



ISSUE
NINETY-FIVE

LIVE, LAUGH, ~~LOVE~~

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CAMPUS MINISTRY)

FALL 2024

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Word^{on}_{the} Street

UW-STOUT EDITION

WELCOME TO WOTS

In your hands you're holding a copy of *Word on the Street* (WOTS) Magazine. We exist as an outreach of Street Level Ministries, a college Christian ministry with groups in various cities. We're glad you're here.

Established in 1999, this magazine is rooted in the belief that Jesus is the center of everything and following Him will open your eyes to truth and the life you were made for.

We meet every week to write and gather content as a group of young adults in cities around the

Midwest. We also have contributing writers from the Philippines, Amsterdam, and parts of South Asia. Our desire is to write about topics focusing on God, life, and the ever-changing landscape of the world we live in.

We hope this magazine is helpful, challenging, and thought-provoking as it encourages you to engage your mind and engage your world as you pursue your walk with Christ. **This life is too short to just go with the status quo. What are you waiting for?**

DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE GLOBE

— AN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE MAGAZINE —



University of Wisconsin-River Falls | **River Falls, Wisconsin**

University of Wisconsin-Stout | **Menomonie, Wisconsin**

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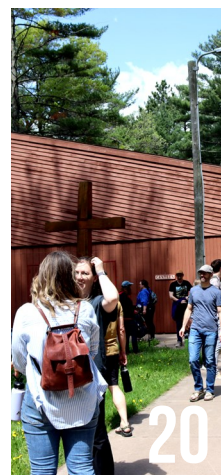
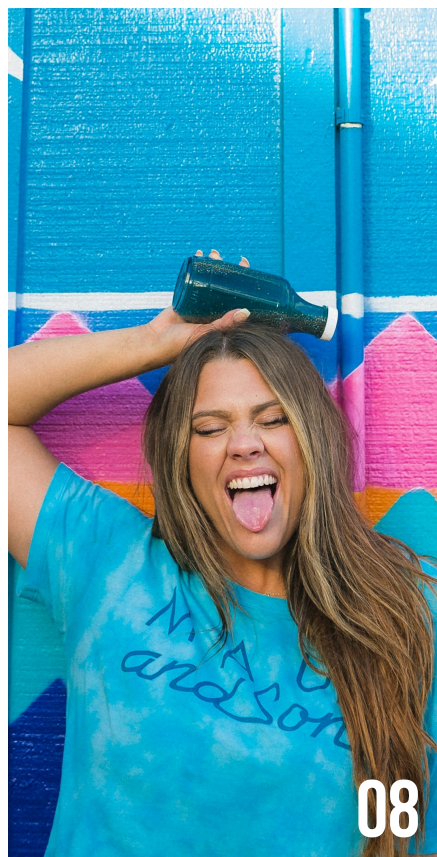
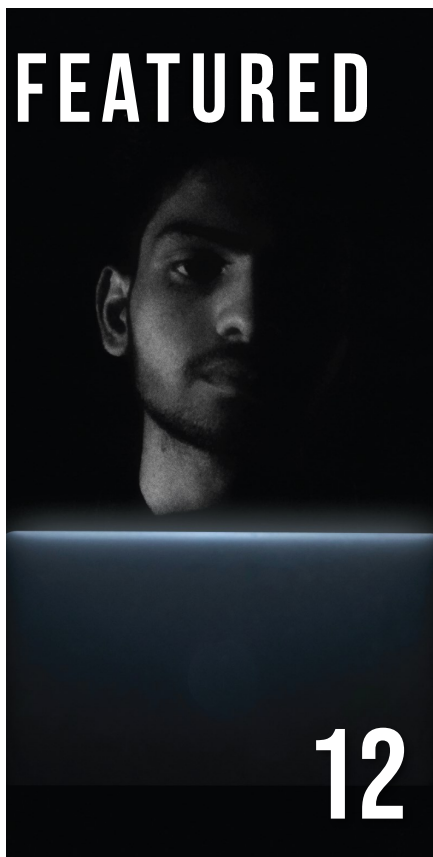
Businesses throughout **Amsterdam, The Netherlands**

Campuses & businesses throughout **Cebu Island, Philippines**

A special edition is also distributed in parts of **South Asia**

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ISSUE
95?

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RADICAL

STREETLEVELMINISTRIES.COM

average campus

ministry



Mondays

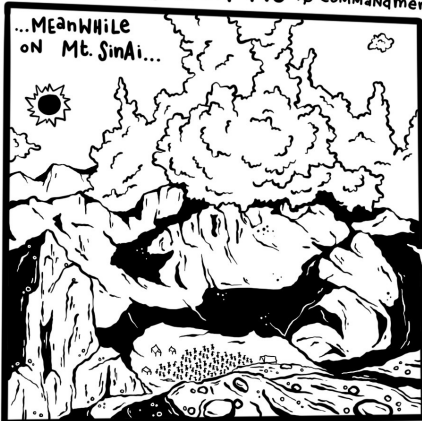
7pm - Gilbert Creek Room
Merle Price Commons

BELIEVERS
Campus
CHURCH

Wednesdays

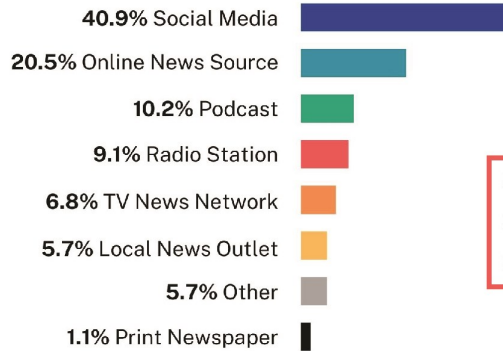
6pm - Free Dinner
7pm - Church
1009 6th St.E.

BIBLICAL ChickENS episode One: 10 COMMANDMENTS



STUDENT POLLS

Where do you get your news?



PEW Research Cewnter found that 50% of U.S. adults get news from social media sometimes or often. WOTS was curious about the stats at UW-River Falls & UW-Stout. The results are eye-opening.

uw-stout 34 students
uw-river falls 9 students
uw-madison 1 student

Science & Technology

"Elon's brain chip and the ethics behind it." - Zean

Finances

"Each class costs about \$60 per class period when you break down the numbers." - Aaliyah

Advice

"Expect the unexpected. Things can change in a heartbeat." - Cole

Faith & Religion

"I recently had a deep dive into religion and what it's been in our lives with my roommate. We're both non-religious, but it was insightful." - Edi

Controversy & Politics

"Land isn't just PROPERTY. There is a westernized/Americanized concept that land's use is to own it, rather than to live and love and grow. Land isn't just something to buy. It holds history." - Lily

Nature

"Being outside is good for your mental health." - Gabby

Work & Education

"In a helping field, you have to be able to put aside your biases to help." - Riley

Ideology & Philosophy

"The existence of two personalities inside one person: moral good and moral evil." - Teigan

Life & Health

"That even if it seems like it, not everyone is doing as good as they might seem." - Ari

What is one thing you learned recently that challenged your perspective?

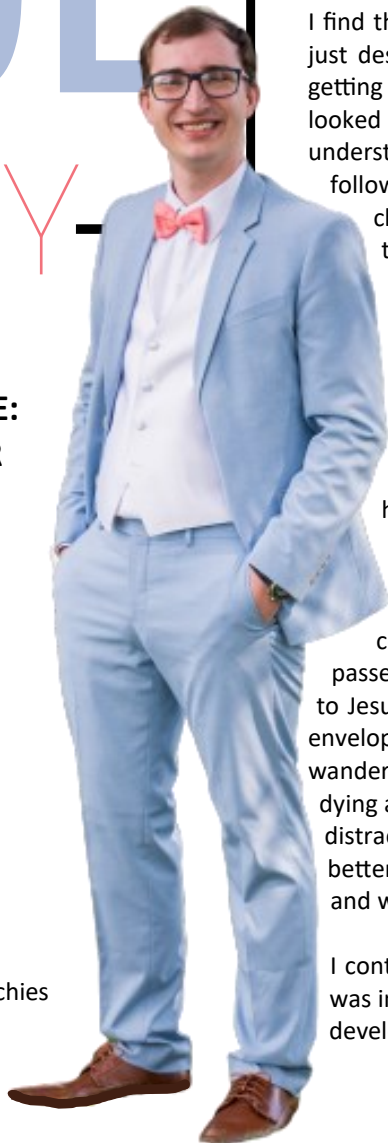
Here are the top responses based on category



ONE GUY'S TRUE STORY

ONE THRILLING RIDE: A ROLLER COASTER OF FAITH

Connor is a part of the Blind Munchies
Coffeehouse in Menomonie, WI



I remember as a kid, maybe 10 or 12, I loved going to my local theme park. This theme park had many thrilling rides, and I had been on most of them. This year in particular I was finally tall enough to ride the big roller coaster. Along with my sister, we walked to the start of the line, and suddenly the fear of the coaster became real. I felt overwhelmed with the tall hills and fast speed. It was daunting, and I no longer wanted to go on the ride I had been so excited for. With some effort, my sister was able to coax me into the line to face my fear. After a long wait, it was our turn to get on. As we walked to the seat, the fear overwhelmed me again, and I panicked. My sister grabbed my arm and told me it was going to be fine. I calmed down and took my seat. The coaster started to go and climb slowly. My nerves built, and I had butterflies in my stomach. We reached the top of the hill, and we very quickly whipped down the other side. I was filled with joy and excitement, and my fear was gone. After getting off, I begged my sister to go again. We rode the coaster many more times that day.

I find that my faith story is very similar to the memory I just described. I spent the first 20 years of my life not getting in the line to faith. I never really knew what it looked like to be a believer in Jesus, and I didn't understand why people were lining up to be His followers. I grew up in a family that did not go to church or believe in the Bible. On rare occasions that we did attend church, it was extremely boring. Faith was just something we didn't do – with the exception of my grandma. She was an amazing person, someone who was contagiously kind and had the superpower to talk to anybody about anything. She had a drive to be herself and to talk about her faith with others. She was struck with many diseases towards the end of her life, like dementia, multiple strokes, and half blindness in both eyes, but she wouldn't let that get to her because she loved Jesus. My grandma was truly someone who was on this roller coaster of faith. As a freshman in high school, she passed, and my family lost the light that connected us to Jesus. My family was hurt by her loss, and I became enveloped by the fear of death. I couldn't let my mind wander at night, and I would shiver at the thought of dying and there being nothing afterwards. I searched for distractions and ran away to things that made me feel better, like video games and porn. I was lost, scared, and without purpose.

I continued to feel alone, and avoid faith. Even when I was in college, pursuing my dream of becoming a game developer, I still felt like something was missing. My life



I NEEDED SOMETHING THAT WAS UNLIKE ANY OF THE OTHER THINGS I HAD TRIED – I NEEDED JESUS.

was going well, but I was still stuck in the same issues that made me feel ashamed and alone. I wanted to break free of those burdens but couldn't find the right things to help me. Then I met someone, someone who reminded me of my grandmother. She was amazing, and she believed in Jesus. We started dating, and my life began to turn around. I thought she would be the answer to my problems and hardships with life, but I still continued to mess things up. I even started to hurt this person I loved so much. I was in love, and yet I still needed something to help me break out of my sins and restore the relationship I was slowly ruining. I needed something that was unlike any of the other things I had tried – I needed Jesus.

So I started to take Him seriously. I went to the theme park and got in line to get on the roller coaster. At first it was a bit half hearted. Just attending church and being around other believers. But I started to feel convicted during the sermons and learned more about my sin and how it impacted me and those around me. I learned more and more about Jesus and how I could be born again into the person God wanted me to be. But it was hard, and the wait to get to the roller coaster was long. There were aspects about my life I hated, but there were also parts I wasn't ready to give up. I hit my breaking point when I was struggling with temptation. I cried alone praying to God to take my sins away from me. I prayed He would help me to start cultivating a real relationship with Him and to help me give my life to Him.

I remember being asked by one of the church members to come to a bible study on Wednesday nights. I was finally at the front of the line, and this was my moment to get on the roller coaster. Time to trust Jesus with my life. I had a panic moment, but I had many people around me to grab my hand and say it was going to be okay. Then the coaster started to move up the hill. Various actions propelled me forward in my faith: focusing on reading the bible every day, learning what the bible says, unlearning the things I thought it said, and

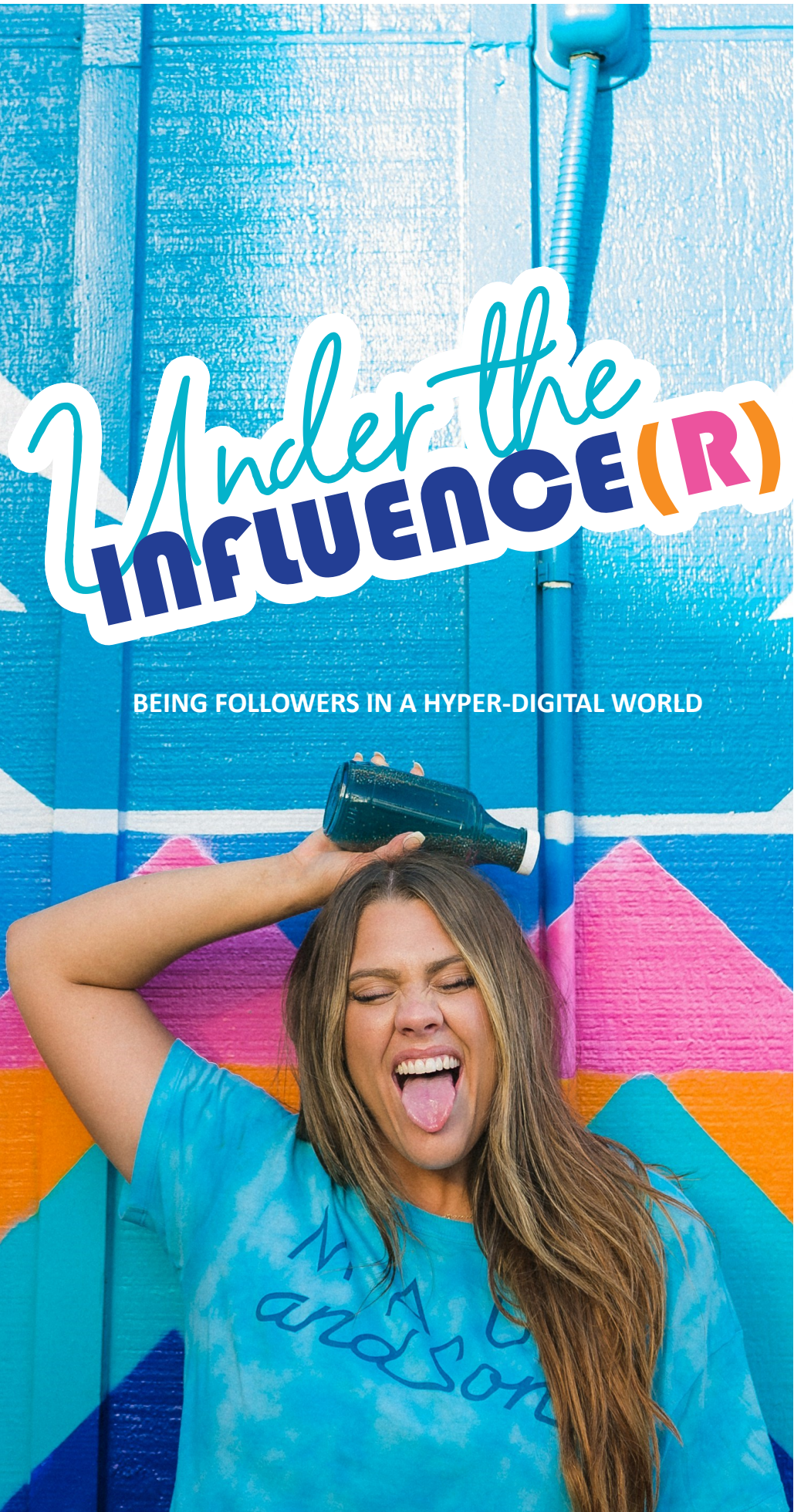
having fellowship with other Christians. I started to feel not so alone and more connected. I started to feel closer to God, winning my battles with sin. I no longer felt so trapped, and I had the freedom to pick God's way. My faith and trust started to grow.

Then I reached the top of the hill. As I whipped down it, God's blessings were poured out onto me. Over the next year I would experience the craziest and most challenging year of my life. I got engaged to the woman I love, and we were married three months later. My wife and I were baptized at our church. We moved to a new home together where we could be more closely connected to the church. We went on our first mission trip together. God pushed me to grow and learn more about what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Today I find myself excited to continue to get in line and ride the roller coaster of faith. With each ride comes new growth paths and learning. Each time I have to climb the hill to see what God has for me on the other side. My current path involves growing in discipleship through a doctrine class, getting more involved in service with church, learning about God's plan for my life, and becoming more connected with Christians and people around me.

I still have so much more to learn about God. I am still young in my faith, but I am also excited to see where He brings me. He has blessed me with purpose and grace. I am grateful to follow Christ and be a part of His church. My prayer for those trying to find that missing piece in your life is that you find the courage and faith to get in the line. You are created in the image of God, and He has amazing plans for your life. *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago"* (Ephesian 2:10, NLT).

- Connor



Under the INFLUENCE (R)

BEING FOLLOWERS IN A HYPER-DIGITAL WORLD

The familiar late-night glow of a 6.4-inch screen captures the eyes and imagination of nearly 6.9 billion smartphone users existing in the world today. That siren of the screen has our fingers scrolling through the latest shorts to see what everyone is up to, even if you have never met them. Something about seeing other people's innermost thoughts, desires, opinions, and adorable dog calls out to our deepest desires and keeps us wanting to see what's around that proverbial screen scroll (bend).

80 years ago, we were watching TV gathered around with our loved ones after a long, hard day at work; now we lay in bed alone watching people who seem to have direction in their lives tell us about their day, what they ate, and what their latest Target haul was (why are those fridge restocking videos so satisfying?). And it isn't just a nighttime thing; we grab a quick scroll through TikTok between classes, as we wait for the dentist, in line while waiting to check out at the store, and even when sitting around a group of friends. Once you start, it's like an addiction. You just can't stop. We are not just talking about those cute pet videos you send to your friend group chat, we are talking about all those people who fill your feed with their world (a carefully curated one) and all they want you to care about.

“WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? IT'S HARMLESS, RIGHT? IT'S A GOOD WAY TO UNWIND AND RELAX. BUT WHAT WE ARE REALLY DOING IS LITERALLY SUBSCRIBING TO PEOPLE AND THEIR WAY OF THINKING, LIVING, AND DOING.”

We like being in the special club that gets to unbox a new makeup product and see the mental breakdown they had this week because life isn't fair. These people tell us that they love us, that we are part of their family, that we are their community, and that we understand them in ways that even the physical people in their lives couldn't. Even if we don't follow specific people, we start building an algorithm of shopping vlogs, sneaker reviews, and police officers pulling over unruly people. We linger on the darker videos and listen to countless hours of people telling us what they think and believe, and as Christians, before we know it, we don't realize what's happening to us. We're under the influence.

TikTok has normalized not being normal. Where else can you act like a high schooler and do stuff you wouldn't do in front of a stranger on the street? YouTube has celebrated being normal, and now every platform has normalized American privileges as if they are expected and deserved. We ignore the realization that we rub off on each other, allowing us a platform for a socially acceptable way of giving into our innermost desires for self-indulgence.

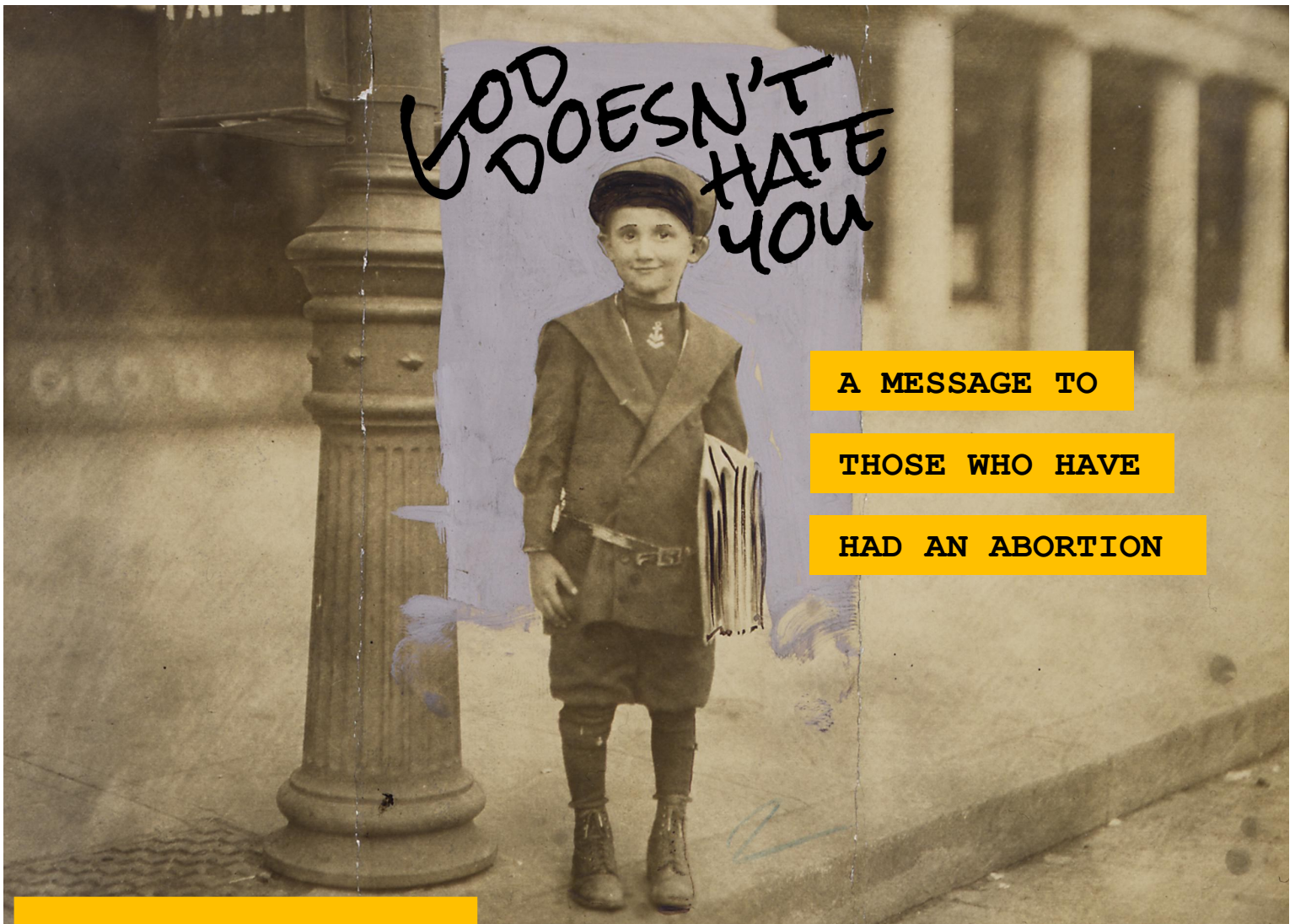
In the Bible, we have the *luxury* of seeing this play out time and time again. Samson had a ton of strength, but in the end, his lust and desires got the best of him when he married the wrong woman. King David, literally called by God a "man after God's own heart," stays home from war (maybe he was tired of the fighting and keeping up a disciplined life) and sees a woman he cannot resist and ends up murdering her husband so he can have her. We may not end up in that extreme of a situation, but we do see many ill effects of how we spend our time and what it fills our minds with.

Those finger scrolls on our screens do more than entertain us. They are our crutches, our safety net when boredom strikes; they make us feel like we are part of the bigger world if we are feeling insignificant, and let's go one step beyond that: "If everyone's like me, then I am alright." But as Christians, we are in this fight for God's Kingdom today. Ephesians 3:12 says, "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*" We are at war, and God gave each of us a calling to help and bring people to see Christ. David's answer to his sin was to turn to his own logic, but the further we look to the world for the answers to our boredom and comfort, the worse the response will be.

What's the big deal? It's harmless, right? It's a good way to unwind and relax. But what we are really doing is literally subscribing to people and their way of thinking, living, and doing. They make us desire things we never knew we wanted or needed to be whole. We allow their way of thinking to take center stage above the teachings of the Bible. When dealing with a hard situation, it's immediate gratification to turn to our screens and find the answers from the world (or the people we think wise). The more we escape to these people, these ideas, taking in what others think, the more we think like and look like the world—bottom line.

What happened to the wise, older Christians in our lives? The wise older saints, the passionate Jesus-following friends and family, and the pastors of our churches are among many voices in a sea of opinions, drowned (or deadened) by our preferences, which we allowed in by the current culture. What's the answer? Delete all social media apps, move to the convent, and only allow your eyes to take in re-runs of *Veggie Tales*? We are still called to live in the world, but the hard part is that we still are to be separate: "*Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one*" (John 17:13-15).

Instead of quick fixes and escaping from reality, who is our identity found in? Jesus, or the world? Who is king of our lives and hearts? Before you pull up your phone to pass a few minutes waiting in line, or when it's quiet and you want a quick distraction from that paper you are supposed to be writing, turn to Jesus. Ask Him to refresh your mind. Get in real community, too. Find a local church that can be part of the rhythm of your life and get some good influencers in your life.



Dear reader,

We know that abortion is a contentious topic. But instead of arguing about who's right and who's wrong, let's talk about the women and babies who are at stake. Abortion rates are on an uphill trend in America, largely driven by access to abortion pills in states that have fresh bans (according to a new study by researchers at the University of California), even at a time when more Americans than ever consider themselves pro-choice (according to Gallup). With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* over two years ago, the policy of abortion is going to be at the top of ballots and in and out of courtrooms for years to come. The problem when the word abortion gets thrown around and labels and verdicts get attached to it, is that the people, the women involved, are lost in the shuffle. If you've been there, or have a sister, a friend, or a roommate, who's been there, this article is for you. Is abortion right? We don't believe it is. Call us pro-life, that's fine, but that's simply not the end of the story. Being found wanting is not the end of the story. We all fall short. Maybe your story involves abortion, but it doesn't have to be your lifelong sentence.

Warnings, protests, and hate are thrust all over social media, billboards, on picket signs in front of abortion clinics, and on too many Christian faces. Though these messages can be right in trying to stop women from making irreversible decisions, they often come off abrasive, judgmental, insensitive, and unloving.

1 Corinthians 13 explains that, *"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."*¹ No matter how much truth is told, if there is no love alongside it, then it has no meaning. Jesus demonstrated how to speak to people who were weighed down by their own sin with equal parts truth and love.

In John 4, a woman at the well was met with difficult, convicting truth when she met Jesus, but He did not start speaking to her about her sin. He started their controversial conversation by asking her for a drink, which demonstrated that He did not judge her for being a Samaritan woman. Jews were not supposed to associate with Gentiles for fear of becoming "dirty," but Jesus had other intentions in mind.

He wanted to give her true life through Himself. Even when her sin of being an adulterous woman with five husbands was laid bare, He did not say what He did to condemn her. He said what He did to show her that though he knew all she had done, He still loved her.

He told her of a never-ending, fully-satisfying, life-giving



MAYBE YOU KNEW DEEP DOWN THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT FELT THAT YOU HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GO THROUGH WITH THE PROCEDURE BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN.

gift that she could have if she only believed. You can have this too, a rich relationship with the Creator of the universe that entails all things good: love, joy, peace, strength, power over sin and circumstance, and so much more. God made a way to redeem humanity back to him once and for all through His son Jesus, no matter how much Satan and sin interferes now.

An abortion is a gruesome experience, one that involves more than most people care to admit. Planned Parenthood claims on their site that there are no “bad” reasons for getting an abortion, but then why does the aftermath bring so much emotional turmoil for many women?²

Mayo Clinic lists the general physical risks and consequences of having an abortion, but they do not go into great depth of how it affects women emotionally.³ Life Clinic, on the other hand, explains that women may initially feel relief after the procedure, though they later may experience mild to severe regret, guilt, shame, anger, anxiety, and depression that can also lead to eating disorders.⁴

The common narrative is that having an abortion is a right, a form of healthcare, or even self-care. That idea is based on the wrong premise, however. It's making a decision as though the only one involved is you.

“I made a terrible mistake and I will never forgive myself. I killed an innocent child. My child. I wish I was educated and I wish someone would have offered their support. I wish to God I would have looked at that sonogram and then jumped off the table and ran out as fast as I could. It's been 20 years and the shame and guilt and heartache only gets worse. I'm so sorry sweet baby.”⁵

“... I was so naive that I thought my [baby] at 10 weeks... was just a ‘dot.’ I know it sounds absurd, but I really believed that. When the abortion was over, the doctor left the container by the side where I could see it. I was freaked out. It wasn't a ‘dot.’ Why didn't Planned Parenthood explain more to me? God, I've been in hell for 40 years.”⁵

If you have gone through this experience and feel the heavy weight of regret and shame of that decision, then this message is for you: *God doesn't hate you.*

In fact, He never stopped loving you, and longs for you to give that burden to Him to let Him carry it. Maybe you knew deep down that something was wrong in the first place, but felt that you had no choice but to go through with the procedure because of the circumstances you found yourself in. Perhaps you were too young, naive, poor, guilty or ashamed, unsupported or ill-equipped. No matter the reason, if the weight of the irreversible decision of having an abortion has crushed your spirit and caused near unbearable shame, then God wants to relieve you of this painful burden.

You may feel lied to, even betrayed, by the healthcare system or loved ones that were supposed to be a better support than they were. Though they may have let you down, God will not. He has the capability to redeem any decision you have made. You can rest in the knowledge that, “...by His wounds your wounds have been healed” and are therefore forgiven and saved from your sins if you believe in Jesus and surrender to Him.⁶

Finally, you can be encouraged that in the end, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”⁷

Whatever has happened in your life that you think is so unforgivable, it is simply not true. God is still here for you, wanting you to come out of hiding so an intimate relationship with Him can be restored.

¹1 Corinthians 13:1-3

²plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/campaigns/our-stories

³mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/medical-abortion/about/pac-20394687

⁴lifeclinic.org/considering-abortion/abortion-

⁵abortiontestimonials.com/i-will-never-be-the-same

⁶1 Peter 2:24

⁷Revelation 21:4

LIVE, LAUGH, ~~LOVE~~ LUST

WHY PORN ISN'T GOOD

Jenny was only in eighth grade when she was contacted by a man on Facebook and told she could make some money modeling. The man asked her to send videos, including ones of her naked. We know how this story ends...

Convinced she could make easy money and believing the promise that her photos would be kept confidential, Jenny agreed. She sent the videos, was never paid, and moved on trying to forget it ever happened. Until one day, her friend let her know her videos are on Pornhub, XVideos, and who knows how many more.¹ Hundreds of thousands of people have watched those videos for their pleasure in the quiet of their own home, most assuming that the girl behind the camera is happy to be posing for all to see.

Stories like this are all too common as the origin of and consent to participation in pornographic content are extremely hard to confirm. This is just one of many dangers advocates against pornography are bringing to the forefront of the conversation, and for good reason.

THE PORN INDUSTRY IS VALUED AT
\$97B GLOBALLY²

FOR MANY, WHAT STARTS AS **MERE CURIOSITY** ABOUT WHAT SEX IS LIKE SPIRALS INTO A HABIT MANY FEEL THEY **CAN'T QUIT** EVEN IF THEY WANT TO.

IT SEEMS EASIER TO **ACCESS** PORN ONLINE THESE DAYS THAN IT IS TO **AVOID** IT.

ESTIMATED THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE **FIRST EXPOSED** TO PORN BY
AGE 13

ACCORDING TO ONE STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2018,
91.5% MEN

THE STATS ARE LESS AMONG CHRISTIAN CIRCLES, BUT STILL NOTEWORTHY.

1 IN 4
18-TO-24-YEAR-OLDS IDENTIFY PORN AS A **HELPFUL RESOURCE** FOR LEARNING HOW TO HAVE SEX⁴

60.2% WOMEN
REPORTED WATCHING PORN OR SOUGHT OUT EXPLICIT IMAGES AND/OR WRITTEN CONTENT IN THE LAST MONTH.³

THE PORN PHENOMENON, A STUDY BY THE BARNAGROUP AND JOSH MCDOWELL MINISTRIES, FOUND THAT, OF CHRISTIAN 18-24-YEAR OLDS

41% CHRISTIAN MEN
13% CHRISTIAN WOMEN
WATCH PORN⁵



MANY STUMBLE UPON PORNOGRAPHY FOR THE FIRST TIME OR **ARE EXPOSED** TO IT BY OTHER PEOPLE.

Fight the New Drug is a non-religious nonprofit founded by four college students that want to provide others with the opportunity to make an educated choice regarding porn. Since 2009, they've raised awareness of pornography's harmful effects while holding to their values: "research-based, education-focused, sex-positive, and freedom-preserving."⁵

By bringing to light the strong ties of pornography and sexual exploitation, Fight the New Drug aims to educate others on the realities of what's going on behind the scenes. The grassroots movement cites secular, reputable sources that call out the damaging effects porn has not just on the individual who chooses to view it, but on those that person is around in the day to day, and on society as a whole:

*"A major study published in The British Journal of Criminology this year found that one in eight videos on three major [video] sites...depicted sexual violence or nonconsensual conduct. Some show intoxicated or unconscious women or girls being raped."*⁶

*"According to cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, pornography was the third most common form of sex trafficking, after escort services and illicit massage businesses."*⁷

*"Regular porn consumers might tell themselves that they aren't personally affected by porn or the toxic messages it perpetuates, but research suggests otherwise. There is no guarantee that porn won't affect a consumer's attitudes about sex in unhealthy ways."*⁸

Whether the scene is violent or not, repeated exposure to these videos and images normalizes the

content and rewires the brain. Viewers are training their minds to think differently about sex than it was made to.

“PORN IS A MASTER OVER-PROMISER. PORN'S NEVER GOING TO REFUSE YOU, ALWAYS GOING TO ACCEPT YOU, ALWAYS GOING TO BE THERE. IT FEELS LIKE IT'S ALWAYS GOING TO COMFORT YOU. AND IN THE MOMENT, IT DOES... BUT IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU NEED THE NEXT FIX.”

FALSE PROMISES

For some, viewing porn has become a regular rhythm of life. And there's a reason people turn to it and masturbation. They want relief. An escape. The stress and pain of life, an underlying loneliness, the lust for pleasure... Porn promises to alleviate all these. Porn has become a culturally normal coping mechanism.

For others, porn has become a substitute for pursuing an actual relationship. It's easier to live in a world of fantasies than to put

yourself out there and risk rejection. Living in scenarios you've made up in your mind excuses you from the effort it takes to get to know and care for someone else.

Porn is a master over-promiser. It's never going to refuse you, always going to accept you, always going to be there. It feels like it's always going to comfort you. And in the moment, it does. The Bible names what we experience when sin feels right in the moment: "fleeting pleasures" (Hebrews 11:25). The problem is they never last for long. Porn temporarily satisfies the gratification you're looking for, but it's only a matter of time before you need the next fix. The next time the craving comes around, you're addicted. If you think it doesn't have its teeth in you, try to quit watching and see.

GUILT & SHAME

Apart from the radical sex-positive community, it's rare that people want to admit that they watch porn. They do it to get their fix but few feel good about it. For many it brings on new levels of loneliness because they don't have that kind of intimacy in real life.

Especially for Christians who are well aware of God's plan for sex, a pornography addiction, or even the occasional "slip up," brings a raging level of guilt and shame. And rightfully so. Guilt and shame are not bad things. They're indicators. It's your conscience alerting you you're going the wrong way. The world will tell you porn is good and healthy. Then why does it feel so wrong?

A BIGGER PROBLEM

A porn addiction isn't just a "you" problem. Guilt and shame make us run and hide. We isolate and get irritable, and the people around us can feel the tension our sin brings. Choosing to watch porn might feel

¹ nytimes.com/2021/04/16/opinion/sunday/companies-online-rape-videos.html

² gjtnux.org/pornography-industry-statistics/

³ pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30358432/

⁴ fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-distort-consumers-understanding-of-healthy-sex/

⁵ covenanteyes.com/pornstats/

⁶ nytimes.com/2021/04/16/opinion/sunday/companies-online-rape-videos.html

⁷ polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf

⁸ fightthenewdrug.org/ways-porn-is-connected-to-real-sexual-violence-fast-facts/

like a personal decision, especially if you are single, but what decision in your life doesn't affect the people around you? Your sin and your choices directly affect those around you. If you're a part of a church, that includes those who are a part of that community.

If you're trapped in a porn addiction and want out, there is a way to live free. Jesus never told us to clean up our lives before we come to Him. Instead, He said just the opposite: "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent" (Luke 5:31-32, NLT).

To see change in this area of your life, you need to be honest with someone around you. It's time to get serious about sexual sin because God sure is. He says those who are sexually immoral will not see the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). While watching porn is no more of a sin than anything else (like over-eating, lying, or being a jerk), it's still a way people are choosing to live life contrary to the way God created us to. We're called to deal with any sin in our life, this one included.

The great thing about a Christian community is you can share the nitty-gritty with those around you and nothing will surprise them. We know that all have sinned and fall short (Romans 3:23). When you start to open up more to those around you, you'll build deeper connections and chances are they know exactly what you're going through, or maybe are there themselves.

A BETTER WAY

Romans 7 talks about the struggle of living enslaved to something you don't want to do anymore. No matter how hard the author tries, he can't stop doing what he hates. This is exactly what it feels like to be trapped in

something that God does not want for you, to be trapped in sin. With sex and all other areas of life, He's given us a better way.

God does not think sex is disgusting. He made it to be enjoyed. The only way it can be truly enjoyable and free of shame is to live our lives in this area according to His guidelines. If you have questions about sex, ask someone you trust! Talk to your friends; talk to married people in your church. The desire to have sexual intimacy is not a wrong thing, but if you look this up on the internet, you know where it's going to lead.

God is calling us to trust His way and not be reliant on ourselves for what's best for our lives. If you move to trust Him on this, don't be surprised when you're tempted to go back to it. Temptation is not a sin. You can choose to invite God in and ask Him to give you new desires. You can choose to lock down your browsing ability with accountability software. God promises to help us handle it: "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure" (1 Corinthians 10:13, NLT).

Jesus doesn't want you to be a slave to anything. He wants you to be sober-minded, self-controlled, and not at the mercy of any urge you feel in a moment. He came to free you from all your addictions and dependence on things that will not fully satisfy you. If you're ready to go to war, watch what God has the power to free you from. There is no addiction too strong for Him.

READY FOR CHANGE?

Join our faith-based mentorship program for those dealing with any addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling, food, porn, etc.). Call The Blind Munchies Coffeehouse in Menomonie, WI for more info.

STILL GOT THAT MONKEY ON YOUR BACK?



DEALING WITH ADDICTION? READY FOR CHANGE?

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From Girl to Boy to Woman

CHLOE COLE SPOKE AT UW-SUPERIOR ABOUT DETRANSITIONING



“I WAS ABLE TO RECOVER. I WAS ABLE TO HEAL.” IN HER FINAL WORDS TO THE AUDIENCE, SHE BOLDLY PROCLAIMED, “THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BEING BORN IN THE WRONG BODY.”

- CHLOE COLE, 19



Puberty is not supposed to be easy,” said Chloe Cole, a 19-year-old activist, before a crowd of college students, community members, and concerned parents at UW-Superior’s Yellowjacket Union. She described her childhood years as self-conscious, lonely, and awkward. “Everything I was going through was par for the course.” She further explained that, although she experienced tumultuous emotions and social discomfort during puberty, these are the typical ebbs and flows that any adolescent girl goes through during this time of life.

However, Cole’s reason for being at UW-Superior was to share the part of her story that wasn’t your average coming-of-age tale. Her mission is to bring to light the harmful effects of gender transitioning for children under 18, and her perspective on gender identity has the potential to draw a mixed crowd. Upon entering the ballroom, attendees were required to have their bags checked and be wanded by local police before entering for security measures.

“Life,” Cole went on to say, “didn’t match my peers during puberty.” She felt more comfortable around boys, was afraid of facing her femininity, and was bullied about her looks. Cole found a transgender community online, and she found others who she could relate to. After spending time in this community, “I emotionally gravitated towards the idea of being a transgender boy,” Cole said.

Today, Cole travels the country bravely sharing the personal physical, mental, and emotional harm gender-transitioning did to her and is doing to others. She described drugs that she was prescribed as a 13-year-old that put her hormones into a menopause-like state. She also received a double mastectomy at only 15 years old. At the time, she thought she wanted a different identity, but what she really craved was for adults to be adults, to teach her how to grow up, and to reassure her that the experience she was going through during

puberty was a normal part of life. Instead, the doctors and psychologists she met with influenced her parents to pursue gender transitioning for fear Cole would commit suicide. Cole wasn’t suicidal—she was just a kid developing into an adult, which is a weird transition for everyone.

Despite changing her gender and living as a boy for a few years, a new persona didn’t solve her problems. “No matter how much I tried to change my body, I couldn’t change being a woman,” said Cole. Towards the end of high school, she chose to detransition back to a woman. She shared that she felt the desire to one day become a mother and have a family of her own, and transitioning had robbed her of the opportunity to blossom into a woman naturally. During her initial detransition, Cole experienced another round of vicious bullying, including fierce rejection from those whom she once called friends in the transgender community. A few years have passed since her detransition, and she is still experiencing lasting physical effects, such as nerve pain.

The end of Cole’s talk provided an opportunity for questions from the audience. One attendee asked, “How do you stay positive despite receiving negative feedback for detransitioning?” Cole responded that her friends and family keep her going. In fact, she’s met many people like herself who have formed a community of detransitioners. When asked what adults could have done to help her, she explained how she felt isolated and would have benefited from closer involvement from her teachers and other adults. She thinks it would have helped if the doctors reassured her that, “It’s ok to be who you are,” or even told her, “No,” to gender transitioning since she was still just a child.

In light of everything Cole has gone through, she remains optimistic. “I was able to recover. I was able to heal.” In her final words to the audience, she boldly proclaimed, “There is no such thing as being born in the wrong body. Everything you have is a gift to you, and our lives are a gift we can only have once.”

A Time to Tarry

by Té V. Smith

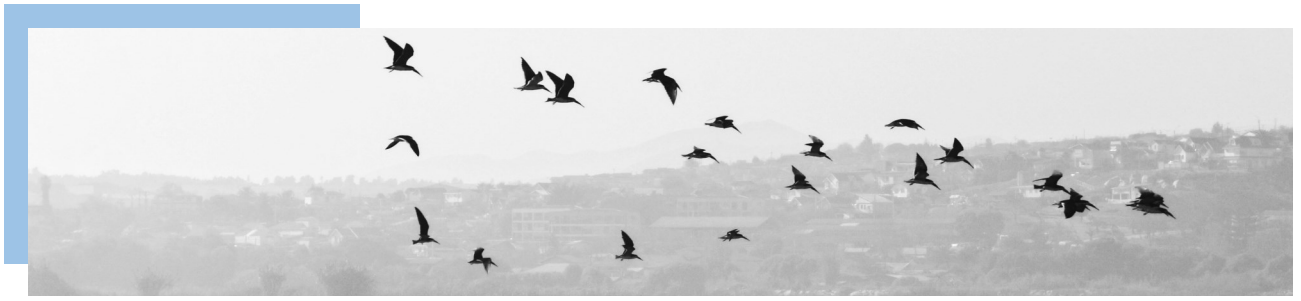
The first time you catch the holy ghost,
It grabs your mind,
 sets your soul,
 sets your sanity ablaze.

But,

on your first time, your very first time,
 you shrink like someone called your name, you're surprised because it's
 not the name assigned at birth, but one only a few know
 like *Long Head Ricky* or *Slick Rick* for Richard
 Not soft like Mama calling you *Richy*.
 Your body stiffens,
 you drop your head and tears stumble
onto the deep-rust-colored carpet
 that looks like dried blood,
 that looks like minutes after your mother fell, and
The deep red in her body crept across the tile as if she was
 s p r e a d i n g the gospel.

The first time your mother's body
spun out of control was on an ordinary Saturday.
The birds held their usual conferences about
worms or nesting decor outside your bedroom window.
The wind was new-day fresh as you
lay in bed daydreaming of breakfast.
That's a strange thing for someone to mull at the start of a day.
But, the weekend
guaranteed something warm, not the granola or pop tart
a school day permitted,
& Sundays were for church with no promise of breakfast before Sunday
school.
You romped down the hall toward the kitchen,
the thought of instant grits and toast already warm inside you;
your slippers seemed to find every creaky board on
the old wooden floors.
Each step
creak, crack, creak, crack
your very own theme music.
If you were a superhero, you would have been called
The Weekend (already taken), or
Saturday Man.
Either way, you were something special
on a special day heading for special start,
one foot in front of the other.





Something fell.

Something hard and large, large enough to
tremble through the house

& you doubled back,
stilled yourself and listened.

“Mom!”

It didn’t come from the bathroom—a loud thud and crash,
like a body or a lamp or a body hitting a lamp.

“Mama?”

You realized the noise came from inside her room.

& you ran, knocking over the kitchen nook barstool
& ran past the family photos lining the hall
& ran—no collapsed into her bedroom door as you swung
it open.

Something about the sight of
your mother spasming on the ground.

Her hair splayed across the floor,
life and its tributaries flow from the back of her head,
mouth opening and closing wordlessly like
a fish or toddler throwing a tantrum,
made you grow up.

Thirty-five minutes
& eleven seconds is how long
the sirens took to reach
the front of your apartment building.

This church is different
from Mama’s church.

The oak doors,
the sunlight streaming through stained glass windows,
the kaleidoscope of colors showering rows of pews,
are missing,
large yellow rectangular lights replace the vaulted
ceilings,
reaching towards heaven.

The people moan & pray loudly
The people express gratitude & dance even louder
as if each have headphones on and
are listening to a different section of the same song,
or caught the same dizzying sickness.

Symptoms are as follows: It starts with a heaving of chests, followed by hysterical wailing and wind or an invisible hand that sends faithful bodies bucking uncontrollably backward and forwards like wild bulls being captured or freed. Jerking. Reaching in every direction but within. Eventually, people wobble, drunk on holiness, until they collapse. *Slain in the Spirit* is what holy folks call it—Slain, like divine violence, murder by sacred magic. They lurch into broken movements like Daddy, after too much grief and dark liquor used to make him tipsy as a mountaintop before Jesus rinsed him decent—did a reverse water-to-wine to sober his sin-soaked soul.

The Ghost even clings to a few children,
who droop heavily in the aisles as if
they’d been marinated in the Lord.

The preacher tries to settle the crowd.
The music whines in rebellion,
you can tell a few people beside you won’t obey
& as if the painting, a crucifix of
Pale Jesus, with outstretched hands, has come to life,
another wave of the Holy Ghost spreads,
like God caught a second wind after
sprinting from person to person.
Shadows gallop across the wall as
the desperate and devoted dance, dizzy with praise and
cry themselves giddy.



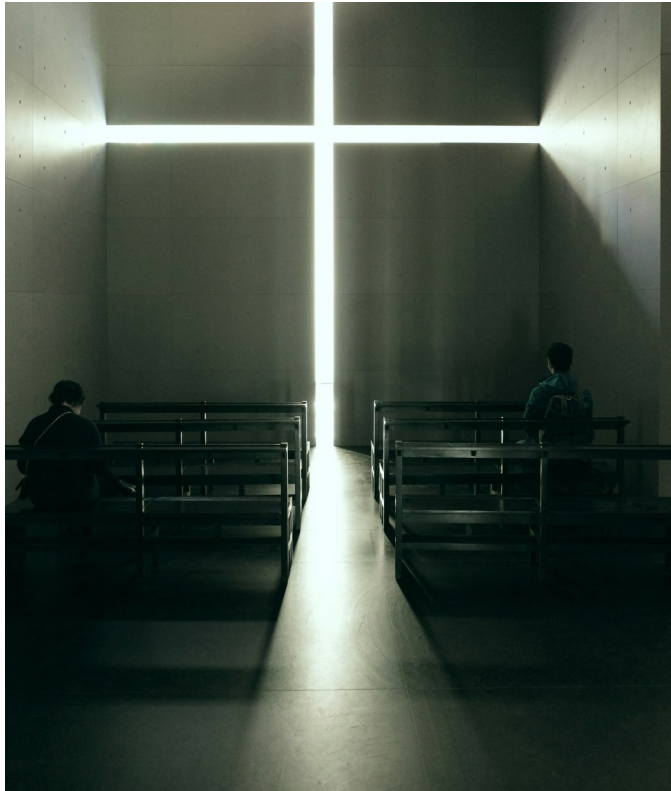
Read the rest of the story at
readwots.com. This story was
originally published in “Here We Are,
Collections of a God Gone Mad.”



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He will be speaking at UW-Stout in
September 2024. Visit
streetlevelministries.com for more info.

BELIEVERS COMMUNITY NEWS



Religious 'Nones' are now the largest single group in the U.S.

When Americans are asked to check a box indicating their religious affiliation, 28% now check "none."

A new study from Pew Research finds that the religiously unaffiliated—a group comprised of atheists, agnostic, and those who say their religion is "nothing in particular"—is now the largest cohort in the U.S. They're more prevalent among American adults than Catholics (23%) or evangelical Protestants (24%).

Researchers refer to this group as the "Nones." Back in 2007, "nones" made up just 16% of Americans, but Pew's new survey of more than 3,300 U.S. adults shows that number has now risen dramatically. Pew asked respondents what, if anything, they believe, and research shows that "nones" are not a uniform group.

Very few "nones" attend any kind of religious service; however, many claim to believe in God or another higher power.

"Nones" aren't all anti-religious. Many say religion does some harm, but many also think it does some good. Most "nones" have a positive view of science, but they reject the idea that science can explain everything.

"Nones" could also prove to be an important political group as Gregory Smith, a lead researcher on the study, says. "Religious 'nones' are very distinctive, among the most strongly and consistently liberal and Democratic constituencies in the United States."

Smith points out that "nones" are also less civically engaged than those who identify with a religion—they're less likely to vote. Within the "nones", however, atheists and agnostics are more likely to be politically and civically engaged, whereas those who responded that their religion is "nothing in particular" are far less likely to vote.

Pew also found that, overall, "nones" are less likely to volunteer in their local communities than religiously-affiliated adults. The survey also found that this group is less satisfied with their local communities and social lives than religious people.

While many people of faith say they rely on Scripture, tradition, and the guidance of religious leaders to make moral decisions, Pew found that "nones" say they're guided by logic, avoid harm, and desire to avoid hurting people when making moral decisions.

"Nones" tend to be young, white, and male. 69% are under the age of 50. Similar studies by Pew and other groups such as the Public Religion Research Institute have found that people of color are far more likely to say religion is important in their lives.

At first glance, "nones" appear to be evenly divided by gender. But digging deeper into the data shows that men are significantly more likely to say they're atheist or agnostic whereas women are more likely to describe their religion as "nothing in particular." Smith says that's consistent with other research as well, which shows women tend to be more religious on average than men.



American couple in their early twenties and one other missionary killed by gang in Haiti

Three American missionaries working for the organization Missions In Haiti, including a young married couple, Davy (23) and Natalie (21) Lloyd, and mission director Jude Montis (45), were tragically killed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The incident occurred on May 23, 2024, following an ambush as the Lloyds left a church. Davy Lloyd, known for his deep affection for Haiti since childhood, had been speaking with his father on the phone during the attack, describing the situation and pleading for help.

The assailants overwhelmed security guards and proceeded to loot the compound where the missionaries were based. Davy Lloyd was tied up, beaten, and subsequently dragged into a house, while his wife and Montis were also taken hostage. The attackers looted the compound and fled with their stolen goods. The situation took a tragic turn when more armed men arrived, leading to a violent confrontation.

Lloyd barricaded himself with his wife and Montis in a building, but the attackers managed to breach the defenses. All three missionaries were shot and Davy Lloyd and Montis were set on fire. Lloyd's burned body was later found at the scene.

The White House expressed condolences for the victims and urged the deployment of international police forces to Haiti to address the security situation.

cnn.com/2024/05/24/us/american-missionary-couple-haiti/index.html

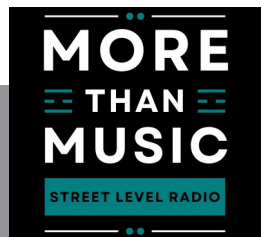
Despite the escalating violence in Haiti, Davy Lloyd's parents, who founded Missions in Haiti in 2000 and live in Haiti, have chosen to remain committed to their mission and the children they're caring for, declining opportunities to leave the country.

Missions in Haiti's website says its goal is, "to see the Gospel of Christ make a difference in the lives of Haiti's young people. Although the entire nation is steeped in poverty, the children suffer the worst. Thousands are malnourished, uneducated, and headed for hopeless lives apart from Christ."

The organization runs House of Compassion, offering housing for 36 children, split evenly between boys and girls. They remain there until they complete their education and become independent. Additionally, they manage Good Hope Boys' Home, accommodating 22 boys. The organization has also established a church, bakery, and a school with over 240 students.

The murder of Davy and Natalie Lloyd and Jude Montis underscores the dangers faced by missionaries and aid workers in Haiti amid escalating gang violence. Their unwavering dedication to their mission despite the huge risks highlights their profound commitment to serving people and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, they too agreed with the late Jim Elliot, who gave his life for the gospel: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

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Why You Need a

CHURCH

(NOT JUST A CAMPUS MINISTRY)



DON'T FALL INTO THE TRAP OF THINKING CHURCH IS OPEN TO INTERPRETATION

There's this phenomenon that happens every year across college campuses. Thousands of well-meaning, well-intended young Christians leave their hometowns to embark on their college education. A massive part of this transition involves saying goodbye to everything they're familiar with, including the church they grew up in. Some stop going to church anywhere, unfortunately (life got in the way, apparently). Others find something that resembles church in a lot of ways: a campus ministry. But is it enough? Will this placebo suffice for a couple years until they graduate?

"A campus ministry can be unmatched in helping students connect with other likeminded believers, especially in an ideologically hostile academic or social setting. A good one will help equip Christian students to defend the faith, serve the poor, and be held accountable to each other. A good campus ministry is a gift from God. But it is no church," writes Russell Moore, author and Editor in Chief of *Christianity Today*.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Moore goes on to say, "The reason many students identify primarily with a campus ministry rather than with a church isn't because of any flaw in most campus ministry organizations. It's because, too often, we evangelicals have a deficient view of the church. We assume it's any gathering of people who believe in Jesus and who do churchly things. Many Christians assume the church exists simply to help us learn more about Christ and pool our resources for missions."

However, that assumption about church doesn't hold water when you go to the Word of God. If church was merely a gathering of Christians, then you could argue that not only could a campus ministry be a church, but almost any gathering of a couple of Christians could be considered one too. That's not the case according to the Bible. Church is so much more than that.

Moore describes it like this:

"In the Bible, a local church—with all its ridiculous flaws—is an unveiling of the mystery of the universe (Eph. 3:6). She is in a one-flesh union with Jesus such that, as in a marriage, everything that belongs to him belongs to her (Eph. 5:22–33). A congregation, in covenant with one another as an assembly of Christ's people, is a colony of the coming global reign of Christ (Eph. 1:22–23), a preview of what his kingdom will look like in the end (1 Cor. 6:1–8). Where there is a covenant among believers—a disciplined community of faith—the Spirit of Jesus is present among them, just as God was present among the people of Israel in the temple of old (Matt. 18:15–20).

"When the church judges a repentant sinner to be a genuine believer, the congregation is speaking with the authority of Jesus when they plunge him beneath the waters [speaking of baptism] (Matt. 28:18–19). When the church judges an unrepentant sinner to be persistent in his rebellion, it's with the authority of Jesus that the congregation pronounces him to be a

stranger to the people of God (1 Cor. 5:4–5; Matt. 18:15–20). When we gather for worship as a congregation in covenant with one another, we’re not simply fueling our individual quiet times with praise choruses. We’re actually ascending to the heavenly places together, standing before Christ and all of his angels on Mount Zion (Heb. 12:18–29).

“The Scriptures reveal to us what we would never discern on our own. The church—not an ideal congregation but the real one you go to every week, with the lady who smacks her gum and the man with the pitiful combover hair and the 1970s-era audio system and the kids banging Tonka trucks on the back of the pew in front of you—is the flesh and bones of Jesus. It’s his body, he tells us—inseparable from him as your heart and lungs and kidneys and fingers are from you (Eph. 5:29–30; 1 Cor. 12:12–31).”

In summary, it’s incongruous to say, “I don’t love being a part of church, but I certainly love Jesus.” It is comparable to saying you adore your friends, but you never actually spend time with them. Like, what? Your attitude about Jesus *and* His church reveals a lot about where your heart really is. If you’re just “taking a break” or thinking “it’s not a big deal,” just try that same line with your mom this December when she asks you about your Christmas plans.

FINDING THE BALANCE

Alright, so maybe you’re convinced now that church is important to God, but knowing the truth and actually doing something about it are two different things, especially when things seem at odds with how it feels. Frankly, a campus ministry can often just seem more spiritual, like they’re more alive than a local congregation. Perhaps you’re meeting people left and right there that seem “on fire” for the mission of Christ, more so than anyone you remember at your church back home. It should be inspirational, but it also needs to be tempered with the fact that sometimes it is zeal without direction—“youthful idealism.” Church, by contrast, is filled with people who are young and old, rich and poor, black and white. These differences mean friction will arise—not everyone will cheer a wild idea to advance the gospel, for example—but it also means that zeal for the gospel could be channeled into more impactful, far-reaching ways with the guidance of more mature leadership.

All of this to say, however, that campus ministry is still

relevant. Being involved in one while in college is vital. So where is the balance? Here is Moore’s advice, and our recommendation, too:

“First, resist the temptation to keep your membership in your home church. Join a church in your college town, as soon as you find one with a commitment to Christ and the Scripture.

“Second, find a church where some people will know your name, and will know if you aren’t present. Find a place where someone will kindly ask “Where were you?” if you miss a week.

“Third, spend some time with people in your congregation who aren’t in the same place in life as you—a lonely senior adult, a harried 30-something mom, a sarcastic 14-year-old kid.

“Fourth, humbly pester the leaders of the church for some way for you to exercise your gifts in the congregation—and let the leaders recognize and encourage your gifts. This means submitting yourself to serve the body in whatever way the church deems necessary. Most often, this will be something more Christlike than glorious, such as cleaning toilets or serving in the nursery.

“Fifth, find a campus ministry that seeks to work alongside the church. Look for a ministry that wants to enhance what’s already happening in your life in discipleship and spiritual growth and mission in your congregation. Be very wary of a campus ministry that isn’t constantly asking you, “Where are you in church—and what’s happening there?” And be very, very wary of a campus ministry that seems to resent the time you spend with your church as “competing” with their ministry.”

So, be sure to find, and get deeply involved with, a good campus ministry. (We recommend Street Level Ministries!) Take every opportunity to serve and lead, both within your campus ministry and among your classmates through your example of faithful living. But also be sure that you don’t miss the place and call of church during your college years. Being actively involved in a local church may feel “slower-paced,” and might feel optional, but it’s part of God’s unfolding plan. Don’t miss being a part of it.

Wanting to find a good church that follows what the Bible says? We recommend Believers City Church, located near college campuses in Menomonie and River Falls, Wisconsin; Duluth, Minnesota; and Cebu City, Philippines. For more information visit believerstogether.com



RONA



ELIZABETH



GLADNESS



JOSHUA



DAPHNE



PETER

The Strange Reality of Being a

CHRISTIAN

COLLEGE STUDENT

An interview with Rona, Gladness, Joshua, Peter, Elizabeth, and Daphne – members of Street Level Ministries from the Philippines and USA

If you are to truly live out your Christian walk while being a student, you are choosing to enter a high stakes environment that will constantly pit your understanding and willingness to engage against the changing, biting tastes of this world. You'll also grow tenfold and see a side of Christ you wouldn't have if you had just stuck to the standard shadows. Are you ready? Read on to gain insight from a few everyday Christians just like you who have chosen to enter in the strange, new dimension of college life as a true follower of Christ.



TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU WERE CHALLENGED AS A CHRISTIAN WHILE IN COLLEGE.

Rona (R): Explaining to classmates about the Bible was hard because they saw God as someone not important. They assumed I was just trying to add them as a member instead of trying to invite them to my campus ministry (Street Level) or church. I just wanted them to know Jesus.

Gladness (G): As a leader in my church while in college, managing my time wisely was challenging. Preparing for church responsibilities, while staying on top of my studies could default to duty, but I had to fight to make sure it was actually because I wanted to serve God and be close to Him.

Joshua (J): Most of my classmates aren't Christians, so they base their opinion on what they saw on social media to decide what's right for them. My views as a Christian are very different, and when I don't agree with them it tends to turn into

arguments. I love to debate, but I have to stop myself because it's not always worth it since they are blind to the truth.

Daphne (D): I had to make the choice to walk away from someone in my life because I could see how that relationship was making me distant from God and my family in Christ. I never realized prior that doing something I wanted to do (putting God first) could be so conflicting and challenging.

Elizabeth (E): I had to decide how I was going to prioritize my time with God, where I was going to church, and how serious I was going to be about my faith in the newfound freedom of all college had to offer.

WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH RIGHT NOW? HOW ARE YOU FIGHTING IT?



(R): What God is calling me to today may not make sense, but I don't have to understand it to obey. What helps is simply serving God and pleasing Him. It also helps to be around more mature Christians who correct me and I can build real relationships with.

(G): Deciding where I am supposed to go next, such as pursuing a career and finding a job. I know God has better plans, though, and I want to commit to ministry.

(J): I can trust myself too much, as if I have all the answers. I have to ask God to humble me and give me knowledge that's from Him.

(Peter): I am struggling to avoid sin. I know I am fighting it because I'm not comfortable about it. Recently, I began to read the Bible daily, which is going pretty good.

(D): I've been struggling with the insecurity of growing as a Christian. It

feels like puberty all over again—but spiritual this time. Rather than ruminating on my imperfections, I am working on turning to God when I mess up and surrendering my failures to Him right away.

WHY ARE YOU SURE THAT BEING A CHRISTIAN IS HOW YOU WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?



(R): It's easy to think that shiny objects and dreams have the answer to life, but they never quench your thirst. My inner heart always knew there was something more because of how empty I felt. It's a constant inner battle unless you know God. I have found that Jesus is worth it all in this life and the next.

(J): When I studied other religious figures like Buddha, Confucius, and Muhammed, they just said to follow a certain life path and rules. Jesus is the only one who said, "Follow Me." He's the only one that actually gives life meaning, but He is difficult to follow. Following rules would have been easier.

(D): I ran for so many years. When I thought I was too far-gone, Jesus chased me and welcomed me home with open arms. I finally hit the bottom of myself and realized I needed Him. I feel at home with Him, and I never want to leave Him again. Looking back at who I was and where I was before Jesus (or "BC"—Before Christ) is a dark place I never want to go back to.

(E): I am sure I want to be a Christian for the rest of my life because I have found nothing else that satisfies like Jesus does. I trust He is worth more than anything I could sacrifice.



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