that I committed no wrong in exercising my free speech rights to speak about issues of profound moral concern from the graduation podium," he said.

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### HEROES OF GOD: NOTABLE NAMES IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Heroes are mostly portrayed by their incredible powers and capabilities, which enable them to perform extraordinary deeds. Their mission is to save society from villains and natural disasters and accomplish heroic acts, like Batman, Superman, Captain America, Wolverine, Thor, and Black

Widow. But heroes are also those who are ordinary people with a divine purpose. They became heroes not in saving others, but in giving up their lives to Jesus our Lord and King. We will discover how these ordinary people performed extraordinary deeds to be 'heroes' indeed.



### SAINT AUGUSTINE (NOVEMBER 13, 354—AUGUST 28, 430 AD)

"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."

Born Aurelius Augustinus in Thagaste in Roman Africa, Augustine was drawn to the truth of the Christian faith in his early thirties but struggled to give up his sexual pursuits. But when he put his faith in Christ, he discovered grace, which made it possible for him to carry out God's will. He prayed to God in humility and dependence for the resources he would require to faithfully follow Jesus in the strength of the Spirit. He went on to become a vastly influential theologian and writer and was instrumental in laying the foundation for modern Christian thought.

### - MARTIN LUTHER (NOVEMBER 10, 1483—FEBRUARY 18, 1546)

"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."3

A German theologian and religious reformer, Luther ignited the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Luther's belief in justification by faith led him to question the Catholic Church's self-indulgence practices because he believed, according to the Bible, that there was no need for anyone to seek or purchase salvation. He wrote in 1533, "For a number of years I have now annually read through the Bible twice. If the Bible were a large, mighty tree and all its words were little branches, I have tapped at all the branches, eager to know what was there and what it had to offer."





### JOHN CALVIN (JULY 10, 1509—MAY 27, 1564)

'I gave up all for Christ, and what have I found? Everything in Christ."5

Calvin was a French Protestant theologian and Reformation figure. He took the Bible very seriously because he saw God's majesty and Christ's glory on every page. As a pastor, he frequently ran into opposition. People would purposely cough during church services so as to drown out his sermons; others would fire guns outside the church; men would set their dogs on him; and some would even threaten to drag him out and throw him in the river. Despite these challenges, Calvin refused to slow down or lighten the load on his ministry.

### DIETRICH BONHOEFFER (FEBRUARY 4, 1906—APRIL 9, 1945)

"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a follower of Jesus Christ, and he paid the price for that discipleship with his life. This cost was paid not only at the end of his life, when he was executed for his role in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler, but also throughout his life as he dedicated himself to his loved ones, his friends, and the true church. Dietrich was born in Poland in 1906 as the eighth child in an intellectually gifted but nominally religious family. Everyone was shocked when he made the decision to become a theologian and pastor at the age of 14.





### ELISABETH ELLIOT (DECEMBER 21, 1926—JUNE 15, 2015)

"There is nothing worth living for, unless it is worth dying for."9

Missionary, author, and speaker, Elisabeth Elliot was born in Belgium. Her life was centered on the unending love of Jesus, and she saw her greatest calling as sharing the good news of His atoning grace with others. This expensive call took her deep into Ecuador's Amazonian jungle where her husband, Jim Elliot, was one of five missionaries speared to death in 1956 while attempting to communicate with the Auca tribe. Later, she would move back into the Auca territory with her young daughter Valerie to live with and serve the people who murdered her husband. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> brainyquote.com/authors/saint-augustine-quotes <sup>2</sup> thegospelcoalition.org/article/finding-sexual-freedom-in-augustines-confessions <sup>3</sup> goodreads.com/author/quotes/29874.Martin\_Luther <sup>6</sup> korcula.net/martin-luther-reformation <sup>5</sup> azquotes.com/author/2355-John\_Calvin <sup>6</sup> reasonabletheology.org/john-calvin-pastor-theologian-reformer <sup>7</sup> goodreads.com/quotes/779560-we-must-be-ready-to-allow-ourselves-to-be-interrupted <sup>8</sup> nobts.edu/geauxtherefore/articles/2018/Martyr1.html <sup>9</sup> crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/inspiring-quotes/40-inspiring-quotes-from-elisabeth-elliot.htm <sup>10</sup> elisabethelliot.org/about



giving my life to Jesus. In the story, the law-abiding and ultra-religious Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to the feet of Jesus. "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law, commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" they ask him. Jesus rebukes them by telling them that the one who has no sin should be the one to throw the first stone. The Pharisees leave, one by one, until only the woman is left, and Jesus tells her He does not condemn her and to leave her life of sin. Many people may say they identify with the woman in this story, and I certainly do as well, but the arrogance and perceived holiness of the Pharisees are what I saw reflected in my own life the most.

I grew up in a large, church-going family. My dad was on the elder board, and my mom was an active volunteer in our children's programs. I grew up as the kid who always got straight A's on his Sunday School work. We always attended youth group and maybe even brought a friend when the youth pastor suggested it. If you had asked me if I was a Christian, I wouldn't have had a doubt in my mind. "Of course, can't you tell by all the Christian things I do?" would probably be my answer. Despite this mask I didn't even know I was wearing, my personal life was defined by sin and apathy towards God. I discovered porn at a pretty young age,

### "I WAS A BOY WHO HAD BEEN LIVING HIS **PARENTS' FAITH AND** DEEPLY NEEDED JESUS."

making me a closely-guarded and shameful person. I was the perfect example of what Jesus called a whitewashed tomb, outwardly beautiful but full of death and uncleanliness on the inside. Still, I made excuses. I tried rationalizing things by trying to balance my sin out with good works or by choosing not to believe it was wrong in the first place. Despite all this, I still believed I was the person I had been playing at all along. Just like the Pharisees, I could drag others before Jesus while refusing to acknowledge the death in me.

During my first years of high school, several things happened that changed my life. I went to a youth conference in Duluth, Minnesota and was invited to join a group of guys in a Bible study. Through that experience of actually studying the Bible, I saw that I was not the perfect person I had imagined myself to be. I was a boy who had been living his parents' faith and deeply needed Jesus. I had prayed a prayer asking God into my heart many years before that, but it wasn't until high school that I finally believed and trusted in Jesus as my savior.

I am thankful for how God has worked in my life since then. I am by no means a perfect person, but I can look back and see just how far He has taken me. I still struggle with trying to earn God's love somehow, and I have to be careful of my motives. Still, I can look back, even in just the past year, and see examples of times He has provided, blessed, tested, grown, and rebuilt me. Over the summer, I got the opportunity to travel to Berlin, Germany and learn from and serve alongside a team of amazing Christians. That and other experiences have confirmed that if you put yourself out there, He will take care of the rest. I am still very much a child in my faith, but being a part of the Christian community at Street Level has been a huge blessing and help. One verse I learned over the summer that has been a motto to me recently when I worry about what my future will look like is Psalms 9:9-10: "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you."

- Nathan



<u>Warning!</u> Consider this a friendly invitation to stop reading this article. If you believe that what follows is going to (1) offend you, (2) hurt your feelings, or (3) cause you to need to face-snuggle your emotional support iguana ("Good lizard, Daphne! What would I ever do without you!") then stop reading now, please!

We here at *Word on the Street* Magazine have long stood by and watched our classmates, family members, and friends jump on the bandwagon of the latest emotional coping mechanisms. These are, of course, the many ongoing attempts our society is making to build a "protective bubble" around an individual's emotions and experiences. The goal is to soften the harshness of life. To remove all hurt and disappointment. To ensure personal comfort at all times. To remove anxiety. To provide security and safety.

It is the emotional equivalent of setting out inflatable bumpers at the bowling alley. We all want the thrill of knocking down some pins (*whew!*) while also avoiding the frustration of rolling ball after ball into the gutter (*waaa!*). But the bumper lane is for kids, not adults. To remain in the bumper lane as you age is horribly unhealthy. You'll never get better at "bowling." You'll

only learn to rely on the "bumpers." (Note: We aren't actually talking about bowling anymore...)

Now, whether you agree with the bowling analogy or not, let's still try to get a little bit specific.

We're talking about trendy things. From prescriptions to pets, these are all very recently invented approaches to "mental health" and personal wholeness that are pushing for the same level of acceptance as the legitimate necessities of life. These are things like (brace yourself):

Weighted blankets
Trigger warnings
Emotional support animals
Taking mood altering drugs
Taking mental health days
Safe spaces
Bias reporting systems
Detecting micro aggressions
Deconstructing your Christianity

None of these things are "worse" than another. In listing a few, we don't mean to offend you or accuse you of a wrong.

### **CONVINCED** ARE THAT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT. AND SO, THEY LOOK FOR A QUICK FIX TO EXCOMMUNICATE EVERY DIFFICULTY."

The way we see it, the citizens of the earth have begun to invent a new and very unrealistic expectation for life: that no harm, stress, or fear should ever occur. That everything uncomfortable should be avoided. That life is supposed to be "easy." That happiness will be achieved when struggle is removed.

So, the chorus line rings out:

Take away our pain, Take away our stress. Take away our fear,

Take away the bad people. (Anyone who doesn't think the exact same thoughts as us.)

And people line up...to be prescribed the instant curealls of prescription drugs...to receive certification letters from their doctors for their poodles to become their own personal therapists...to wrap themselves in a 55-pound blanket because a few deep breaths, a moment of quiet, and maybe even a quick prayer in order to relax seems like too "simple" of a solution... Many are convinced that life shouldn't be difficult. And so, they look for a quick-fix to excommunicate every difficulty.

Does this sound like the people you know? Maybe.

Maybe not.

But we know people like this. In fact, we know far too many people who are no longer able to handle the slightest of discomforts, anxieties, or struggles. And so, instead of facing up to the wide-ranging scrapes and tussles of life, they seek to mitigate them.

Even some of our Christian friends who voice a faith in a Heavenly Father, and who acknowledge God's kindness, protection, and care for His children... Even with the power and presence of God available to them... they will look to a pill or a pet to put them at ease! Apparently for some, the popular philosophies of the day have more wisdom to offer than does the God who created everything. (But that is perhaps another subject for another 'zine...)

So, as we see it – a different approach is needed: it's time to stop ingesting every idea that is pushed upon us.

These anxiety crusades aren't helping anyone. The steady supply of emotional avoidance widgets being produced by our modern, fragile sensibilities is actually making things worse. Most of it simply allows people to indulge in their anxiety instead of overcoming it. And this approach has only made us softer and weaker. More fragile. Less able to face the realities of life.

You can figure this out if you are willing to reconsider the premise: things weren't always this way. We used to be stronger. We used to be braver. We used to be tougher.

Is there something in our past that might point to a better solution? (Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 11:28-30)



### **ADDICTED?** There's answers for what you're going through...

### Ready for change?

Join our addictions group beginning Thursday May 18 at 6 pm in the **Blind Munchies Coffeehouse's** 

conference room. 621 Wilson Ave, Menomonie, Wisc

Meetings will be held weekly on Thursdays.

# **FICTION**

Again there was a breach in Demon Intelligence. This is the second time correspondence was obtained from a Senior Devil named Slipnoose to his nephew, a Junior Tempter called Mugwort. Remember, dear reader, that demons have a warped perspective. To them, right is wrong, good is bad, and God is the Enemy. However, this letter could provide insight into the forces at work in your own life and, ultimately, aid you in resisting them. So, if you do choose to read, proceed with extreme caution and keep your wits about you.

### My Dear Mugwort,

I was wondering why your letters had stopped, but now I know the truth. Brace yourself, young beast, for I have never been so furious with you. My sources tell me the worst has taken place. Your boy has become, please know how deeply it disgusts me to even write the word, a Christian. Oh, the horror! The monstrosity! Despite all the care and effort I put into my previous letters, how did you manage to fail so miserably? And then to not even tell me directly! You worthless smear of toadslime! I hope you cower when you consider how much you will suffer for this unforgivable mishap of yours. Know that I am utterly ashamed of you and wish you the absolute worst for the rest of your miserable existence!

However, luckily for you, I consider myself a deeply reasonable creature, so I will postpone your punishments and leave you on the case for the time being. You will never receive forgiveness for this, but there is much damage to still be done in your young man's life. So, let us move on to how you can make yourself useful in spite of your grievous sin.

My first piece of advice is that you should take full advantage of the newness of your boy's condition. Weave great expectations in his mind, the more grandiose the better. Make him believe that belonging to the Enemy means his life will always be on the up and up. The best way to do this is to play into his sense of entitlement and comparison.

Get him looking at the people around him. Focus his attention on the good things they have: caring friends, academic success,

opportunity, romance, whatever. Make him believe that if he does a good enough job of following the Enemy's demands, he'll be handed those things on a silver platter too. Make him think that he can earn a happy life by following the rules.

This is a wonderful little game, for suffering is inevitable for every human creature, especially those that belong to Him. Our Enemy has designed it to be so. In His twisted way, He means to use their pain as a means to make them more like Him. Disgusting if you ask me, but easy to get this mixed up in their feeble minds. Play your cards right, and when your boy tastes his first trial it will catch him completely unaware. He'll feel betrayed by his beloved Father (can you even stomach that He lets them call Him that?) and, if you're lucky, stop communicating with Him altogether. That's when we're really free to do our best work.

Once your boy has developed some proper disillusionment and bitterness, entice him to find his satisfaction in the stuff of this world. Stay away from things the Enemy would obviously dislike. Yes, you read correctly. While you could destroy him with something obviously bad, like illicit sex or some wonderfully lurid addiction, confuse him by capturing his heart with something he would consider good. Tempt him to make this good thing the center of his world, his highest happiness. This can be nearly anything: the opinion of his friends, comfort, security, even how well he believes he's serving the Enemy. Humans are easily distracted. It will throw everything out of balance and perfectly set the stage for my last piece of advice.

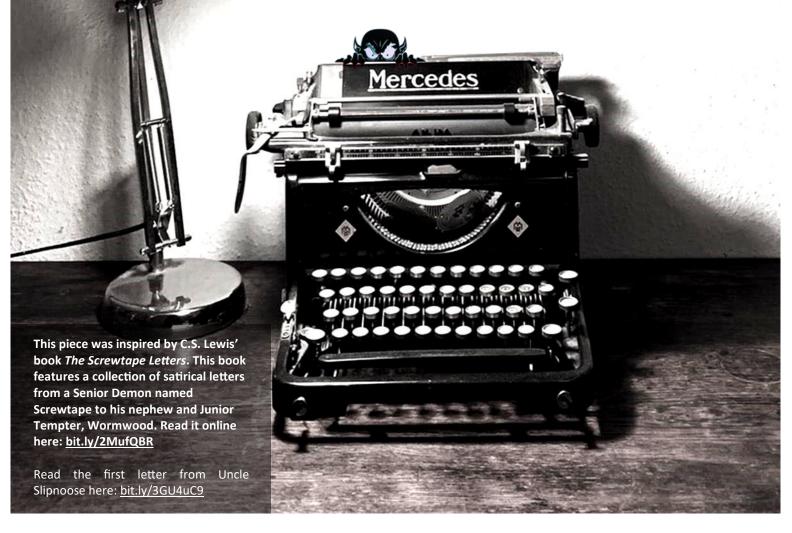
"ONCE HE REALIZES HE'S
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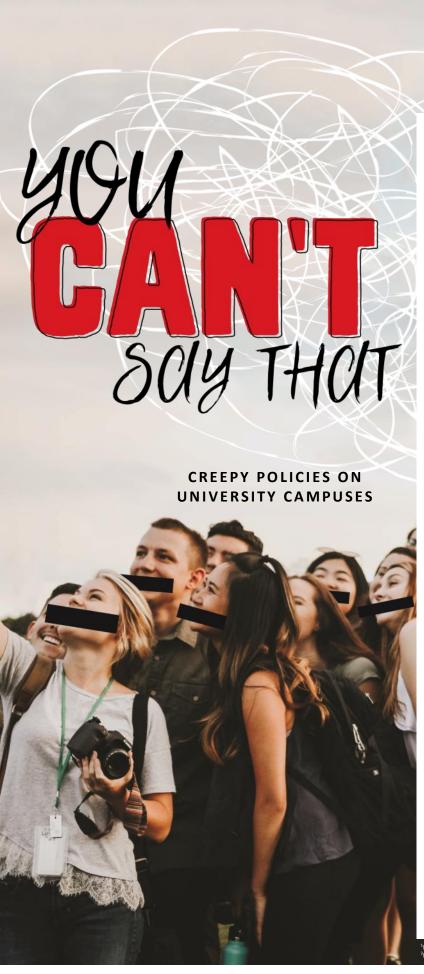
Once he realizes he's off course, make him believe that there is no hope of fixing it. Drown him in guilt. One of the most disgusting aspects of the Enemy's relationship to these human creatures is His incessant offerings of restoration. If He gets His way, every time they fall down, He'll pick them back up. It's obscene. However, He needs their cooperation. He never forces. So, be sure to capture your boy's attention first and have him only think about his failure, not of how the Enemy has repeatedly promised His help.

Follow my instructions exactly this time, Mugwort, and perhaps you will be able to at least steal your boy's joy and create some decent confusion. I plan to visit you soon. I suggest you do your best to make this situation as bad as possible before I get to you.

Your deeply disappointed and ever-watching uncle,

Slipnoose





igher education is becoming ground zero for testing out forms of censorship that propel discrimination and instill fear by silencing student's viewpoints that do not conform to narratives on campus. While under the guise of being inclusive and welcoming, roughly 456 universities across the United States, including UW-Stout and UW-River Falls have Bias Incident Reporting systems in place.¹ These reporting channels encourage everyone within the campus community to monitor the climate by reporting any incident that they deem is an act of bias or hate.

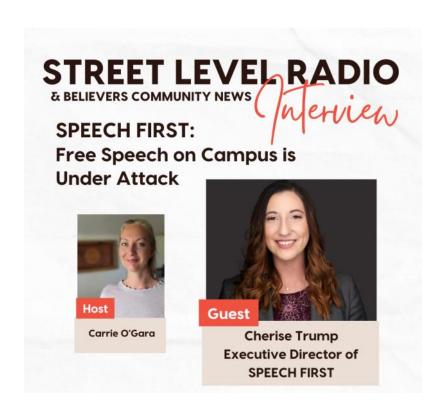
Once an incident has been anonymously reported, university members trained in bias incident prevention and response determine the appropriate response. However, sometimes repercussive actions are being taken in violation of a student's right to freedom of speech. So rather than creating an atmosphere of inclusivity, it's leading students to self censor, fearful that at any given time what they say could be reported.

For example, a recent lawsuit against Oklahoma State University is challenging its policies, including a harassment policy so vague it's causing students to be afraid to express opinions about religion, politics, and cultural issues out of fear that another student will report them. <sup>2</sup> Yes, it's becoming normal for campuses to push the mindset that one *should* be offended by the opinions of others they disagree with and take action to silence them.

The prospect of a student standing up to a university can seem daunting, expensive, and time-consuming. Most students don't take action for a number of reasons: fear, awkwardness, and wanting that diploma by graduation. Speech First is an organization that is fighting for the freedom of speech on campuses by supporting students that want to fight for that freedom. They do this through advocacy, litigation, and education.

With all that being said, don't just take our word for it. What follows is an interview conducted by Street Level Radio with the Executive Director of Speech First, Cherise Trump (no relation to *that* Trump), on her experience with attacks on free speech on university campuses.

<sup>1</sup>http://speechfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sF-2022-Bias-Response-team-and-Reporting-System-Report.pdf <sup>2</sup>http://speechfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/<sub>2</sub>-10-2023-PRESS-RELEASE-0SU-Complaint-2-1.pdf



STREET LEVEL **RADIO** (SLR) **CONJUNCTION** WITH **BELIEVERS COMMUNITY NEWS HELD AN INTERVIEW** WITH CHERISE TRUMP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPEECH FIRST, an association dedicated to protecting its members from toxic censorship culture, especially on campuses, and the host of the first new live show and podcast called "Well Said," where she interviews experts, activists, professors, and students about free speech at higher education in American culture.

"we defend our members' rights to free speech on college campuses"

Cherise Trump: "we're a nonprofit organization." "we're also ... membership organization. So, we defend our members' rights to free speech on college campuses. And in a lot of cases, that means we will litigate against universities that violate those free speech rights of our student members. And that is something that we really pride ourselves on - on our precision and our focus going after these universities and them accountable. holding students come to us, we're able to act very quickly. And one thing about being a membership organization, it allows us to keep their identities out of the lawsuits, which is huge for them because right now

on campus, students are not only worrying about being censored, but they're worried about coercion and retaliation for being conservative or having conservative values. So, by being able to keep their name out of the lawsuits, we are able to put the students in a more comfortable situation so that they'll actually come to us and tell us exactly what's happening on campus and what they're concerned about."

"So, a lot of times they [students] will just go with the flow because universities have kind of this parental nature about them, right? So [they] will kind of lean on them when they need something, or when they need protection."

**SLR:** "...how would you make a student, who may not be aware, that this is happening to them — that it's a real thing?"

Cherise Trump: "...They [students] are usually very misinformed or uninformed about their constitutional rights. It's just not taught anymore in the public school system, and it's really unfortunate. So, a lot of times they will just go with the flow because universities have kind of this parental nature about them, right? So students will kind of lean on them when they need something, or when they need

protection. But also, when a university administrator tells a student that you should report anyone who commits a microaggression against you, or you should report anyone who says anything offensive or even says a joke that you don't like, that doesn't really raise a lot of red flags for students because to them, this is something they've been hearing all through kindergarten through senior year of high school. And so, what's happening now is this is becoming very normalized, this type of behavior: censoring and reporting on each other. And students, again, don't know about their rights, and they're not super passionate about them. They'll just go with the flow. They'll maintain that mental kind of complacency about it."

"I really encourage students to read their campus policies — read your student handbook, read your harassment, biasincident, and computer policies — because they sneak stuff in there that can be used against you!"

**SLR:** "Speaking of bias reporting, you came out with this great report... In there you mentioned that 80% of college students are self-censoring, and I'd like to talk about the relationship between self-censoring and free speech because ...a lot of people think bias reporting is giving somebody the ability to speak their opinion freely by reporting what has offended them. ... Are people confused about that, and what is the relationship?"

Cherise Trump: "... students are definitely confused about it. The way the universities characterize what a Bias Reporting System is, they state that it's something that will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. It is something that will broaden the scope of discussion and debate—they put this real interesting positive spin on it. And it's super Orwellian when you think about how they talk about this as if it's good for everyone. But when you read the actual policies and how the universities define a "bias incident", you'll see that an incident of bias is whatever the university wants it to be. And in a lot of cases, they will lay out examples on their websites. They'll say an "incident of bias" can be "offensive", "hateful" or "biased" speech,

"unwanted speech", "joking", "stereotyping", "microaggressions" etc. ... Who defines what hate is? Who defines what bias is? You know, if you think something is hateful, it might not be something that I think is hateful. So you can't put a pin on it, and you can't identify what exactly that language is. ... I really encourage students to read their campus policies — read your student handbook, read your harassment, biasincident, and computer policies because they sneak stuff in there that can be used against you!"

"...SHE ACTUALLY USED THE PHRASE, "THEY WILL REPORT ME." THAT IS WHAT THE MENTALITY IS RIGHT NOW. NOT JUST THAT THEY'LL HATE ME BECAUSE I'M A CONSERVATIVE. BUT THAT "THEY WILL REPORT ME"."

**SLR:** "We were discussing the Virginia Tech court case that's a big deal right now. I think that is an interesting angle where we can see how you personally doing this as a young person, [and it] is also a boldening thing that could be very exciting to hear for the students that I know."

Cherise Trump: ...on the Bias Reporting System issue with Virginia Tech, (we actually just won earlier this year in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals against the University of Central Florida on a very similar issue). Virginia Tech, of all the schools we've sued or interacted with, I think this one is where students use the Bias Reporting System the most. They report on each other for everything on this campus. I don't know what it is about the campus, but they just love using this Bias Reporting System. And so, you have students who are just terrified to talk to us. I've interviewed students for this lawsuit who are like, "Hold on, I have to move to another room because there are students here, and I don't

want them to know my views because I'm afraid they'll hear and they'll report me." She actually used the phrase, "They will report me." That is what the mentality is right now. Not just that they'll hate me because I'm a conservative, but that "they will report me". So, that is something that is deeply concerning for students. They are worried too about when the school receives reports on you, that they're keeping records. What happens when the school administrators, who are oftentimes very far left, know who all the conservatives on campus are because of this Bias Reporting System? And they know who to target. They know who if there's a scholarship opportunity comes up, they know who not to email about it, right? So, they have probably like a running list of all the students that they don't like that they consider bad eggs, right? Just keep in mind what this Bias Reporting System is. It's not just the disciplinary action, it's the recordkeeping, the investigatory aspect, and that's even creepier in its own way.

SLR: ..for an individual who is just delving into this for the first time maybe after listening to this, maybe they will start thinking critically and analyzing their role. Is there hope for that individual?

Cherise Trump: Yeah, I think that's a great question because there is a lot that the community member can do. There's a lot the students can do. There's a lot that faculty can do. I would say on the student level, know your rights, definitely know what those are. Understand the Constitution recognize and take ownership of the fact that you're an adult, and it's your responsibility to defend your rights and to take ownership of them. But also understand your responsibility at the university. You want to have these discussions. Encourage debate on your campus, try to host debates, talk to professors that you think are friendly to that idea because the concept of debate is getting lost. We're not practiced at it anymore. If you hear people debate and argue with one another they're not articulate. They're just shouting, and it actually sounds like a real argument. It doesn't sound professional. It doesn't sound mature. And I think we're just losing that art in society right now. And students have an opportunity to reinvent this, to recreate this debate culture on their campuses. So, I encourage you to start debate clubs or to participate in them. There's also a bunch of student organizations that are good for this if you're a conservative student and you need an outlet, or you feel like you can't really express yourself or your views on campus. There are organizations like the Turning Point Foundation, Young Americans for Liberty, Young Americans for Freedom, Network of Enlightened Women, and the Leadership Institute. A lot of these organizations have alumni programs, so after you graduate, they'll connect you with people in the network who have similar career paths you want to pursue. They'll keep you in touch with the folks who have similar views as you as well. But, I do really encourage the debate aspect because it is a lost art, and I'm really concerned for what that means for our country.

And just again, stay knowledgeable. Stay aware of what's going on. Don't become complacent. I always tell students this, especially the students we interact with. They want to debate and speak up so much. Just get that courage and go write for the school paper, write an op-ed. There are some organizations, like Campus Reform and College Fix, you can become a campus reporter for them, creating an outlet for you. So there's a lot of organizations out there that are particularly helpful for getting your voice out as a conservative student.

VISIT STREETLEVELRADIO.COM TO LISTEN TO THE AUDIO.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW AT READWOTS.COM



heir slogan, "Expect more from your coffee," makes it clear that the Blind Munchies is committed to serving more than just a cup of joe. Both the Menomonie and River Falls Blind Munchies Coffeehouse locations are working together to help provide access to clean water to South East Asian communities lacking this vital resource.

A part of the proceeds from every customer purchase goes towards humanitarian efforts in developing countries. Currently, that project is focused on supporting clean water projects in rural villages. A third well was recently completed in an area lacking this critical resource.

Our World In Data reported up to 57 deaths per 10,000 people in countries like India, Pakistan, and Nepal due to contaminated drinking water. Additionally, this region is suffering from limited water for personal hygiene. According to the WHO, 2.3 billion people lack access to handwashing facilities, with significant gaps in access between urban and rural areas. Even though adding a few wells is a tiny drop in the bucket compared to the need, simply visiting one of these local coffeehouses for a cup of coffee can make a big difference for the communities these wells are drilled in.

While this non-profit business provides humanitarian aid abroad, both locations have a lot to offer their own communities. Whatever and whenever you order, you will be served with a friendly smile and greeting. You can get a variety of coffee drinks, from breves to lattes, and choose from various fresh-baked European-inspired treats. On Saturdays, you can also grab a hot breakfast in the Menomonie location for just \$3. Stop by in person or visit theblindmunchies.com to learn more.



### **MENOMONIE**

Nestled in the basement of Believers Church in Menomonie, the first Blind Munchies Coffeehouse is only a few blocks from UW-Stout. This cozy location at 621 Wilson Avenue has a collection of tables for groups, sofas to lounge upon with your beverage of choice, high-top counters for serious study sessions, and a conference room for meetings. Come and surround yourself with warm lighting, eclectic decor, and friendly faces.



### **RIVER FALLS**

In River Falls, 115 West Cascade Avenue is the place to get caffeinated and study. Just down the street from Johnson Hall at UW-River Falls is the second delightful Blind Munchies Coffeehouse. This location has high-top tables surrounded by lush plants, creating a soothing study space away from campus busyness.



### HOW GOD RELATES TO US AND WHY IT MATTERS

n October of 1963, President John F. Kennedy was leading the United States through racial tension, nuclear crisis, and space exploration. Magazine photographer Stanley Tretick was there to capture it all. One photograph in particular shows President Kennedy sitting behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office while his charming, not-yet-three-year-old son, John Jr., peeks hello from under the desk. Without realizing it, John Jr. has the affection, the attention, and access to one of the most powerful men in the world. There is no doubt—his dad delights in him.

The tender image of John F. Kennedy and his son evokes emotion for anyone. If you're a Christian, it's especially meaningful because it's a small glimpse into how God relates to us. We can play under the feet of our Creator, our Father in Heaven, and it's no bother.

### THE AFFECTION OF GOD

No matter how many times it's heard, never let it become cliché: God loves us, and God loves you. Meditate on that for a minute. It is so astounding the Apostle John proclaims, "How can this be!?" Many times throughout Scripture, God's love moves Him to act. For example, 1 John 4:10 says, "This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son as a sacrifice to take away our sins" (NLT). God loves us because He is love, not because we are loveable.

Additionally, God makes His affection undeniably known by the title He chooses for Himself: Father. He is not an estranged Father who gives us

commands from afar. Rather, He desires to be deeply involved with all aspects of our lives to help grow and mature us. The maturing process means we get His blessing, yes, but we also receive His discipline. Though it doesn't feel good at the time, it proves the legitimacy of our faith, "As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children." God's affection isn't always shown in the ooeygooey-feel-good moments of walking alone on a beach. It often shows up in the difficult, painful, and humbling experiences that shape our character.

### THE ATTENTION OF GOD

Furthermore, God's delight is revealed by the level of attention He pays to us. He knows us more intimately than we can understand, down to each hair on our head. Parents are notorious for having an eye on their kids and kids are notorious for being aloof to their parents when they are in their own little

world. The same is true with God. At the times of our lives when we sense Him the least, His protective eye has never

wavered.





### AT THE TIMES OF OUR LIVES WHEN WE SENSE GOD THE LEAST, HIS PROTECTIVE EYE HAS NEVER WAVERED.



Knowing God watches over us is a treasure because it provides a solid foundation amidst a very insecure world. As Christians, we are not exempt from hardship, but the God we worship is capable of carrying us through all things. Writer Marshall Segal elaborates,

No crisis or circumstance overwhelm Him. He is never surprised or shaken. He made all things, sustains all things, and rules all things, including every detail of our lives, even on the most difficult days. No hill is too high, or night too dark for Him. When what you can see only screams anxiety, see the strength of His power in all He has made. Surely the God who made the mountains 'is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy' (Jude 1:24).

This world is perilous mentally, physically, and spiritually. Thankfully, our Father knows what we've been through and what's still ahead, and amidst all of that He's promised to never leave us nor forsake us.

### THE ACCESS OF GOD

Finally, the way God invites us to come close to Him displays His delight. Instead of keeping us at arm's length He offers for us to draw near, "So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered Heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe...let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (Hebrews 4:14-16, NLT). In the worst of times—when we've been made aware of our sin we're most tempted to run and hide. But, because of

Christ we can find mercy by running to God instead of away from Him.

Practically, prayer gives us access to God 24/7. Again, it is something often taken for granted but if we stop to grasp the implications it will truly humble us. We don't need to be in a specific building, taking a certain position. We can talk to God whenever we want and trust that He cares enough to listen. Author J.I. Packer describes what it's like for God to answer our prayers,

Not, indeed, that our Father in heaven always answers His children's prayers in the form in which we offer them. Sometimes we ask for the wrong thing!...Good parents never simply ignore what their children are saying, nor simply disregard their feelings of need, and neither does God; but often he gives us what we should have asked for rather than what we actually requested.

Our Father delights to communicate with us in all circumstances. We can rest in knowing that His answers are perfect even when we cannot see or understand.

Like John Jr., most moments seem average to us—just another day crawling all over the floor at Dad's work. But oh, what a great Dad we have! Let's stop, gaze up at Him in awe, and cherish the delight He gives without measure.

"Cheer up, Zion! Don't be afraid! For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs." (Zephaniah 3:16-17, NLT)









### WHAT IS DECONSTRUCTION?

At the beginning of 2021 Andrew Blooms, an artist and music producer published a blog post titled "Escaping Christianity Pt. 1" in which he described his Christian experience. He said, "There is so much I am angry about, there was so much about my American church experience that was so wrong. Personally, I feel like religion stole some of my life." Blooms, like many before him, explain a process of thoughts and actions in which a person takes a step back and ask what it really means to be a Christian. Today this is called deconstruction.

Deconstruction, or the term deconstructing faith, can have a variety of meanings from the simplification of biblical teaching, to updating a belief or even rejecting faith entirely. Jacques Derrida (a French Philosopher) first used the term. He defined deconstruction concerning how people break down a language to discover the intent and meaning of words based on the writer or speaker.

There have been countless "church kids" who have grown up and started to question what it really means to be a Christian and if the way they grew up was the "right" way. Can religion be trusted? Are the experiences they had in their religious circles justified? What does the Bible really say? Can such a book be trusted? These are just a few of the questions deconstructionists need answers for.

### THROUGH THE EYES OF CULTURE

The grown up "church kids" are no longer satisfied with the simple "because the Bible said so" answers they received from

their parents and teachers. This type of response left a bitter taste and belief that maybe there are some questions too tough for God to answer. Many people are still searching to know what is true and our culture is quick to feed them a variety of solutions.

Deconstructing looks like redefining faith through a new lens. The new lens can be a social issue, humanitarian view, past

# "THERE IS SO MUCH I AM ANGRY ABOUT, THERE WAS SO MUCH ABOUT MY AMERICAN CHURCH EXPERIENCE THAT WAS SO WRONG. PERSONALLY, I FEEL LIKE RELIGION STOLE SOME OF MY LIFE."

experiences, or through simplification. In an interview, Neil Shenvi, an apologist, and author says, "The Reformers wanted to reexamine all their religious beliefs in light of Scripture. They wanted to reform their beliefs to the Bible. In contrast, evangelical deconstruction wants us to reexamine all our religious beliefs in light of history and sociology."

Most of the time this sort of isolated deconstruction results in a total abandonment of the Christian faith. Some retain a form of faith, but it has been so divided from Scripture that it is unrecognizable. The problem is if faith is always being dissected and probed, it is broken apart into vague beliefs far removed

from real life. These beliefs can then be defined based on a person's own experiences and perceptions. Belief like this can never be substantial enough to hold up under the weight of real life questions and troubles because it doesn't have anything tangible to hold on to.

### THE SCRIPTURAL SIEVE

There is a right way to unpack how to live out Christianity today, and that is by looking through a Biblical lens. The Scripture tells how faith in Jesus is to be the foundation of Christian belief (Matt 7:24). 2 Corinthians 5:7 tells believers to walk by faith and not by sight. A Christian who believes that Jesus is who He said He is, would base their life on what the Bible has to say about God and how to live out Christianity. Looking through the lens of the culture around us is unstable and constantly changing, but the inspired word of God never changes (Heb 13:8). How can the Christian faith be explained if not through the Bible? The Scripture offers a comparison of what life as a believer will look like as opposed to that of a nonbeliever.

The deconstruction trend can sound like an intelligent idea to jump in on, but if the intent is to become wise in the eyes of yourself and others around you, Isaiah 5:21 says woe to you. 1 Corinthians 3:19 says the wisdom of the world is foolishness. If the Bible is accurate, then Christians would be wise to base their lives on what it says instead of what others interpret it to be.

God isn't afraid of people's questions or doubts about the Bible and how it is interpreted. Although it is not always easy to understand, the Bible does have concrete answers and truth that can be applied to the lives of believers. It's good to have questions and seek out what you believe and why. Many people will go through a process of seeking what it means to follow Jesus Christ. God doesn't ask us to have blind faith but to come to Him for the answers, wisdom, and understanding. The tough questions about traditional values and practices should encourage you to dig into what the Bible really teaches.

It can be intimidating to research the Bible and find out what it means. It's a good thing God didn't tell Christians to do it alone. They weren't meant to. Acts 2:42 records the church meeting together to learn and live life together. This is the way God chose to teach His followers. You don't have to take my (or anyone else's) word for it. You can take your questions to the Bible or a trusted Christian friend when you need help.





recently traveled to a few different provinces in the Philippines. As we entered each new place, there was one thing I couldn't help but notice was the same wherever we went: a lot of people just sitting and watching life pass them by. It was especially noticeable when we would stay in one place for an extended time. I saw the same people day after day, sitting in the same place, doing the same thing: absolutely nothing.

A lot of Christians are living their lives the same way. Oh, they're busy with church and work and school and living a "morally upright life," but their lives aren't amounting to anything. They're lulled into apathetic contentment with the same cycles of life that everyone else is living: eat, sleep, work, [insert hobby], repeat. Of course, these rhythms vary with each individual, but you get the gist of it. It's a mundane cycle. They're just watching life pass them by.

Is that really what Jesus envisioned for His followers when He said that He came to give life, and give it abundantly?<sup>1</sup> I think not.

Jesus was a go-getter kind of guy. He was always on the move. Always "about the Father's business." He was hard-working, creative, and passionate. He had life inside of Him, and it was contagious! When people met Him, they were either repulsed or captivated. For the latter, their lives got flipped upside down. No longer did they continue in their routine existence. They found out what they were truly created for and lived it.

There's an 80-year-old guy that lives in one of the provinces that we visited. One day, my friends wanted to buy something from the convenience store, so we parked on a side street and waited. As we were about to leave, we saw that 80-year-old drive by in his cherry red Jeep. Someone pointed and said, "There goes Jim!" I couldn't help but compare his life to those I described earlier. Jim's not just sitting around, waiting for life to pass him by. He's out there, living each day as if it's his last. That's what meeting Jesus did to him.

I'll never forget the day that Jim, with a sparkle in his eye, looked at me and said, "I just want to go home." He smiled gently and continued, "I'm grateful to the Lord. But I'm ready to go home." That was months ago, yet, he's still here. Apparently, he's still got some life to live. And he's old. How about you?

There	2000	
mere	gues	

John 10:10 <sup>2</sup>Luke 2

### the blank check

### THE GREATEST GIVER AND OUR SUSPICIOUS HEARTS

e's one of the wealthiest men this world has ever seen, but you wouldn't know it by passing him on the street. He lives in New York City, commuting by subway and then a short walk to his 37<sup>th</sup> floor office. Hundreds, if not thousands, of strangers week in and week out hardly notice him, even bumping his shoulder without saying, "excuse me." Even though they're strangers, he loves them deeply: the guy who sells footlong hotdogs from a cart with an

underinflated tire, the teenager with the most carefully thought out and rebellious image on their way to high school, and innumerable businessmen in suits on their way to Wall Street.

One day, the man sets up a small, foldable table and chair right in the middle of the hurried Monday morning traffic. "Free checks" his sign reads, "Any amount." He signs and dates ten checks from his own bank account distribute to anyone willing to take him up on it. Throughout the day, many people walk by staring straight ahead as if he doesn't exist, some give him a quizzical look like his sign couldn't be true, and yet ten-ves, ten—individuals walk up and name their price.

FREE CHECKS ANY AMOUNT

"Will you pay off all of my student loans and my rent for a year?"

"How 'bout a million dollars?" a cab driver barks. "Of course," says the man.

a medical student asks. "Yes," the man says.

The man writes out and signs a check to each individual, no questions asked. Some go away in tears, some laughing with unbelief, and others are completely speechless at the generosity of a complete stranger.

Returning to his office, the man sits behind his desk looking out at the New York skyline. One by one, each person he wrote a check to comes to mind. He imagines what they'll do with it, how their lives will improve. Then, the faintest knock and a hesitant turning of the doorknob interrupts his reverie.

"Ah, Maggie," the man says. "Come in, come in."

Maggie, a making-ends-meet mother of five children, peeks her head inside the door. She had met this man earlier and thought he was crazy for what he was doing. "But," she thought, "Was I

crazy for taking him up on it?" Shyly, she makes her way to a comfortable armchair near the man's desk. In tears she can barely utter the words, "Thank you." The man consoles her and asks, "But what are you doing here? I have not seen or heard from any of the others."

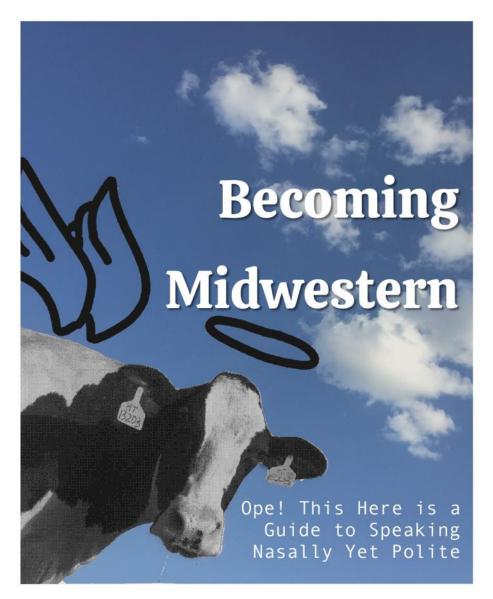
"I got your address from the check," she quivered. "I had to see you, to say thank you, to explain how much this really means to my family. You're part of our family now, after what you've done."

The man stood up and embraced her in a tight hug as if she was a long lost daughter because he knew she understood—it was never about the money.

God is merciful to the saint and sinner alike. He shows no partiality based on age, race, education, socioeconomic status, tainted pasts

or bright futures. Yet many of those who have encountered God's presence and blessing fail to return the honor and worship that is due our magnificent Creator. If Jesus is who He says He is and has done what scripture explains, isn't He worth far more than an I'll-go-to-church-if-I-feel-like-it attitude? Isn't He worth pursuing with outright abandon right now, not when our other life goals are achieved first?

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, 'were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'" (Luke 17:15-19)



Not from around here? This quickread guide will help you interpret the slang and cultural context of the great American Midwest. After familiarizing yourself with some of the key words and phrases of our area, you'll be ready to adopt some of the complex cultural practices that accompany being a true Midwesterner.

You'll want to take note of these key social norms to avoid any potentially uncomfortable situations.

### Local Greetings

When you make eye contact while walking past anyone, stranger or friend, always smile and say, "Hi!" When someone asks you, "How's it goin?" the only acceptable answer is "good." Do not elaborate. They don't actually want to know.

### Handling Conversations and Encounters

Never directly ask for anything. Phrase your request as if you're asking the other person.

Example: if you really want to go to the movies, ask, "Do you want to go to the movies?" (Hint: to really blend in, add the key phrase 'er no' to the end of this sentence).

Avoid clear, firm statements that may incriminate yourself as having an opinion, such as, "I want to go out for ice cream." When someone asks your opinion, never give a direct answer. It's better to use this reliable phrase: "Oh, I dunno, what do you think?" When you bump into someone or have any regrettable encounter where the only option is

### **Key words:**

### The Cities

Minneapolis, MN and St. Paul, MN area.

Example: "Are you going to the Cities this weekend?"

### Ope /op/

Used exclusively when you bump into someone; may also precede the word "sorry" in any context.

### Pop /pop/

Soda

Example: "Do you want an orange pop?"

### Hot dish /hot dish/

A mixture of food items drenched in cream-ofsomething soup, baked, and commonly housed in a 9x13 casserole dish.

### Slang:

You betcha!

Yes

Uffda!

Holy cow!

Oh my gosh!

For cryin' out loud!

Cripes!

Jeepers!

No kiddin'!

Ah jeez!

All exclamations of surprise, disbelief, or frustration. We are a people easily taken aback and, thus, have developed a multitude of terms to convey this to one another.

### **Phrases:**

Well, I'm gonna letcha go. Well, I spose.

"I don't want to be here anymore.'

I'm just gonna to sneak right past ya.

"Move."

Jeet?/j-eat/

"Did you eat yet?"

### Real quick

Add to any statement of intention to make it sound like you're not going to inconvenience anyone by what you're about to say or request.

### Fr no/err-no/

Common tag for the end of sentences to safely phrase your desires as questions instead of dogmatic statements.

### Sorry/s0rry/

May be used as a precursor to any request.

Example: if your friend is speaking too quietly, say, "Sorry, I couldn't hear that."

for you or the other person to go first, always say, "Ope, sorry, go ahead," and continue to repeat this phrase until the other person gives in and goes first. There are no time limits on this discourse of social propriety; take as long as needed.

If you visit someone's home, it is highly likely you will be offered refreshments. It's imperative that you never give a resolute "yes" the first time you are asked – always politely refuse to avoid appearing

"Avoid clear, firm statements that may incriminate yourself as having an opinion."

gluttonous and greedy. Suggested phrases for refusal: "Oh gosh, no thank you, don't bother yourself," or "Sorry, I just ate, couldn't fit anymore in." Continue this refrain when they ask again. If it comes around a third time, you have entered dangerous territory where continued denial distasteful. now becomes highly Enthusiastically accept, making profuse comments about their truly exceptional taste and quality.

Safe Departures

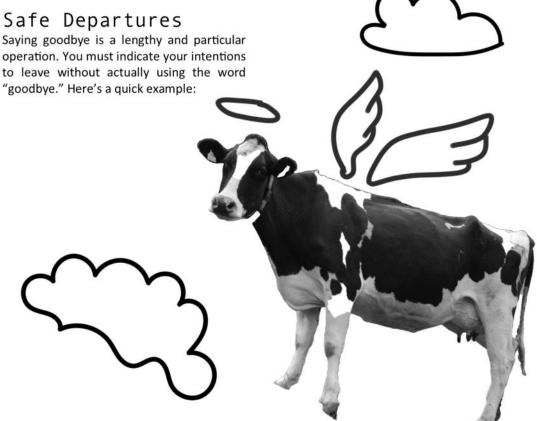
operation. You must indicate your intentions to leave without actually using the word "goodbye." Here's a quick example:

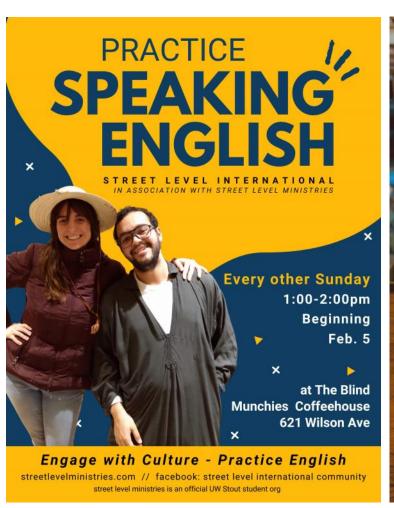
When the other party initiates an end to the conversation (indicated by the use of a "well" statement, see column), start by thanking them for their hospitality or good conversation.

Next. swiftly introduce novel conversation point, such as the weather. Draw out this conversational point for 10 to 15 minutes, and then repeat, presenting a new one if they haven't already done so. After a minimum of 30 minutes, you are safe to wrap up the exit process. If you find yourself in the uncomfortable position of having no good reason for leaving the conversation, simply end with, "Well, I'm gonna letcha go," to give the impression that you do not want to take more of their time since they obviously have important places to be.

Remember, never say the word "goodbye," but you may insert any of these suitable phrases for the actual sendoff: "stay healthy," "stay warm," "see you later," "drive safe," "watch out for deer," "say hi to [name] for me."

Keep this guide handy; you never know when you'll need a reference... just real quick.









# DON'T DON DO GOLLEGE ALONE.

18-25? LOOKING FOR FRIENDS?

### STREET LEVEL MINISTRIES

A community of young people following Jesus in Menomonie, WI.

streetlevelministries.com streetlevel@uwstout.edu



### **MONDAYS**

**6pm Dinner & Bible Discussion** 

@ The Blind Munchies Coffeehouse

621 Wilson Ave, Menomonie WI 54751

An official UW-Stout campus org