



Baffled?

CONFUSED?

Feel like you're in the **DARK?**

Receive the Light

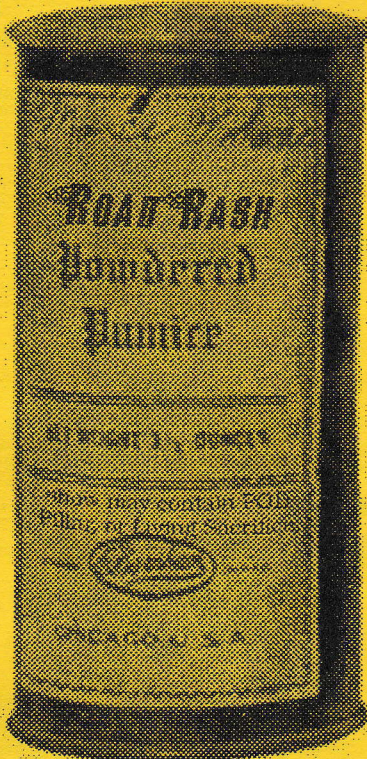
SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH?

WORD

on the street

ISSUE #6

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SAY WHAT?

Can a Christian get a tattoo? Is getting a tattoo a sin? Will it be a bad witness?

I recently posed these questions at a family gathering, and since tattoos are such a popular thing these days I thought it would be a good thing to cover.

Let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about tattoos. Jon Trott from Cornerstone magazine happened to have a reader write in with a similar question. I thought he did an awesome job covering the verses on tattoos. He wrote, "The only verse which apparently address 'tattoos' is Leviticus 19:28 'you shall not make any gnashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you; I am the LORD.' (nrsv) Hmmm, sounds like a prohibition, all right. It turns out however, that the word 'tattoo' is translated 'marking' in some translations and may have been more properly called 'scarification' (that is body modification or scaring). But even if it did mean 'tattoo' how about the next verse right before this one? 'You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard.' Ah, that means anyone who trims his beard is also sinning? I haven't heard anyone quoting Leviticus 19:27 at me for using a razor, even when I Bic my face and whole head with it" (reprinted by permission of Cornerstone Magazine issue 121 vol.30)

The Old Testament law was given to the Jews before Jesus came. The Bible states that we are no longer bound by the law since Jesus came to free us. Romans 3:19-22 states, "Obviously, the law applied to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses and to bring the entire world into judgment before God. For no one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what His law commands. For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it. But now Christ has shown us a different way of being right in His sight not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the scriptures long ago. We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done." Romans 7:6 also confirms that we are no longer under the law: "But now we have been released from the law, for we died with Christ, and we are no longer captive to its power. Now we can really serve God, not in the old way by obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way, by the Spirit."

Still others will use Romans 12:1-2 to say that no Christian should get a tattoo: "And so dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice the kind He will accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is." Ah, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. The key here is let God change you: God has designed everything so we can have a personal relationship with Him. He

wants to walk with us and talk with us, and He wants to transform us. "Then you will know what God wants you to do." Yes you can know for yourself what God wants you to do. Kind of freeing isn't it? Keep in mind that God never changes and we are being conformed into the image of His Son.

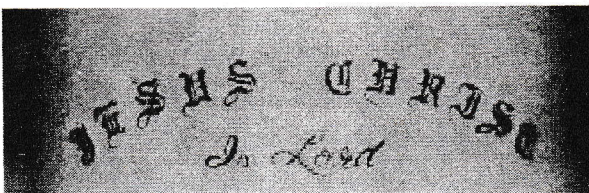
A few common reasons I hear for Christians not to get tattoos is that it is of the world, that it is copying the behavior of the world, getting caught up in the acceptance of the world and every trend and style that comes around. These people say we, as Christians need to be holy and separate. I agree, but if we never copied anything from the world and its trends, we'd all be wearing the same trends and styles that were out when we stopped growing.

I do believe the Bible says that it is wrong to have a greedy competitive heart that lifts the trends and fashions of the world up as an idol. What I'm getting at here is your heart. If you are getting a tattoo so people will think you're cool and you want to be accepted, then your heart is not in the right place. But that isn't the only reason to get a tattoo. I know several people that have gotten tattoos to express a holy attitude and life for God. One friend of mine got a tattoo and verse to cover up a pagan symbol from a cult she was involved in before she came to know God. Another friend got a tattoo as a symbol of when he came back from being a prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-31) The beautiful verse reminds him daily what God has brought him through. Still others get them as witnessing tools and decoration. It's a heart issue. Why you do what you do does matter. If you can't get a tattoo without selfish and idolatrous motives then don't, but you can't say that everyone has that motive, therefore you can't say that tattoos are wrong for all Christians. Romans 14:4 "Who are you to condemn God's servants? They are responsible to the Lord, so let Him tell them whether they are right or wrong. The Lord's power will help them do, as they should. Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God." Romans 14:10-12 also says, "So why do you condemn another Christian? Why do you look down on another Christian? Remember that each of us will stand personally before the judgment seat of God. For the Scriptures say, "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess you are God.'"

The point is you cannot judge why a person got a tattoo, just like no one can judge why people have brand new cars or why people take expensive vacations when there are people literally starving in the Sudan that don't have a personal relationship with God. You might say that expensive clothes and cars wouldn't scar your body like tattoos will. But if you are living with a greedy heart for the things of this world it will scar your heart and your relationship with God. Getting a tattoo with a clear conscience before God will only scar your body, which is worse?

They have come out with make up that can be tattooed on, is that wrong? Is it any more wrong then regular make up or a temporary tattoo? I think the best thing we can do for people, family members, or children is to encourage them to have their own personal relationship with God and read the Bible for themselves, instead of taking someone's word for it, because you won't be with them when they stand before God. I am encouraging you to seek the Lord about this, read His Word, and ask Him to reveal it to you.

One more thing Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (not whether or not you have a tattoo)



Massive Earthquake Takes Toll in India

Is the earth coming apart at its geological seams? With thousands feared dead after a powerful earthquake struck India on Friday, January 26, 2001, another that earlier devastated El Salvador, a tremor off Kyushu Island, Japan, and even minor quakes in Ohio and recently in New York City, people start wondering. "These earthquakes are not related," said Waverly Person, director of the Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colorado, which tracks earthquakes worldwide. "We locate about 50 quakes every day. But, you only hear about them if people are killed or if they're felt very strongly in the United States." The Center was established in Washington in 1966 and has been working out of Golden since 1973. It tracks earthquakes worldwide and often provides the first news of a tremor. Phone banks started lighting up at the center, operated by the U.S. Geological Service, before dawn on that Friday with news that the worst earthquake in 50 years had hit India. The tremors have killed more than 15,000 people and injured over 30,000. Officials in India said the final toll may be much higher. The quake was measured at 7.9 on the Richter Scale by the Earthquake Information Center.

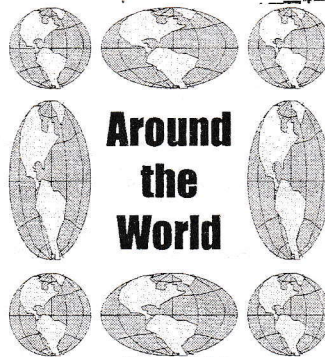
The most murderous recorded quake in history killed an estimated 830,000 people in Shaanxi, central China, on February 2, 1556. Earthquakes ranking about 4.5 or greater (of which there may be several thousand every year) are strong enough to be recorded by sensitive instruments all over the world. Person said there is no reason to believe the quake that rocked El Salvador on January 13, 2001, also triggered events that led to the January 26, 2001, earthquake in the Indian sub-continent.

The quakes occurred on separate tectonic plates, and a quake on one does not set up a domino effect in another. According to their records, about 18 major quakes (measuring between 7.0 and 7.9 on the Richter Scale, and one great quake measuring 8.0 and above) can be expected each year. Many of these, however, may strike uninhabited parts of the world.

But, does it make life scarier for people living in quake zones? "What it does is bring forth awareness in places like California and Alaska. It brings it up in their mind," Person said, "but they're not more afraid."

"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (Luke 21:11).

Above articles appeared in the Hope for Today Newsletter March 2001 issue by David Hocking



Around the World

Jewish Presence on the Temple Mount Avowed

Although the most recent Moslem "spin" is that there is no Jewish connection to the Temple Mount, the Supreme Moslem Council in Jerusalem said in 1930 that the site's identification with the First Temple is "beyond dispute." The

Supreme Moslem Council, appointed by the British, published an English-language tourist guide that states: "The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This also is the spot, according to universal belief, on which David built an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings." A footnote refers the reader to II Samuel 26:25. However, PA Mufti, Ikrima Sabri, told the German Die Welt within the last three weeks that, "There is not the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish Temple on this place in the past. In the whole city, there isn't even a single stone indicating Jewish history." WRONG-There is continuous, indisputable testimony in biblical archaeology of the presence of Jews from the time of Abraham within a few feet of the place where the Mufti was standing when he told this obvious untruth. There is massive evidence within the Temple Mount itself of the continual presence of the Jews.

"And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings 9:1-3).

GOD'S WORD: PROVED TRUE!











Around the World



What Comes To Your Mind First When You Hear The Name Jesus?

- from the students and staff

@ Stout

	Amy	Faith And Love
	Jason	Christ
	Uli	I think of a skinny dude, with a beard, long hair and I think of... gentleness and forgiveness... and I think of being in the same position wanting to explode and like... get back at people who betrayed me and stuff... but I think of all the stuff that Jesus didn't do which in turn make him admirable.
	Ryan	Heaven
	Kurt	What comes to my mind first is Jesus dying on the cross so many years ago for us, shedding his blood for our salvation.
	?	Church
	Matt	The Son of God
	Kathy	Faith
	Luke	The first thing I think of is my Lord and Savior... the person that died and rose for me... That is what I think of.
	Gabe	Love

This is what the Bible says about Jesus Christ.

His name, Jesus, is a Greek word which is translated from the Hebrew name Yeshua. The name Yeshua is a shortened version of the Hebrew name Jahovashua, which means: God is our salvation.

Contrary to popular belief, Christ is NOT Jesus' last name but His title. The Greek word Christ and the Hebrew word Messiah have the same meaning which is: God's anointed One.

His name tells it all. Jesus Christ is God's attempt to restore the relationship He once had with humankind and provide a way of salvation or safety from hell. The Bible says that God sent His perfect Son to take the punishment for all the wrong doings (sin) of the imperfect human race. He did this, as the book of Ephesians tells us, because He wanted to, because He loves His creation and wants you to know that He loves you. It's all in the Bible. Check it out for yourself. Read the book of John in the New Testament. You WILL find the truth. He promises to come again and take us all home to be with Him in heaven. Those who so choose NOT to respond to His love are doomed to an eternal place that the Bible says will include crying, grinding of the teeth, eternal darkness...it's hell. God does not want you to go there for He created it for punishing Satan and his demon buddies. He has provided a way out.

No! God doesn't send anyone to hell, people send themselves there. It's like this: if you are at a bus stop and a bus pulls up and opens the door and YOU refuse to get on, is it the bus driver's fault that you didn't get on? NO. This life is the bus stop. God is the bus driver and He has opened the door for you. Soon this bus is leaving and the world will be destroyed. The choice is yours. Heaven or hell....where are you going?

A Letter From A Friend

Dear Friend:

How are you? I just had to send you this letter to tell you how much I love and care about you. I saw you yesterday as you were walking with your friends. I waited all day, hoping you would talk to Me, also. As evening drew near, I gave you a sunset to close your day and a cool breeze to rest you, and waited. You never came. Oh, yes, it hurt Me, but I still love you because you are My friend.

I saw you fall asleep last night and I longed to touch your brow, so I spilled moonlight upon your pillow and face. Again, I waited, wanting to rush down so we could talk. I have so many gifts for you.

You awakened late and rushed off for the day...My tears were in the rain. Today you looked so sad, so alone. It makes My heart ache because I understand. My friends let Me down and hurt Me many times, too, but I love you. I try to tell you in the quiet green grass; I whispered it in the leaves and trees, breathe it in the colors of the flowers. I shout it to you in the mountain streams, and I give the birds love songs to sing. I clothe you with the warm sunshine and perfume in the air. My love for you is deeper than the oceans and bigger than the biggest want or need you have.

We can spend eternity together in heaven. I know how hard it is on this earth; I really know (because I was there), and I want to help you. My Father wants to help you, too. He's that way, you know. Just call Me, ask Me, talk to Me. It is your decision. I have chosen you and because of this I will wait...Because I love you.

Your Friend,

WEARY ONE

You think I haven't watched you.
You think I haven't seen, But I
caught your tear last night When
it fell from your dreams. My
heart breaks when your heart
breaks Cause I can see inside
And though you're so fragile, I've
seen how you've tried to be
strong. Oh, my weary one Oh,
my weary one Lay down, let me
be all that you need My weary
one. You've been set aside And
you've been left to find love. This
life hasn't been all you've hoped
or dreamed of. And so I'll pull
you close, Though for you, trust
is hard to find. I'm reaching out
to hold your empty hand in mine.
Oh, my weary one Oh, my weary
one Lay down, let me be all that
you need My weary one. And
you're wondering how love
picked you up and Dropped you
in this cold place And you're
wondering how you could be re-
placed. Still I know every twinkle
in those weak eyes... Oh, my
weary one Oh, my weary one Lay
down, let me be all that you need
Oh, my weary one Oh, my weary
one Lay down, let me be all that
you need My weary one, My
weary one.

Written by Mandee Radford from
Alathea (the rains cd) and
Michael Aukofer
www.alathea.com

Jesus spread a radical message...

L O V E and G R A C E

the Jesus Bible Study

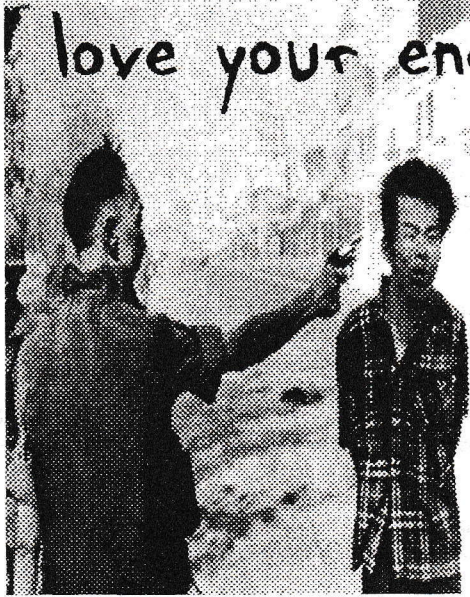
6pm every Thursday

@ the Coffee Cottage
in River Falls, WI

...come hear it for yourself.

What does this mean?

love your enemies



Eau Claire

Jesus Fellowship of Believers

Bible study: Thursday nights 6:30 pm
at the Coffee Grounds
3460 Mall Drive

Men's prayer breakfast:

Tuesdays 6:00 am at
the Bread Box on Cameron St.

THE STUDY-RED WING, MN

Want to know more? Find out for yourself
We're meeting for a verse by verse Bible study
upstairs at the Red Wing, Minnesota Hardees Restaurant
When is it? Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m.
Come, find out for yourself.

VERSE-BY-VERSE BIBLE STUDY

REALITY

FOR OUR TIMES.



ONE WAY!

WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE THE ONE TRUE
SOURCE OF DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES. THE
SCRIPTURES, THOUGH WRITTEN THOUSANDS OF
YEARS AGO, GIVE US A ROADMAP TO THE
FUTURE AND MOST
IMPORTANTLY THE SINGLE SOURCE OF ETERNAL
LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

STUDY GROUP MEETS AT THE BLUE HERON
COFFEEHOUSE, THURS. NITES, 8:00PM
WINONA, MINNESOTA

AN OUTREACH OF CALVARY CHAPEL, MENOMONIE, WI

In my hometown there was a large church that was known as the church where "the people spoke in tongues." It was commonly known that if a person visited that church or went to the youth group, they would encounter members of the church speaking in unknown languages as a corporate group. The thought of experiencing such a thing was quite freaky to me and seemed very unnatural. Although I was open and curious about most everything, this was a little too "out there."

I moved away to go to college and a few months later I received an invitation to visit a non-denominational church with my best friend. I was raised in a very traditional, denominational church and didn't really know what to expect. I was open to the new experience, but was concerned that I might run into some folks speaking jibberish in the middle of the service. Much to my relief, no one broke out into tongues while we listened to the pastor's message.

Shortly after visiting this new church, I asked Jesus to save me from my sins and to have control of my life. God gave me the desire to start reading the Bible which has been referred to as the "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth." It turns out that God actually addresses the issue of "speaking in tongues" in the Bible.

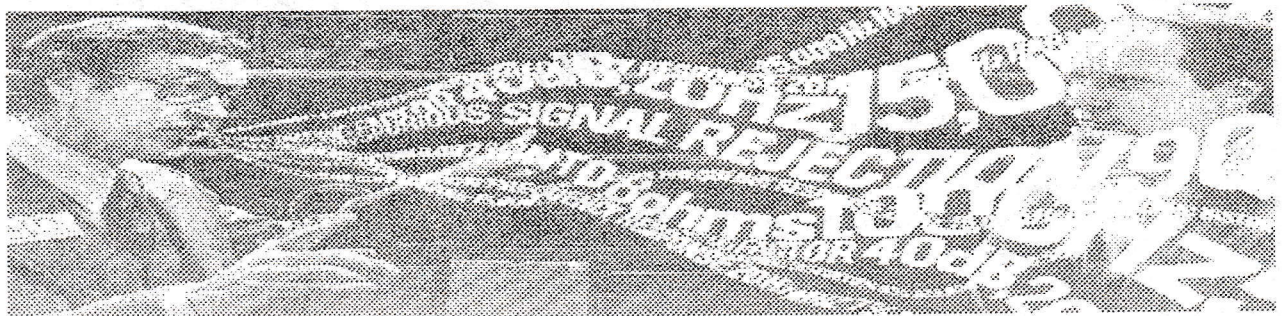
In 1 Corinthians 12:4, it talks about how God gives each believer (born-again Christian) different kinds of spiritual gifts. In verse 7 of the same chapter it says that a spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. There is a list of the various gifts of the Spirit in verses 8-10 like the ability to give wise advice and to teach. In verse 10 it says, "Still another person is given the ability to speak in tongues and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said." Verse 11 states that it is the Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts and that He alone decides which gift each person should have. Not everyone in the church is given the exact same gift; this is so we can bless and help each other with the various gifts we have been given.

Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians also addresses the gift of tongues, giving the reader more clarity about the proper usage of it within the church. Paul the apostle (who was inspired by God) stresses the importance of properly using the special gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:23. He writes, "Even so, if an unbeliever, or someone who doesn't have these gifts, comes to the church and hears you all talking in other languages, he is likely to think you are crazy." This verse specifically addressed the fear I had in going to a new church for the first time. In verse 26 Paul says, "Well, my brothers, let's add up what I am saying. When you meet together some will sing, another will teach, or tell some special information God has given him, or speak in an unknown language, or tell what someone else is saying who is speaking in the unknown language, but everything that is done must be **useful to all, and build them up in the Lord.**" He goes on to say in verse 27 and 28 that, "No more than two or three people should speak in an unknown language, and they must speak one at a time, and someone must be ready to interpret what they are saying. But if no one is present who can interpret, they must **not** speak out loud. They must talk silently to themselves and to God in the unknown language but **not** publicly."

Paul adds in verse 33 a very important attribute of God. He says, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the other churches." Finishing off chapter 14, Paul further instructs us to never say it is wrong to speak in tongues, but to be sure that everything is done properly in a good and orderly way.

So what is my point in writing about this particular matter? Here's the lowdown: Some of you may go to a church where people are speaking in tongues in a way that contradicts what God has said in His Word. Now you know what God really says. Go ahead and dig in deeper in the Bible.

For those of you who have been turned off to Christianity and the real Jesus because of an issue over tongues, I personally apologize and pray that you will come to know the real Jesus. He is not a chaotic God; Satan and the world are chaotic. He loves you, wants to save you and have a personal relationship with you, and wants you to know the truth!!!



the latest buzz

Every Christian magazine you pick up these days has something in it about “Roaring Lambs.” What started out as a book by Bob Briner has turned into not only a CD, but also a wake up call and a mini reformation of the soul. Check it out:

Bob Briner’s 1993 work “Roaring Lambs”, “celebrates people who are salt and light, affecting culture by being part of it.” It Challenges believers who have abandoned their call to live like Christ, and are instead living in their own Christian sub culture, a Christian ghetto. It describes roaring lambs as those who are not to spending their time criticizing and retreating from the “secular world” but those who are getting smack dab in the middle and acting as a light. It’s like that old saying, “It’s better to light a match than to scoff at the darkness.” We can easily shop in only Christian stores and buy Christian stuff and have a lot of Christian friends; and these things are all good. The problem is that if we are not careful, we can fill our lives with these things and shelter ourselves so much that we find ourselves with no one to witness to. In essence we are focusing on what we think is a Christian life instead of living like Christ. We have forgotten where we’ve come from, who we really are, and why we are here. “It’s time for believers to confidently carry their faith with them into the marketplace so that our very culture feels the difference.” says Briner.

Jesus knew where He came from, who He really was, and why He was here. I think the answer is to take a good look at Jesus life and how He lived among the people. Jesus is our example, right? What did He fill his days with? He went over to sinner’s houses and had dinner. (Luke 7: 36-50) Do we? He wasn’t afraid to touch lepers to heal them, taking the risk of getting leprosy Himself. Do we help the ones no one else wants, even risking harm or discomfort to our very lives and family? Jesus loved us with reckless abandon. Do we love that way? Jesus was selfless and didn’t care about the possessions He had or didn’t have. Do we?



evenly salted steak

St. Francis of Assisi once said to “preach the gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words.” A profound statement considering John 13:35 “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” If we are never around the untouchable how will they ever see our love for one another and them?

To Bob, it meant not only being salt and light every chance he got, but living a lifestyle representing Christ.

Bob was called to the business world and he saw it as much of a mission field as the tribes in Africa. Bob’s passion was to earn people’s respect through service, love, diligence, and grace, hoping to pave the way for the Gospel.

John Styll, CCM Communications president and publisher of CCM Magazine, recalls, “Bob had a way of encouraging me to do business not only more professionally, but with more humility and grace. By example he reminded me of the importance of thank-you notes and quickly returned phone calls and e-mails.”

Now, not all of us are called to be pastors or evangelists. But we are all called to serve and to love. Pastors and evangelists are called to serve and to love; they just have different gifts to carry it out with. In a sense we are all missionaries. The word missionary doesn’t even appear in the Bible. The idea is that missionaries go into an area where people need to hear the good news of Christ. They serve the people in various ways and love them because they are people, and because they need Jesus. Why not a missionary in an office, the theatre, or the ballet. 1 Corinthians states “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.” We are called to live like Christ did wherever we are. A tasty steak needs to be evenly salted right? Just like we are to be the salt of the earth, the whole earth.



one thing to note

On the "Roaring Lambs" web page when you click on the book discussion link a little box full of questions pops up. The box says "Take a quick moment and think about the following questions and consider their impact in your life."

At the end of the questions there is a rating scale. Saying that if you answered yes to 8-10 questions you are a bona fide roaring lamb. And if you only answered yes to a few questions then you are less of a roaring lamb. Don't worry, according to these questions, Jesus wasn't even a roaring lamb. They are good questions, but they won't make you a roaring lamb. Although walking with Jesus will, the Bible guarantees it

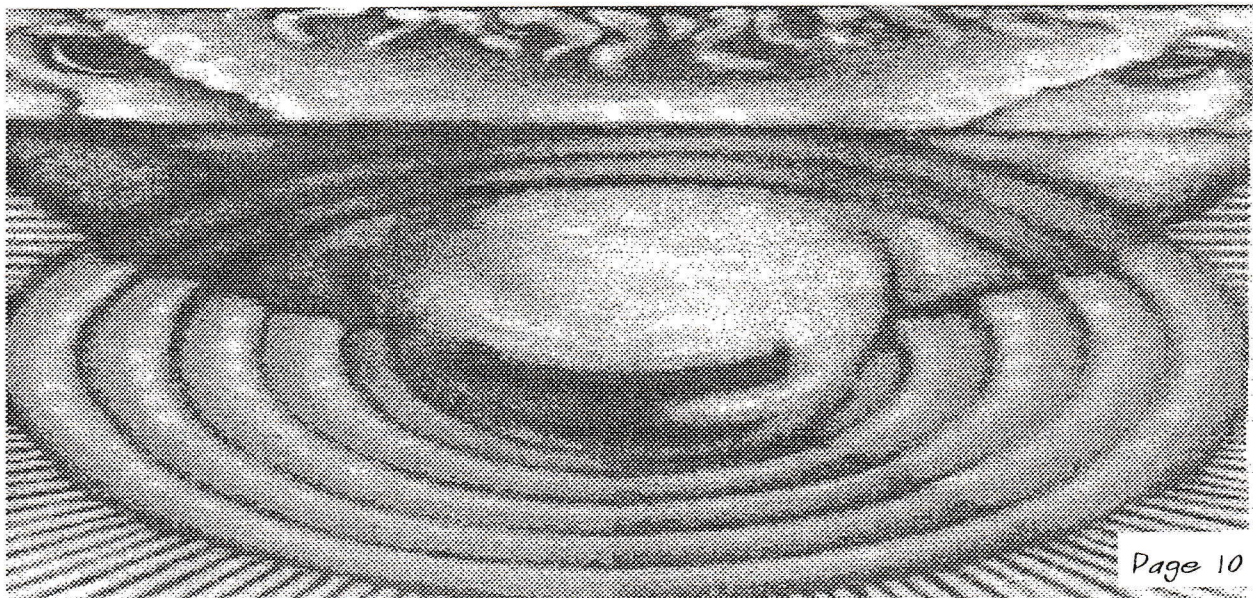
a legacy

What legacy will you leave? The funny thing is that people that leave extraordinary legacies didn't have it on the forefront of their minds. They all just loved God with reckless abandon, and had incredible selfless compassion for the lost. St. Francis of Assisi once kissed a leper because he knew it was hard for him to touch a leper. He forced himself to break through his fears to love others and be like Christ his Savior. Bob Briner's life was summed up with five selfless words: "How can I serve you?" He lived his life serving everyone, truly being salt and light, truly living like Christ. Michael W. Smith recalls the last time he saw Bob before he died of cancer in 1999: "He was laying in bed, half the size that he was, and I am sitting there praying for him. This was 10 days before he passed away. As I was getting ready to leave, he said 'Man, how can I serve you?' It was all I could do not to lose it. There he was, at his last breath, and he's trying to serve me."

Elisabeth Elliot, a missionary to the Auca tribe in Southern America, went back into the jungle to share the good news of Jesus with the very men that murdered her husband, Jim Elliot weeks earlier. Elisabeth wrote about her desire to share Christ: "To be such a clear representation of God the Father that even the most sinful man on earth can recognize God's love for Him and desire to be born again."

Jesus, the lamb that was slain, left the ultimate legacy: He served all through love until death.

Check out-www.roaringlambs.net

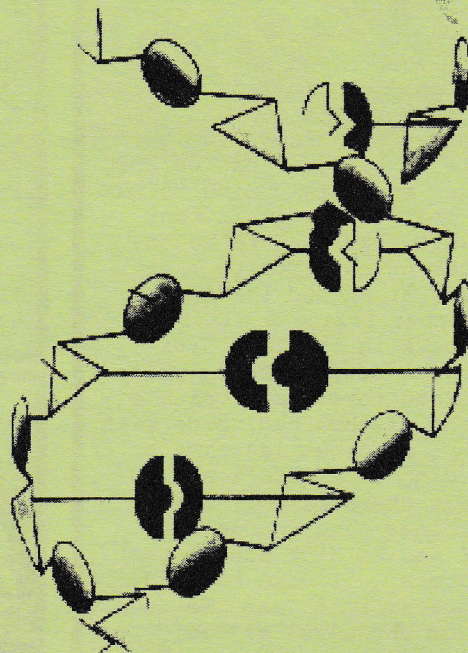


U N I V E R S I T Y C O P Y

***.Feed**
Jer-15:16
your words were found and I ate them.
issue.6

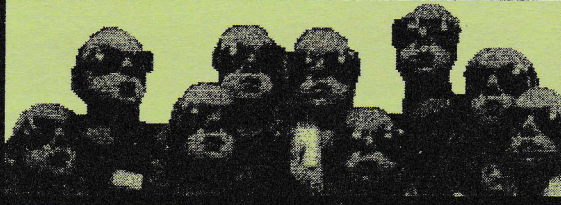
JNIVAC

>>the
manufactured
man



>>life without procreation

The Manufacturing of Man



Most of us have heard the phrase, "In the beginning, God..." Most people are familiar with the biblical teaching that God created everything in six days. Fifty years ago, I would bet most Americans believed that there was a God who created everything, including man. Times are different now. Most people do not believe in a God who creates. We, often without questioning, accept the other mainstream theory on origins... that being evolution.

We have pitched out the idea that there is even a God not to mention a creating God. In fact many theologians do not hold to what the Bible teaches on creation. The current trend is to believe that we are God. Many say they are coming to the realization that they contain many untapped powers that need to be unleashed. They often refer to a New Age coming...just around the corner.

I remember taking a class in High School back in the late '80s called *Twentieth Century World* where we discussed controversial topics of the day...many of them had to do with technology. I remember learning of genetic breeding of tomato's and potato's to make the *potatome*. Technologically, things have changed so much since I was in High School that the sci-fi books I used to read are now newspaper articles. We seem to be reaching the level of God. The greatest illustration of this recent advance in technology, in my mind, comes from the latest experiments in cloning living animals and prospects of cloning humans.

It was in 1966 that J.B. Gur-

don, from Cambridge University, first cloned frogs.¹(gish) In 1996, at the Roslin Institute of Edinburgh, Scotland, Ian Wilmut working with a team of scientists cloned a sheep from fetal and embryonic cells of an adult sheep.² In 1997 they had successfully cloned a sheep from an adult female sheep (though not widely known, a dead sheep). This sheep cloning experiment was a great advance in science to many as it blazed the trail leading up to human cloning.

An article taken out of the February 18th Sunday Edition of the London Times reads, "Work begins next month on creating the world's first cloned baby."⁴ A couple is working with an undercover organization, Clonaid, registered in the Bahamas, to clone the world's first baby. This couple wants to create a replacement child for their 10 month old son who died in a hospital operation. The article further states that Brigitte Boisselier, French-born biochemist and scientific director of Clonaid, said, "For us the purpose of this project is philosophical: to create eternal life,". It turns out that Clonaid is owned by the worldwide Raelian movement. This religious cult believes that all humans were originally cloned from a group of alien



scientists...aliens from outer space. The article further states, "Apart from cloning, the main preoccupation of Raelians is the creation of an embassy to welcome aliens arriving on Earth." (Times)

The cloning of Wilmut's sheep, Dolly wasn't as easy as we would have been led to believe. Dr. Ray Bohlin mentions, "Dolly was the only success amid 276 failures. There were 277 cell fusion's made, with only 29 growing as embryos. All 29 were implanted into 13 ewes with only one pregnancy and one live birth. Dolly really beat the odds. (Bohlin)

We are mistaken in thinking that we can create life. We have been able to manipulate that which already exists in our universe (created matter) but we have never created something out of nothing. In the book of Genesis, we learn that God created the world out of nothing... "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The word *created* is *bara* in Hebrew meaning *creation out of nothing*. God created the this present world out of nothing. Einstein's First Law of Thermodynamics declares that matter cannot be created or destroyed. Man cannot create or destroy matter. All we have done or ever will do is manipulate what already exists. I like to think of it as playing with God's Lego blocks.

According to the Bible, God made man in His own image, "And God said, Let us (triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26) Only man was made in His image. His *image* refers to the emotional and spiritual characteristics of God. God created us in his own image so that He could commune with us and enjoy our company. He did not create animals with the ability to reason, think, laugh or cry. Ani-

mals do not enjoy poetry. Animals do not like to watch foreign films. Animals are incredible creatures but they are different.

According to the Bible, we were created perfect, containing powers we would only dream of having today. But that ended when we chose the one and only wrong path. What was that path? Well, it was the desire to be God. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, degradation and death entered the picture. The Bible states that God created everything very good. Because of the fall of mankind in the Garden we do not see this world being very good. Scientists are now learning that our world has been slowly unraveling



rather than evolving.

So what is one to think about this cloning stuff? Well, from a biblical perspective, the times we live in are the darkest ever and will get darker (read Matthew 24 & 25). What's one to expect with a bunch of clones running around? Who knows? Will these clones have souls? Maybe, as natural born twins have souls. God is not surprised at this stuff. Jesus Christ came to die so that you can have HIS eternal life. His resurrection proved that He is God. He said, "if any man believe in me he will have eternal life". I'm looking forward to joining Him forever.

Sources:

-Bohlin, Ray *Cloning and Genetics-The Brave New World Closes In*, Probe Ministries, www.probe.org

-Cult scientists prepare to clone human baby <http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/news/pages/sti/2001/02/18/stinwenws01011.html>

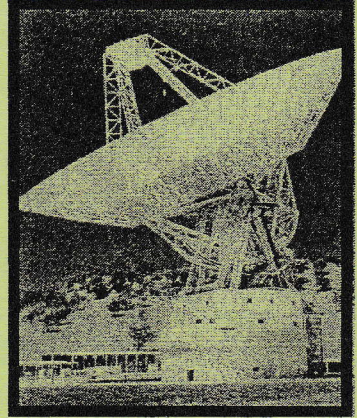
You got your ears on?

This past April, UW-Stout hosted guest lecturer, David Alexander, from Wichita State University. His lecture, titled, "Bringing Star Wars Down to Earth: The Search for Extraterrestrial Life", drew a large crowd of students, faculty and people from the area interested in this controversial and increasingly popular topic.

Dr. Alexander posed the question, "Are we alone?". He quickly answered, "Nobody knows the right answer yet." He commented that we did not find any traces of life on Mars back in the 1970's when we sent the Viking probe. He also spoke of the controversy surrounding the Mars Rock that has been in the news the last couple years and that Scientists are still divided over the issue of there being remnants of biological life embedded in the rock or not. Dr. Alexander also mentioned the possibility of water on the surface of Jupiter's moon, Europa. He did however, mention that it is hard for us to determine if there really is any life on Europa because it is impossible for us to travel to Jupiter to take a look.

What are the chances of us finding life out there anyway? Many processes have to be working properly in harmony for life to exist. Simply having a planet with water on it grossly misses the mark for a life sustaining system. If our planet were to be slightly closer or farther away from the sun, life would not exist. From the observable evidence, it seems that our earth was designed like a finely tuned machine rather than the result of two Carbon molecules swishing around in water, with lots of time (billions of years).

So say there is intelligent beings out there. Will we ever meet them? Proxima Centauri, our closest star, lies in our galaxy over 25 million million miles away. The Apollo flights to the moon took three days of space travel. If we were to travel at the same speed as the Apollo craft we would need 870,000 years to get to Proxima Centauri. Can we go faster? Well, lets try the insane speed of one-tenth of the speed of light...that would get us there in 43 years. The energy to get us there would equal about a month's worth of the electrical consumption of the whole world. Space also contains an estimated 100,000 dust particles per cubic kilometer which, being very small, and at a high velocity could easily destroy a spaceship.



From a biblical perspective, there is no mention of mankind running into other extraterrestrial life forms. Though God could create life elsewhere, He has not mentioned it in His Word. It's interesting that so many people will seek after E.T.'s so that they can explain away the God mentioned in the Bible.

I believe we live in a time, not unlike past times, where man is being distracted in any way possible from following a true and living God...A God that personally came to share His love with us.

If you are not sure of the God of the Bible, I encourage you to continue searching. I think if you are sincere, you will find Jesus Christ to be the true and living God.

The Testament--a Testimony

The Testament, by John Grisham, is a book that many readers are not soon to forget. The book begins with an angry, rich old man who is furiously rewriting his will moments before his death. Embittered and empty despite all of his riches, he leaves his \$11 billion fortune to his mysterious illegitimate child, Rachel Lane. This begins a vicious legal battle between his estate and his children from three ex-wives who, to their surprise, were cut out of the will.

Enter Josh Stafford, Mr. Phelan's top attorney who is to execute the will. It turns out that the will is not simple to execute because the only details left about Rachel Lane are that she is a missionary working somewhere deep in the jungles of Brazil. Josh recruits Nate O'Riley, fresh out of drug and alcohol rehab to make the trek to Brazil to find Rachel. The book focuses mostly on Nate, a disgraced corporate attorney who is running from the IRS and numerous other things. The novel is mostly about this journey, which is much more than just a physical journey for Nate. It turns out to be a very rewarding journey for him spiritually.

When Nate finally finds Rachel, she is living among a tribe of remote Indians deep in the Pantanal region of Brazil. To his surprise, she is completely content and at peace and promptly informs him that she wants nothing to do with the money. To Nate, this is absurd and he struggles to understand why someone wouldn't accept such a fortune. After spending some time with Rachel, though, Nate finds himself drawn to her. He sees a peace in her that he doesn't have and an innocence that he longs to have. Rachel tells him about Christ's love for him and Nate thinks that he has done too many terrible things for God to love him. Rachel explains to him that all he has to do is ask God for forgiveness and he can be forgiven. She even leads him through a "sinner's prayer."

Upon going back, Nate is appointed as Rachel's attorney and arrangements are made for a settlement to each of Mr. Phelan's children. Nate makes the trek to Brazil one last time to try and get Rachel to sign the agreement, only to find that she died of malaria shortly after he left. While in the small city of Corumba, Nate stumbles into a little church, and finds himself pouring his heart out to God and receiving the forgiveness and cleansing he was so desperate for. He is regenerated and made new.

Even though, the book still maintains Grisham's trademark legal wrangling, it is also a message to his readers. As one *USA Today* critic put it, it is "unabashedly spiritual without being doctrinaire." Grisham manages to tell of the wonderful love and forgiveness that Jesus offers in a legal thriller without it being "preachy." One of the best things is that it shows that a high-class corporate attorney needs Jesus just as much as an Indian living in the jungles of Brazil. He holds nothing back in displaying the emptiness of Nate's life and the joy that Rachel has in her utterly simplistic life. I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys Grisham's writing or even to anyone who enjoys reading testimonies of broken lives transformed by the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

STEIGER INTERNATIONAL

"Steiger International is dedicated to bringing the love of Jesus Christ to the darkest corners of secular society and to disciplining the global youth culture." The global youth culture is the largest unreached people group in the world. God has a broken heart for these young people and they need to hear that Jesus loves them."

This is the mission statement of Steiger International, a non-denominational, evangelistic organization that now spans the world. Steiger International began in Amsterdam, Holland in the 1980's. The word STEIGER means "pier" in Dutch. This ministry began on a barge on Steiger 14 behind central station when David and Jodi Pierce began a ministry to reach the radical underground scene in Amsterdam. On the boat, they held Bible studies that reached many punks and other secular youth resulting in the establishment of a church in the inner city. Steiger International has a number of teams based throughout the world that reach out to their local communities.

What if God told you to get up in front of a bunch of people, play Jesus music, and share the gospel even though you knew you had no talent and that you might be humiliated beyond your worst nightmare? Would you still do it? How far would you go to reach out to a lost and dying world who needs to know Jesus loves them? Would you sit on the corner of the street with a sign that says, "we will pray for you" speaking to all who pass by? Would you bring a coffin, set it up in the middle of a parking lot or carry it around the beach, and do a skit to share the gospel? Would you put yourself in a bunch of uncomfortable situations so that the people around you can know the freedom and joy of knowing Jesus personally?

These are just the sort of things that the people of Steiger Minneapolis are doing in order to show the love of Jesus to all walks of life. Mark Johnson leads the Minneapolis, MN base of Steiger International and works with a team of individuals who share the common goal of reaching the punk neapolis. This Minneapolis minis- the boundaries of the mainline and gutters to reach the desperate the saving light of Christ. Steiger Jesus to the streets. As did Je- seeking to save a lost and dying unreachable. Jesus Christ took world upon Himself when He died ger recognizes that there is no reach, no one too far gone, no sinning God's love.

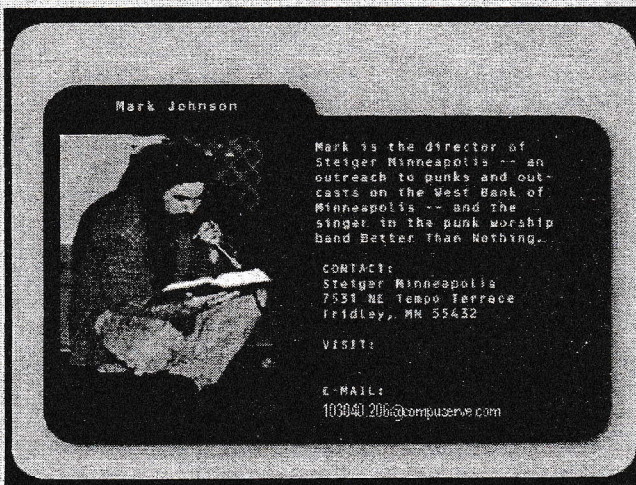
God is using this local population that many Christian connect with or are even afraid of many youth have been burned by their Hard Core Bible Study pro- for hard core punks and secular Word of God without the religion often surrounds it. Although the temporarily when their original funeral home) closed, they are new and improved location.

The Steiger House provides discipleship housing with an evangelistic twist. The disciples who live in the House minister to their neighborhood, to each other, as well as the house serving as an emergency shelter and providing temporary housing to people who are home- less and jobless and need a chance to get on their feet. During the summer, the group operates the "Jesus Kitchen," taking food, Bibles, and tracts out on the streets. The house serves as a safe place for neighborhood kids to hang out and hear about Jesus and His love for them. The basement of the house also serves as a concert venue.

God continues to use the Steiger Minneapolis team both on the streets of the Metro area and in the International ministry. Many members travel on both short and long-term missions trips. This summer, a group will attend the 2001 Steiger Minneapolis Ministry School. Upon completion of the Ministry School, the group will venture on the yearly trek to the "Rainbow Gathering," a hippie festival that meets each summer in a different location around the United States. The Gathering group brings Bibles, tracts, and dehydrated food, all of which they serve up free to anyone who wants it. Still another group is hoping to take Jesus' light to the annual Burning Man festival this year. One couple from the Steiger Minneapolis team is moving to India where they have committed to ministering at the Delhi House, leading a house for destitute children. Another couple is temporarily relocating to help local believers begin a ministry in North Carolina.

Wherever God leads them, Steiger is committed to reaching the dregs of society for Jesus Christ and sharing the love of Jesus with the people that Jesus Himself went looking for.

For more information, visit their website: www.steiger.org



Mark is the director of Steiger Minneapolis -- an outreach to punks and out- casts on the West Bank of Minneapolis -- and the singer in the punk worship band Better Than Nothing.

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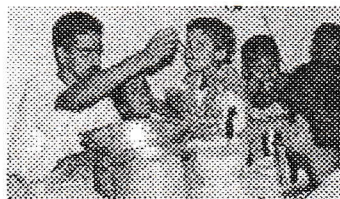
counter-culture in Min- try is reaching beyond church to the streets and the hopeless with Minneapolis is taking sus, this ministry is world, a world deemed the sin of the whole on the Cross and Stei- one outside of God's one capable of out-

ministry to reach a churches can't or won't In a day when so religion and church, vides an opportunity youth to hear the and formality that so study closed down meeting place (an old meeting again in a

DELHI HOUSE

India

A Ministry of Steiger International
REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE DESTITUTE
HOME AND EDUCATION FOR STREET CHILDREN
HIV-TB CLINIC, COMMUNITY OF THE POOR



Here is the December Newsletter written by Gaby Gerlach.

One morning after waking up, I wandered into the room of the boys and was greeted by a penetrating smell. My nose traced the source to Anil's bed. Below the bed lay a grey-black bundle that turned out to be a boy. His pants full of diarrhea, his skin black of dirt. After a bath with lots of soap and balm we recognized the boy to be Shakeel. He lived before in the Kids'house but disappeared a year ago. This night he came back, working his limble body through a narrow opening above the gate he made himself at home. When we found him at first, a year ago, he was a traumatic little boy, sexually abused by different men. His bottom a festering wound. He was so confused, so hurt... beyond his understanding. In the nights he cried, hitting his head against the wall and foaming out of his mouth.

More and more we find young men and kids abused in a cruel way. They are so emotionally disturbed and confused that nobody wants to live with them. There are some institutions, schools and therapeutic day-cares for the mentally disabled, but no home where these broken creatures can live and receive healing to their soul. A few days back we found Suresh, 13 years old. He lost his leg by a "train-accident". Suresh is deeply traumatized and rather psychotic. He lives in his own dreamworld. He claims to have 6 daughters which he has to find husbands for, then again bursting out in a Nepalese song, wildly shaking his body, drooling, wild eyed, smearing dirt over his face. Often he cries in the night or talks without pause insane stories, while ripping the bandage of his leg. He is now in Ton's house where he will receive skin-grafting and when that is healed, (quiet a challenge with this boy), a prosthesis. But more important than all this, he will find healing of heart and soul.

Kids like this need a surrounding, a family they can trust. People who can handle them with loving patience and help them to come into the presence of Jesus. It is always so encouraging to see our kids, how despite their broken past, they grow healthy in body and spirit. Jesus is real in their lives, not just a character out of that book we read from.

The need for our Ashram, our which we are acquiring at present, have place for these broken kids. children love and professional therapy that he just admitted 3 more going on epidemic forms among the all the addicts are HIV-positive, These guys would just die on the be there.



future community on the piece of land, is growing. On this beautiful land we will Here we can offer these traumatized apy. Tony, from our Rescue Center, told AIDS Patients in his clinic. AIDS is tak-drug-addicts of Yamuna Bazar. Almost sharing their needles and their disease. roadside if Tony and his team would not

Last Sunday the complete Delhi People in total were crowding to-songs of worship and thanks and going to give us also the surround-Close by a slum is growing out of making up camp. In their colorful rounding our property. They en-and looked with curiosity to this wondrous looking group of former destitute patients, different-abled kids playing cricket, guys in wheel-chairs, guys with crutches, enjoying the nature and each other.

House Family was on the new land. 70 gether. We brought our guitar, sang made an altar for our Lord Jesus. God is ing land, farmland with trees and a well. the ground, Bangladeshi immigrants are dresses they dotted the stone wall sur-joyed our music, message and prayers

Ton met the owner of the land bordering ours, provided him with a bible and told him that we would love to buy his land also. The man was sincerely touched by what he experienced this afternoon and is willing to sell his land and even, to donate a part of it for a work that is much on the heart of each devote Hindu. Why don't you build a church here, he said!

On this land a Hindu Temple and Ashram, a Sikh Gurdwara (ashram) and a Muslim shrine surround us. We want to be a blessing and a light to them. Unconditional love and service to those in need will reflect God's character.

Thinking about the "Delhi House Ashram", I always remember the story of the first apostles. The first Christians received regularly teachings from the apostles and spiritual guidance. They lived together as brothers and sisters celebrating the communion. They all possessed the fear of god, they were one heart, one soul. No one considered to have private property, instead of that they shared all they had. Called by God these apostles were followed by many miracles. This group of disciples regularly met in the Temple, in Salomo's hall, united by faith. The inhabitants highly regarded them and many came to Jesus. Sick people were brought out on the streets. On beds they waited for the passing by of Petrus by whose shadow the sick received healing. Even out of the outer villages they brought their sick and demon possessed and all were healed. (We are working on the shadow-bit.) However, we see that by having community with the poor and render our services so that the sick are healed and the possessed set free, hearts are touched... and we stand in high regard by the people and authorities....and many of them came to Jesus.

A thousand times thanks for all your spiritual and moral support, your prayers and gifts

-GABY GERLACH

More from the Delhi House on next page

Half the amount for the land came in and we believe that the other half will come in very soon. God is teaching us how to be good stewards. Good stewards with His provisions and the work He called us to do, never losing sight of His face, living in the fruit of the spirit. Please pray that God will give us also the farmland bordering ours. Please pray that we will stay true to our calling amidst these decisions and visions concerning the future Ashram and Clinic

Nirmal, the young boy whose body is ravaged by Tuberculosis is still at Delhi House. He is in a stable condition, that is, his deteriorated body which almost lost an arm, is slowly healing, so it looks. Still, he is at death's door and needs all our prayers. There is not one hospital or doctor that will take up responsibility for the medical treatment Nirmal needs. So I am now crossing limits in medical care.... Me; bandage and love.....God; healing!

The Rescue Center is venturing out also. As pioneers they have to find ways to answer to the great need among the drug-addicts whose bodies are destroyed by drugs and disease. At present there are 7 patients, the most of them hard-core heroine addicts, sick with a combination of AIDS, a fracture, missing toes or tuberculosis, etc. etc.

I thank you all for your prayers, your generosity and friendship shown to our children and us (big and small) during this last year. We will not forget that you all made this work possible. It is hard to express in words the gratefulness I feel towards you.

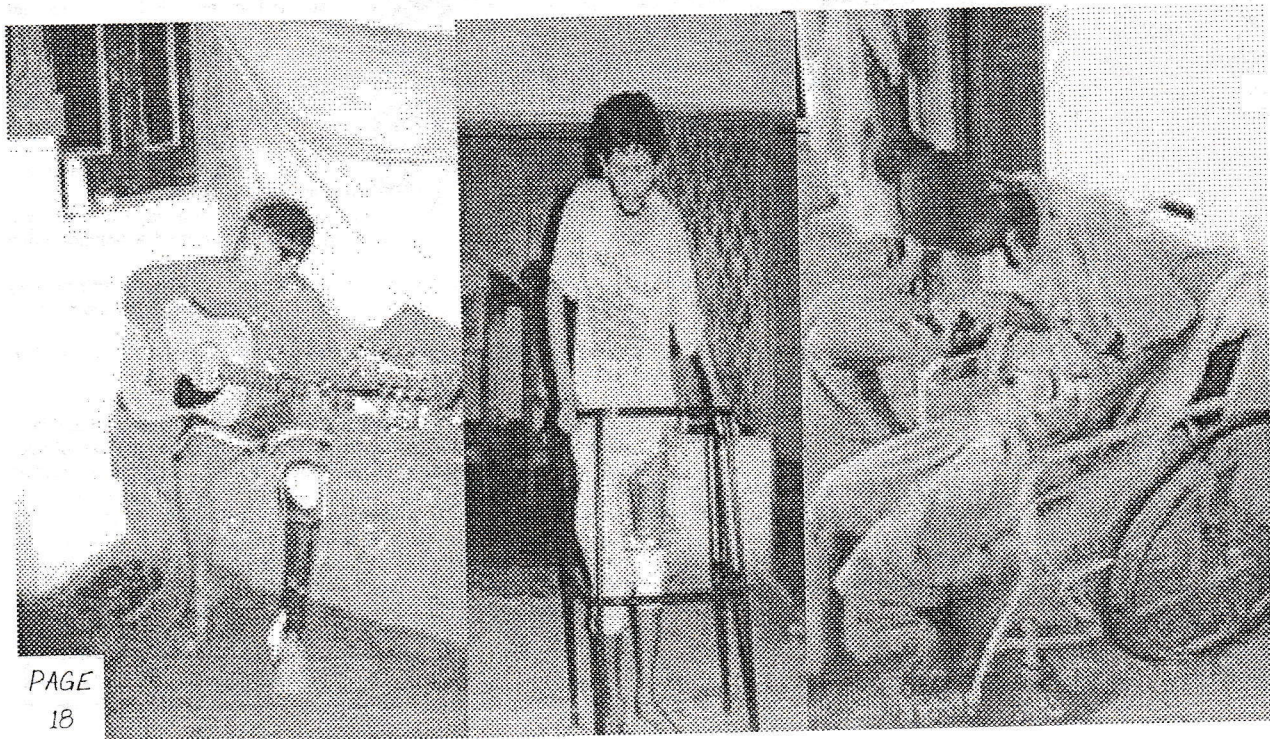
-TON SNELLAERT

If you want to sponsor this work please write out a check for Steiger International, with **DELHI HOUSE CLINIC** clearly written on the back and send to one of the addresses below.

U.S. Office: P.O. Box 1186 Northampton, MA 01061 United States
Toll Free: (888) 827-1782 Tel: (413) 667-3471
usa@steiger.org

European Office: Lessingstr. 36 D 76135 Karlsruhe Germany
fon: 0721 8306200 europe@steiger.org

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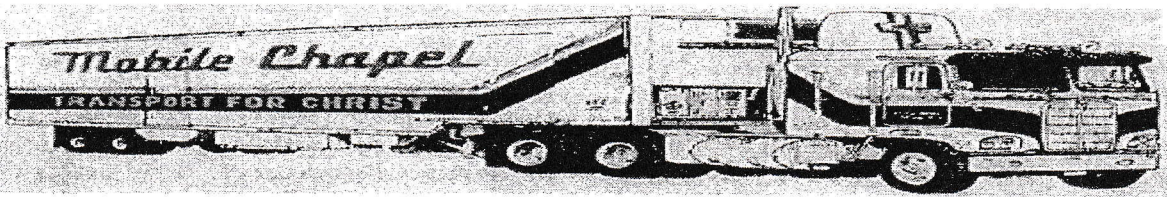
Check this box to receive more info about
Street Level Ministries

Address:



Mail to: Street Level Ministries
621 Wilson Avenue
Menomonie, WI 54751

Email:



What image comes to your mind when you hear the word "church?" Do you think of a quiet, somber building with stained glass and people dressed in their Sunday best? Or do you picture a building filled with people wearing blue jeans and t-shirts and praising God real loud? Whatever the case, Jesus comes to us wherever we are. He reminds us in His Word that wherever two or more are gathered, He is there. (Matthew 18:20) This becomes obvious when a person attends a church located in the parking lot of a truck stop.

So, what image comes to mind when you think of a truck stop? Sleepy, staring, coffee drinking, rough talking truckers? In Hudson, WI there is a truck stop called T/A at exit 4. If you stop at the T/A, you'll see some sleepy, staring, coffee drinking, rough talking truckers. That's not unusual for a truck stop. If you drive around to the north side of the building, you will find a small, mobile chapel. *That's* unusual. An evangelistic ministry called Transport For Christ (TFC) operates this chapel, called The Powerhouse, and others like it.

Established in 1951, TFC International is an interdenominational, international Christian organization dedicated to winning truck drivers to Jesus Christ and teaching them to grow in their faith. A pamphlet distributed by the ministry explains their purpose: "TFC works year-round on the home front to reach the trucker. Consider the fact that one of every six registered vehicles in this country is a truck. If you eat it, wear it, or sit on it, a truck brought it. The average over-the-road trucker is only home a handful of weekends a year. Loneliness, family problems, hazardous road conditions and constant pressure to meet deadlines wear upon the trucker as he spends weeks or months away from home. There is a tremendous need to touch the lives of these men and women with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The need for a personal relationship with Jesus never changes."

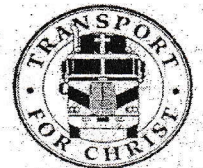
This awesome mission is accomplished in a number of ways. First, mobile chapels like the Powerhouse are located strategically throughout the United States and Canada. TFC has 24 chapels in North America and three in Russia. They are placed at key truck stops and are staffed by trained Chaplains every day, 365 days a year. They are unlocked 24 hours a day for drivers to come in for devotions, prayer, and fellowship. Tim Sackett, a Chaplain at the Hudson TFC Powerhouse, has been with TFC since 1992. When the Chapel moved to Hudson, he lived in his office located in the back of the mobile unit. He lived at the truck stop for three years. Occasionally, Tim had volunteer Chaplains take his place when he had time off to visit his parents. In 1995, he got married and bought a house in Hudson. He continues to spend a majority of his time at the Powerhouse. As a Chaplain, Tim provides counseling and encouragement to truck drivers as well as worship services on Sundays and Bible studies during the week.

Another way TFC's mission is accomplished is through special literature. Tim Sackett says, "Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28 when He said 'Win them over. Baptize them, see them saved. Then teach them everything that I've taught you.' So the second part of that Commission, teaching them to grow, is the hard part." TFC distributes free literature created especially for truck drivers. Their magazine, *Highway News and Good News* contains articles about Christian living and also a presentation of the Gospel. Each month, over 50,000 copies of this magazine are distributed to truckers throughout North America and they are always free of charge. They also distribute 18,000 copies of an edition of the New Testament called "Road Map of Life" to truckers. They also have teaching aids truckers can purchase or receive for free. One of these, a Bible Study called "God's Highway of Life," includes a three-part study. A man named Henry Grimm is involved with Follow-up Ministries. A truck driver can complete the written four-page study, send it to the TFC headquarters in Denver, PA and Grimm reads and writes back as to whether this new Christian is on the right track or maybe needs further studies. Then he sends them Bible Study #2. This follow-up gives the truck drivers who are studying the Word some accountability and encouragement. Finally, there is a series of teaching tapes the drivers can purchase or receive. There are ten tapes in the series and a Moody Bible College graduate does the teaching. The name of the series is "Eyes On The Son" and takes the new Christian through all aspects of the Christian life. This is a very important part of true discipleship.

TFC says, "Our vision at Transport For Christ is to place 100 permanent chapels in North America and to have a mobile ministry to truck drivers in every country of the world where there is a significant trucking industry." In addition, Tim Sackett has his own personal vision: "Number one, I want to inform. That's why I study the Bible, so I can teach it. I want to be a person who has information about the Bible and about God so I can share that. But I also want to do the second thing and that is to inspire. Information, when it comes to the Bible and when it comes to God, without inspiration is just more knowledge. But where there is information with inspiration it becomes transforming. So whatever I write, whether it's a sermon, a lesson, or a magazine article, I want to make sure that people walk away with the things that I say not just full of more head knowledge saying, 'Hey! I learned eight verses today in the sermon!' Those eight verses need to make a difference for the rest of their life. That's what I'm hoping to do. That's why we sing, that's why we pray, that's why we serve communion. I mean, it has to be the whole thing. I think we need to treat every day like that. But 95% of what we do is done, not during Sunday service, but with drivers one-on-one. A lot of my conversations start at the counter in the truck stop drinking coffee and talking, and eventually these conversations end up in the chapel."

If you would like more information, you can contact Transport For Christ by writing to:
 TFC International Office
 P.O. Box 303
 Denver, PA 17517

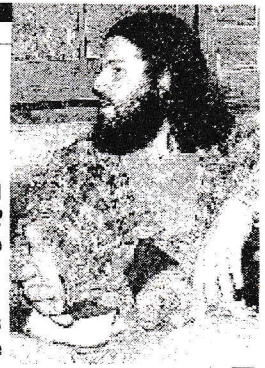
You can also visit their website: www.transportforchrist.org or email them at tfcio@aol.com.
 They can also be reached by calling (717) 721-9800.



Whatcha think 'bout that?

(students tellin' it like it is)

Hey y'all! In the last issue we kicked things off with a Stout student showin' us that "God has given us Not the spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind" – 2 Tim 1:7. Well Guess what?!? We kinda like hearin' from you college folks so we're gonna go diggin' for some more "Truth 'bout Jesus."



Our focus this time falls on a sophomore who is active in Street Level Ministries AND has been participating in lots of Bible fellowship (i.e. he's not the average "pew potato.") Let's see if he's got somethin' for us...

Q: In John 14:6, Jesus tells us He is the truth. What does this mean to you?

A: "I think this means that when all else fails you, and you're surrounded by uncertainty and lies, that you can be assured that Jesus will be there for you, and that what He has said is indeed true and will never change... I believe this means that the Bible is true, because John 1 says that He, Jesus, is the Word, and if He is also the truth, then it's saying the Bible is true."

Q: John 8:32 tells us "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Do you believe that simply trusting in Jesus can actually set you free?

A: "In a word? Yes. Pretty amazing that all you have to do is know that Jesus died for you, and accept that, and you will be eternally free."

Q: What has Jesus set you free from?

A: "I never have to worry about going to hell. If you think about it, I'm free from fear; what can possibly harm me with the creator of the universe on my side. Most importantly, He's freed me from sin. Sure, I still mess up, but I know that I will be spending eternity in paradise, and nothing can take that away."

Q: Are there any verses or stories in particular from the Bible that help keep you focused on Jesus and His truth?

A: "Not really any in particular. But for something interesting, try counting in the New Testament where Jesus says, 'I tell you the truth.' It's quite impressive. He's very emphatic about the truth."



MEXICO the second time around

Recently, a group of us went to Mexico on a mission trip. It was not my first time to Mexico. I went there two years ago, for what Americans normally go there for: to drink alcohol and hang out on the beach. At the time I was a born again Christian and I felt guilty for this, even though I knew I was forgiven. When I was forgiven of my sin, I was forgiven not only of my sins in the past but also the future.

We are all sinners and unable to save ourselves. Jesus Christ provided salvation to us through His sacrificial death on the cross. So if anyone goes on a mission trip to accomplish His will here on earth, we are thanking Him for what He has done. We are all unprofitable servants.

"Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat?' Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get ready, and wait on me while I eat and drink?' Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'" Luke 17: 7-10

On our way into Mexico, we spent a day in L.A. before crossing the border. Entering Mexico was like entering a different world. The foundations of a lot of buildings on hillsides were made out of tires filled with mud. There was a lot of what we would consider poverty. Garbage and refuse littered the streets. Wild dogs roamed everywhere. A lot of the buildings were under construction. If you left a big hole in your building, it wasn't considered a finished structure and the owner didn't have to pay property taxes.

In contrast, America seems rich, but we have a lot of spiritual poverty. We have poverty of the soul. It is the mindset that figures since there isn't any life after death or God, there is no reason to care for anyone but myself. Why not just fight, horde, and strive to get everything you can while you are here? The best car you can finance, the nicest house you can find in the best neighborhood, a beautiful wife or handsome husband, and two healthy kids. There is nothing wrong in itself with these things. What we need in life is direction and purpose. As a born again Christian, I know that the Bible is the road map to life and the instruction manual to one's soul. In the Bible, it's written that we will all reap what we sow. It is also written that if we desire the blessings of life, we must seek God's Kingdom first.



Spiritual destitution in God's Kingdom is caused by three things: pride, worldliness, and unbelief. God wants to welcome us into a Spiritual Kingdom. In this kingdom there are different standards of poverty. Gold is used in heaven as pavement.

I see the story model of the penitent thief as the basic guide for having a relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. Luke 23:35-43, "...The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the chosen one.' The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'" Then he said, 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth; today, you will be with me in paradise.'"

The Jewish leaders were looking for a king to rule the earth and conquer the Roman oppressors. Jesus came to usher in God's spiritual kingdom. Why would the Jews want a King who wouldn't even fight to save his own life? They challenged his divinity in their blindness to his spiritual authority. He came to save souls not only lives, to enrich the souls of his believers not to make them wealthy, and to be the Prince of the Creator's eternal kingdom not the figurehead of a corrupt earthly kingdom.

The penitent thief demonstrated the simplicity of salvation. He realized who he was, a sinner, and worthy of condemnation. He fears god, repents of his sin, confesses Jesus Christ as his Lord, and prays for salvation,

"Lord, remember me..."



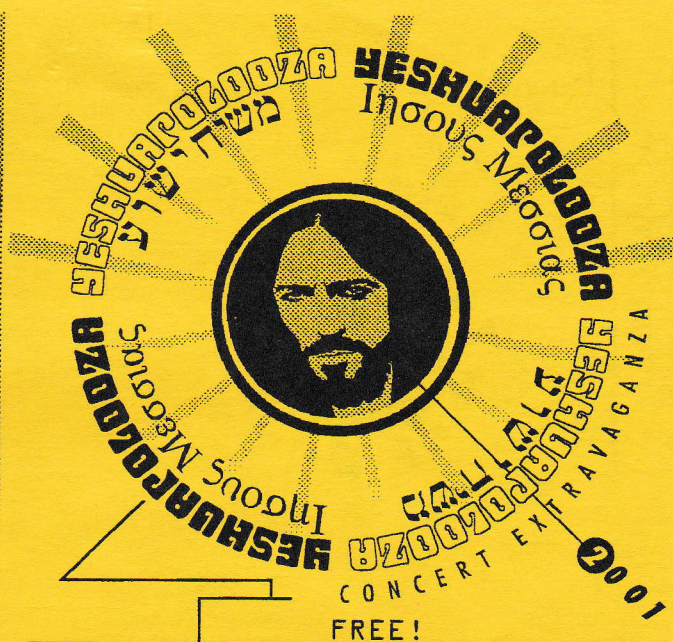
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