

THIS ISSUE

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Word on the street
magazine

ISSUE: 29

A Street Level Ministries Publication • Winter 2007



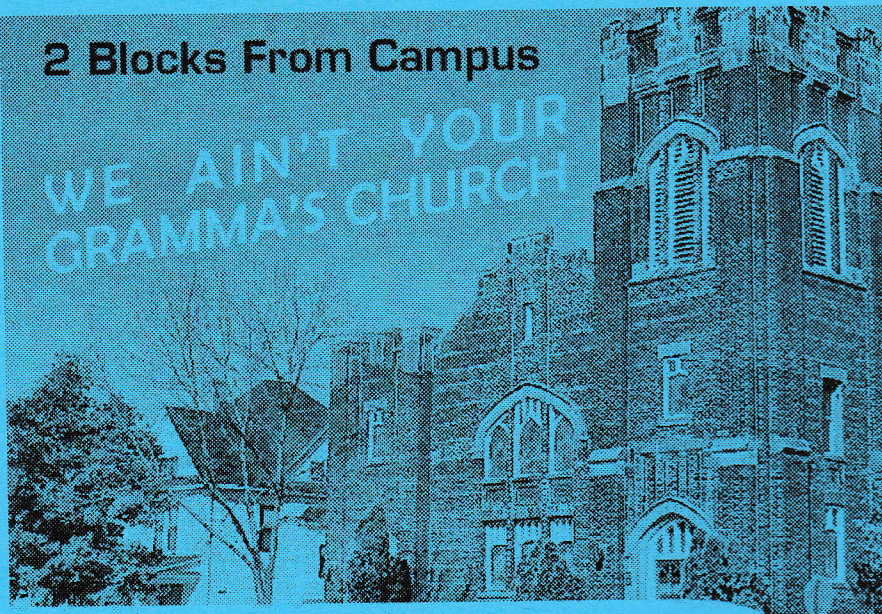
“THE ALLURE OF THE LOST GOSPELS”

Gospel of Judas • Gospel of Mary • Gospel of Thomas

Where do you find your spiritual fulfillment? • Hate snow? Find out how to have fun with it!
What are UW-Stout students passionate about? • Extreme Filipino makeover!

2 Blocks From Campus

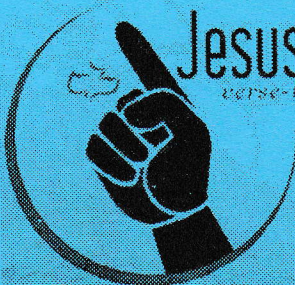
WE AIN'T YOUR GRAMMA'S CHURCH



NOT SURE WHAT TO EXPECT? Gain an insight and click on "Watch Last Sunday's Service" to get a taste of the teaching. Also, we don't have membership and your level of involvement is up to you.

All are welcome!

- INDIAN & PHILIPPINES MISSIONS
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- YOUTH AND KIDS MINISTRY
- JAIL MINISTRY
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- RELAXED ATMOSPHERE
- GOOD COFFEE
- NONTRADITIONAL SERVICE
- LOT'S OF BIBLE STUDY
- FELLOWSHIP
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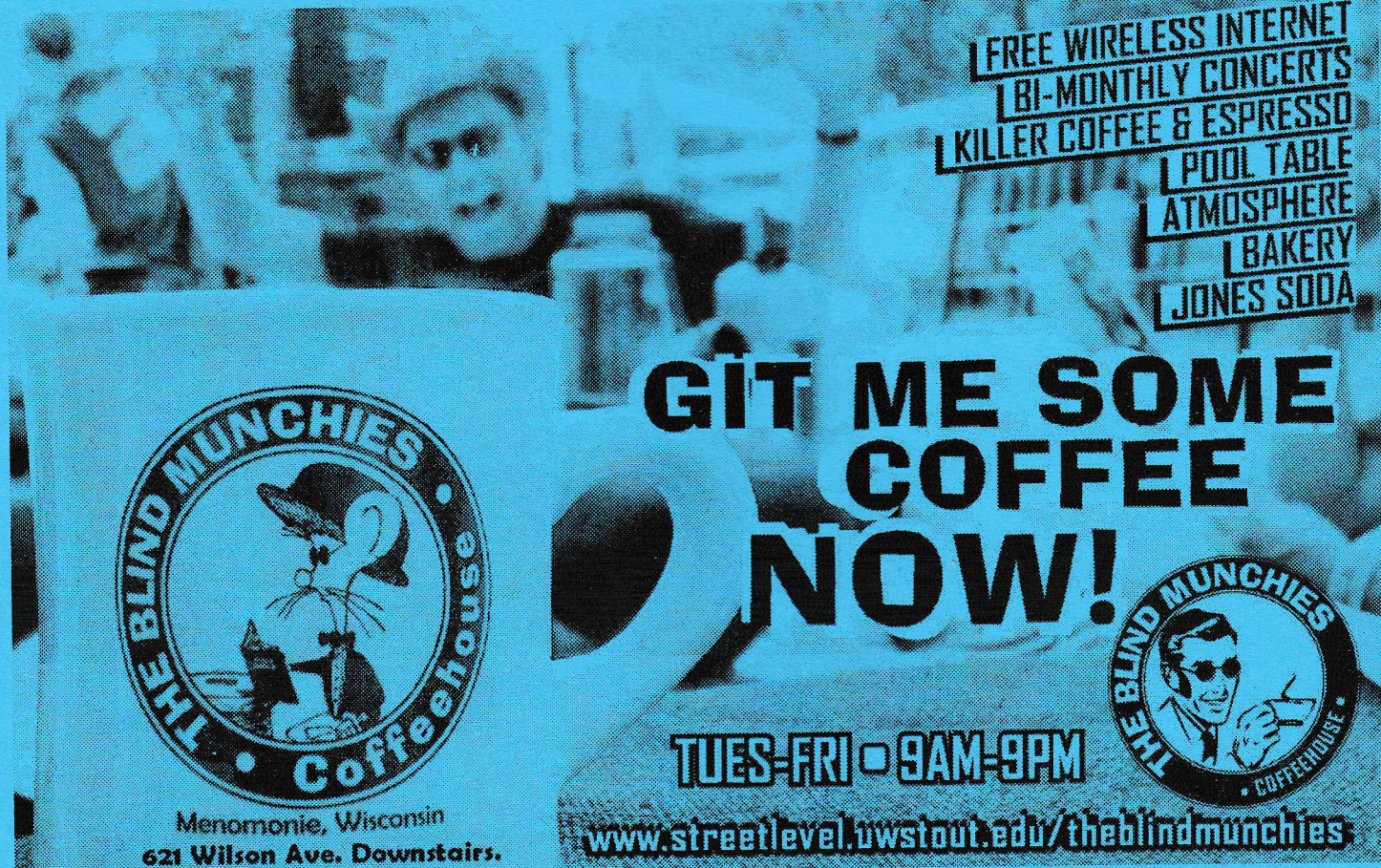


Jesus Fellowship of Believers
verse-by-verse bible teaching

Menomonie

SUNDAY SERVICE: 10:30am

621 Wilson Ave (1 block from BK Downtown)
www.jesufellowshipofbelievers.com



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GIT ME SOME COFFEE NOW!



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621 Wilson Ave. Downstairs.

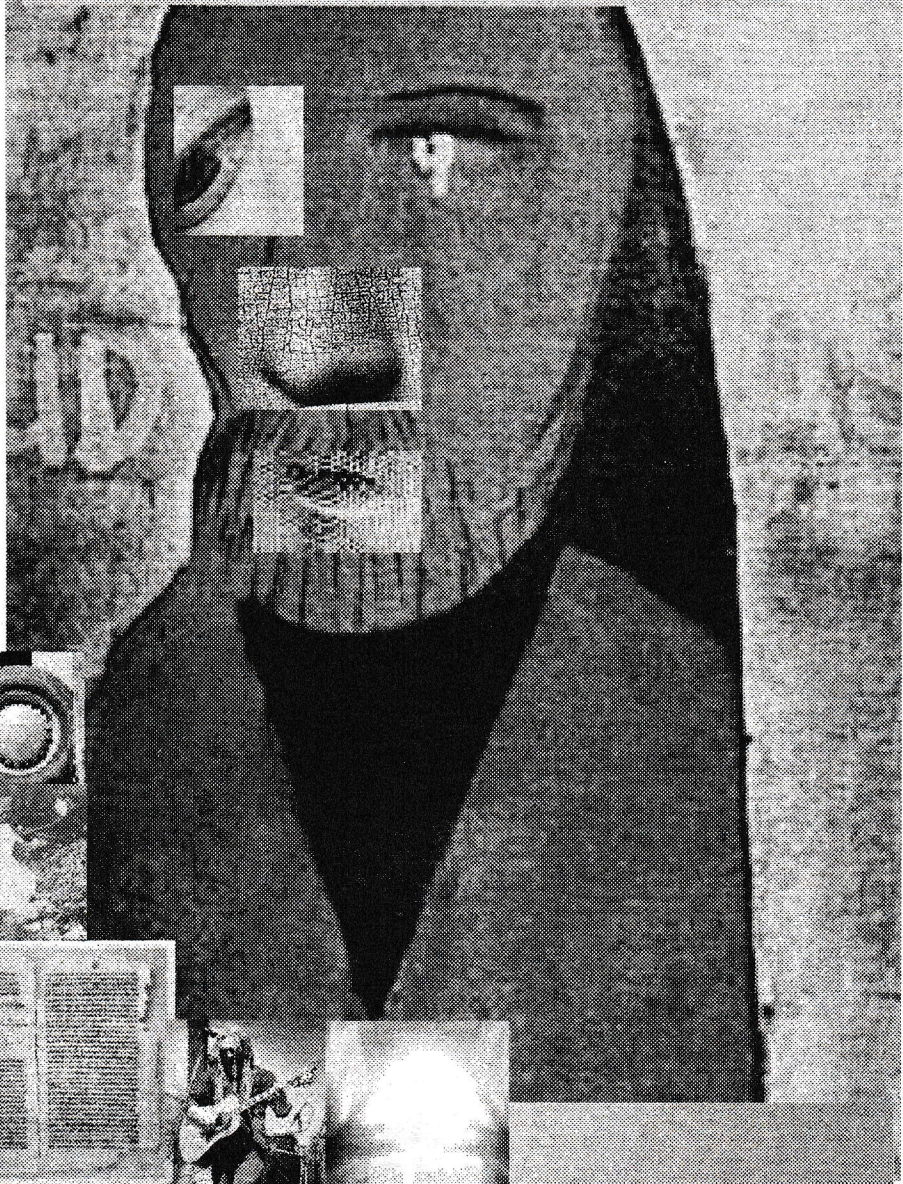


TUES-FRI • 9AM-9PM

www.streetlevel.uwstout.edu/theblindmunchies

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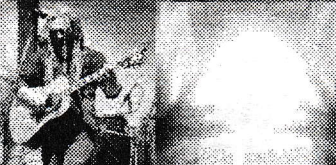
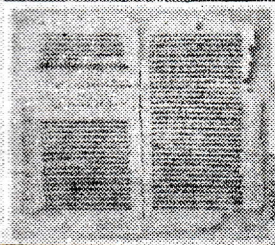
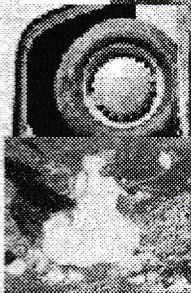
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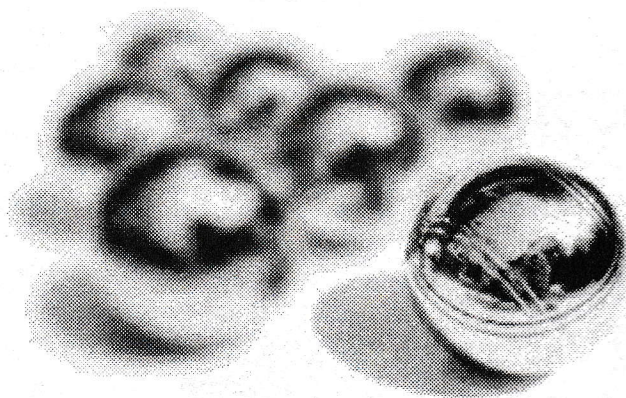
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Word on: the street
magazine

Want to know more? Check out our website -
www.streetlevel.uwstout.edu
Any comments or suggestions please write us

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INTOLERANCE

Helen Keller was once quoted as having stated: "*The highest result of education is tolerance.*" If such a statement is true, our education system is woefully failing. I remember a time not so long ago when colleges and universities around this nation were the bastions of freedom and tolerance, the centers of daring and even radical thought. Individual pursuits ruled, they were places that challenged the status quo and pushed the limits of free-thought. Sadly it seems today that many of our university systems, and certainly those who attend them, have ceased to lead and are simply blindly following the pied pipers of secular universalism; the harbingers of a faceless existence on homogenized, suburban cul-de-sacs.

It is quite trendy and oh-so-politically-correct these days to use the word "tolerance" with reverent awe. Please don't misunderstand, I do not write this to in any way condemn or denounce the practice of tolerance, but rather to shed the light of reality upon the oft hypocrisy in our wielding it. The truth of the matter is that mankind is an extremely poor choice with whom to leave the ideal of tolerance, for we lack understanding of its proper use. We strut about very proudly wearing it, without realizing that we have put it on backwards and the tags are showing. And of course, no one wants to be the one to point that out. Truthfully, we tend to drift far more toward the style of tolerance as that of Oklahoma City Bomber, Timothy McVeigh, than that of Martin Luther King or Gandhi, though individually we would be the last to admit it.

One of the greatest examples of such hypocrisy is how the secular

world deals with Christianity. Now I will be the first to acknowledge that a lot of "protestant religious groups" (please note the conspicuous absence of the word "Christian"), bring much persecution upon themselves for their own intolerance and very un-Christ-like behavior. But the world, it seems, is willing to practice tolerance in nearly every other segment of the population and in the entirety of the political scope until it comes across a *Christian*. While as a reader you may at this point catch an air of "poor me" attitude, even the most cynical of the population would have to acknowledge a level of truth here.

Let me cite an example: occasionally I find print media of various sorts that ridicule Christianity for being "anti-feminine." Christianity, altogether along with the alleged "victims," are equally attacked in what appears to be simply an ignorant tantrum. Everyone who is anywhere near the "scene of the crime" is equally to blame. Not only does this strike at the ideals of *free choice, independent thought, and American freedom*, even more it shows a wholesale ignorance on the subject of women in Christianity! At the time of Christ, women were deemed by the society in which they lived to be mere property. This essentially placed a value upon them that was just a bit higher than that of the family dog. It was *Jesus Christ* who came along and struck a blow at the heart of society by elevating women to equal status with men, but then again, Jesus was pretty good at shaking things up across the board on any of life's status quo. Such personal attacks seem to be dug from the depths of angry souls that are motivated not so much from the fact that they disagree with Christians, but that *Christians do not agree with them!* Ah, tolerance! One would think from the media that Christian women are being brainwashed and held with ropes against their will; never mind the fact that millions of Christian females live in joy, peace, agreement, and have experienced the greatest worth and purpose of their lives upon coming to Christ (the words of women, not mine).

What is amazing to me, is the fact that I have never read a "home-grown" flyer that stepped on the beliefs and practices of Islam when the subject of women and feminism arises. I am not making any kind of a

A true Christian may give you a Bible, tell you that God loves you, and attempt to point you to Jesus, but they won't trash your stuff or call you names.

subjective statement on this issue, but I believe that all parties on all sides of the Muslim religion would agree that there are very strict rules for women within the Muslim faith. Careful dress codes, public interactions, and societal roles are observed that are far more stringent than anything that a Christian woman under even the most conservative denominations would practice. *And yet*, no one is cranking out photocopied tracts so diligently misinformed as those that are commonly found strategically placed on Christian publication racks around UW Stout Campus. Why?

It seems that you can *be* anything you want these days, *do*

Continued on page 14... →

Events Calendar

Academic Calendar

Saturday, March 10-Sunday, March 18—Spring Break Week, No Classes

Tuesday, March 27—Advisement Day, No Classes

UW-Stout Sports

Saturday, January 27

Hockey at St. Norbert College at Resch Center, 5 p.m.

Men's Basketball vs. UW-Whitewater, 3 p.m.

Women's Basketball vs. UW-Whitewater, 5 p.m.

M&W Track & Field hosts UW-Stout Open, noon

Wednesday, January 31

Men's Basketball vs. UW-River Falls, 7 p.m.

Women's Basketball at UW-River Falls, 7 p.m.

Friday, February 2

Gymnastics at Gershon Invite in La Crosse, 6 p.m.

Hockey vs. St. Scholastica, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 3

Hockey at UW-Superior, 7 p.m.

Men's Basketball at UW-Oshkosh, 5 p.m.

Women's Basketball at UW-Oshkosh,

7 p.m.

M&W Track & Field host Warren Bowlus Open, noon

Monday, February 5

Gymnastics vs. Winona State and Hamline, 7 p.m.

Spiritual Fulfillment



The *Pursuit of Happiness* is a movie recently released, starring Will Smith as the main character. Smith's character basically poses the question, "What makes us happy?" There are many ways to go about this: friendships, relationships, power and education. At Stout, an obvious concern is education among those who attend. What I ask is that we, as members of this community, take a deep look into how we are going about this, especially how our spirituality is affecting us. Granted, I don't have all of the answers, but what I do wish is that we take a critical view of ourselves, a self-check. Is our spirituality fulfilling? Are we satisfied with our attempts in the spiritual realm? Are we just going through motions and seemingly getting nowhere? Are we even looking? If this is a struggle in your life, ask yourself, "Am I on the right path?" Like I said before, I don't presume to have all the answers, but hopefully, by looking at the lives of others on campus, we can see if what we are doing is working.

Over the course of an afternoon, I struck up some quick, impromptu interviews while walking around campus. This was not scientific in any way. I just walked up to people with these questions:

What do you believe in, spiritually speaking?
What do you think will happen when we die?
Where do we go when we die?
What do your beliefs provide you in the here and now?
Do you feel fulfilled by what you do? Why?

This sampling doesn't reflect the student body as a whole, and there are many religions left out. I found that three categories of people seemed to emerge from this sampling. The first group makes up the majority of people on campus. Generally, they all believe in some kind of higher power, however, some are not too concerned with their standing with this higher power. Something to note is that most people in this category haven't really put much thought into this. It's a little hard to describe this group since most people in this group believe whatever they want to believe. They all take life as it comes and everyone feels fulfilled by what it is they are doing, whether it be a career pursuit, a passion, or relationships. In a sense, we could say they have the "If it feels good, do it" mentality. For some believe in a type of reward system (ie. heaven and hell) when they die for their efforts as a human. My guess is that these people who believe in a reward system don't want to necessarily admit to the existence of a God since they want to be open to other possibilities. In general, we could label this group as the "Other" group.

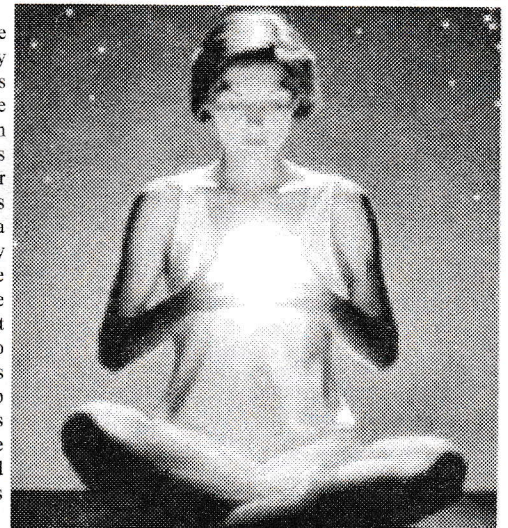
The next group is quite slim. These people believe in, well, nothing, spiritually speaking or they tend to think that these matters are unknowable. They have to live for the here and now because they don't really believe in an afterlife. This WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) life is lived out with earnest, for life could end at any moment. I do admire this aspect since many of us think we will get a second chance in the afterlife, but who is to say we do get a "second" chance? So, I do admire them for this. I did find it interesting that there were very few people who live this way. Not many people are willing to say that there is no point to this life and that everything up to this point is all chance. I decided to label this group with two labels, the first being nihilist, which is basically the philosophical idea that human life is without meaning and the second label would be the agnostics, which gets some of its

definition from the nihilists or the thinking that this existence is unknowable to us.

The third group, which lies between the aforementioned groups in population, believes in one God and a heaven and hell for the afterlife. Also, they believe that God attempted to reach man by sending his Son, Jesus, who was God in human form. They tend to feel that life has a meaning. Also, they feel that this provides peace during the course of life. However, these people are all at varying stages in their beliefs. Some believe that what they did in the past has made them right with God, such as being baptized, or having gone to church all their lives. They think this makes them "okay with God." Some, which I applaud, have admitted there is work that needs to be done in their relationship with God. Others feel that going to school is what God wants them to do. Regardless, most are not too distinguished from the "Other" category except with a "Christian" twist. Hence, we

Continued on page 10...

Are we just going through motions and seemingly getting nowhere? Are we even looking?



Wednesday, February 7

Men's Basketball at UW-Superior, 7 p.m.
 Women's Basketball vs. UW-Superior, 7 p.m.

Friday, February 9

Gymnastics vs. UW-La Crosse, 7 p.m.
 Hockey at UW-River Falls, 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 10

Hockey vs. UW-River Falls, 7:30 p.m.
 Men's Basketball at UW-Stevens Point, 3 p.m.
 Women's Basketball at UW-Stevens Point, 5 p.m.
 M&W Track & Field at Border Battle



Friday, February 16

Gymnastics vs. UW-Oshkosh, 7 p.m.
 M&W Track & Field host Blue Devil Open, 4 p.m.
 Hockey NCHA Playoffs, TBA

Saturday, February 17

Hockey NCHA Playoffs, TBA
 Men's Basketball vs. UW-La Crosse, 3 p.m.
 Women's Basketball vs. UW-La Crosse, 5 p.m.

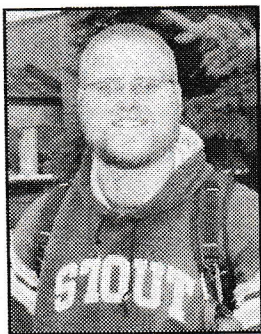
Monday, February 19

Women's Basketball WIAC Quarterfinals, TBA, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 20

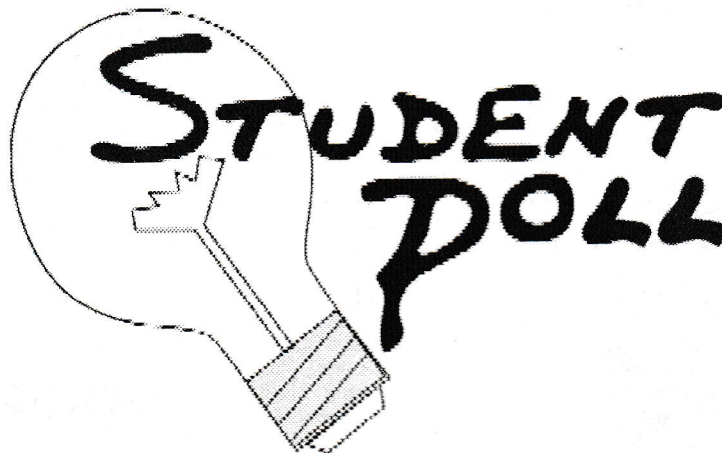
Men's Basketball WIAC Quarterfinals, TBA, 7 p.m.

Q: What are you passionate about?



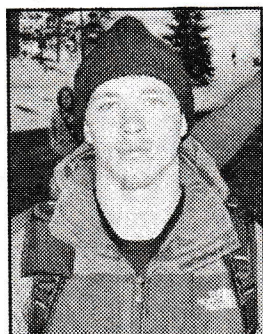
Jim Knoebel
5th year Senior

I am passionate about helping individuals with disabilities.



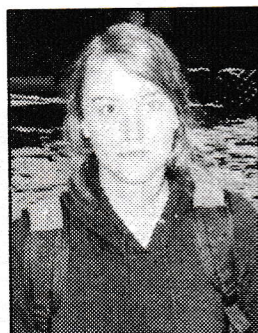
Bridget Murphy
Junior

Working hard to accomplish my goals and have a good life!



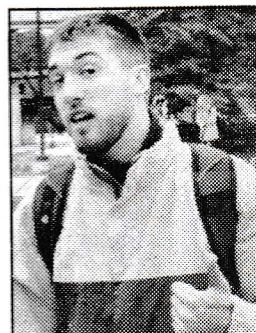
Braden Sowle
Junior

Being healthy and helping people become more healthy.



Kristin Leach
Sophomore

I am passionate about art. How humans interact through it and the creative side of people. I love how many different types of art there are and all the forms of expression.



Andrew Beckman
Sophomore

Music because it allows others to relate to me through their own perspective and state of mind. (And it's hella tight.)



Eleria Mercurio
Sophomore

Fashion and making the world beautiful through me and my sewing machine.

Wednesday, February 21
Women's Basketball WIAC Semi-Finals,
TBA, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 22
Men's Basketball WIAC Semi-Finals, TBA,
7 p.m.

Friday, February 23
Gymnastics at Hamline Invite, 7 p.m.
Women's Track & Field at St. Olaf Open,
4 p.m.

Saturday, February 24
Hockey NCHA Semi-Finals, TBA
Men's Basketball WIAC Championship,
TBA, 7 p.m.
Women's Basketball WIAC Championship,
TBA, 7 p.m.

Men's Track & Field at St. Olaf Open, noon.

Wednesday, February 28
Women's Basketball NCAA First Round,
TBA

Thursday, March 1
Men's Basketball NCAA First Round, TBA

Friday, March 2
Men's Basketball NCAA Regionals, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Regionals,
TBA
M&W Track & Field Indoor
Championships, Whitewater 10 a.m.

Saturday, March 3
Hockey NCHA Finals

Men's Basketball NCAA Regionals, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Regionals,
TBA
M&W Track & Field Indoor
Championships, Whitewater 10 a.m.

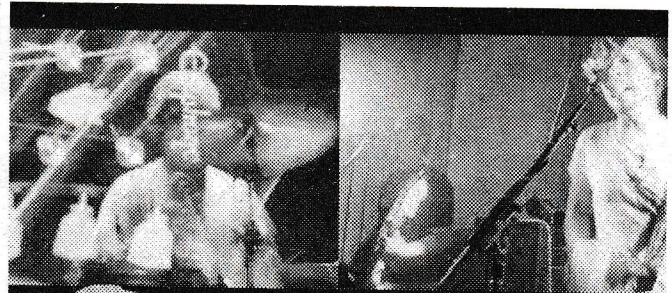
Wednesday, March 7
Hockey NCAA First Round, TBA

Thursday, March 8
Gymnastics WIAC/West Regional at
La Crosse, 6 p.m.

Friday, March 9
Men's Basketball NCAA Sectionals, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Sectionals,
TBA
M&W Track & Field at NCAA DIII Indoor
Championships

THIS IS LUKE!

Confessions!

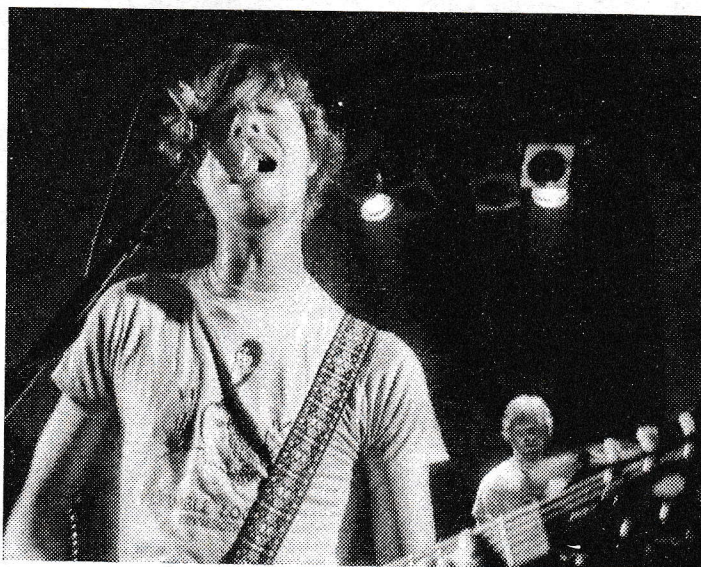


1. Who comes up with most of your lyrics, or is it a team effort?

Kory is really the writer in the group. Jay did some writing early on, but the majority of the writing done for us is by Kory. He writes in such a way that really communicates our message in a creative way.

2. How did you guys first meet?

We first met at an area youth ministry called "the door ministries" in Jamestown TN. Luke was one of the founders of the ministry and a teaching pastor at it, Jay came on staff to run the "venue" side of it, booking bands and running shows. Kory and Jay are regular worship leaders at the ministry. A local Christian music festival was coming up and they were searching for local bands to fill in some spots, so Kory and Jay decided to write a few songs for it. Needing someone to play drums they asked Luke, and he agreed. After that first show it was pretty evident they had something cool going and over the next six months they spent time writing and putting together a direction for what they wanted as a band.



3. If you could tell today's college-agers one thing, what would that be?

Dream...right now is your best time to figure out what God has for your life. Dream big. We have a big God who wants to bless your life and give you the desires of your heart. Stick with God and dream big.

4. What is your favorite restaurant?

Chipotle is our fuel that keeps us on the road!

5. How many days a week are slated for group practice?

When we are touring we normally have shows every night, so not a whole lot of practice then. When we are home we try to get together about twice a week, especially if we are writing. We generally step up our practice right before a tour as well.

6. Do you know your mother's birthday?

Haha... My mom's birthday is November 19th... I can't speak for the other guys. The truth is if Kory remembers his own birthday we are lucky!

7. Who is the worst driver?

I think all three of us agree that Luke is the worst driver. He defines a wreck as "only if you can no longer drive the vehicle".

Saturday, March 10

Hockey NCAA Second Round, TBA
Men's Basketball NCAA Sectionals, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Sectionals, TBA
M&W Track & Field at NCAA DIII Indoor Championships

Friday, March 16

Men's Basketball NCAA Final Four, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Finals, Springfield, Mass.

Saturday, March 17

Men's Basketball NCAA Final Four, TBA
Women's Basketball NCAA Finals, Springfield, Mass.

Friday, March 23

Gymnastics NCGA Championships at Whitewater, TBA

Saturday, March 24

Gymnastics NCGA Championship at Whitewater, TBA

Music/Entertainment

Outdoor Skating Rinks-open now through February 28, call Menomonie Recreation at 232-1664 for locations and hours

Jan 26, 6pm, Swiss Miss Candlelight/Ski Walk, Red Cedar State Trail/Stokke Trail, Menomonie-FREE

Jan 27, 7pm, Snowshoeing by Moonlight, Chippewa Moraine Ice Age Visitor Center

Feb 1, 8pm Open Mic Night, MSC Rec Center, presented by Blue Devil Productions

Feb 2, 8pm Quietdrive in concert, MSC Great Hall, presented by Blue Devil Productions

Feb 3, 5pm, Lake Wissota State Park Cross Country Ski, trail also available for hiking and snowshoeing, Lake Wissota State Park

Feb 8, 8pm Kill the Vultures in concert, MSC Rec Center, presented by Blue Devil Productions

Feb 8, 7pm, Dallas Brass to perform, Great Hall, Memorial Student Center, UW-Stout

“THE ALLURE OF THE LOST GOSPELS”

“There is no doubt that the presence of God on this earth in the form of a man named Jesus caused a great stir and much speculation.”



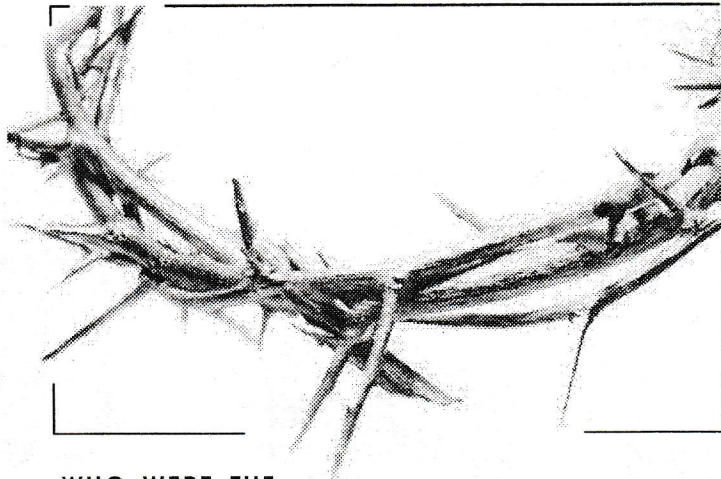


WHAT'S ALL THE EXCITEMENT ABOUT?

Long before David Koresh and the Branch Dividians in Waco, Texas, the Manson family, or Jim Jones in California, were the Gnostics. Unfortunately, the Gnostic religion didn't end suddenly with a mass suicide or an explosive showdown with the military. In fact, this system of thinking has experienced an explosion in popularity and acceptance through the recent release of Ron Howard's *The Davinci Code*, as well as the surge of much information concerning the "lost gospels" into the mainstream media. *Time* magazine recently sparked the interest of the nation by featuring articles in two different issues concerning the Gospel of Judas (Feb 27, 2006 and April 17, 2006). *National Geographic* also joined in on the excitement by running a two hour special about the same subject. Various other publications and television programs are churning the curiosity of Americans everywhere by reporting on various other "lost", or "Gnostic" gospels. Men and women of all religions are tuning in to see what kind of secret information they can gather to give them

insight into who Jesus really may have been, what His relationships were with His followers (particularly with Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot), and what exactly He came to do. Inaccuracies are regularly overlooked in order to receive this new information, and the same people who have forever scrutinized the Gospels in the Bible for their assumed contradictions are now embracing these marginal texts. Even though the authors of these "gospels" are uncertain and their doctrines are often filled with the same practices that the God of the Bible condemns, these texts are being given more credibility in a single moment than the Canon of Scripture has throughout the ages.

So why are these early texts that never made it into the Bible suddenly becoming so popular? Could it be that the human race is seeking greater evidence of God's existence, or are we only looking for something that can aptly justify our incessant rejection of Him? Let's take a closer look.



**WHO WERE THE Gnostics?
WHAT IS Gnosticism?**

Though many believe in the theory of evolution, it is clear that mankind is not changing very much at all. Throughout the centuries, there have always been those to whom education and higher learning was greatly revered. This was a problem for the leaders in the early church who preached the simple, easy-to-understand message of salvation by faith in Jesus, and it continues to be a problem in the 21st century for those who attempt to teach the same message. There was, and still are, those who believe they are more enlightened, more intelligent, more "in the know" than others, and; therefore, have secret information regarding the salvation of our souls. Gnosticism was one such belief system that quickly became a problem in the early church because, by nature, it excluded those in the society who were without the capacity to receive and understand the lofty religious concepts this group offered. The Gnostics (a term derived from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "in the know") believed that they had received enlightenment, or extra-biblical revelation that was rare and exclusive. They sought diligently for higher learning and greater religious insight to satiate their appetite for a belief system that was contrary to the "child-like faith" that Jesus taught. This would invariably propel them to a place of superiority and importance which they so greatly desired. Many of these Gnostics contributed their ideas and thoughts to their cause in the form of lengthy texts or "gospels", some of which have resurfaced as recently as 1945. These texts then serve as precious fodder for present-day Gnostics who hold the same belief system, but operate under a different title (or no title at all). These include such books as the gospel of Thomas, the gospel of Judas, the Apocalypse of Adam, the gospel of Mary, the Acts of Peter, and the secret book of James, among others.

THEY ONCE WERE LOST, BUT NOW ARE FOUND.

Many of the writings of the early Gnostics were lost for nearly 1,700 years until 1945 when a red earthenware jar was found in Nag Hammadi, a town in Upper Egypt. Within this jar were 13 papyrus books dating from 350 A.D., which was a collection of writings by these Gnostic believers. Let's take a closer look at three of these widely recognized Gnostic gospels, the first of which was one of the books found at Nag Hammadi: the infamous gospel of Thomas.

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

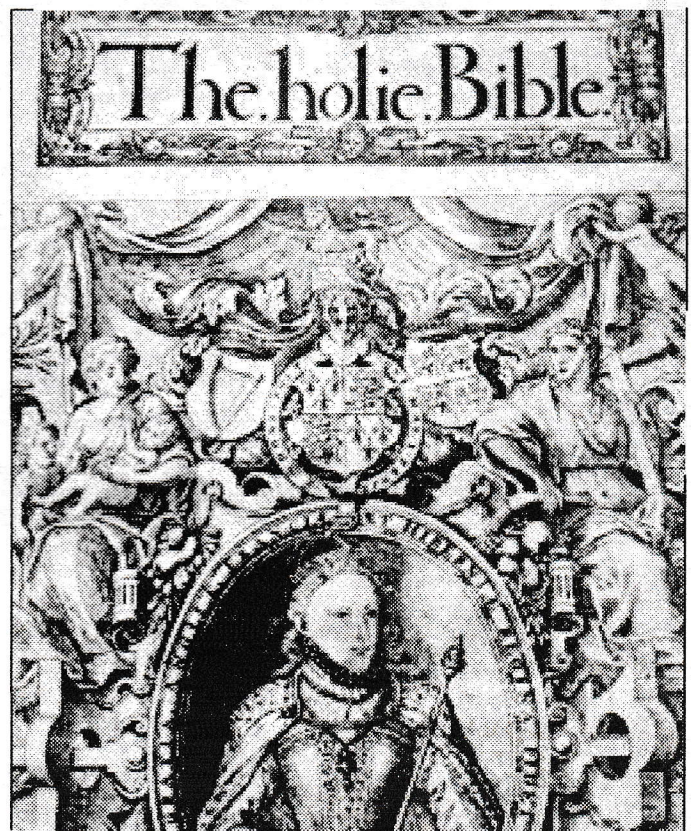
This particular text dates back to the middle or late 2nd century, and though it was written long after the Apostle Thomas's death, there are still many who insist that it was penned by the "doubting Thomas" read about in the Biblical Gospels. The writings themselves are nothing more than a collection of supposed sayings of Jesus Christ, many of which bear a striking resemblance to the recorded words of Christ found in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, except that these sayings are isolated and void of any kind of narrative. In reading this self proclaimed "gospel", one runs the risk of misunderstanding the true meaning of the text, due to the impossibility to place the sayings in any kind of context, as they are recorded in no particular order. This is just the idea behind true Gnostic thinking. Although it is not possible to attribute the Gospel of Thomas to any particular sect, it is clearly Gnostic in nature. As the preamble indicates, these are "secret sayings", and are intended to be esoteric in nature. The sayings are not intended to be

interpreted literally, as their New Testament parallels often are, but to be interpreted symbolically, as attested by the prologue and the first verse (the entire "gospel" can be read at various websites online). True to Gnostic form, the interpretation of these "secret sayings" of Jesus must be "discovered" before true life can be realized. While this gospel has many similarities to the trusted Gospels of the Bible, it lies in blatant contradiction to not only those same gospels in other areas, but also to the doctrine of Christ altogether. Nowhere in the New Testament can we find such a negative view of women as recorded in Thomas' purported gospel. In the Bible we are told that God does not see any difference between man and woman in reference to salvation, but according to this Gnostic text, "every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven" (verse 114). No early Christian writer considered this document to have any authority for believers or any place among the Scriptures, probably because its theology was questionable and it could not clearly be connected to Thomas.

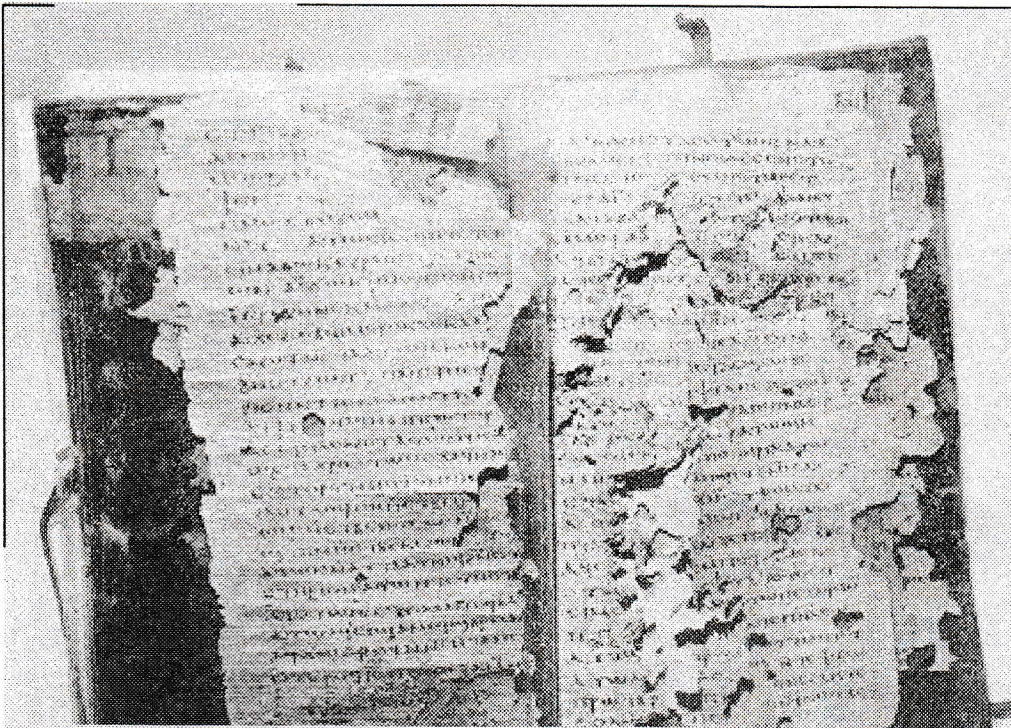
THE GOSPEL OF MARY

With an estimated date of origin ranging from 120-180 A.D., and much debate over the authorship of the text, the gospel of Mary Magdalene hasn't acquired any more credibility than the gospel of Thomas over the last 2,000 years. No complete copy of the gospel of Mary is known. In fact, over half of it is lost. What remains, however, is a narrative that depicts conversation between Mary and the risen Savior, as well as a heated discussion between herself and the other disciples.

The Gospel of Mary presents Taoist and Buddhist concepts recorded in 1st century Christian semantics. Jesus is quoted as saying that "All natures, all formed things, all creatures exist in and with one another and will again be resolved into their own roots, because the nature of matter is dissolved into the roots of its nature alone." This is very similar to the Taoist concept of Oneness as expressed in Chapter 34 of Tao Teh Ching. Speaking of the Tao, it says, "All things derive their life from it [Tao] all things return to it, and it contains them." Other portions of this gospel



The Gnostics (a term derived from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "in the know") believed that they had received enlightenment, or extra-biblical revelation that was rare and exclusive.



Where the Bible tells us that we must simply "believe in our heart, and confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord", Mary tells us that Salvation is achieved by discovering within oneself the true spiritual nature of humanity.

contain striking similarities to the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Again the gospel of Mary, Gnostic throughout, is requiring the reader to reach a higher level of understanding in order to attain true spiritual rebirth. Where the Biblical Gospels tell us that we must simply "believe in Him" so that we "will not perish, but receive everlasting life" (John 3:16), Mary tells us that salvation is achieved by discovering within oneself the true spiritual nature of humanity. Where the Jesus of the Bible tells us that "I came...to call sinners [those who sin] to repentance" (Mark 2:17), the false Jesus in Mary's supposed gospel tells us that "sin as such does not exist..." Although there is dialogue between familiar characters in both the Scriptures and this gospel, that may be the only similarity to be found between Mary's gospel and those of the Bible.

THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS

In recent months, the Gospel of Judas has gained much attention due to its resurfacing as a result of a long series of dramatic events that ensued after its initial discovery in the 1970s. The media capitalized on the excitement and published articles and televised documentaries concerning this great discovery. The authorship is questionable and remains anonymous, though due to the character of Judas being central throughout the text, he is given the recognition by default.

Written between 130 and 170 A.D., this gospel offers a new idea of the relationship Judas had with Jesus. Concerning the new discovery, Bart Ehrman, distinguished professor and author of New Testament interpretation and history of ancient Christianity, says the gospel of Judas "portrays Judas quite differently from anything we previously knew. Here he is not the evil, corrupt, devil-inspired follower of Jesus who betrayed his master; he is instead Jesus' closest intimate and friend, the one who understood Jesus better than anyone else, who turned Jesus over to the authorities because Jesus wanted him to do so." Any amateur Bible reader will see the clear contradictions between this gospel and the others in Scripture which tell us that Judas was possessed by Satan himself, and was eventually driven to suicide over the matter.

WHAT NOW?

These recent findings at Nag Hammadi and elsewhere have given new life to the age-old system of thinking called "Gnosticism", the same system of

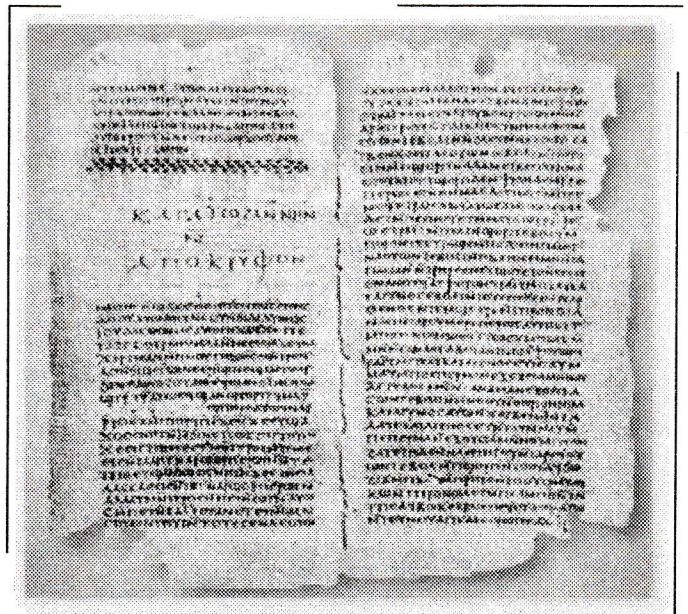
thinking that was viewed by the early church leaders and even the Apostles themselves as unorthodox. Whereas the Gnostics of the 2nd century were frequently denounced as heretics, these modern "seekers" are given more credence than ever with an argument that claims these "gospels" were left out of the Bible because of a congregation of brutes who forcefully decided to include only the sacred texts that would serve their own purposes. Failing to understand the fact that these "brutes" have, throughout history, been slaughtered for adhering to the orthodox doctrine that Christ taught,

now have a large portion of so v that no longer considers God's Word to be taken literally, and instead are forever seeking "secret knowledge" that even the Gnostics of old couldn't fully attain.

Further study on this matter reveals that these lost gospels and other Gnostic writings condone some of the most bizarre pagan practices, some of them believing that orgies, homosexuality, and the consumption of an aborted fetus crushed by a mortar and pestle are all practices that are reserved only for the most enlightened of individuals. While it is true that there is an occasional parallel between the Gnostic records and the Scriptural accounts, one must

demonstrate caution when choosing the very things into which we invest our trust. The general public seems to be concerned about the "apparent contradictions" between varying passages of the existing Bible, while many of those same people are trying to embrace these secondary gospels which most certainly contradict.

It would suffice to say that these Gnostic gospels are altogether different than, and opposed to the gospels that have been included in the Canon of Scripture. The word "canon" literally means "a standard" and includes all 66 books of the Old and New Testaments (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John included). These books were not haphazardly (continued on page 10) chosen from a pile of writings by a few hypocritical men with ulterior motives. These books were chosen for inclusion in the Holy Bible based on several criteria: First, it must have been authored by an Apostle or



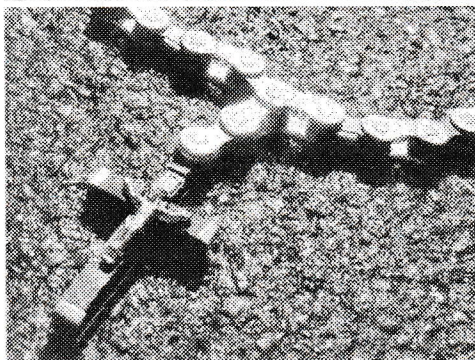
someone closely related to an Apostle (the Gospel of Mark, for example, was penned by John Mark, but dictated by the Apostle Peter, a close companion, while the book of Luke was written by Luke himself). Secondly, the information must have matched apostolic doctrine (which the Gnostic gospels clearly do not). The third requirement was that the early churches were both reading and using it. If it could not be easily understood and applied to one's life with noticeable results, it was rejected (no "higher level of understanding" was needed as is required by the Gnostics). Lastly, the text needed to be used and accepted by the church in succeeding generations. It is important to note, however, that the church leaders did not force certain books on the church. No one man or group of men made a certain book canonical. God determined the canon; man discovered it through long and steady usage with faith. The canon finally emerged through the combined conviction of church leaders and members working in harmony and guided by the Holy Spirit.

To accept both these Scriptural Gospels in conjunction with the Gnostic

Gospels as true and literal cannot be done. If one chooses to accept the Bible as true and literal, it would be dangerous to allow these Gnostic ideals to replace Biblical doctrines. Likewise, if one chooses to believe that these Gnostic writings are true and literal, it may be equally dangerous to one's spiritual journey to allow Biblical doctrine to supersede those beliefs. If, however, one chooses to take bits and pieces from all areas of thought, never considering any to be necessarily true, and rejecting the idea of taking them literally, there is only a quagmire of uncertainty to be had. Perhaps there is indeed a "hidden path" of "true enlightenment" to be found by reading these and other Gnostic texts. Perhaps the one so lucky to have found this secret knowledge will write a book of their own. Perhaps it will be the next "Lost Gospel".

texts. Perhaps the one so lucky to have found this secret knowledge will write a book of their own. Perhaps it will be the next "Lost Gospel".

Continued from page 10...



can call this group the Christians. Personally, I fall into this category. I can tell you what has worked for me and that is following Jesus. I live a fulfilled life, a life worth living for. I don't attempt to follow Jesus by my actions and rituals; I try ever so hard to live by a relationship.

Relationships take work, you know? Because of this relationship, I know where I am going when I die. I have a purpose in life, a meaning to all of this, which is to give my God glory in all I do.

What have we just seen? There are many ways to find spiritual fulfillment. Millions of people die everyday with the diploma of accomplishing this life, fulfilled or not. We only have one chance at this life, so I hope that what we are doing is working. If it isn't, what are we going to do about it? I offer a suggestion: be diligent about searching. Don't take life as it comes, but be on the ball and seriously search. Think about what it is you are doing currently. What is the ultimate end of what you are doing? If you don't like that outcome, then maybe it's time to do a little looking around for a different path. Jesus is a viable option; He has affected me so much. If you want to know if Jesus is the answer you have been searching for, ask Him. Just take some quiet time and see if he will make Himself known to you. All I ask, in anything that you choose, is that you make sure that the path you are on is going to get you where you want. Be sure.

Tired of guilt inside?



Street Level's College Bible Study

We can help you figure out what the HECK the Bible means

* MONDAY nights at 7PM *

The Northwoods Room
UW-Stout Student Center

www.streetlevel.uwstout.edu

Feb 9, 7pm, This is Luke in concert, Blind Munchies Coffeehouse, Menomonie, no cover!

Feb 9, 7pm, Golden Dragon Acrobats, State Theatre, Eau Claire

Feb 15, 8pm The Chambermaids in concert, MSC Rec Center, presented by Blue Devil Productions

Feb 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 7:30pm (Feb 18 and 25, 2pm), Footloose, presented by the Menomonie Theater Guild, Mabel Tainter Theater, Menomonie

Feb 17, 7:30pm, The Spencers: Theatre of Illusion, State Theatre, Eau Claire

Feb 21-22, 7:30pm, Guys on Ice, State Theatre, Eau Claire

Feb 22, 8pm Comedian Mary Mack, MSC Rec Center

Feb 23, 7 pm B-Flick Nite at the Blind Munchies Coffeehouse. Free

Mar 8, 8pm Open Mic Night, MSC Rec Center, presented by Blue Devil Productions

Mar 2, 7pm, Minnesota Timberwolves vs. Utah Jazz and Building 429 in concert following the game at Club 3 Degrees, Minneapolis, MN

Mar 23, 7pm, The Gizmo Guys to perform, Mabel Tainter Theater, Menomonie

Mar 30, 7pm, Tom Feldmann & the Get-Rites in concert, Blind Munchies Coffeehouse, Menomonie, no cover!

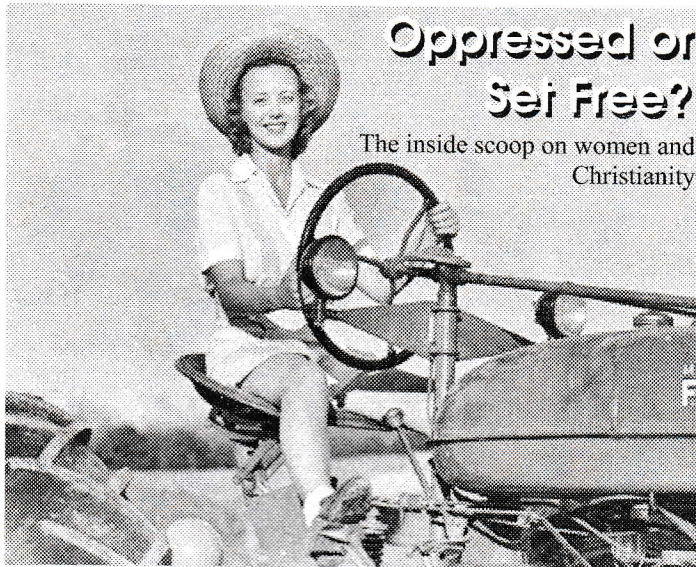
Mar 31, 7pm, Minne-Brass to perform, Mabel Tainter Theater, Menomonie

Stout Adventures

March 9-March 18, Spring Break 2007: Kayaking Lake Powell

March 30-April 1, Backpacking the Superior Hiking Trail, MN

March 23, 24 and 25, American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Certification Class, 6-10pm and March 24, 25, 9am-3pm



The subject of the religious oppression of women is not a new one. In fact, throughout history, religions over the globe have attempted, and some have succeeded, to subvert its women. The question becomes, who *is* the real culprit? Is it God? Is it the Bible? How does true Christianity regard its women?

Women have been given a unique and important place in humanity. Up until the creation of Adam, the first man, God had said that everything He made was "good." It is when Adam is found lacking that God said for the first time something was not good: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." A woman was a necessary and honored part of the world. Only with the addition of the woman could God's creation be perfect and complete. If the Bible, or God Himself, were attempting to demean or belittle women, there would be little or no mention of cases such as the great women who played significant roles in history. But the Bible is full of such details. The books of Ruth and Esther are books entirely composed of the stories of women who accomplished greatness. Ruth eventually found her

When people cry out against Christianity regarding its women, the argument of submission is typically made. This is a commonly misunderstood issue when it comes to the Bible's directions on marriage.

place named, against man's tradition of that day, in the genealogical line of Jesus Christ. God saw to that. Esther was a common woman who became queen and was a great heroine of her people. The book of Judges records a woman named Deborah who acted as Judge and became a deliverer of her people during a time when women normally did not have any status in the world. Only the God of the Bible notes these women as great parts of history. This is hardly a book that oppresses the feminine gender.

In early times, women commonly had no status, no rights. The arrival of Jesus changed that. If God were to enter humanity, He could choose any form, and to come in any way. He could arrive as a powerful ruler, or as a soldier, but Jesus Christ chose to honor women for all time by coming through Mary. He made His way into this world the same way each of us does, through woman. The angel who came to Mary to tell her what was to happen said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" She was blessed. This was not a message to Joseph who would take part in raising Jesus as an earthly parent. No, woman was blessed and favored here. No other religion, no other faith has given women such a status.

So why the outcry against Christianity on the issue of women? People throughout the ages have ignored God and have established for themselves a system of living and of society that, by its very nature, stomps on those whom it considers weaker than itself. This is where "religion" has taken over, which comes from the baser instinct of man to dominate and control. Religion is

manmade in that it is a set of rules based on the standard of whoever is creating them. These rules and prohibitions are often believed to make one right with God through their adherence. Such rules are always an unattainable frustration to the common person; they serve to alienate, rather than to bring together. The Bible states that, "*These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.*"

Interestingly, Jesus Christ came with the express purpose of setting people free from this sort of oppression. He came with a message that recognized the human inability to attain right standing with God, and offered Himself as a stand-in by which we can have relationship with God. Jesus spent time with women whom society deemed worthless. In the Bible's book of John, He spoke with a woman at a well who had to draw her water at the hottest time of day because she was an outcast of society. Most people would not have given her the time of day. Jesus did. She left that conversation uplifted and told everyone that this man, who knew everything she had done, had spoken life-giving, freeing words to her. This is hardly an act of someone who demeaned women.

When people cry out against Christianity regarding its women, the argument of submission is typically made. This is a commonly misunderstood issue when it comes to the Bible's directions on marriage. It is rarely misunderstood in other areas where submission exists. In a workplace, there are many roles played by many people. Someone is the ultimate boss of all employees. Some are managers over smaller groups of people, others are employees with their own job to do. No one argues that this is an appropriate system for order. Imagine the chaos if everyone were the boss at your job. More time would be wasted in conflict than anything else. In the like, God is the ultimate authority over all. In a marriage situation (and only in marriage), a man is given the position of manager over his own wife. The wife is a person, with ideas, and thoughts, and feelings of her own. In order for things to run smoothly, for there to be peace in the home, there must be someone who makes the final decision. This is not because the wife is worth less, but because there must be order. God has placed the husband in that position. He also must answer to God for those decisions. God's instructions to man are to "*love your wives and never treat them harshly*", similarly, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*" and "*So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*" This is how God requires a husband to love his wife. God's intentions for women were never for her to endure domestic violence or cruelty, or for her opinions and ideas to be disregarded. These are things MAN apart from God has done. Submission is for order and consistency, not because women are incapable of making sound decisions.

Men and women have equality in Jesus Christ only. "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all ONE in Christ Jesus.*" Yes, religious systems oppress women. Religious systems are man-made. God's system brings about equality. Indeed we all need a freedom from religion, not just women. Religion has a horrible history of cruelty, murder, violence, and hatred. Christ, however, has a history of bringing freedom and love unknown to those who do not know Him. Relationship with this "equalizer" is what sets man and woman truly free. "*Therefore if the Son (Jesus) makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*"

So it is not God, the Bible, or true religion that subverts women, rather it is those who reject Christ who continue to oppress and dominate them who are the real culprits.

a woman

**Italic quotes are taken from the Bible.*



Campus Crusade for Christ

Thursdays

7:34 pm @ MSC



and sets an appropriate tone for the following songs. It goes a little long, but finishes up nicely and holds together the best of all the high-energy songs on the disc. For a more mellow sound, track four, "The Other Side of May", delivers a beautiful contrast to Mike's more fast paced tunes. It is a unique blend of rich vocals, splashed with smart bits of lead guitar that are never overdone. The contrast of driving and soothing rhythms remains throughout the entire disc, coupled with lyrics that are insightful and anything but superficial. This is the type of CD that remains interesting without being overpowering or cliché; the type you could easily listen to while embarking on a long project or road trip.

It gets better. Michael Blair is local enough to hit our area with some regularity. He recently played two great live shows in Menomonie, and is looking to come back to the area this year. Better yet? You can check out 5 tracks off of the CD at Mike's Myspace site to get the real flavor of the music. Go to www.myspace.com/michaelblairproject for an artist profile, downloadable songs, tour dates, merchandise and CD's.

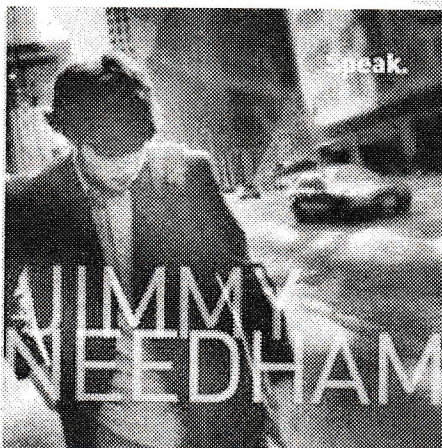
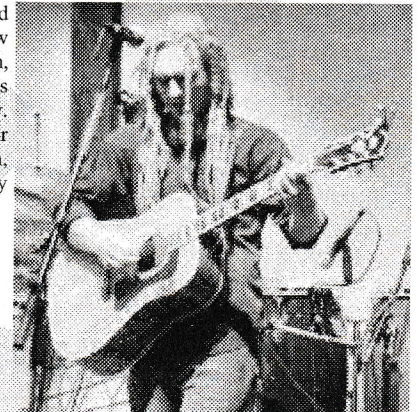
Michael Blair Project "Peace to You"

Aggressive Folk Rock

Have you been in the mood lately for some "politically charged, non-religious church music?" This is how Michigan-based artist Michael Blair describes the flavorful and aggressive folk rock styling's in his new self-titled release. This 13 track treat will immediately capture your attention with smooth melodies, driving guitar rhythms, well-placed harmonies and insightful lyrics. It's reminiscent of late 90's rockers such as *The Counting Crows*, *Barenaked Ladies*, *Blues Traveller*, and *Dave Matthews Band*, while maintaining a modern roots-rock sound.

The first track, "Peace to You", has a pulse-like energy that drives it

Some may need two or three listens to allow this disc to grow on them, but the beauty of Michael's work is in its subtlety. Partner up with this CD for your next study session, creative endeavor, or sunny day drive.



Jimmy Needham "Speak"

Acoustic/Pop

Jimmy Needham, a 20 year old college student, recently joined Inpop Records and re-released his indie first album but this time under professional record label to hopefully get the ball rolling on spreading the good word. He gets *Speak* going right from the start with a few new tracks and the same honest lyrics and eclectic style of music. If you are looking for the top tracks, go for *Fence Riders* or *Lost at Sea*, they

you .mp3 downloaders, its on iTunes as well.

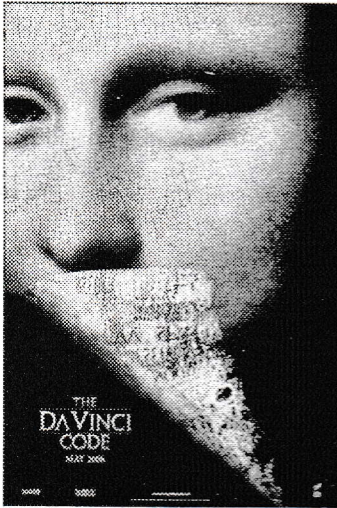
Myspace.com/jimmyneedham

both have a good beat and interesting lyrics somewhat reminiscent of Jason Mraz but a little more acoustic. Some of the other tracks can get to be a bit slow and even a little the same, but this is where being a one-man band has its downfalls. Don't let that deter you, listening to this album front to back will definitely provide a look into this mans personal findings about Christ and life. If you like solo artists, Jimmy Needham is definitely one to look into. Even if you don't prefer solo artists, some of his tracks still fit well in your library of songs. Check out Amazon.com or, for





Movie Reviews



Da Vinci Code

Action/Adventure
Tom Hanks, Audrey Tatou, Paul Bettany, Ian McKellan
Rated PG-13 for disturbing images, violence, some nudity, thematic material, brief drug references and sexual content.

With all the hype surrounding *The Da Vinci Code*, you would have had to be vacationing in Antarctica for the past two years to not have heard about the movie. *The Da Vinci Code* movie is last summer's controversial response to author Dan Brown's best selling novel by the same name. Both the movie and the book seek to explain "the biggest con of man" and the "biggest cover-up in human history". That's a

pretty lofty exposé, and one not taken lightly by numerous groups of people for various reasons. Some religious groups reacted with shock and anger that hypothetical information would be presented as being plausible. Others were just plain annoyed at the proposition that Jesus had a child with Mary Magdalene. Some touted the book and following film as great bits of research and hypothesis. Fans were won in high schools and among college students, who uphold Brown's ideas as a good basis for their own belief system. Whatever the case, controversy means big bucks, and big bucks make big movies. Here's the scoop on this one.

The film boasts an award winning cast, with Tom Hanks playing Harvard symbologist, Robert Langdon, Audrey Tatou as the pert police detective Sophie Neveu, Paul Bettany as an albino monk, and Ian McKellan as a slightly crazy conspiracy theorist. Langdon and Neveu are brought together by a series of bizarre circumstances as they find themselves an oddly matched pair on an even more peculiar quest. They learn as the movie goes on that they are actually on a quest for the fabled Holy

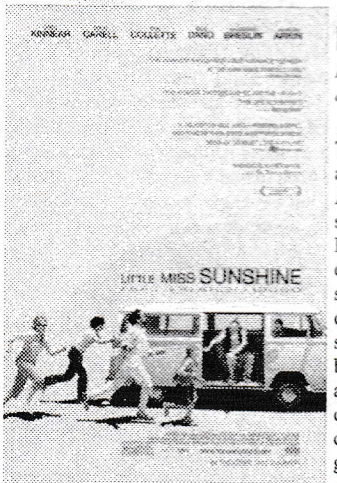


Grail. They become increasingly entrenched in the secrets, mythological lore and historical cover-ups that surround the grail's identity, while dodging a score of shady characters out to stop them in their tracks. This is where the plot becomes almost comedic. The long car chases and matter-of-fact dialogue become almost silly and rehearsed. This element could have been greatly improved, considering the fact that both the author and director would like the viewers to think this could have actually happened.

You would be hard-pressed to find another movie that so poorly lives up to the "action/adventure" title. Tom Hanks delivers a wooden and distant performance as he ambles indifferently from one code-cracking scene to the next. His costar, Tatou, only slightly one-ups him by bringing an element of humanity to her role, but still manages somehow to remain unattached to what *should* be the most thrilling trip of her life. There is an uncomfortable tension between the two which serves as a reminder throughout the long entirety of the film that, most often, books are difficult to translate into movies. Cinematography saves this film. The grandiose angles that the camera takes make the viewer feel as if they are watching the entire thing happen from a bird's eye view, which translates well with the fact that we're supposed to think we're in on the secret.

How to Have Fun Watching the Da Vinci Code

This movie's not boring, but it's not really fun either. Here's one way to have fun while watching it: look for the movie's filming errors. The "Movie Mistakes" website lists errors found in the film so you can do some case cracking of your own. The website is <http://www.moviemistakes.com/film5458>.



Little Miss Sunshine

Rated R for language, some sex, and drug content.

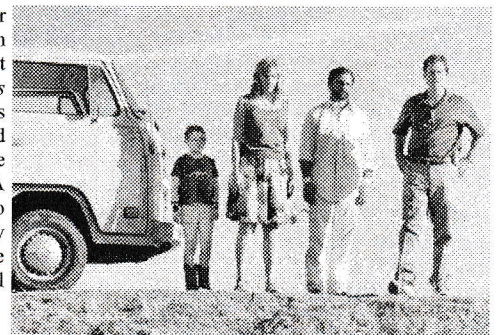
Throwing certain stereotypes aside and creating ones all its own, *Little Miss Sunshine* raised the bar for summertime comedy this past season. Expecting to see the cheesy action and comedic banter so prevalent in summer movies, I was stunned and delighted beyond belief. The movie is simply well done for what it is: a black-comedy road trip movie aimed at making you laugh until soda comes out your nose, but at the same time challenging your views on family life, girlhood, depression and overachievement. In the words of my

husband, "If you don't laugh at this movie, then you can't laugh at your own mediocrity."

The cast is assembled masterfully, each character complementing the others. Olive, the young be-speckled, anti-heroine is played to perfection by Abigail Breslin (*Raising Helen*). Her round little face telling you that she CAN win the beauty pageant is so convincing that you root for her through the whole

film. Over-achieving dad (Greg Kinnear) is only going to allow his precious daughter to enter a contest she KNOWS she's going to WIN. Nurturing, but high-strung and stressed out mom (Toni Collette) seems like she'll be happy if the family can get through the road trip without any violent deaths or jail sentences. Add into the mix a depressed uncle (Steve Carell), a silent, brooding teenaged brother (Paul Dano), and a heroin-addicted, free-spirited grandfather played by Alan Arkin, and you have the ingredients for a well-rounded wacky and charming ride.

You may ask, "Why is it necessary for the whole family to get into a VW bus to take a little girl to a beauty pageant?" The twisted truth is that it actually all makes sense when you see the events unfold. If you enjoyed the 1996 road trip movie *Flirting with Disaster* (Ben Stiller and Tea Leoni), then you'll be in for a treat with *Little Miss Sunshine*. I was particularly captivated and amused by the uproarious ending. A word to the wise: do not consume any beverages during the movie, for they will fly out your nose!



anything you like, and *believe* anything you desire *as long as it's not Christianity*. I am told by Christian friends about their being ridiculed at 12-step meetings for giving their "higher power" the name Jesus, but the cry for tolerance would resound for the guy who wanted to exalt a turnip. Campus Christians in Menomonie have been persecuted verbally, had their property attacked physically, just because of how they independently choose to live their lives! Everyone else gets to make "lifestyle choices," *and no one dares to make the faux pas to claim any choice as error*, but Christians are rarely given that same latitude.

Jesus Christ once stated that He was the "rock of offense." He knew what it was to be attacked in these ways. While Christians, such as I, can express question as to the motivations of such baffling and mysterious acts as these, the truth is that the *very fact that believers are so inexplicably attacked* is a confirming aspect of our faith. I could sit in a restaurant and speak to a friend across the table about nearly any subject that can be thought of, but let the name "Jesus" slide across my lips and the room goes silent and everyone looks shocked as if I just dropped my pants.

The ire of so many find unity in their joint hatred. It is not enough that *they* have the freedom to *not* believe in Christ, but more, they don't want *you* to have that freedom to seek the facts and ultimately to seek the *truth*! So they steal Christian publications and throw them in the garbage, break and destroy magazine racks, damage personal property of believers, and ignorantly condemn the faithful for exercising their freedom to live as they please. If it were a gay publication, the public would gather en masse with a corporate condemnation of such vandalism, but because it's a *Christian* effort, then tolerance goes out the window in exchange for intolerance and self-righteous elitism. If it were simply a matter of honest and open debate of facts and

figures, we would happily listen to all opinions and "life-choices" (we have made MANY offers to various groups to join an open discussion, but no takers). A true Christian may give you a Bible, tell you that God loves you, and attempt to point you to Jesus, but they won't trash your stuff or call you names.

*Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one's own beliefs.
Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others.*

—John F. Kennedy

Freedom? I'm all for it.

Pastor Tim Dodson
Jesus Fellowship of Believers
Menomonie, WI



Extreme Filipino Makeover

Four Street Level Members Spend a Summer in the Philippines

This summer 4 members from Street Level Ministry at UW-Stout lived at the top of a mountain in the Philippines, myself included. When I joined Street Level several years ago I never had a clue that one day they would be taking me to the other side of the world. I have always liked to travel, but this was far beyond anything that I had ever expected.

Street Level Ministry believes strongly in helping those with a desire for Spiritual growth, not only here in Menomonie, but also in locations throughout India and the Philippines. Our mission this summer was to teach the Bible to the children in the surrounding schools as well as offering an adult discipleship class for the believers in the community.

The road to the top of the mountain was quite rough, studded with rocks and ruts which made for slow driving, but this gave us plenty of time to pay closer attention to our surroundings. Nearing the end of our upward trek was a family who always caught our attention. Through the windows of their house we could always see several children who were faithful to greet us every time we went by.

Our pastor had mentioned his desire to assist this family in some way, but we weren't sure exactly how to help. With the aid of the local Filipino pastor,

we made contact with the mother of the children to see if we could be of assistance. She invited us into her home, where we told her God had blessed us so much that we would like to share that blessing with her family. We learned that her husband was at work carrying rocks where he made less than two American dollars a day (100 pesos), on which he was to feed his entire family. 100 pesos would not buy much more than plain rice for breakfast, lunch, and supper since the couple already had seven children and an eighth on the way. Their home was very small, built with scrap wood and garbage. It was void of privacy and the leaking roof was held together by wrapped vines in the corner. Also, a large heap of wet ashes consumed much of the precious space inside the home.

With the permission of this family, we decided to rebuild as much of their home as we could afford with a 200 dollar budget from Street Level Ministry's home church here in Menomonie. For the next five weeks we proceeded to tear apart their home day-by-day, wall-by-wall. We only had time to work one day per week, so we had to be careful to complete each section of the project before the sun went down. The local pastor, along with a few others in the community helped with the reconstruction and taught us how to build with Filipino tools and materials. We finished the house just before leaving to come back home to America. As we left we stopped to say goodbye to the family we had helped, where we met the newest member of their family. Only a few days old, their new daughter was born inside their new home. We said our goodbyes without translation, but we knew that they would miss us, and I believe they knew we'd miss them. It was an experience that I'll never forget.

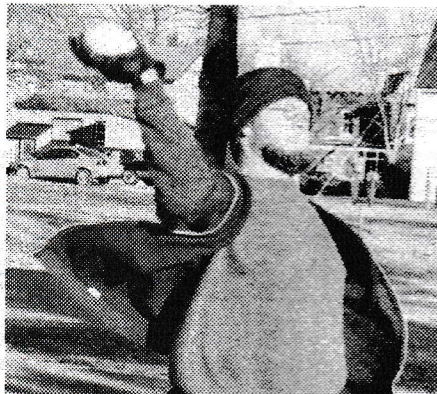
My experience with this organization has taken me to places both physically and spiritually that I never would have gone alone.

When I walked into Street Level's Bible study several years ago, I never expected for my experience to be much more than a study of the Bible, but I was wrong. My experience with this organization has taken me to places both physically and spiritually that I never would have gone alone. I am grateful that Street Level believes strongly in helping those with a desire for Spiritual growth, not only in locations throughout India and the Philippines, but also right here at home, for people like me in Menomonie, Wisconsin.



FUN IN THE SNOW

So the great, old man winter is upon us. During these days, going outside can be a chore. The days grow long with cabin fever. The drudgery of walking to class makes one



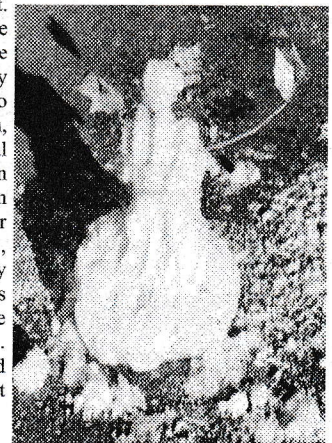
"Don't fight against winter, play with winter. This way, summer might get jealous and come sooner."

wonder of summer fun in flip flops. You might think to yourself, "When is the summer getting here? Where did the summer go? Am I going on spring break to someplace warm? What is summer? What is warm? Am I warm?" If you find yourself questioning whether the summer king will fight the old man anytime soon, there is hope. I am here to say that it doesn't have to be this way. Here is a novel idea: have fun with winter. Don't fight against winter, play with winter. This way, summer might get jealous and come sooner. Think about it. So if you are wondering how to have fun with winter, we at *Word on the Street* decided to compile a list for those looking for a solution. We call it the Fun with Snow list. So go ahead, make summer jealous. I dare you.

1. Build a snowman.
2. Make a snow angel.
3. Fill a squirt bottle with lemonade, run outside and write your name, your friend's name, or something funny. The more lemonade, the better. Be artistic.
4. Have a snowball fight.
5. Naughty-fill your roommate's sheets with snow. Nice-fill a plastic bag with snow and then place it in your roommate's sheets. For more effect, try to get the snow as close to the foot of the bed as possible.

6. Collect snowflakes on your tongue.
7. Pack your neighbor's refrigerator with snow. I prefer to use wet snow. The goal here is to have a wall of ice. That way when they are looking for a cold one, they get it, literally. Make sure you can close the door.
8. Go window shopping down Main Street on a snowy evening. You can even pretend to be in a 50's Christmas movie.
9. Interrogate a snowman. Ask him where his leader is and shout, "That's a lie!" Proceed to mutilate him until he "talks." Use big words like: information, "Hercules Project", infiltrate, and assassinate.
10. Build an Igloo, find a pair of mukluks, and various dead animal skins. Go ahead and put on the clothing you just obtained and hang around the Igloo shouting, "The Ice Age is upon us!"
11. Go skiing.
12. Find as much ketchup and red food coloring as you can. Any red beverage will do. Place it outside on a patch of snow, preferably in a high traffic area, and proceed to rope it off with "Police - Do Not Cross" tape. Warning: this could cause a problem with the local authorities.
13. Try your hand at ice skating.
14. When walking with your friends, you could eat the "yellow" snow you created with the lemonade. Another warning: you could loose friends this way. This could be a good thing.
15. Another friendly thing is putting snow down your friend's jacket. Enjoy and watch them squirm (and possibly retaliate.)
16. Sit inside with a warm cup of hot chocolate and gaze out the window on a snowy day.

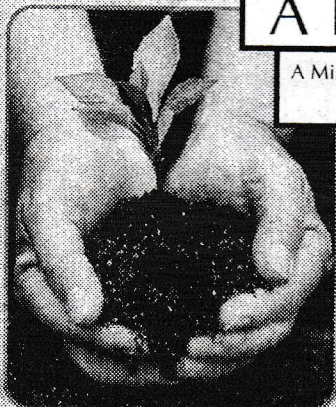
If we do these things, summer will be here before we know it. Some people might not like how you enjoy winter so much, though, so be careful when engaging in any winter activity, especially when others might be affected. Thank you and good luck out there.



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The "Perfect" Evangelist

by Michael
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For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. —1 Corinthians 5:14f

I was born into the fourth generation of Christians on both sides of my family. We belong to a small, evangelical denomination, so I was the last to expect that a "life-long" evangelical Christian could struggle with homosexuality. But, as early as the age of 12, the struggle was there. Instead of providing hope for freedom and the tools to confront these mysterious struggles that surprised me more than anyone else, my upbringing and evangelical culture taught me to do everything I could to deny the existence of this problem—or at least keep it to myself.

As the one experiencing these unhealthy attractions, I felt terribly confused about where these feelings came from. After all, I was never sexually abused and I came from the "perfect" evangelical family! In my secrecy, I lived in fear of never being married, what people would think about me never dating, and worst of all, what if they found out?! My plan was to never tell anyone, because I saw that as the most impossibly difficult and devastating option.

The first time I tasted the emotional gravity of my situation was in eighth grade on the youth group mission trip to Mexico. During a powerful night of worship to music and prayer, I broke down weeping because of what I held inside. Everyone asked what they could pray about for me or what was wrong, and I just covered it up with a lie to the effect of, "I'm just really feeling God tonight." It was that night that I vowed I would never talk about this nor let my emotions come to the surface. It was just too dangerous.

It was dangerous because among my church peers, "to be gay" was perhaps the worst thing of all. That is why homosexuality was never discussed in the church, other than to establish that it was a grave sin. Even my good Christian older brother talked about how gays should be shot. After all, to be attracted to men was a "choice"....It had to be since the Bible condemns it. And God would not condemn what is not our choice.

From sixth grade on, when these feelings began, I kept a stiff upper lip to appear masculine enough and feign interest in girls. Meanwhile I was plagued by a constant fear of the origin of this huge problem (that no one knew about), and I feared it had already preemptively "ruined" my life by predestining me to a wifeless, childless future. But my deepest pain was the fear that I was a fake, a fraud, a two-faced deceiver, beyond the grace of God and bound for hell—despite the fact that I had accepted Christ as my Savior at the age of four.

By all visible accounts, I was the "perfect evangelical," seen by youth group leaders as an inspiration and even a mentor to others. But inside I was weak, scared, sick, and being eaten alive by this internal war.

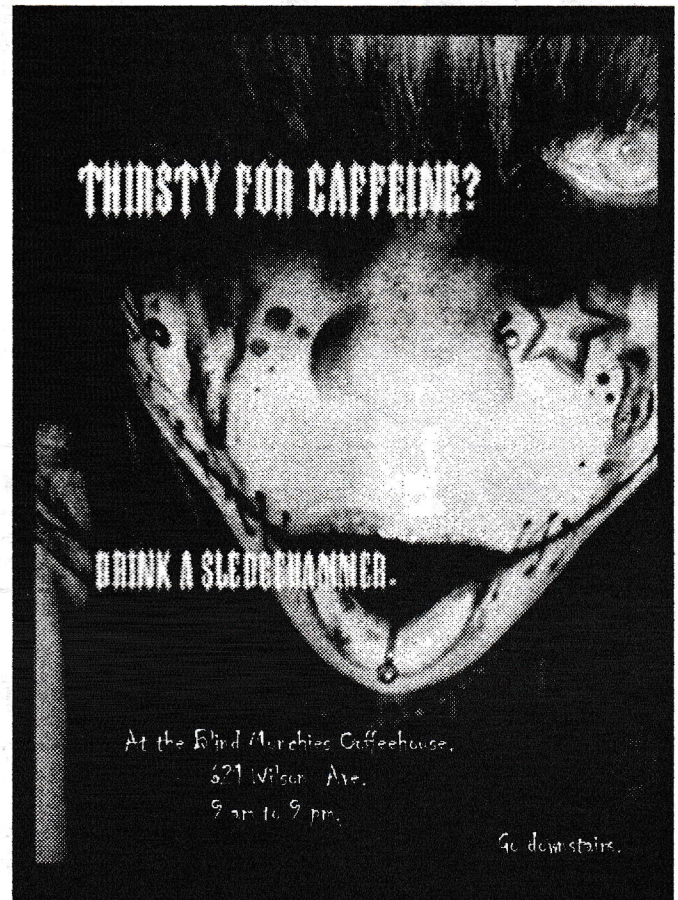
In my senior year of high school I read *The Scarlet Letter*. I remember identifying with those characters so much, feeling my own shame and secrecy burn within me. I attended and worked at every youth conference and camp I could. I tried time and time again to privately repent and walk away from these terrible attractions, but they only got worse. The silence was killing me.

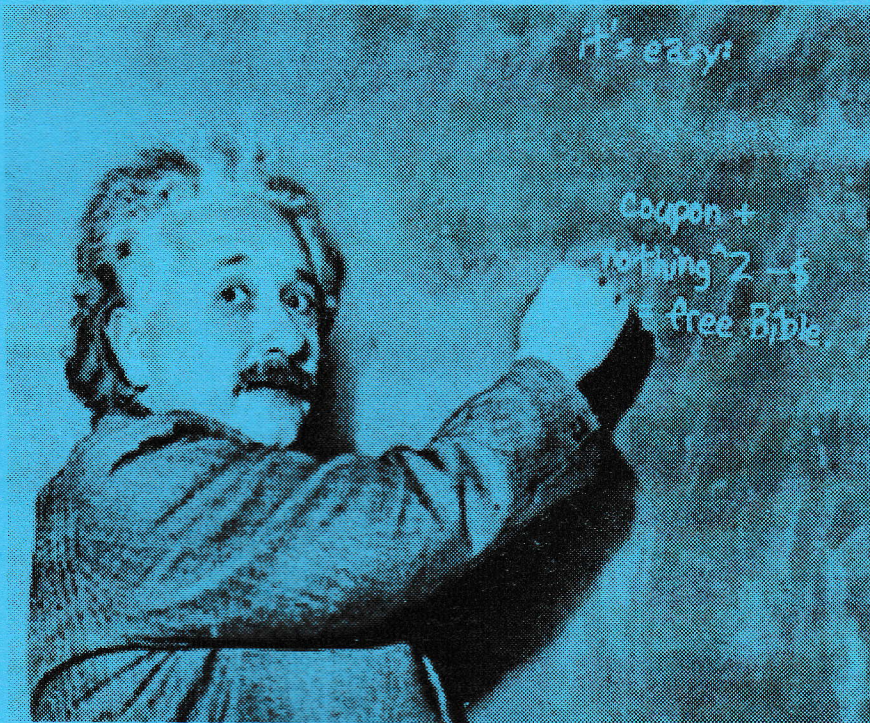
After seven years of losing the battle, I was desperate and nearing the end of my rope spiritually and emotionally. I found the grace I needed when I finally confessed my struggle to my best friend in the church and several Campus Crusade staff during my sophomore year of college. These staff members encouraged me to go to an annual Campus Crusade conference where I was first introduced to Outpost Ministries. Outpost's Executive Director Dan Puumala was a guest speaker holding a session on "Homosexuality and the Church." It brought me so much hope to see that I wasn't alone, and that there are those in the church reaching out to those of us fighting with this.

More recently, I have been blessed by the openness, love and accountability in one-to-one sessions with Outpost's Youth and College Age Minister, Nate Oylo and a larger, regular support group of Christians seeking to know and love God more, who also happen to struggle with the same things I do. Our weekly meetings and occasional weekend retreats are helping me to reverse the vow of silencing my feelings and keeping my secret which has held me captive since junior high school. Slowly the veil is being peeled back and I am experiencing the love of Christ through community at Outpost. This has given me much hope that the evangelical community is changing, at least in pockets like Outpost.

The fear of condemnation funneling my silence was a trick of Satan all along. But that demonic illusion was aided by the way much of evangelical society approaches this issue (or doesn't approach it at all). I am so grateful that the loving hands of Jesus are stirring among evangelicals through organizations such as Outpost Ministries, to reach out to those in bondage to same-sex attractions.

OUTPOST NEWS, August 2006.
Outpost Ministries, PO Box 22429 Robbinsdale, MN 55422, 763-592-4700 or Outpostinfo@OutpostMinistries.org.





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Little Miss Sunshine pics:
yahoo.com

The Perfect Evangelist pic:
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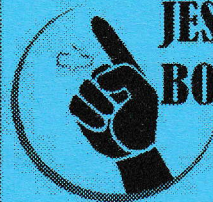


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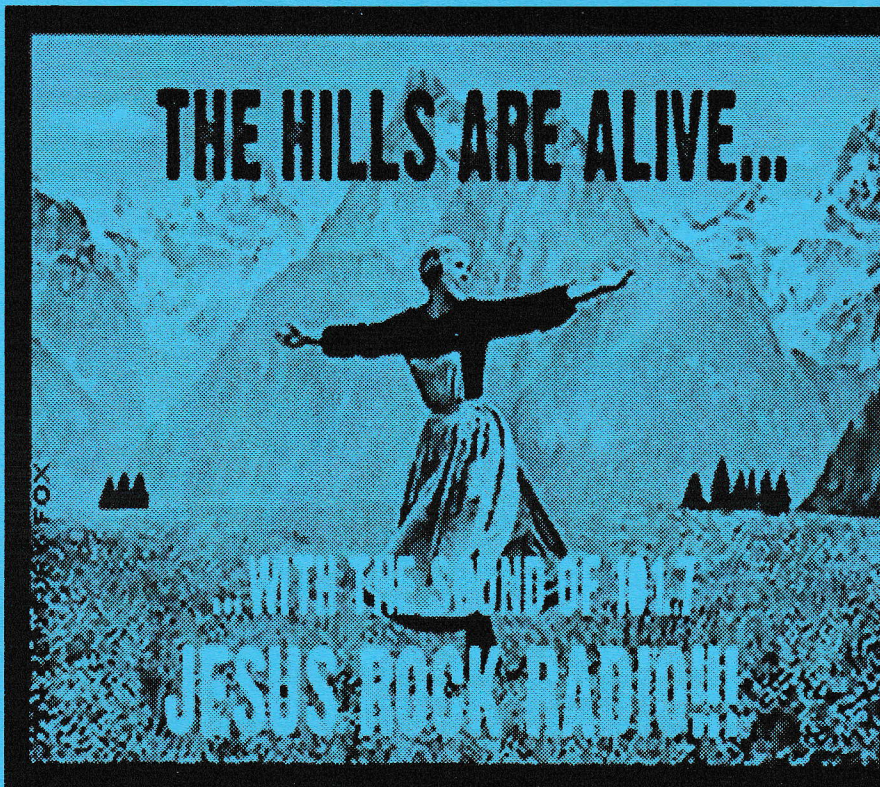
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Sunday

Jesus Rock Radio on Sunday

Morning

7-10:30 am

Live Sunday Service

10:30 - Noon

Live D.J.

6 - 8 pm

Monday

Wildcard (Bible Study)

8 am

Rock the Flock (Bible Study)

Noon

Wildcard (Bible Study)

5 pm

DJ show-Jeremy Kadinger-

Segues 11 pm

Tuesday

Live DJ show-Jeremy Jones-

Jones'n in the Morning 7-10 am

Wildcard (Bible Study)

8 am

Rock the Flock

Noon

Get a Life (Bible Study)

5 pm

Wednesday

Wildcard (Bible Study)

8 am

Rock the Flock

Noon

Wildcard (Bible Study)

5 pm

Live Underground Bible Study

7 pm

DJ show-Jeremy Kadinger-

Segues 12 am

Thursday

Wildcard (Bible Study)

8 am

Rock the Flock

Noon

Get a Life (Bible Study)

5 pm

Friday

Wildcard (Bible Study)

8 am

Rock the Flock

Noon

Wildcard (Bible Study)

5 pm

DJ show-Jeremy Kadinger-

Segues 10 pm-12 am

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