

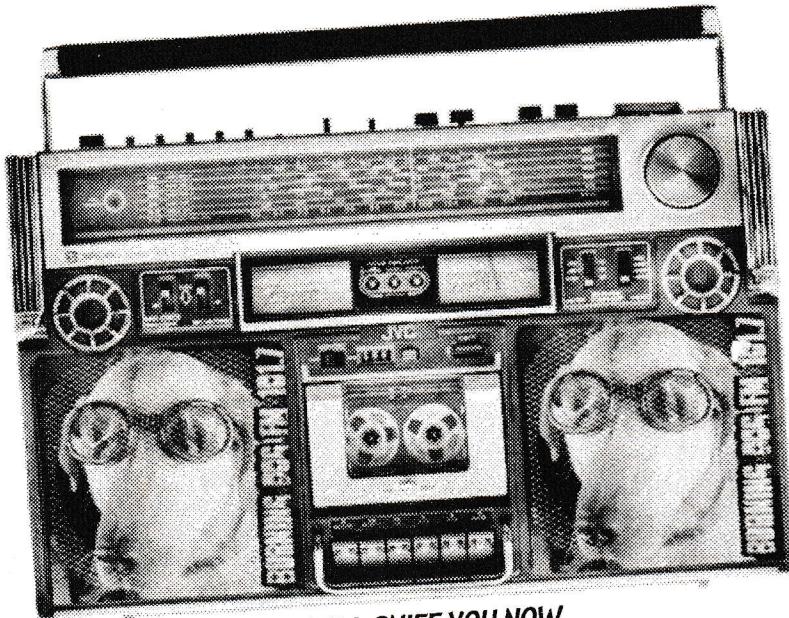
ISSUE 42

# How to Lose 12 God in 10 Days

# 15 How to Find God

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:





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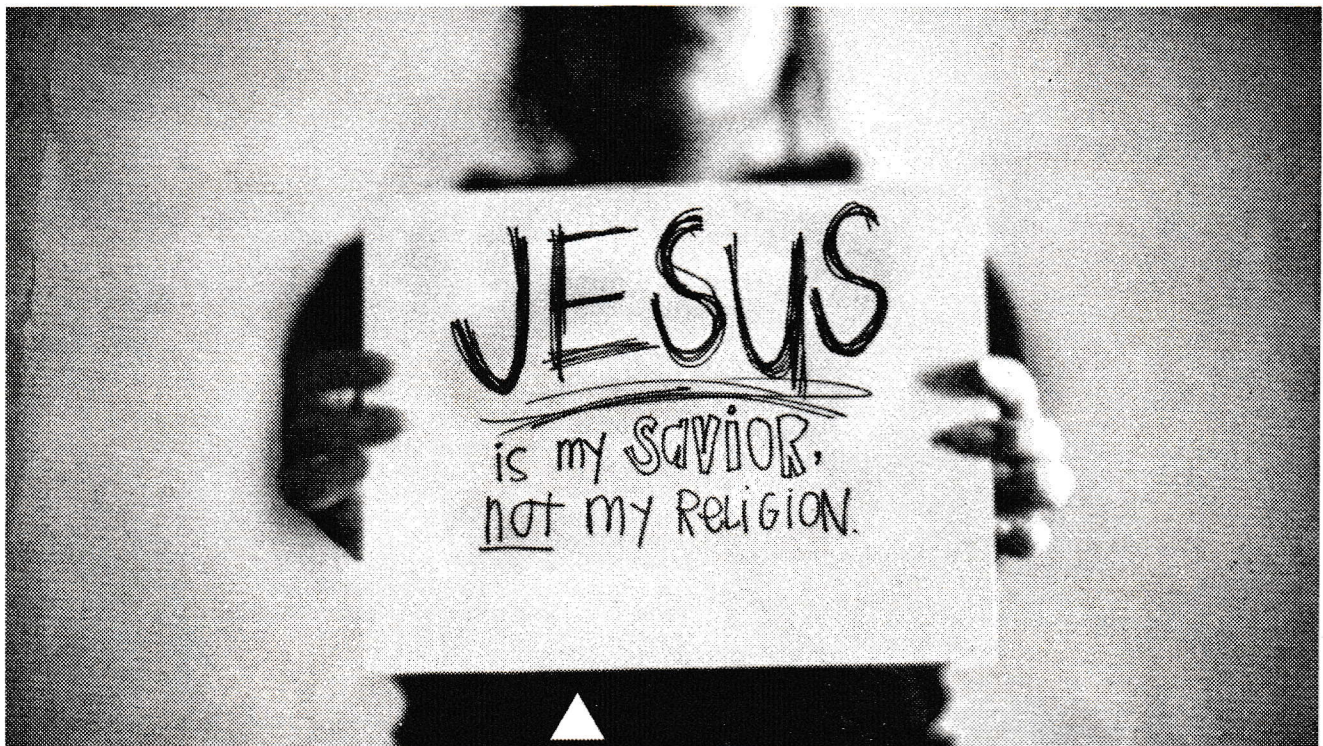
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# How to Lose 12 God in 10 Days

# 15 How to Find God

INSIDE *this*  
**ISSUE**

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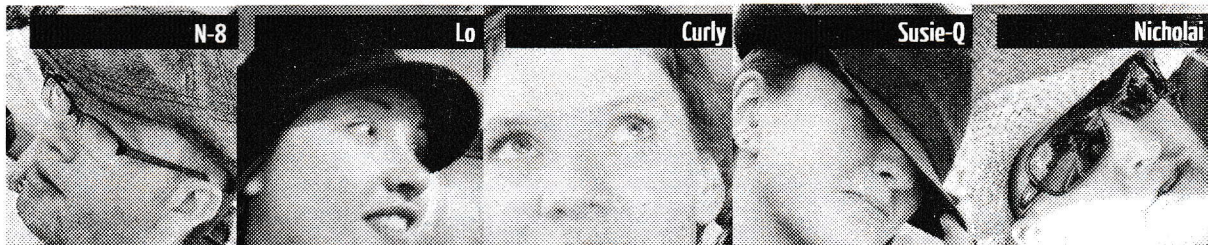
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**Meet our  
Crack writing  
Staff:**



**Word** on the street  
magazine

A quarterly publication of Street Level Ministries, a UW-Stout Student Organization

Want to know more?  
Check out our website: [www.wotsmagazine.weebly.com](http://www.wotsmagazine.weebly.com)  
Any comments or suggestions, please write us:

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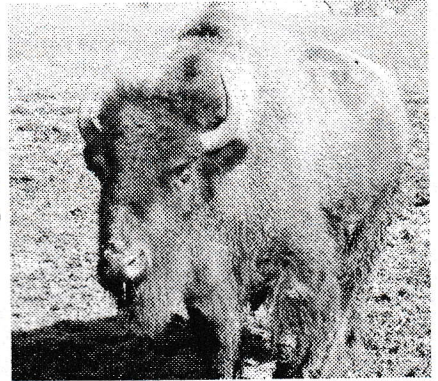


After going through the grueling process of judging our likes and dislikes as experts on how to kick it, we came up with a list of the best places to kick it in Menomonie, whatever your style.

### ***Kickin' it All Around***

#### **Wakanda Park**

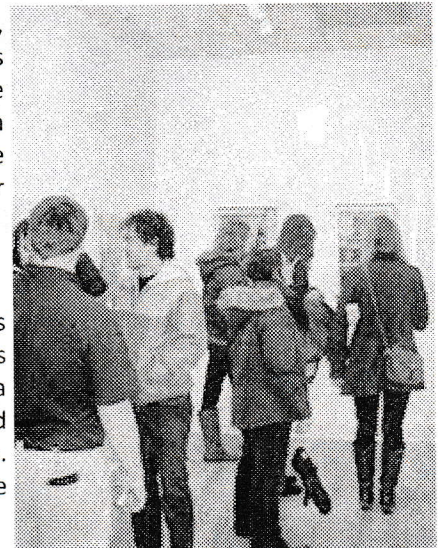
Wakanda Park hosts a plethora of kickin' it opportunities. Topping the list is an 18-hole disc golf course which weaves through trees and open fields. The park also features ball diamonds, soccer fields, and a basketball hoop. For those who appreciate God's creation, Wakanda offers an animal park complete with bison, deer, elk, turtles, and other little critters. The animal park leads to a nature trail that winds through tall grasses and woods. The ever-popular water park is mom-tested and kid approved; it's a great clean place to cool off in the summer sun. Turn east off of Broadway by Taco John's and you will end up right in the middle of the park.



### ***Kickin' it Artsy***

#### **Gallery 111**

Slip on some dark-rimmed glasses and get ready to kick it artsy. Gallery 111, located at 111 Main Street, is a new art gallery started by a handful of Stout students and Menomonie locals. It features a variety of art from both students and locals. The gallery hosts a multitude of art showings and music events. This eclectic venue offers a real chance for artists to get their name out and express themselves. Most of the pieces are drawings, paintings, and sculptures. For more information, check out their website at [www.gallery111menomonie.com](http://www.gallery111menomonie.com)



#### **Mabel Tainter**

Built in 1889 in honor of the late Mabel Tainter, the Mabel Tainter Theatre serves today as a performing arts theater, public reading room, and cultural center. It was built out of local sandstone, which came from the Dunnville rock quarry located just a few miles north of town. The Mabel Tainter is best known for its theatrical plays and shows. These range from local artists to well-known national and international acts. You can also find many genres of shows ranging from comedic to romantic. For more information, visit [www.mabeltainter.com](http://www.mabeltainter.com)

### ***Kickin' it Old School***

#### **Russell J. Rassbach Heritage Museum**

For the person intrigued by history, the Russell J. Rassbach Heritage Museum is the place to expand your knowledge about Menomonie and Dunn County. Some of the exhibits include Victorian rooms and history about Dunn County during the Civil War. Admission is \$5.00, but the tour will not leave you disappointed. This museum can be found in the far north corner of Menomonie.

To dig deeper, go to: [www.discover-net.net/~dchs/sitehm.html](http://www.discover-net.net/~dchs/sitehm.html)

#### **Caddie Woodlawn**

A major attraction for people who still read books, Caddie Woodlawn Historical Park is a simple house on 160 acres of prime Dunn County land. The house is special because it is the home base for author Carol Brink, who wrote the famous children's book, *Caddie Woodlawn*. It is a good place to catch up on some fun facts or just have a picnic. Caddie Woodlawn is located nine miles south of Menomonie off Hwy 25 and is open during daylight hours.

Their website is [www.discover-net.net/~dchs/sitecw.html](http://www.discover-net.net/~dchs/sitecw.html)



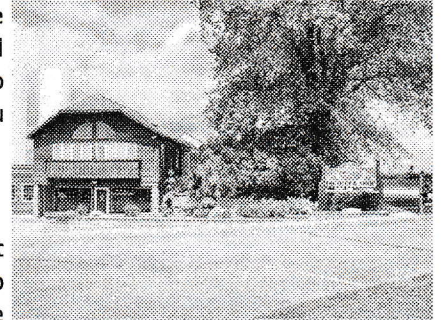
## ***Kickin' it Scennie***

### **Fishing**

For those of you who love fishing, Menomonie has a number of easily accessible fishin' holes. You can go down to the boat landing underneath the Hwy 29 bridge and set up shop for catching walleye or bass. You can also travel a little further south to Riverside Park where you might hit an ideal sucker fishing hot spot. In addition, you can fish the beaches at almost any of the parks in town.

### **Cady Cheese**

Cady Cheese is a well-known favorite amongst cheese lovers. By traveling west out of Menomonie on Hwy 29 and north on Hwy 128, you will be led to a quaint shop that's about as Wisconsin as it gets. There you can find the area's freshest cheese curds and cheese blocks. There is nothing like a squeaky cheese curd to satisfy your snack craving. If you're interested in small souvenirs, you can find some really fun cow toys.



5

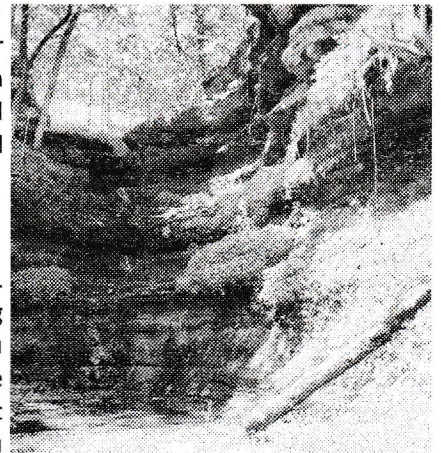
## ***Kickin' it Granola***

### **Menomonie Farmer's Market**

It's hard to go wrong with fresh, local produce. In Menomonie, the place to go for locally grown foods is the Menomonie Farmer's Market. The market is located in Wilson Park and runs every Saturday from May to October. From fresh peppers and spices to hot, home cooked foods, the farmer's market is an exceptional place for all things home-grown. For days of operation and hours, check out their Facebook page.

### **Devil's Punch Bowl**

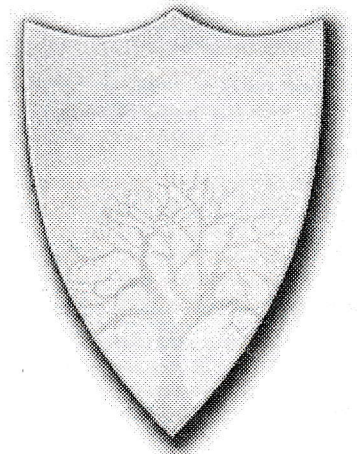
The Devil's Punch Bowl is surely one of the top places to go granola in Menomonie. Its unique beauty engulfs you as you step into the bowl. Thick, mossy patches covering the cliff and water dripping from the rocks add a surreal quality to the experience. You can get to the Devil's Punch Bowl by taking Hwy 29 (by Cenex) to County Road P. Take a left on County Road P and an immediate left on Paradise Valley Road. After about three miles, turn left into a small dirt parking lot with a sign for the park. After you park, walk straight until you see some stairs. The Punch Bowl is at the bottom of the stairs.



## ***Kickin' it Nerdy***

### **The Mithril Forest**

The group that makes up Mithril Forest is quite an interesting group of people that steps out of the real world for a while and back to the past. They participate in role-playing games with foam weapons. The focus of the group goes much deeper than that, though. The group has been in existence for over 25 years and they have developed their own back-story, rules, and culture. It seems as if it would be fun to watch and even more fun to be a part of. The group meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Riverside Park. For more information, check out The Mithril Forest Facebook page.



*"Goin' home." For many of us students, that's a popular answer to, "Whatcha doin' this weekend?" But that's not the case for Peet Anunratchartwong and Aavash Sakya. Both students have come from overseas to study here at Stout, so not only did they have to get used to college, but they also had to learn a whole new culture and lifestyle without the aid of weekend getaways back home. The following interviews delve into the challenges they've faced and the homes they've left behind.*



**Apiwat (Peet) Anunratchartwong**  
Bangkok, Thailand  
Sophomore/Graphic Design

**Word on the Street (WOTS):** How would you describe Bangkok?

**Peet Anunratchartwong (PA):** Most of Thailand is focused on Bangkok, and that's where you'll find all of the universities. If you go out of the city, it is very different, but there are still roads and things like high speed Internet out there. The weather is always hot too. I went home for the winter break, and it felt really warm even though they were having the winter season too. The first time I saw snow was when I came here.

**WOTS:** What do you do for fun at home?

**PA:** I hang out with my family a lot. I have two younger sisters, and we love to go into the city just to have fun like people here do too. I love to eat out with my family because good food over in Thailand is not necessarily expensive. And my parents will pay for it. (Laughs.) The place that we love to eat out the most is called Barbecue Plaza because they have a pan that you order some meat for and then grill on it. They have a really good sauce too, maybe that's why!

**WOTS:** What is your favorite holiday?

**PA:** It would be the Thai New Year. It's on the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of April. I like it because we usually celebrate by splashing water on each other. The major road closes and there's a parade and

people just splash water; water guns are used a lot. Weird, isn't it? The 15<sup>th</sup> is a family day, and we usually go to the eldest member of the family and show respect by wishing them good health and pouring water on their hands.

**WOTS:** Why did you come to UW-Stout?

**PA:** I knew I wanted to study overseas, so I tried to see what schools I should go to because I wanted to study design. UW-Stout accepted me and I got excited. My friend who was already here said it had a good art program. Now I know I don't like anything more than graphic design, so I think it's the right major. I'm afraid at first maybe I'm not going to like coming to a small town in America. But I came from a big city, so I already knew a lot versus if I came from a rural area.

**WOTS:** What were some challenges coming to study in America?

**PA:** I was pretty lucky that I went to an English-speaking private school. Even though I had that knowledge of English, I felt like I couldn't even talk for the first semester. It took me awhile. Sometimes people are too fast, or they have too much slang. I had a history class and I had to read a textbook and I'm like, "Oh no!" I dropped that class.

**WOTS:** What are some differences you've noticed between Thailand and America?

**PA:** People here start talking to you like they know you, but they're strangers. What are you trying to do, rip me off? Know what I mean? (Laughs.) It is weird that there is a culture difference with drinking. People here really drink a lot. It doesn't really matter, right? You don't have to go out and get really wasted.

**WOTS:** What organizations are you involved with on campus?

**PA:** We have the International Relations Club so I'm a member of that. It's pretty unfortunate that they don't have a men's soccer club. A bunch of guys from the club want that. We get together a lot and play.

**WOTS:** What are your future plans?

**PA:** I'm going to try to go to Germany and study abroad for a semester. I feel like I don't really want to go back home. I was born there and lived there for 20 years. Of course I miss my family, but I want to try to do something different.

**WOTS:** Have you ever run into a tiger?

**PA:** No. Have you ever run into a moose?



**Aavash Sakya**  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Multimedia/Junior

**WOTS:** How would you describe Nepal and its people?

**Aavash Sakya (AS):** You can't say there are the real people of Nepal. We are totally different. We don't look at all alike in our features—all mixed cultures. Even though we are so small, we have many people coming from India and China, so it's really hard to know who are the real Nepali. My grandfather would say our family is the real people!

**WOTS:** Since there are so many different cultures in Nepal, who does your family say they are?

**AS:** My dad is Newar and Buddhist and my mom is Hindu. I practiced three religions every day growing up. It was confusing because in Hinduism they sacrifice lamb, but in Buddhism you can't sacrifice, so I had this thing where I was sharing two cultures. I was learning about Christianity in school too. I would also celebrate Nepali, Tibetan, English, and Newari New Year. Maybe it's 2010 now, but for the Nepali it would be 2065. The mixed background that I have is really complicated actually. Most people in Nepal are not like me.

**WOTS:** How was your home life then?

**AS:** My grandfather had three wives. One wife was from Tibet, one from Nepal, and one from India. I lived in that joint family for years. We had a BIG house. At the end was a kitchen and then room here, room here, like a motel. For dinner and breakfast everyone would come out and eat together. My grandfather had seven sons and two daughters. It was really hard to live in a joint family—a lot of drama since my grandfather thought he could do anything he wanted, but that's not cool. My brother and I went to a boarding school, so for six years so we didn't know what was happening.

**WOTS:** What school was that?

**AS:** I went to a boarding school called Godavri for grades 1-6. It's an American, non-profit, Jesuit school. It's about 30 miles from Kathmandu. The fathers and the priests were not pushing

Christianity on us though. I never practiced Christianity at all. We were morally pushed to learn English. The reason I'm kind of good at English is that English was taught first in classes, and Nepali was second. I would have a lot of trouble reading Nepali now.

**WOTS:** Your hometown is Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. What's it like?

**AS:** It's a big city, the only city I would say. Kathmandu has everything, but we are maybe 20 years behind in technology. My dad works for a company that was the first to bring Wi-Fi to the city a year ago. It's not like we don't have anything, but better technology would bring a lot of difference. In America, it's cars, cars, cars. I had a motorcycle back home, but we're not so into cars. There are really beautiful places if you go just 30 miles away from Kathmandu. There's not a lot of buildings or cars out there, and the air smells so fresh. But the infrastructure is so bad that there are no good roads outside of the city. Many people who live outside of the city have never seen a TV.

**WOTS:** What drove you to come to UW-Stout?

**AS:** That's a hard one, actually. I was not thinking of going anywhere, but my parents were pushing me to get out of the house, to go anywhere in the world. My brother was already in America and he was saying, "Come here, come here." Why Wisconsin, though? I was not planning on coming here at all. I thought I would go to NY University, but I applied to a lot of colleges and Stout was the one that gave me the most scholarships.

**WOTS:** Where else in America have you been?

**AS:** I went to San Francisco to visit my brother. He's studying at Stanford right now. I love it there, really beautiful. I've been to NYC, Boston, and Chicago. I plan to go everywhere once I get a car and go on a road trip.

**WOTS:** What would you say is the most different about America compared to home?

**AS:** I would say there are a lot of girls here. Usually in Nepal guys make up 70% of the students in classes, and here it's 50%, maybe less. There are a lot of laws and rules in America. I asked my friends why you have to stop at a stop sign when there's no one in the road! Another thing is that I never hear anyone honking, which is really weird.

**WOTS:** What are your future plans?

**AS:** Future plans? So hard, but I've always had an interest in movie production. Mostly I like movies that are political, such as *Spy Games* and *V for Vendetta*. Because I would watch so many movies growing up, my dad would say, "I hope you would be so happy that there is a degree about studying movies." I would love to go into video production and directing since I have always had this dream.

*Turn the page for delicious, traditional Thai and Nepalese recipes from Peet and Aavash.*

W.O.T.S.

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# Thai and Nepalese Recipes

AUTHENTIC REGIONAL FAVORITES

## Peet

### Pad Krapow (Stir Fry with Basil)

- 2-3 Tbs oil
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 med. Serrano chilies, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 cups cubed chicken
- 1 Tb soy sauce
- 1 Tb sweet soy sauce
- 3 1/2 Tb fish sauce (optional)
- 1 Tb chili paste in soy oil
- 1 1/2 cups sliced white onion
- 1/2 cup sliced green bell pepper
- 1 cup Thai basil leaves
- 1 tsp white pepper

Heat wok over high heat. Add oil, garlic, and chilies and cook until garlic begins to brown, 2-3 minutes.

Add dark and sweet soy sauces, fish sauce, and stir fry until liquid is reduced by half, about 3 minutes.

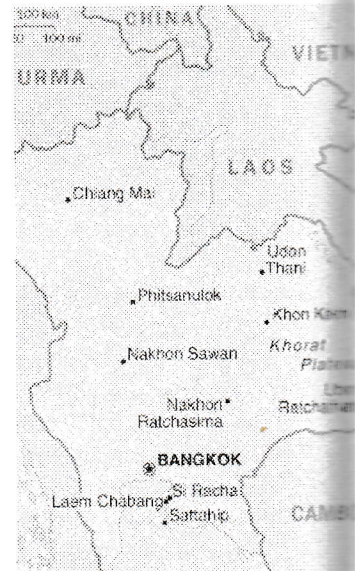
Stir in chili paste.

Add onions and bell pepper and cook until chicken is cooked through, 5-6 minutes.

Stir in basil leaves, then add pepper and stir until combined.

Serve with rice.

Serves 3-4



## Aavash

### Thukpa (Tibetan Noodle Soup)

- 1 lb Tibetan noodles (egg noodles)
- 1/2 lb lamb or beef
- 1/2 lb spinach, washed and cut into pieces
- 1 cup onions
- 1 Tb garlic, minced
- 1 Tb ginger, minced
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 3 fresh chilies
- 1/2 tsp lovage seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup tomatoes
- 2 Tbs soy sauce
- 2 cups beef or lamb broth
- 2 Tbs mustard oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tb cilantro for garnish

Cook noodles in wok in boiling salted water until slightly undercooked. Drain and rinse.

In saucepan, heat oil and sauté onions until light brown.

Add turmeric, garlic, ginger, cumin powder and chilies and stir well for one minute.

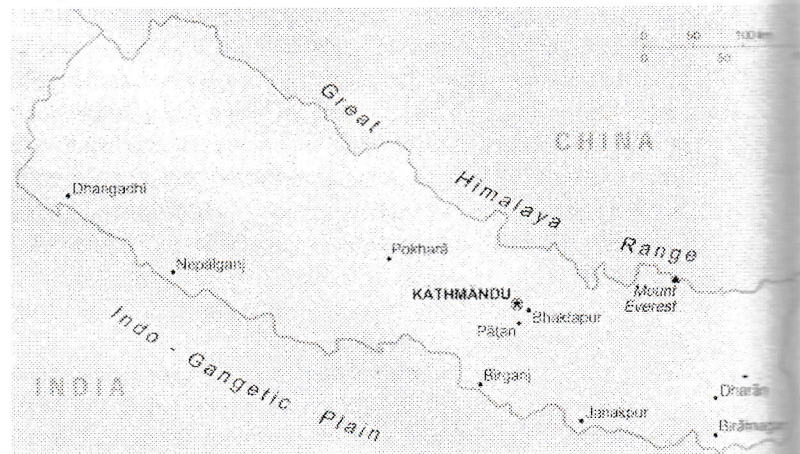
Add the chopped meat and cook until browned.

Add tomatoes, soy sauce, broth, lovage seeds, bay leaf, mustard oil, and salt and pepper, Wok until meat is tender.

Add the noodles and wok for 5-7 minutes.

Then add spinach and wok for a minute or two.

Garnish with cilantro and enjoy!





# A Street Level Member's True Story

INNOCENT FACE; WICKED  
HEART; CHANGED LIFE

**F**or all my 20 years of life, I had worn an innocent face and fooled everyone into thinking that I was a good person. I grew up going to church with my mom and two brothers, but I treated it as a choice and something you did on Sundays. If you had asked me what being a Christian was, I would have simply told you someone who goes to church. I lived in Verona, a suburb of Madison, so I developed a mindset that the sum of life was being successful, jumping on the bandwagon, and standing out by blending in.

Last September, I was finally ready to accept the Lord Jesus as my Savior. I was torn to pieces at that point because I essentially could no longer hide the fact that behind my "innocent" exterior was a broken person full of sin who had absolutely nothing solid to stand on and nowhere else to run. My life consisted of pleasing myself, and when that is all that is focused on, slimy things come out of it. My life was this: my boyfriend of three years had just broken up with me, I had just moved to Menomonie as a transfer student to Stout, and I was rooming with a bunch of strange girls. I had even gone to my first real drinking party, something I had managed to abstain from until then. I was so, so incredibly scared; I didn't know who I was or what I was doing.

When I saw a poster for a concert called Yeshuapolooza hanging up in Price Commons, I thought, hey, why not? I checked out the Street Level website and found myself listening to some Bible studies, and that's when Jesus came running to me. I broke down crying on my knees in my room one night, and I finally accepted Him as my Savior. The next day, Jesus walked next to me as I headed down to Yeshuapolooza and He showed me this group of believers I didn't know could be possible in this world. They were real, and the love they had for Jesus was shining out from all over their being.

It's literally been one miracle after another ever since. I've found my purpose now, and it's not school or a career - it's not about busting moves and putting on airs so that others admire you. It's life as God planned it for me. Coming to God is way more than just a healing process, it's an incredible journey that proves that Earth and all those who live here, are no accident. We each have a purpose, and we are designed to fulfill that. I have no idea where I'll be or what I'll be doing five years from now, but it doesn't matter. Every day is to wake up and work for God, not so

that I can feel good about myself or point out to others that here walks a nice person, but to bring glory to God who saved this girl by being a witness to others, so that they, too, might find their salvation in Him.

I struggle with my flesh, I want to focus inward and feel sorry for myself, and I want to go home and hide under a rock. But God knows all that. He knows every hair on my head. And here's the real kicker. He loves me so much, that He sent His only son Jesus to die for me. When I finally listened to His sweet, sweet voice, He came running to me and lifted me out of this dying world. Running, to me, a sinner. Hallelujah.

**BIOGRAPHY**

TRUTH IS  
BETTER  
THAN  
FICTION



## Academic

**Tues, May 11**  
Classes End

**Wed, May 12**  
Study Day, No Classes

**Thurs, May 13**  
Evaluation Week Begins

**Sat, May 15**  
Commencement

**Wed, May 19**  
Evaluation Week Ends

**Sun, May 30**  
End of Contractual Year

**Mon, May 31**  
Memorial Day, No Classes

**Tues, June 1**  
Pre-Session Classes Begin

## Sports

**Wed, April 21st**  
BB vs. UW-Superior (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

**Thurs, April 22nd**  
SB vs. UW-River Falls (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

**Sunday, April 25th**  
SB vs. St. Catherine (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 2 p.m.

**Wed, April 28th**  
BB vs. UW-Superior (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

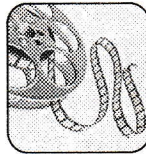
**Tue, May 4th**  
SB vs. Hamline University (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

**Fri, May 7th**  
BB vs. UW-Stevens Point (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

**Sat, May 8th**  
BB vs. UW-Stevens Point (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

**Tue, May 11th**  
BB vs. Northland College (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

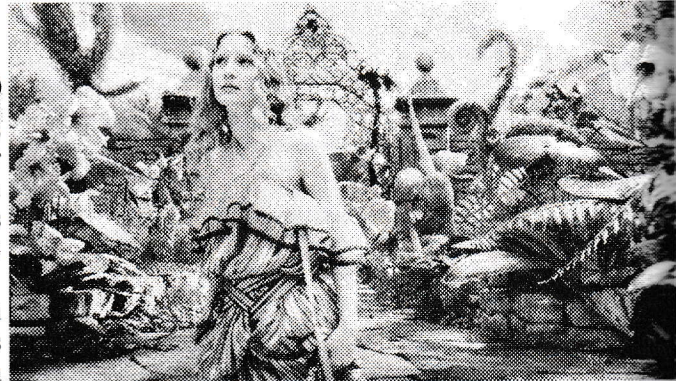
*(continued on page 11)*



MOVIE

### Alice in Wonderland 3D

**Johnny Depp, Mia Wasokowska,  
Helena Bonham Carter**  
Director: **Tim Burton**  
Walt Disney Pictures  
Rated: **PG**



Simply and madly wonderful! Tim Burton's take on this 1865 Lewis Carroll classic is everything that you could have imagined. The cast filled

their roles so perfectly, you'd think they were hand-picked by Mr. Burton himself. It is a story we all know and love taken to a new height of clarity and fantasy. The iconic and amazing Johnny Depp teeters on the edge of sanity. Mia Wasokowska brings Alice to life and adds a little more 21<sup>st</sup> century spunk. I would highly recommend seeing this treasure in 3D, as nothing compares to being face-to-face with a giant Cheshire cat. It brings to life a dark and mysterious underworld of Disney. A must see!

### Book of Eli

**Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman,  
Mila Kunis**  
Directors: **Hughes Brothers**  
Warner Brothers  
Rated: **R**



Denzel Washington is a man on a mission. Traversing through a barren and lawless America, he clings tightly to a sacred book that holds the message of hope and salvation for mankind. Gary Oldman portrays a formidable,

post-apocalyptic foe. The ashy scenery alone makes it worth seeing on the big screen, as it is both powerful and reminiscent of the age of "Mad Max." Overall, the movie was dreary and bleak, so moments of corny humor, at times, seemed out of place. The score, a masterful work by Atticus Ross, was one of the highlights that created unity in the film and pulled me through to the end. I would recommend this movie for two reasons:

1. Denzel can do no wrong.
2. The twist at the end packs a mean punch.



MUSIC

### Wiitala Brothers

Debut Release: *Bad Blood*  
[www.thewiitalabrothers.com](http://www.thewiitalabrothers.com)

This indie, fraternal twin duo hails from Chicago, IL and is currently on tour promoting their debut release, *Bad Blood*. With Christopher on vocals, guitar, and tambourine, and Trevor on drums, their music delivers simple honesty with melancholic rock undertones. The album's signature song, "Bad Blood," is in reference to Christopher's successful battle with Hepatitis C, while "Secrets in Your Heart" tells a love story. I personally recommend this album to anyone who enjoys a bit of "depress-lodic" every now and then. Their songs are embedding, personal and tend to stick with you.



### Kate Hurley

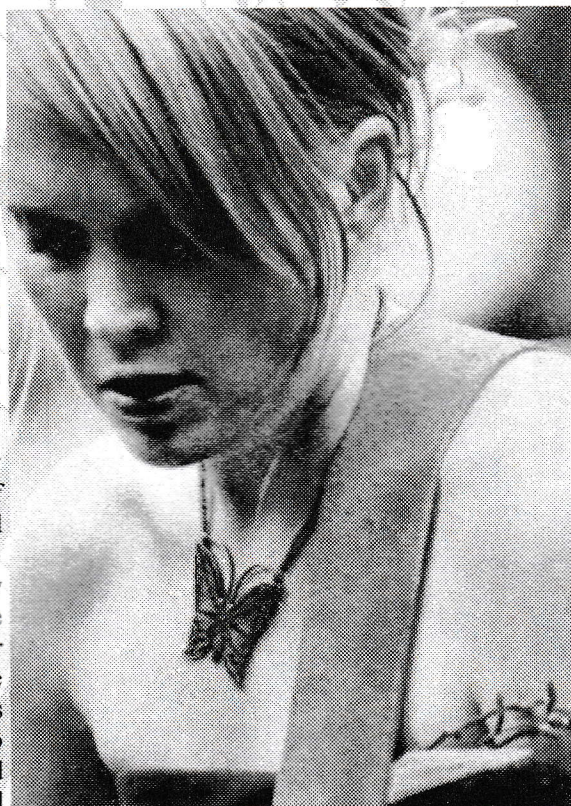
[www.katehurleymusic.com](http://www.katehurleymusic.com)

Beautiful and soulful would describe this singer-songwriter from Boulder, CO. Kate has been writing music since she was a little girl and has had the privilege to play concerts all over the United States, Russia, Thailand, India, and Brazil. She has performed in bars, coffee shops, churches, night clubs, concert halls, jails, and on the street.

Her goal in music and life is simply stated, "To paint an accurate picture of God to those who have misunderstood Him".

With a new solo CD, produced by Worship Circle Records, just around the corner, she gives a sneak peak to her site viewers with free downloads of the EP. The song, "The Whole World is Waiting," gives picture and insight to what is to come. It is a beautiful and haunting ballad of the state of the world today and the hope that is set before it.

Her voice quality is ethereal with a bit of Janis Joplin grit. Kate Hurley is truly a woman who stands out in the sea of musical talent. Have a listen to her 2007 CD, *Sleeping When You Woke Me*, and stay tuned for her new solo release!



(continued from page 10)

### Entertainment

**Wed, Apr 21<sup>st</sup>**

Art Share  
School of Arts 1-4 pm

**Fri, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Youth In Revolt- Movie Showing  
Applied Arts 210, UW-Stout  
6pm and 9pm

**Sun, Apr 25<sup>th</sup>**

Meat Raffle Sundays  
Jake's Supper Club 11am-1pm, Runs  
Every Sunday

**Thurs, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

Stoutnic Picnic  
South Campus lawn by Commons  
4:00pm- 7:00pm

**Thurs, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

We the Living with Far From Falling  
The Underground, UW-Stout  
8:00pm

**Thurs, April 29<sup>th</sup>- May 1<sup>st</sup>**

Menomonie High School Spring Play:  
Lizard  
2:00pm show, 7:00pm show

**Fri, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Free Live Music: Blank Page Empire  
Blind Munchies Coffeeshouse, 7:00pm

**Mon, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Open Drawing  
Applied Arts 303 7-10 pm

**Thurs, May 6<sup>th</sup>**

Roma de Luna with Me and My Arrow  
The Underground, UW-Stout  
8:00pm

**Sat, May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

"Tastings" A confluence of Art & Food  
Mabel Tainter Theater

**Fri, May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Illusionist: Tristan Crist  
Mabel Tainter Theater 7:30 p.m.

**Sat, May 8<sup>th</sup>**

Green Tea with the Rince na Chroi  
Dancers  
Mabel Tainter Theater 7:30 p.m.

**Sat, May 29<sup>th</sup>**

Shawndell Marks  
Mabel Tainter Theater 7:30 p.m.

(continued on page 17)

# How to Lose God in 10 Days

## JOURNAL OF A DRIFTING MIND

*"Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death."*

*-James 1:14-15*

Once we have God, we can never lose Him. However, we *can* forget Him and walk away from Him. By nature, people are forgetful. We forget to call people back, to take the pizza out of the oven, to set our alarms, to get our moms birthday gifts, and we forget that Jesus died for us on the cross. Maybe you're someone who has forgotten God already, someone who is close to walking away, or someone who doesn't want to forget. Find out how detrimental forgetfulness becomes in this journal of the thoughts of someone being dragged away. You will discover that the smallest choices that seem inconsequential are, in fact, crucial.

**Day 1 Friday: Bored with God.** This Friday, my friends will all go to the bars and clubs to make their own entertainment for the evening. I remember when my life was exciting, the thrill of not getting caught and not knowing where the night would take me. That thrill's gone from my life. I was glad to be done with it at the time, but now I'm getting bored with my existence. My life has become robotic and dull, and it's been like this for months. I don't remember what the pastor talked about last Sunday; maybe this Sunday he'll open my eyes.

*"You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you..." (Deuteronomy 15:15)<sup>2</sup>*

**Day 2 Saturday: Selfishness.** I want more for my life that just being a "good person". What benefit is that for me? I am so young, but I live like I'm 80. People that don't know God just do what they want and they seem happy. The Bible says they are lost, but they seem to find their way around just fine. They don't care about what people see them do; I want that carefree attitude. I want to do something big with my life and go somewhere, but all the things I want to do are restricted and controlled by my Christianity, and I feel like I am not getting anywhere in life. I see the aggressiveness of my classmates and their drive to be the best. If that means lying or cheating, they will do that, but I feel horrible

about it because I was taught that it was wrong to lie and cheat. It would be much easier if I made my own rules and decided for myself what was right.

*"Yet you have forgotten the Lord, your Creator, the One who stretched out the sky like a canopy and laid the foundations of the earth..." (Isaiah 51:13)<sup>1</sup>*

**Day 3 Sunday: Jealousy.** I went to church today. I don't know why I went, but I guess it's because that's what I do; I go to church on Sundays. As the pastor gave his sermon, I felt like someone had talked to him about me. I felt like he was staring at me the entire time. What about the people next to me? Why can't he preach at them? Oh, that's right. They're perfect and everyone loves them, but I can see right through them. They think they're the best. They are always smiling and always at church "serving". Don't they have something better to do with their time than serve God and show how much I lack? I feel like I am trapped in this little world where everyone is perfect but me. All eyes are on me; I wish I didn't care what they saw.

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." (Psalm 78:7)<sup>2</sup>*

**Day 4 Monday: Unforgiving.** I'm back at my apartment now with nine hours of classes behind me and six hours of homework ahead of me. I got home from my long day of classes and was ready to take it easy and relax for a few minutes, but my roommates decided to leave dishes piled in the kitchen and crusty food chunks all over the coffee table. Don't they know how to clean up after themselves? Why would they leave their mess for me to clean up? So I told them what I thought about that. Then I went out to eat because my energy was zapped, and, of course, the waitress sucked. She apologized for messing up my food order, but I seriously think they



should get some competent servers that do their job right.

**"I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word." (Psalm 119:16)<sup>2</sup>**

**Day 5 Tuesday: Distant from God.** I tried to pray this morning. I talked, but I felt like I was talking to the air, like no one was on the other end. I prayed anyway because that is what I do; I pray in the morning. Then I went to school again and had another bad day. I used to talk to God all day long when I was walking to class, or during class, asking Him to help me stay awake. I remember praying silently for people that passed me by. I don't talk to Him like that anymore because He feels so distant now. God used to answer me when I prayed; things would change in my life, but now nothing changes. I used to think He could do anything, but if He could do anything, my roommates wouldn't bother me, I would have awesome grades, and I wouldn't be stuck in this town. I could afford to study abroad somewhere.

**"Then they believed His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel..." (Psalm 106:13)<sup>2</sup>**

**Day 6 Wednesday: Doubting the Truth.** So I was in Psych class and I had some thoughts. If our brain is just a muscle, if our thoughts are just a path of neurons, then am I in control of what I think or are my thoughts controlled by the environment and genetics? Why do I believe in Jesus? Is it something that I have conditioned my brain into thinking is real? Is it just what someone else thought up? How could the Bible be anything more than someone's neurological pathways that formed one thought followed by another neurological pathway that formed another thought, and then they wrote those thoughts down and called it the Bible? How could someone survive in a stomach of a fish for three days without air? How could Noah tame and find all the animals in the whole world, let alone fit them all into a boat? How could someone die and be dead for three days with no brain activity and no heart beat, and then live again? Just some thoughts.

**"Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach." (2 Timothy 2:8)<sup>1</sup>**

**Day 7 Thursday: Wandering Thoughts.**

Okay, so I had another thought, actually a lot of thoughts. My mind wanders in thought all day long until I forget what I was thinking about an hour ago because now I am thinking about something totally different. So, here was my thought, my obsession. When I graduate, I am going to buy a drop-top Volvo S80 on 20" rims and drive into my heated garage at my condo in Uptown Minneapolis. The possibilities for my life are endless. It is still a dream, a dream I spend all day thinking about. I went home today and watched two movies back to back, and then finished the night with the series, "Entourage". It was a veggin' out on the couch kind of a day.

**"The same happens to all who forget God. The hopes of the godless evaporate." (Job 8:13)<sup>1</sup>**

**Day 8 Friday: Believing in False Promises.** My dreams aren't going to happen if I follow this dull existence any longer. I'm going to follow my instincts, and they are telling me, "Do what you want to do. Get out there and have fun; you only live once." I see the success of all my friends, how they still party, but keep it under control. I don't see a problem with getting drunk and having a blast every once and a while. Only a few get in trouble with it, but that is because they are reckless. Most of my friends get drunk and they are fine. They have the best of both worlds: fun and success.

**"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."**

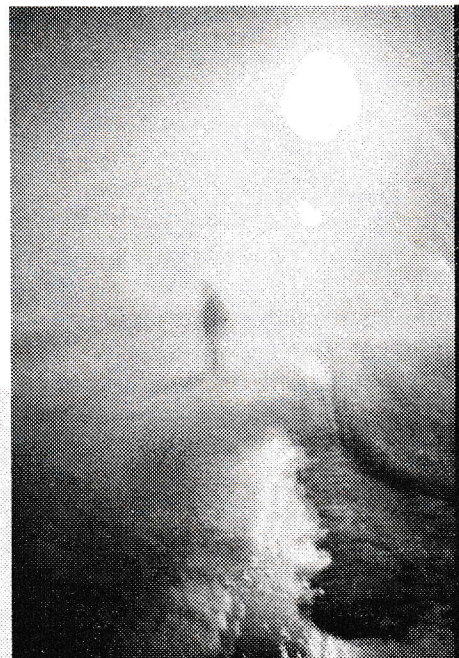
**(Psalm 20:7)<sup>2</sup>**

**Day 9 Saturday: Acting on False Promises.**

So I ditched my church friends last night to party. They don't understand what I am going through, and we are not on the same page anymore. I don't agree with them, so why would I hang out with them? I decided to go out with people that actually like to have fun and don't judge me. I still have time to finish my homework and get ready for next week. I didn't drive drunk or get in a fight; my life didn't crash around me because I got a little tipsy.

**"I remember your name in the night, oh Lord, and I keep your law."**

**(Psalm 119:55)<sup>1</sup>**



**"I went to church today. I don't know why I went, but I guess it's because that's what I do; I go to church on Sundays."**



**Day 10 Sunday: God Forgotten.** It was the greatest feeling sleeping in until whenever I felt like getting up, and then making myself Pop Tarts. No fake smiles to give out, no stares from people who can't relate, no feelings of guilt for partying Friday night, none of that. I think I will do this every Sunday; it feels so good to not have to set my alarm. I don't need to answer to a God that doesn't speak to me anyway.

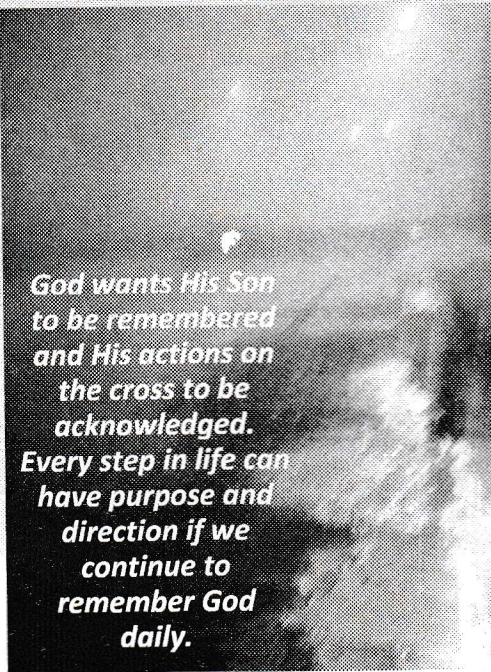
**"Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days to come, and the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" (Ecclesiastes 12:1)<sup>2</sup>**

We cannot just sit back and let life happen or we will end up with an account like this one, of someone who once knew God, but then forgot His promises. This person did not expect that in 10 days they would be walking away from God, but one thing led to another. One little choice after another

and they were gone. This person's view of God started off wrong and only got worse. It is not a chore to follow God; He is not a weight. In fact, He is the opposite. Jesus said, **"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."** (Matthew 11:28-30)<sup>1</sup>

If going to church is work and His commands are chains, one has to wonder if they are even a child of God. God wants His kids to have purpose. God wants His Son to be remembered and His actions on the cross to be acknowledged. Every step in life can have purpose and direction if we continue to remember God daily. God, in turn, will not be left on the side of the road while life trudges on.

**God wants His Son to be remembered and His actions on the cross to be acknowledged. Every step in life can have purpose and direction if we continue to remember God daily.**



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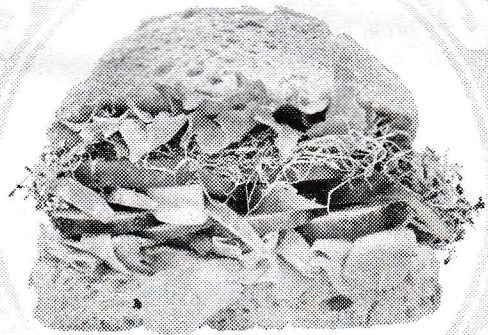
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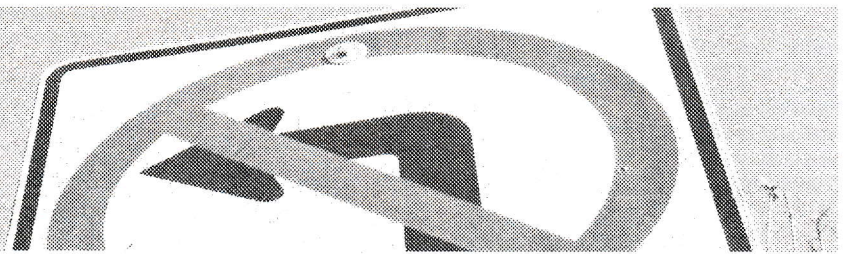
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# How to Find God

TAKING THE FIRST STEPS  
TOWARD REAL LOVE



Whether you have forgotten God, been a Christian your entire life, or have never known God, He has always been there, waiting for you to turn to Him. Isaiah 43:1<sup>1</sup> reassures us, "...Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine." Finding God may seem daunting and impossible at first, but God assures us through His Word that we should not fear because He loves to reveal Himself to those who want to know Him.

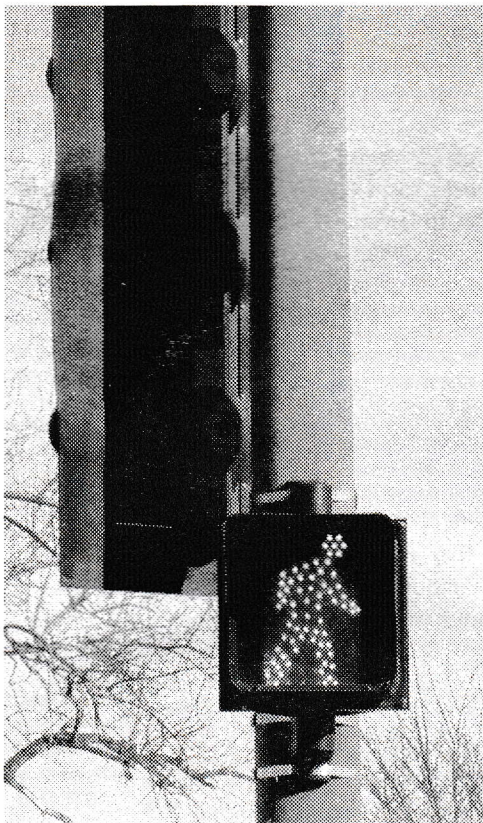
**One indication of being lost is feeling a general lack of purpose to your life or deep, unexplainable emptiness.**

## Seeking

Maybe you used to have a connection with God, but your life has curved in another direction and you have forgotten Him. Maybe you grew up in a Christian household, but going to church was a tedious routine you never truly understood. Or maybe you've never acknowledged God's existence at all. If you find yourself in any of these situations, it can be hard not to feel lost in the life you are living. One indication of being lost is feeling a general lack of purpose for your life or a deep, unexplainable emptiness. Take a minute to look at your life and reflect on the way you have been living. Are the things that consume your time leaving you empty?

Skepticism is bound to reveal its ugly face sometime during your search for God, so you may find yourself asking, "How will I know if Christianity is the truth?" or, "Aren't other religions basically the same as Christianity?" The good news is that there are answers to your questions; all you need to do is ask God. Conversing with God is a huge part in the journey toward salvation, and prayer is the medium through which we communicate with Him. Matthew 6:8 says, "...your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him!" If you honestly thirst for a relationship with God and cry out to Him with a pure heart that has turned from sin, He will answer. To receive new life you must be broken, humble, and realize your need to change your mind and walk toward God away from how you've been living.

Prayer is extremely important in our personal communication with God, but listening to Him is equally significant. Think about having a conversation with a close friend. You don't do all of the talking yourself, but you listen to him or her as well. God has promised to be there to direct us so we won't have to search for Him any longer. That promise is given to us in the book of Isaiah 30:21, "Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say,



*'This is the way you should go,' whether to the right or to the left."*

Another way to learn more about God and His Word is to attend a Bible study or church service because you will discover more about God's Word and how you can live through Him and on His behalf. When you are looking for a church, it is important to make sure that they accurately teach and follow the Bible. God's Word is one of His greatest gifts to us, and the church should be focused on learning and growing through that Word. It's also crucial that a church has a congregation comprised of people who love one another genuinely and rely on each other for personal support. Learning about God may seem intimidating, but having a group of close Christian friends can make an incredible difference. Reading God's Word can raise questions, but there are legitimate answers for every question, and God will not leave you hanging. This is why having support from other Christians is extremely beneficial. 1 Corinthians 12:27 confirms, "All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it." By growing in relationships with other Christians, you can build a support network of people to rely on if you are ever feeling lost or alone.

## Finding

Think of the most incredible experience you've ever had. Maybe it was climbing a mountain, watching a vibrant sunset, or traveling abroad. While these may seem like the most remarkable experiences in the world, coming to know God is most awe-inspiring of them all. You will finally recognize that God has a personal plan for you, which is dedicated to carrying out His work here on earth. Salvation offers a sense of clarity and recognition that the only way to find true happiness and peace is in God. It is a comprehension that, in order to live for God, you must give yourself to Him completely, holding nothing back. Romans 10:9-10 tells us exactly what it

*continued on next page...*



means to be saved: *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is LORD and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved."*

Living for God is a remarkable gift, but many people will immediately question and persecute you when you become a born-again Christian. Sometimes the worst of that persecution will even come from those who are the closest to you, including family and friends, but it's important to

remember that God knows you and He will never give you more than you can handle. Keep in mind that their opposition is not truly against you, but against the One you follow. John 15:18-19 tells us, *"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you."*

Giving yourself to God and walking through life as a born-again Christian is no easy road to travel, but remember, eternal life spent with God in heaven is the greatest gift we can ever receive. You may find yourself falling into temptation through old habits and conceivably stumbling into a bad situation, but God is always there to help you get back up on your feet. Although guilt and shame are inevitable feelings, they can actually be helpful as long as you don't wallow in them. Convictions of guilt come from the Holy Spirit and convince our hearts that we are sinning against God, and shame from that sin is a reminder that we should never return to it. Although God does not want us to live in a constant state of shame and guilt, those feelings are the tools He uses to help direct us through His plan for our lives. It's helpful to refer to James 4:4 when these situations arise: *"...Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God."* The Bible was not written for us to pick and choose which parts we feel like following because being in a relationship with God is all or nothing, and it requires our complete commitment to His Word.

## Growing

God wants salvation for each and every one of His children, but being a Christian isn't only about finding God; it's also about continually growing in a relationship with Him. Reading the Bible is the best way to learn about what God expects from us. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."* Ask God for guidance and comprehension if you do not understand what you are reading in the Bible. There are multiple other resources

you can use for further clarification. Reliable websites such as [www.onlinebible.net](http://www.onlinebible.net) and [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) are helpful for delving deeper into the comprehension of God's Word, or you can consult other believers if you are feeling confused. They can share their personal experiences about reading the Bible and what has or hasn't worked for them.

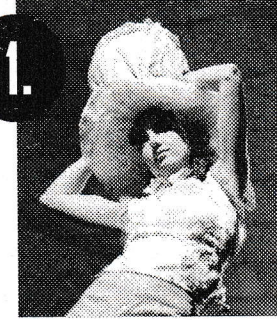
Putting complete faith in God and His Word is fundamental to living your life as a genuine Christian. Jeremiah 10:23 reassures us that if we truly walk with the LORD, He will remain steadfast by our side through even the most difficult times when we say, *"I know, LORD, that our lives are not our own. We are not able to plan our own course."* Life will always be complicated and full of challenges, but God will walk with you every single step of the way, and you can rest assured that you will never be alone. Sometimes the best development as a Christian comes as a consequence of hard times, so we must remain willing to endure these inevitable circumstances and rely wholly on God for protection and guidance.

Whenever you are prepared to give yourself entirely to God, He will be waiting for you with welcoming arms. Taking those first few steps on your walk with God may seem like miles, but He will help you from beginning to end and provide redirection if you stray. Don't let the world take you as its own, for as Jesus promised in John 14:2-3, *"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am."* Take those first few steps. God is waiting for you and will guide you.



# Stout's Top Five

## A QUICK LOOK AT 5 STOUT EVENTS



1.

The Stout Apparel Society invites you to their annual spring fashion show titled **Silhouette**. Its theme this year is "Street." The fashion event is coordinated, planned, and produced by your classmates. It will feature around 200 designs by apparel design majors, including the works of 40 seniors. There is a student show April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm and two public shows that will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm and 5 pm. The fashion enthusiasts, the curious, the bored, and everyone in between are welcome to attend.

Looking for a reason to confine your body to a 16-foot space for a weekend? Then look no further than the **Flambeau River trip** with Stout Adventures coming up in a couple weeks. Nothing more than a sense of adventure and a small chunk of change is required, and before long you'll be learning basic canoe strokes and boat maneuvers while floating along on a river somewhere that's been said to be quite scenic: the Flambeau River State Forest. The deadline to sign-up is April 26<sup>th</sup>, so be sure secure your spot among fellow river floaters if you're interested.

2.



3.



Rock out with the winner of the first annual **Battle for the Bucket** sponsored by Blue Devil Productions. Although there were no clashing swords or buckets to speak of, the winner of this band competition has had to battle through auditions and an online voting war. Contestant auditions were filmed and then placed on the BDP website to undergo the scrutiny of Stout students who proceeded to vote their favorite onto the stage. The runner-up will be the opening act. The winner will be performing via a fully paid contract on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Underground at 8pm. Expect more than 150 people.

**The Biggest Loser – Stout Style**, has been going on since March 1 as a fitness program sponsored through the UREC, and will end on May 7. Participants, which include anyone with a membership to the Health and Fitness Center, have joined together in teams and have been working with trainers. The winner will be the group with the biggest increase in three areas of health: total strength gained, body fat decreased, and flexibility. So it's not just about weight loss, but total health. Although the deadline to sign up has long since passed, joining the gym at UW-Stout is as easy as walking in and paying a minimal fee. Bring out the loser in you!

4.



5.



Remember the **Haiti Drive** for summer clothing and shoes sponsored by UW-Stout back in January and February to give to victims of the devastating earthquake? Well, although the drive has ended, your donations were shipped in late March and are now in the hands of grateful Haitians. The amount shipped was equal to the wall of boxes that were stored in the office of Mary McManus, who organized a large portion of the drive. Thank you to all those who donated!

(continued from page 11)

### Recreation

**Thurs, April 22**  
SA - Youth Climbing League  
All day

**Sat, April 24**  
GPS Basics  
All day

**Sun, April 25**  
Challenge Course Open House  
All day

**Mon, April 26**  
SA - Youth Climbing League  
All day

**Wed, April 28**  
Full Moon Paddle  
All day

**Thurs, April 29**  
SA - Youth Climbing League  
All day

**Fri, April 30**  
Whitewater Canoeing: The Flambeau River  
All day

**Sat, May 1**  
Whitewater Canoeing: Flambeau River  
All day

**Sun, May 2**  
Whitewater Canoeing: Flambeau River  
All day

**Wed, May 5**  
Dutch Oven & Utensil-less Cooking  
All day

**Fri, May 7**  
Northshore Rock Climbing Trip  
All day

**Sat, May 8**  
Northshore Rock Climbing Trip  
All day

**Sun, May 9**  
Northshore Rock Climbing Trip  
All day

**Wed, May 19**  
Poker Walk  
All day

# Where Do We Go From Here?

## ENTERING THE WORKING WORLD

**G**raduation is fast approaching and the end is in sight. The problem is that the "real world" is also just around the corner. Life after college is about to set in. Now, if I were Morpheus from the movie *The Matrix*, I would probably call it the "world of the real" and offer you a blue pill and a red pill. Your decision would lead you on to a trilogy of blockbusters, and you would live on to be well known for what you did. I am not Morpheus, but figuring out what you want to do with the rest of your life does always start with one simple question: what's the goal? Here are some tips to help you get your bearings, get started, and move forward.

### What's the goal?

18

Whether you had your whole college career planned from day one, or decided on a major just to get it over with, the desired end goal is also the starting point. If you answered the question, "To get a job," you can begin by asking people who have been in your field of interest. Start looking at online job placement and career websites like [monster.com](http://monster.com) or [hotjobs.com](http://hotjobs.com) to see what kind of work is available.

Another resource is the Career Services Center located in the Administration building. As an alumni, you can post a resume online through their job search board. Their friendly staff will help with resume writing, cover letter writing, job search skills, and mock interviews. For the 2006/2007 school year, Stout had a job placement rate of 95%, so the odds are in your favor. As a student, there is a career exploration course that you could take to see what might be of interest to you. Either way, the university is on your side.

If you want to continue, do the research on graduate school to see if it truly is the right course of action for you. If you are taking this route just to circumnavigate stepping into the working world, then you might be wasting your time and money. However, if graduate school gets you to your goal, it may be worth it. Lastly, assuming you have earned a degree or are close to finishing, by all means make sure you finish. If you don't like your choice of a major, you can always use it currently for work, and for furthering your future career plans.

### Living situation

Usually, you tend to move close to where you work. This, however, can be costly. Most importantly, live within your means; don't rent something that is out of your financial capacity (remember your student loans). If you are on the job hunt, the cheaper the better, but use common sense when dealing with landlords. Check with housing services



in the towns that you might be moving to in order to find out their reputations. Online reviews and word of mouth are also helpful. One good rule of thumb for rent is to always have three months of rent on hand. Yes, this requires discipline, but it is also a good indicator of the type of place you can afford. The other choice is moving back home with the parents, which a lot of people do these days. Be ready to live under their rules again and help around the house. Preferably, this isn't a permanent solution, but it can help you get on your feet if you use it wisely.

### Self-discipline

Who needs it, right? You do. Sleeping in until noon means you might miss your job, not just class. Eating pizza for every meal isn't very healthy, and your new coworkers might have a better palate than that. Eating out all the time also puts the crunch on your pocketbook, so cooking at home might be a better routine. Pack your lunch for work; don't rely on the company's vending machine.

After getting into this habit, here is another big word to think about: budget. By budgeting your money, you can start to see what you have to work with. Start by keeping track of everything that you spend in a month to see where your money is going. Maybe that coffee and scone in the morning is only six bucks, but it adds up over time. Then, take what you make and subtract it from your bills and other expenses (i.e. rent, cell phone, organizations, loan payments, utilities, food, clothing). This is

your budget. Any money left over is something that you can put in a savings account or invest. Living within your budget means not frivolously doing whatever you want, but simply spending your money in a preplanned way. This really does work and it is this simple, but it takes some people until their 50's or 60's to figure it out. The sooner you figure this out, the better. So, if you haven't done so yet, start incorporating self-discipline into every area of your life. Before you know it, your student loans could be paid off.

### No more college hours

Your routine becomes a lot more regular after college, and you won't have as much free time as you might have been accustomed to. After college, if you haven't found work, try to find a routine that keeps you motivated and productive in order to find work. Start your day like a 9-5 job and spend your time looking for work. Your job is to find a job; this should be your mentality. If you do get hired, unless you are a teacher, expect two weeks of vacation time at the most. Some companies require you to work for a whole year before you get any vacation time. So, brace yourself, because 40 hours of work a week is the norm.

### What if it doesn't work?

There are always alternate jobs out there if nothing in your field is open; it doesn't mean that your education went to waste. Keep your head up and always be looking at job

*continued on page 22...*



# Let's Go Shopping?

## BRINGING THE CONSUMER MENTALITY TO CHURCH

Imagine if you will, a shopping center with its white fluorescent lights shining down. In the background there's the typical elevator music jingling along to help make your shopping experience more fulfilling. Then, all of a sudden, an announcement is made:

*>BING-BONG< "Welcome, shoppers. As always, you will find the greatest deals on just what you're looking for. Are you looking for the latest fashions? How about that modern gadget with all the extra features? Maybe you're just browsing for a really good deal? Living on a budget? Remember to check out our clearance section in the back. We have everything you want! Find it all right here at Church-Mart."*

In our modern society, it is not uncommon to find people doing what has been labeled "church shopping". It has become widely practiced. People go from church to church looking for "a good fit". Who can blame them? With the broad spectrum of churches out there today, it is easy to get lost in the quagmire of denominations, sects, and church philosophies. Their intention is to find a place where they can feel comfortable and accepted. Is that what we're supposed to do?

### **Broad Selection – Difficult Choice**

Usually, the first hurdle is confusion. With the variety of churches out there, how do you settle on the one that's right "for you"? Your eyes turn to the internet, the paper or the phonebook for options. What are you looking for? While looking around, you see that there are churches with an older, more orthodox approach. In other words, they have lots of candles, robes, shiny brass work, pipe organs, and maybe some statues. They seem so old-school, but on the other hand, they carry years of tradition and, when in the sanctuary, it feels like God dwells there. Maybe that's what God intended for church but you feel so out of place there. What's next?

There are others that cut out all the "temple-esque" look and feel. These churches are a bit simpler and more stripped down. They have childcare and Sunday school available for the kids. In the corner, there's a percolator coffeemaker and a small collection of VHS tapes and pamphlets that explain how rock music will

send you to hell. This is one of those churches they call "conservative". It seems a bit dull for you, especially with the routine format of the services. You're not sure about this one either, but at least they use an acoustic guitar for their music. And nice felt banners, by the way.

Next, you find the biggest church in town. This church is as big as a mall! They have a food court and an indoor playground for the children. There's a whole separate chapel for weddings and there are dove-shaped fountains surrounding the several-thousand gallon fish tank in the lobby of the church. They even have a coffeehouse with a full espresso bar and bookstore with all the verse-stamped knick knacks you could ever want. They don't do sermons, but use drama instead. With all the theater seating, it feels like you're at a movie or a concert. This looks like a blast! They have four services on Sunday and two on Saturday, so you can fit it into your schedule with ease. Now, you think that looks like a church you can get on board with!

After all your research, you go home to make the decision. After thinking for a while, you're unsettled. You're just not sure how any of them make you feel. Certainly, the last one seems very appealing, but to get a real feel of everything, you decide to attend a service at each one to try them on for size.

### **Organic Vegetables vs. Canned – Knowing What's Better**

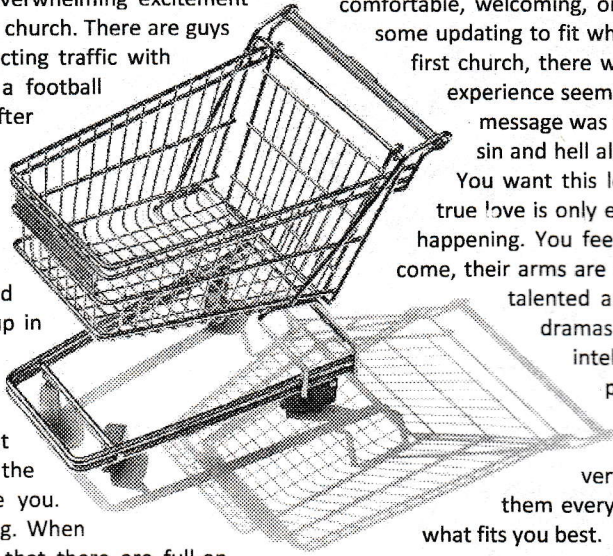
Even though deli fried chicken looks and smells so good everyone knows that it isn't until after you eat it that your stomach turns sour. Boxed and canned foods are sometimes really delicious, but often lack any real nutritional value. So, as you look down the aisle at Church-Mart, you realize that you need to just try something out to see if it's any good.

Off you go with a critical eye and a discerning ear, walking into each of the churches you found to see how they feel. In the first church, the ornate environment is quiet. There seems to be a very sincere reverence here. You notice that there are only a few people there, but they look very devoted. The organ begins, signaling the beginning of the service. People look at you strangely because you don't do certain things at the right times. They portray some concern about what you are wearing as though you are dressed in an inappropriate way. After about 40 minutes of ritual and responsorial reading, the service closes and everyone moves to leave the building like they're in a race for the door. A couple of people said hello, but no one went out of their way to greet you. The place just feels cold and sterile. You're not really into pipe-organ jams and after it was all done, you felt alone.

Next Sunday comes and it's off to church number two. This church starts a little later in the morning, which gives you more sleep time. You feel more rested and awake. As you pull into the parking lot, everyone seems to go out of their way to say hello. After shaking hands with the pastor and getting a sub-standard blistering hot cup of coffee, you sit down to hear the sermon for the day. As you listen to the service, all you hear is that you are in sin and that hell awaits you, lest you repent. You begin to feel a bit angry because you are a Christian and don't like the insinuation that you need to be saved from hell and sin. Besides, you have your baptism and confirmation credentials in your desk at home. And how do they know that hell is real, anyway? They talk like they've been there and seen it. How could such a nice, inviting group of people subject themselves to this? You begin to feel the weight of anger and depression on your mind and heart before the service is over. If God is a loving God, why does the service have to be so condemning? There was nothing nice about this church service at all. No

wonder the place isn't busting at the seams with young people. They'd never stand for that. Neither will you.

Lastly, you visit the mega-church the following Sunday. There is an overwhelming excitement when pulling up to this church. There are guys in the parking lot directing traffic with neon wands. It's like a football game or something. After you park, you see that hundreds of people of all walks of life are going to this church. Everyone stops to say hello and while you are swept up in the fun of it, you decide to introduce yourself to someone else only to find out they are new to the church today just like you. This place is happening. When you walk in, you see that there are full-on school-like class rooms for kids of every age for Sunday school. The youth group is running around hanging up posters for a big concert outreach they are doing in the auditorium. Everyone seems to be drifting past the espresso bar before going into the sanctuary/auditorium. After you pick up your mochaccino, you grab a complimentary scone and move to find a seat. Finally, there's an open seat and the family in the same row ushers you to come and sit down. The lights dim and the stage lights up. A quick glance upward reveals large plasma screens hanging from the ceiling, giving you a close-up of everything happening on the stage. Like a rock concert, the first chord is played on an electric guitar and everyone gets up on their feet. You wonder if the moshing is going to start, but instead everyone raises their hands and sings the song together like they have all memorized the lyrics. The songs are very familiar, upbeat and easy to sing. Every song gushes with how much God loves us. What a rush! Some of the church actors take the stage and act out the subject of the sermon for the day. Now and then, the drama pauses and one of the church leaders begins to explain things using a huge dry-erase board. By the time the service ends, you are already pondering coming back next week. Then you realize you weren't forced to dig through a Bible and you never once heard the word hell. In fact, you feel uplifted and encouraged. It isn't until you see your reflection in the bathroom mirror that you realize you are grinning from ear to ear. You feel welcomed. You feel better about yourself. It is very comfortable and warm. The people are nice. The church leaders seem like real nice men and women. The music rocks! The drama is very entertaining in that it makes you laugh, cry, and sometimes sit on the edge of your seat. It feels like heaven here. For you, it's settled. This is the place for you.



## This One is Just Right – Customer Satisfaction Guaranteed

It has become abundantly clear through your research that there are a few expectations that you need filled when you are shopping for a church. The first two churches didn't meet very many of those needs like the third one did. They weren't comfortable, welcoming, or uplifting. You're modern and feel that the church needs some updating to fit who you are as a person and who we are as a society. In the first church, there was no community. You felt like an outsider and the whole experience seemed cold and uninviting. The second church was nice, but the message was too condemning. There's nothing loving about talking about sin and hell all the time. You need to feel okay inside about who you are. You want this love to be central to everything the church does. Besides, true love is only expressed in tolerance. The third church was big, but it was happening. You feel like you can come and go as you need. Every time you come, their arms are open like they really missed you. The church band is really talented and has a couple of Dove award-winning albums out. The dramas are very moving, and the explanations are deep and intellectual. All that aside, you really like their coffee. These people are fun! This church is fun. God wants us to be happy people, and this church makes you feel happy. There's nothing like finding the perfect pair of pants. They feel very comfortable. They make you look good. You could wear them every day. It's the same with church shopping. You have to find what fits you best.

## Someone Poisoned the Water Hole – Being Sold a Bill of Goods

Many people walk this very same path every day in hopes of finding what brings the most satisfaction. Have you ever met someone who can't stand eating vegetables so they never eat them, ever? This is not unlike the guy who only eats at McDonald's for every meal. There is a real hidden problem in the church shopping illustration depicted above. Every choice was made based on wrong criteria. The person above failed to know the answer to a couple of crucial questions that must be answered before looking for a church.

**1: What makes a church a "right church"?**

**2: What am I, as a Christian, supposed to be doing?**

The first problem with church shopping as shown above was that the shopper's main goal was to satisfy self. There is a distorted understanding of what God intended for the church. This is because there is a very real lack of knowledge concerning what God expects. The church in the Bible is made up of people who seek to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Jesus (Matt 16:24).

We all know that we have to eat right in order to be healthy. Without proper nutrition, we will suffer the consequences. If we eat candy bars and drink Mountain Dew for every meal, we're not going to make it for very long. A church lacking the proper nutrition (spiritually speaking) will leave you sick. Paul the Apostle spoke to one of his churches in the New Testament, telling them to partake of the solid food of the Word of God so that they could discern good and evil. Without that knowledge, you can fall into something that looks good by all outward accounts, but on the inside is a trick of the devil, keeping



# "And Then it Happened" A FACEBOOK COMMUNITY TALE



**The Gig:** Remember that game from when you were a kid that entailed finishing each others' thoughts to build a nonsense story? Turns out big kids like to do that, too.

**The Group:** Street Level Community Facebook page

**The Rules:** Finish the previous sentence and begin one of your own. Don't finish the second sentence; that's for the next person to finish.

He waited nervously in line biting his fingernails and dreading the moment when his number would be called. He was jolted back to reality when...

he felt a sharp pain in his side. Whirling around, Cletus gasped...

holding his hand to his chest he looked around, suddenly very aware of the

silence that was closing in, when...

someone held a pack of juicy fruit under his nose....he looked up and saw the Kool-aid man with Fat Albert and his gang all dancing to "Return of the Mack." Down the hall was the sesame street crew.....

waiting to school the Kool-aid. Cletus cheered on the pack of dancers when...

he felt a hand grasp his shoulder tightly, turning around he discovered....

that his long time friend Clarke had returned from France. He had gone to France to...

Go to the Notre Dame Cathedral. When he got there...

he said, "well I guess, ah well I guess-ah I'm-a gonn-a get-a out-a hear-a". The French

people all around him were offended at his

terrible French "a- accent-a" and this was all because Clarke was missing half of his brain due to the traumatic experience

he had when he...

jumped off the bridge in the middle of the winter at age five. It had caused his head to....

jumble about and fall right out...some in the snow, and some out his snout. So he stuffed it back in and patched it with grout till...

he was interrupted by the sounds of Elvis on the stereo. "It's now or never....come hold me tight...kiss me my darling...be mine tonight....tomorrow will be too late....it's now or never....my love won't...

in his incapacitated state, he didn't realize that Journey was doing a show a couple

blocks away, and was covering Elvis. Fearing it was actually Elvis, he...

didn't stop believing. Suddenly, Cletus was blinded by...

a flying chalupa which knocked him unconscious. Waking up out of his fast food induced coma, he slowly began to realize...

he wasn't in Kansas anymore. So...

he stepped to the front of the line noticing that his number, 19, had just been called. A sweaty man wearing a tie that appeared to strangle him grimaced at Cletus and handed him...

a pack of gum, four moth balls, a copy of People magazine from 1986, and a set of keys. Looking closely he noticed...

Carol Burnett was a classy lady back in the day. Suddenly his feet left the ground and he was air born when....

Go to [wotsmagazine.weebly.com](http://wotsmagazine.weebly.com) to read the rest of the tale.

21

continued from page 20... Church Shopping

the church from its real purpose. The Bible speaks of a spiritual war that is raging all around us every day. If we are Christians (by the Bible's definition), we are to be engaged in this battle. No, it doesn't require the use of guns, knives, or wrestling skills. The Bible says that our weapons are not like those of earthly wars but are spiritual in nature (2 Cor. 10:4). In another place, we are told that the Bible is our sword (Eph. 6:17). Hmm...

Look back to our illustration. There was never a mention of the Bible or looking into the scriptures for the right way. This is a huge pitfall many shoppers stumble into. Sure, there may have been verses shared in every one of the churches described in the illustration, but the Bible warns of false teachers who will come to deceive people (2 Peter 2:1). We must have the proper interpretation of the Word of God (2 Tim 2:15). People think that interpretation comes down to opinions. So, some will say, "I believe this," or "I believe that," or "in my

experience," but unless you can base your opinion on something worthwhile, it's not really worth anything. So, do I take your opinion of what church is supposed to be based on your experiences, or do I look to the opinion of Jesus Christ and His apostles? Who would you believe? You can rest assured that Bible doctrines are not mere opinions. To understand who God is and what He wants, you need to understand the true teaching of the Bible.

**What makes a church a "right church"?**

Does it teach the Bible? Do they sincerely desire to fulfill God's will? Do they encourage you to have a relationship with God and fulfill God's will for your life? If you can answer yes to these questions, then you know it to be a "right" church.

**What am I, as a Christian, supposed to be doing?** Christian, stop looking for a spiritual self-help program. Stop looking for a social organization or nightclub. Stop focusing on yourself. The mission of Christ was selfless and cost Him His life. He sought to save the lost and show people the way to eternal life. The

mission of the church is in the same vein. Jesus commanded the believer to go into all the world, preach the gospel and make disciples (Matt. 28:19). In our society, we all are much too preoccupied with our selves. "What about me and my needs?" Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). He also said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt 16:25).

Isn't it time to stop shopping around? Buy the vegetables and get on with it. I did, and it made all the difference in my life, just like the Bible described that it would. Find a church with people who are saved, seek to do God's will, and are living according to the Word of God.



Continued from page 18... Where do we Go From Here?

openings on the web or in the newspaper. Do this while you check out some other career choices that you normally wouldn't have considered. Stay connected; get to know people in your field of choice. Don't stop looking., even if you have a position in your field. This way, you can continue to see what is out there and what the job market is doing.

Hopefully, the "real world" isn't as painful as it looks. It just takes some getting used to and some adjusting. Let me tip you off to something else, though: God desires the best for you. He desires that you know Him and build a relationship with Him. Jeremiah 29:11 puts it best, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." We can go through life planning and wishing to someday find

fulfillment. Ultimately, hope doesn't last and we aren't fulfilled if the only goals we set are for a job, a career, a companion, or lots of stuff. But, if hope is placed in God, who loves us and changes our lives, we will find true contentment and peace. God himself is that key to contentment, and through Jesus we can get to know Him and His peace. Jesus puts it this way in Matthew 6:33: "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." If you want more info on how this relationship begins, flip to the "How to Find God" article on page 15. You can do the groundwork for entering the working world, but, in the end, God's plan for your life will always be best.

## 22 **a word from the barn... NICK THE HICK**

Today's Topic

### **THEM NEW-FANGLED APPLIANCES**

Well the technology geniuses done it again. I know it's not a new thing but it's a new pain in my life. Digs right under the arm skin and burns my soul right up. That automated stuff they got put in bathrooms and other areas of society these days are enough to make a guy tear one off the wall smash it open and grab the product his self. You ever seen one of these automatic sinks, not only do you gotta stick your greasy fingers under der for seconds on end but they only give ya enough water to make the dirt wet. And to dry off is another story, seriously a guy has to plan on only drying off six fingers at a time. Now this aint a problem for my buddy Earl who lost four fingers in the combine but for us common sense folk we end up wipin the rest of the fingers on our jeans.

I also sat on a "Automatic Toilet Genius" the other day and I guess it aint so automatic because there was still a surprise in the toilet when I went in there. And definitely watch out if you're a mover and a shaker on one of them things cuz they might just flush ya down

while your still sittin. Now I sat down with the wife over dinner and talked this through. We don't know what to think. We can't just rip em out or carry our own sink so we are left with little options. While I was on that internet I fueled my disgust lookin for other automated things.

Hot dang! I just remembered that they got them automatic blow dryers too instead of paper towels. Them make everyone real happy. Stand there for fifteen minutes until your hands get dry. You know youd think with everything else they do these days you could make one that blows warmer air faster. Heck you could put a wood stove right in the bathroom and put your hands on that. It also save on electricity to. Sure make our green friends happy. Although speakin of them I still aint seen no green people. I found in my quest that they got auto toilet seats too. I guess you just look at it and it puts itself up. Next thing ya know there gonna come up with automatic nose pickers. Yeah I guess you just stare at it and the little fake finger goes right



up your nose then you know da rest. I can't even get into the other things for the sake of the kids who read this. But it sure is enough to make me go blah. Well that's enough grousing for now I gotta get to cleaning up this soap the automatic soap dispenser left on the counter. Ok that's enough this time.

#### Sources:

##### Articles

How to Lose God in 10 Days:

<sup>1</sup>New Living Translation of Bible

<sup>2</sup>New King James Version

How to Find God:

<sup>3</sup>All verses from New Living Translation of Bible

Where Do We Go from Here?:

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## Just Swimming

I am swimming  
 I like to swim  
 I lift to the surface for one breath before going back  
 I am swimming and swimming  
 The water surrounding me darkens, pressures swell  
 Breathe, I forgot to breathe  
 I look up but see black  
 I was swimming, just swimming, just enjoying  
 Weights on my ankles pull me down  
 Breathe, I forgot to breathe  
 Weights pulling me down  
 Too far down, no more light, only black  
 I feel the water, mud  
 I thought it was just water  
 But mud, black mud  
 Breathe, I forgot to breathe  
 I am too far down, I see only black  
 The mud, paralyzes my body  
 My soul churns as I lay stiff  
 Unable to escape  
 The mud, blinding my eyes so I do not see the hand stretched out to me  
 The mud, deafening my ears so I do not hear the voice calling me  
 Breathe, I forgot to breathe  
 I was swimming, just swimming  
 I liked to swim  
 I breathe in mud wishing for air  
 The mud, blinding my eyes so I do not see the hand stretched out to me  
 The mud, deafening my ears so I do not hear the voice calling me  
 The mud suffocating me  
 I cannot see the hand to take it  
 I cannot move to find it  
 Help me, I give up  
 No breath, no sound, no sight, no more  
 That is when He brought me to the surface  
 New life, new eyes, new sounds, deep breath

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*There are those who call themselves Christians...*

*Sure, they say they know God.*

*Sure, they go to church once in a while.*

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