

Introduction

Ministering to the Underground Sub-cultures

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You can find them on the street corners of any major city, they wear black or disheveled clothes, have many parts of their body pierced, their hair is weird, they talk of anarchy and declare that they are Satanists. Who are they? They are Punks and Rockers or, as they have been more recently called, "Generation X" - the Alternative - Underground Sub-culture. At first, most of us thought that this was just another fad and that, like other fads, it would just fade away. But, if anything, it is growing larger.

The interesting characteristic of this underground sub-culture is that it is almost worldwide. For instance, if you look alternative you can go to Europe, South America, Asia, even some places in Africa and the Middle East, and you will immediately be received by the underground there. The thing that connects these people is music. Here we listen to groups from all over the world and they do like-wise.

Why is this Significant?

Right now there are many parts of the world where God is moving but these movements have very little effect on us because they take place in the context of completely different cultures. Often, if we try to transplant what is happening there, it doesn't work in our culture. Alternative people are the outcasts of almost every culture so if God were to move in the underground, because it is so inter-connected, it would be like a wild fire going from country to country and culture to culture. Then from the fringe of each culture the fire would begin to sweep into the center.

This is exactly what happened about 25 years ago; in 1971-72 thousands upon thousands of Hippies from countries all over the world found God and came into churches as the "Jesus people".

Gradually, this has changed the whole character of church. Before the "Jesus People" movement, church had hymns for worship, a mid week evening Bible study at the church, where the pastor taught and everyone listened, and the pastor's Sunday message generally in the tone of a Parent to child.

After the "Jesus people" movement, choruses and contemporary worship began to be added. Though gradual at first, now most churches have all contemporary worship. Next, because the "Jesus people" were activists and radicals, they weren't satisfied with just sitting and being taught, they wanted to be part of the discussion. The church began to have discussion-type bible studies which eventually moved out of the church and into people homes and on every night of the week.

Finally, the "Jesus people" didn't want to be treated like children and have a parental figure get up every Sunday and point his finger at them and tell what bad kids they were. So there was gradually a change in preaching style to an adult to adult approach. I believe that God is getting ready to change things all over again with a new underground sub-culture.

The question is, are we ready? What would happen if a group of Alternative kids who were recently saved came into your church this Sunday? They have all different colors of hair, piercings all over their bodies, they are a little rowdy and (because they are just new Christians their language isn't cleaned up) one of the young guys comes up to the pastor and says, Shit that was a good message!

Would the older Christians, let their love cover a multitude of sins and not put religious stumbling blocks in front of them? Would they welcome the young people in with open arms or

would these young people begin to feel the cold shoulder and slowly realize that they weren't welcome the way they were.

I don't think God is going to release His power in the underground until there are enough churches and ministries ready to protect all the new little lambs He wants to bring into the kingdom. He doesn't want them slaughtered by the wolves just waiting for an opportunity.

Understanding Generation X

As Christians, whose task it is to take the gospel to every living creature, how then do we reach these young people? It seems that everything that they stand for is contrary to what we believe.

Unfortunately, the church is under a misconception which makes it even more difficult. Generally, the attitude that the church has taken toward the sub-culture is, "these are good kids who have gone bad, so we need to get them out of it and bring them back to the good." This basically says to young people, "unless you come back to the middle class you can't have Jesus". We wouldn't word it that way, but isn't that what we are communicating?

How do you reach a people group who are usually so negative?" Is the question I kept asking myself when God spoke to me about reaching out to this sub-culture. As far as I was concerned, they were mouthy, rebellious, ungrateful and angry Satanists and anarchists. Try as I might, I just couldn't see how God could do anything with this group. Sure, I had seen firsthand how He had been able to touch the hippie sub-culture to birth the Jesus people movement but that was different because there I could see some common ground.

They wanted things like peace, love and freedom, similar to the views of Christianity, but this new group seemed completely opposed to everything that I and my faith stood for. Fortunately, God sees what we do not and He began to work on my heart over the next 3 years to totally transform my attitude.

He began the process during a conversation with two young people in our church; we were talking about secular heavy metal music and the negative effect it has on people. One of them said, "Well it's like that line from the AC/DC song "Hells Bells", (WE ARE TAKING YOUR CHILDREN TO HELL AND NO ONE IS PUTTING UP A FIGHT). I was so startled that I asked him to repeat it, and then asked if he was sure that it actually said that. I couldn't believe the arrogance of the devil. Not only was he doing it

more openly than ever, now he was bragging about it. My second reaction was in the form of, "them those are fighting words!" I felt that someone had to put up some kind of a fight for these kids.

Heavy Metal Concerts

I decided that a good place to start, was to take a couple of these young guys and start going out to the Heavy metal concerts that came to town, not to protest, but to witness and pray. I had heard from a friend who worked on the streets, that whenever one of these the openly Satanic bands came into town suicide and Satanism would increase after they left, like a wave of evil being released each time they played. Therefore, along with the evangelism, we decided to also take seriously the need to bind up the spirits that came with these musicians, in order to stop these releases and to stop the spirits from doing their work.

As we continued to go out to these concerts over the next couple of years, we saw 3 significant things take place:

1) At a number of the concerts the enemy's spiritual power was totally shut down. We were even able to read about the results of our prayers in the reviews the next day; sometimes they would even comment on the exact things we had prayed for.

2) As we shared Christ with these young people we began to find out that they weren't exactly what we expected. We discovered that most of them had come from really hard, abusive backgrounds and that their rough outside was basically a cover for all of the hurt inside.

3) At some of the concerts the Lord would prompt me to just stand and pray for the people. As I did this He would point out a person walking by and I would hear Him say, "no one has ever prayed for this person, would you please pray for him/her". As this happened numerous times a night at each of the concerts, I began to see that this was a forgotten and neglected generation that very few people have cared about, including the church.

Why the Anarchy

Even after studying the cultural philosophies I still had a hard time dealing with the anarchy and the Satanism because I just couldn't seem to get a handle on why these were popular. I brought this dilemma to my friend who worked with street kids downtown and he was able to give me some helpful insight.

He pointed out that, for many of them, their first exposure to authority was in the home, where they had parents who abused them. This abuse either continued, or led to, their being put in foster homes. For many of them this didn't help because they were then abused by these new authority figures. Then, when they complained to their social worker (the next authority figure), they were often not believed and were left in the abusive situation or had to run away.

Most of them, also because of the above problems, did poorly in school, which again brought them into negative confrontations with the school's authority figures. This pattern then continues on with the police, government officials, landlords, etc. until, from their perspective, "authority is corrupt so let's get rid of authority and have anarchy instead."

The way my friend's ministry had learned to respond was, "You are right, authority is corrupt, and that is why Jesus is coming back because only He will rule the world with true justice. In the mean time, instead of being an Anarchist, which leaves you with nothing, why not become a Godarchist, (obeying authority, not because it just, but because God has told us to) and end up with true justice and eternal life."

Are They Really Satanists

For some of these young people, the Satanism is very real and they have embraced it in rebellion to God but for most of them that isn't the case. For them it is more by default than by actual choice and far more for show than real belief.

This second group has a dilemma because they know they are in need but since they have cut out authority figures and resources from their life, where then do they turn to get help?

The one place that they should be able to turn to and find help is the church but unfortunately, when many of them have they tried to go to church (and we were shocked to find out how many really had tried) instead of acceptance and love most of them found rejection.

Therefore, they travel on down the line and end up with Satan, who seems to be the only one who is interested in them. But instead of helping them, he destroys them.

We, on the other hand, as the church, need to be there for these needy young people, helping them with an attitude of love and acceptance. I was talking with one of these young fellows, all dressed in black and a musician in one of the local punk bands, and he mentioned to me that when he was

younger he had gone to church. I encouraged him to try going back but he told me they would reject him. I suggested that maybe it was a misconception and he should give it a try anyway. "No" he said, "I have tried going back and they did reject me".

Then I told him to come to our church because he would be accepted there. He took a long, careful look in my eyes and said, "I believe you, there is something different about you". He asked for my phone number, so he could call me if he wanted to talk more. I realized that the difference he saw was the love I had for him. I don't know where along this process it happened but that night I realized that God had actually changed my heart, I really did love him and for him to find a person, who loved and accepted him, instead of rejecting him, spoke volumes to him.

Try to see it from their point of view: when they try to go to church they get rejected and then, as if to add salt to the wound, church people come down to their streets and yell at them, telling them what horrible sinners they are. This is their picture of the church. Most of them have never once experienced a Christian who genuinely showed them love instead of rejection.

If this was the extent of your contact with the church and Christianity, how do you think you'd feel, and how in the world would you ever find God?

Cross Cultural Missionary Work

Slowly, it dawned on me that this truly was another culture (or as some have called it, "a tribe") and that I was actually being called to a type of cross-cultural mission.

This meant that I needed to learn their language, their values and even their perspective on life.

Positive Aspects of the Alternative Sub-culture

The other thing I began to discover was that there were actually some positive aspects to the sub-culture. For instance, they love creativity, honesty and sincerity and they hate hypocrisy. Also, most of them won't compromise their principals for materialism. I found that, as with all cultures, there are some aspects that are contrary to the gospel and some that are more consistent.

This entirely changed my perspective on the ministry. This was when I began to see that we weren't called to get good kids who have gone bad

to come back to the middle class church. Instead, our goal became to teach them how to walk with Christ in their own sub-culture or, in other words, to be in it and not of it. This way they become the salt and light to the next generation so we don't neglect another one.

Also, in my studying I discovered that there wasn't just one group, but that there were a number of major groupings:

- a) Punks** - Usually dress in black, have outrageous hairdos with shocking colors and unusual styles, and many of their body parts are pierced and filled with weird jewelry.
- b) Rockers and Alternatives** - Usually have long, out of control hair, either a disheveled shirt or a T-shirt with graphic pictures of their favorite bands, worn out jeans and a leather or jean jacket.
- c) Skin Heads** - Their heads are totally shaved, they wear short jeans with suspenders, high laced Doc Martin boots with different colored laces (each color identifying a different faction) and tend to be most violent of the sub-cultures.
- d) Skaters** - Usually long hair hanging in their eyes, long baggy shorts, and they will either be on or carrying a skateboard
- e) Goths (Gothic)** - Usually all black clothes, white or pale faces, black make up, black hats, often spiky hair, they hang around cemeteries and many of them are very artsy.
- f) Retros** - They dress very much like the old Hippies. They are into organic foods and often are vegetarians.

What do they think about Jesus

They have a hard time seeing that Jesus is really for them. One night, when we were talking to the kids on the street, I gave a young guy a tract that we had made up. When he looked at it he said, "Oh, that's not for me". He said it in such a funny way that I asked him what he meant and he said, "Well I don't have a job and a big car so it's not for me", and he was dead serious.

I then understood how much we, in the middle class church, had changed Jesus into our own cultural image.

Consider this for a moment, Jesus

- 1) Was only 30 years old
- 2) Was uneducated
- 3) Didn't have a place to lay His head
- 4) Was an international refugee
- 5) Grew up with the mistaken stigma of being born out of wedlock
- 6) Regularly criticized and pointed out the hypocrisy of the senior pastors and denominational leaders of His day
- 7) Spent most of His time hanging out with longshoreman, prostitutes and the equivalent of punks and rockers.

In your opinion who does He sound more like, a normal church member or one of these street kids?

Next, consider this: if Jesus came today, how many churches would be willing to hire him as a senior pastor? Not many. He was too young, uneducated and far too radical. Yet somehow we have so changed the image of Jesus that these kids find it hard to believe that He is the "friend of sinners" (punks and rockers). This has got to be changed. We need to present to them the real Jesus before they can find the real salvation.

Reaching out to the Underground

1) **The first** and most important way to reach out to these young people is to see past the outward roughness and just love and accept them, period. They need this more than anything else you could ever give them.

2) **Second**, whenever you see these young people please pray for them (remember you may be the first and only person to ever pray for this person), they really do need it. This is one of the clearest ways to let the enemy know that someone is going to put up a fight for these kids.

3) **Third**, using the vehicle of music. "Studies show that teenagers will listen to an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between the 7th and 12th grades alone," (*U.S. News and World Report Oct. 28, 1985*). Music does play a major part in their lives (far more than when we were growing up) and, therefore, it is a very effective vehicle.

a) Encourage the young people in your church, who probably know the kind of music that will reach their friends, to start a band which can be used in reaching out to this new generation. If it is not the kind of music you are use to; please be patient and long-suffering with them, as long as it is Christ-centered, encourage them to use it for Him as an outreach to their generation.

b) Another possibility would be to buy some CD's of the number of the good Christian Alternative bands that are available and give them to these kids.

4) **Finally**, these young people are far more visually oriented than our culture so a picture is worth 10,000 words. Vivid graphic art is another very effective tool for reaching them. Instead of thinking, "what can I say to these young people", think, "What picture best communicates the message I want to them to receive". This may even involve word pictures.

Ministry hints

Here is something that I have noticed and, to me, shows why we need each other. Generally, the older the person is who has a ministry, (e.g. Zine, band, outreach, ministry center, etc.) the more burden and vision they tend to have but less ability to convey it in a relevant way. This group has been called to mentor the next generation into it's calling.

It seems the younger they are, the more relevant they are, but they often seem to have little burden for ministry. This is the next generation. Finally, there is a third group that is right in the middle (late 20's to early 30's) who seem to have both, some burden and some relevance. These are the workers who form a bridge between the other two groups (remember, this is just a generalization, because I have met people who don't fit into these categories).

This means we need to work together. Neither, "those old coots are on a control trip and keep trying to cram me into their idea of Christianity," nor "those young punks are only out to have fun and be cool and don't even care about ministry" will work.

With lots of love, acceptance and a miracle from God, we can see this "Lost Generation" get free of the enemy and be found by the Good Shepherd.

Prophecies about the Underground: Crucial Role in the End Times - Rick Joiner, from the Harvest. Morningstar Ministry

The Lord has prepared a ministry for this last day, which will be the marvel of the men and the angels. These will not be the self-seeking or the self-promoting, and most of them will remain unknown to the world and to much of the church. Their works and the preaching will stir nations but many will fade into the crowds and disappear before anyone even knows who they are.

They will have no desire to build major ministries and will not covet fame and fortune.

They are "spiritual celibates"; they will not "rape the bride". Just as a natural eunuch is given entirely to preparing the bride for the king, and has no desire for her as he is not even able to, these will be completely given to preparing the church for her King. Their whole purpose is to see the King's joy because they are truly His friends. These will follow Him wherever He goes.

While many of their peers have been seeking exposure and promotion for their ministries, these have been quietly preparing themselves just as Jesus did for His thirty years. While others are advancing in ministry many of these have been retreating. While others have been building up, these have been digging down, trying to strengthen their foundations and deepen their roots. Not in rebellion, and often grieving over it, these are usually out of harmony with much of the church.

When the battle unfolds, much of the leadership in the church will have gained their positions through self-promotion and political manipulation. Many who are considered "generals" by the people will be "privates" in God's eyes. Some in the lower ranks in the people's eyes will be God's top generals.

These will not seek rank or position in the church at this time, but will quietly, mostly incognito, direct the end time strategy of the church. Their authority will be in their wisdom. Like Stephen, who was but a deacon but whose wisdom and power lit a fire that set a new course for Christianity, this new breed, without fame or position, will direct some of the greatest events in history. Through men will never know many of them, the entire host of heaven and hell have known them from the beginning.

Not since Jesus has the enemy feared anyone like he does these selfless messengers of power. Just as he tried to destroy Moses and Jesus by killing the children, his present onslaught through abortion and drugs is a desperate attempt to destroy these before they can mature. Some of them will have been dragged through the dregs of the human sin, trauma and despair before they are awakened. They will love much because they were forgiven of much and delivered of much. As deep as the enemy has been able to get his roots into them, that is how deep the Lord will fill them after their deliverance.

Understanding the Different Sub-cultures

Andrew Jones - Boaz Project- Prague, Czechoslovakia

Making sense of today's subcultures can be overwhelming. It was certainly a challenge for me when I moved my family to the corner of Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco. So many subcultures, each with its own alternative world of taste, shops, fashions, music, choice of drugs. And then the conflicts of having them relate to each other --- the ravers were too happy for the punks and the goths were too serious for the hippies.

But after living among them for a while I began to see patterns emerge which helped to put their cultures in perspective in a way that gave value to their distinctiveness without confining them to a box. I began to see different worlds that each had a gravitational pull. These worlds offered various directions in which young people could move if they wanted to leave the mainstream and journey towards an alternative world.

At first, I saw these directions take place on two axes. The first is in relation to time; The directions are backward in time or forward in time. It is much like how a mechanic will either retard or advance a distributor to synchronize the right timing for a car, or like rewinding or fast-forwarding a video. The second axis is in relation to space; The two directions are downward or upward, either descending or transcending the mainstream dimension like climbing up or down a ladder.

I later found it helpful to add another axis which has to do with personal interaction or integration with society. It also has two directions-- - toward or away. They moved along the axis towards either extremity or isolation.

The Time Continuum:

Backward or Forward?

Backwards and forwards are related to time. Escaping the mainstream existence, also known as Babylon because of its greed, selfishness and conformity rather than creativity and community, can be attempted by going back in time or forward in time.

Backward

Going backward can represent a movement towards a simpler world. It could mean going back a few decades (retro) and adopting the clothes and values of a world that seems to make more sense than the present mainstream world. Or it could mean slipping back to a more tribal, primitive existence. Adopting neo-romantic ideals of the simple human, the "noble native", a society free from modern concerns of materialism and consumerism., a rural utopia where equality exists between humans and animals and trees. I have referred to such a world as "The Enchanted Forest", it is a world alive with living things, and people that live in it tend to wear natural fibers with natural colors and use natural drugs (marijuana, hash). There is a return to primitive religion for guidance --- animism, monism, communal living, organic foods and organic building materials, tribal drums, tribal tattoos and piercings. There is an expectation of oneness, a desire for unity and harmony, for peace on earth.

I found it helpful to bring the gospel in its original narrative form rather than a prepositional formula. I re-told the Creation story from Genesis, as it relates to and fulfills much of primal mythology. I present myself not as one who holds to a 2,000 year old religion, but rather as one who traces his heritage back to the very first person who responded to the initiative of God to restore the harmonious relationship that had existed in "dreamtime". The tree of life is central to my storytelling.

The longing for the tree of life is something that touches them deeply and gives interpretation to the primacy of trees in their own religion and lifestyle. I tell them the tree of life was transplanted (Rev. 22) and that it is accessible through the One who hung on the Tree to enable us to have life and life to the full.

I try to avoid the 20th Century preoccupation with individualism in the gospel. It is the family of God that He calls us into, His body, a community that they we live together in

forever with their Creator. He came to seek and to save "what" was lost, not "who" was lost.

The redemption of God involves all of creation, a new heaven and a new earth. Those that join this redeemed community have all things in common and look to the one who one day will bring peace and harmony to a new heavens and earth.

Forward

Many people would rather live in the future than in the past or the present, since there are so many exciting possibilities. For them, the future does not come quick enough. They move forward to embrace technological advances.

The fusion of technology with the human (often represented by their body piercings) is a combination they believe will result in a brave new world where many of the problems of the present will not exist. They love motion and speed rather than stillness and reflection. They embrace what technology produces. They wear man-made fibers with colors that are heavily synthesized. Their music is electronic and achieves sounds that only technology could produce. Their drugs are also synthetic made in labs (ecstasy, LSD, Speed) and often have the effect of forward acceleration.

There is great interest in aliens, the Internet and the future. The raver's ideal of P.L.U.R. (peace, love, unity and respect) could well fit many other cultures in this world although the skinhead's philosophies of fascism and social Darwinism are also present. Much of this world has to do with getting the "edge" or advantage over others (smart drugs, smart bars, smart cards, etc). It is these people whose fears are relieved in the knowledge of the hope of God, the Coming One. He knows what the future holds and, as the Psalmist sings, "our times are in His hand."

The Space Continuum:

Downward or Upward?

For those that want to exist in a dimension other than the present world of the living that traps them, there are options of escape. They can descend it (downwards) or transcend it (upwards).

Downward

The downward trip is an attempt to live sub-terrain, underground from mainstream. Descending can be achieved through drugs (depressants, heroin, alcohol), through temperament (gothic) or living out a personified

deconstruction of everything the mainstream represents (punk, riot grrl, grunge).

a) Industrial music creates sounds out of the grinding noises of a society in decay.

b) Punk music, in its various forms, gives expression to the anger and frustration.

c) Goth music can often find the "marvelous" in the mystery and play on the remains of dead religion. It can also access the soothing silence of death that carries its own beauty for those seeking to descend the ugly realities of a broken world.

Spirituality often revolves around what is secret, mysterious, and unavailable to mere earthlings. Interest in the dark arts of occult is high and whatever has been forbidden or persecuted in the past is valued. Vampirism is admired for its mysterious, spiritual and erotic value. Black tends to be the dominant color and studded leather carries a symbolic rebellion and protection against violence. Piercings in this world are often valued by the experience of the piercing itself (pain, eroticism, and rebellion)

Upward

The upward trip is one of transcendence so the spiritual aspect is a large factor. If the trip downwards is often connected with a desire for power or healing, then the upward journey is often an attempt at higher knowledge, leading to a higher existence. This attempt may be through drugs (psychedelics) or spirituality (mysticism) or a combination of both (techno-shamanism). There is much stress on creation - planets, cycles, seasons, and the appropriate rituals that enable humans to interact.

Historical ritual sites become places of power and the ideal site for a spiral dance or rave or drum circle. There is a longing for a convergence of all things so that universal harmony might establish a higher way of living for all. The clothing is loose and unrestricted and often in the colors of the sky (blues and oranges). Jewelry is often connected to the stars or to various forms of mysticism. Babylonian, Egyptian, Celtic, and Ethiopian in particular.

Paganism is popular as a return to earth based religion. So is wicca and goddess worship, which can represent the restoration of the female dimension for an overly patriarchal spirituality and thus another balancing mechanism to enable convergence of the forces. Time is cyclical rather than linear.

Things that are timeless are valued over things are bound by time (pop-culture) or

progressive in time. Tantric sex, in its present western packaging, has more to do with a continued moment of spiritual ecstasy and is considered "higher" than intercourse that moves progressively towards a climax. They tend to see Jesus as a mystic or shaman.

I present him as the Ascended Master, the Knowledge of God, the One who stands behind all the forces of the universe and will one day cause the great convergence to happen when He brings all things into harmony under his gentle care. I learned a lot from studying Celtic Christianity and found a platform on which I could meet with witches and carry a conversation that wasn't stained by witch burnings and Crusades.

The Celtic believers followed Jesus into a holistic lifestyle that embraced the arts, avoided institutionalism, created life-transforming ritual, and accessed power from God to raise the dead. The next generation respects that. I also gained a lot from studying the redemptive fantasies and fairy tales of George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis who portrayed the "deeper magic" in a way that is palatable to the generation now learning from Harry Potter.

The Relational Distance Continuum: Towards or Away?

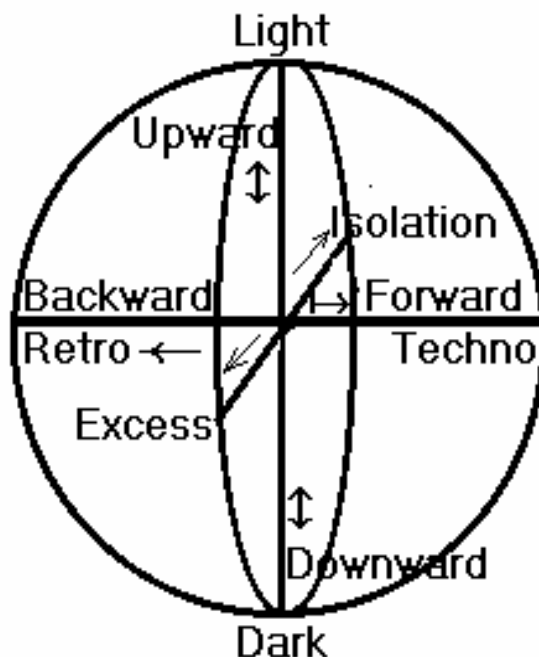
The Third Axis is that of Distance. It describes where cultures place themselves in relation to others or to elements in their world. They will usually either move towards something to be close to it and even go beyond it or they will move away from something to avoid it, hide from it

Towards

This the direction towards extremity, exaggeration, excess. It escapes the mainstream by moving towards its fears and taboos rather than avoiding them. Embracing death through music and art (death metal), experiencing danger through extreme sports (skaters), making excess a fashion statement through distortion and exaggeration.

Hard Core music knows no bounds of volume control or voice projection.

Creating shock value through abnormal body manipulation, forbidden sex practices, non-sensible tattoos and extreme piercings, 1930's suits and yellow top hats.



It is a rebellion against normality and a deconstruction of society's norms. It finds a heritage in the dada and surreal art movements of France and Germany. It makes weird fashionable. When it comes to spirituality, the religions and cults that demand the greatest commitment seem to be the most attractive. The "Straight Edge" movement is often embraced for its commitment to the "no's" of a strict lifestyle.

Christianity is normally perceived as something tame (or lame) and predictable. I am quick to point out the radical nature of following Jesus, which historically has often ended up with the upheaval of "normal" society as well as the death of his followers.

Away

The opposite direction on the distance axis is away from society, a removal, a relocation of one's existence to a point as far away possible from where everyone is. It is a means of escape, an avoidance of life, a refusal to communicate, a shying away from whatever is going on. It is taking a culture to its introverted extreme where the solitude provides a safe place for contemplation.

There are many goths who choose to live in the quietness of the night rather than the day. Increasing numbers of "Cultural Creatives" choose to live off the power grid in remote areas where human contact can be more selective. Cyberspace also offers a respite for geeks who prefer a virtual world where they can avoid the demands of face to face interaction and the norms of fashion and etiquette.

For people occupied with this movement away, spirituality that values meditation, pilgrimage, and disciplines of silence are attractive. Many have recently taken another look at Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox spirituality. Even evangelicals are exploring the idea of labyrinths and monastic orders. The Celtic way, with its history of pilgrimage and "martyrs" that traveled to the mountains and islands to seek God in an isolated place provides encouragement to do the equivalent in the 21st century.

The writings of the Desert Fathers come from a deep place of experiencing the presence of God and are valued highly.

A Colorful, Rotating Ball

Putting the three axes together gives a three dimensional ball on which most subcultures could be placed in relation to their time, space and relational distance. It should be pointed out, however, that there are two factors that add to the complexity of understanding these subcultures.

Motion

No culture is stationary. All are moving and changing and so are the people that make up those cultures. It is common for people to move out of one culture and into another and then into another. From hippie to gutter-punk to cyberpunk, for example.

Integration

Movement across subcultures means there will always be elements of one subculture present in another. A "Velvet Goth" may still have his hemp necklace from his Rainbowwithdeadhead past. Tattoos remain despite paradigm shifts. There are some sub-cultures that tend to stay within their own worlds and others that find acceptance in another cultural environment. A drum circle within a tribal rave on an ancient burial site, for example, might be attractive to alternative people from within very different subcultures.

It may be best to imagine that the ball is constantly rotating and the colors are always blending with each other to create new flavors and remixes, always changing and always reflecting the hopes and fears of the people that have the boldness to wear their anxieties, tattoo their story for the world to read, openly display the color that represents how the deepest part of them feels.

Such people refuse to conform to expectations and are therefore often sidelined as rebellious, out of touch, or just weird. It is no secret that Jesus felt especially drawn to the social outcasts of his day. Among them he found a heightened receptivity to the Story of God. It was these alternative youth that were called out to form the Body of Christ and represent Him to the world. I expect that the emerging church of today will find its most uncompromising leaders from among the alternative subcultures of today.

Identity Issues in Underground Subcultures

Mark Humphries - Red Herring Cathedral - Winnipeg MB

Red Herring Cathedral

The Red Herring Cathedral was a late night coffee house in Winnipeg, MB that started in the summer of 1995. The Red Herring provided a venue for a stream of bands, DJ's and a host of other artists. It also became an ever changing community of people who would stay up all hours of night and day sharing conversation and too much coffee. The dream itself grew out of the desire of my wife Alex and myself wanting to communicate Christ to our peers, most of whom were not Christians and who would have little to do with organized religion.

We began dreaming about a late night coffee house with the support of an elder at our church and one night we prayed together and asked God for a place to start a ministry. I really did not expect an answer so quickly but through a series of relational connections two weeks later we had the use of an empty house. I remember going with the same elder to meet the owner of the house and trying to explain to him about a whole group of people who would never fit in at a church. He had no idea of the people that would eventually use that house but he trusted that God might be giving us a vision and he offered the use of the house if we would pay the taxes.

It was an exciting time: suddenly God seemed very real and lots of things seemed possible. Even as we began to fix up the house we began to pray that God would form a community; that fringe Christians would come and get connected with each other and that we would be a voice to the alternative culture in Winnipeg. We had only a vague idea of what we were getting ourselves into but we had a lot of passion that came from wanting to share our experience.

To fast forward the story, we went through many stages of growth and change. I tended to get a sense of restlessness unless I felt we were making progress with connecting with people outside of Church culture. At one point we were drawing out many youth groups and we decided to shut the coffee house down because we did not want to become a drop in center for youth groups.

Osborne Village

We then moved into Osborne Village a more central location in the city that attracted squeegee kids and buskers and was the cool place to go for coffee on a summer evening. When we reopened our doors we took the risky step of only having bands that played in the regular music scene. We did this because we saw that Christian bands were simply reinforcing the Christian youth ghetto. I also talked to all the key youth leaders who hung out there and asked them not to come all at once. It was during this time that we began to see the fringes of the street culture and various music cultures come into the coffee house.

At first it was a few people checking it out. One night we had a potluck and there was a lot of food left over so a couple of people went out on the street and gave some food to a group hanging out in what was called The Circle (a general hang out for drug selling/buying). After that, a few of the street youth came in and then along with them a steady stream of disaffected young adults from the various identity tribes---Goth, punk, vampire, nerd, rave and a host of other variations.

I think because of the size of Winnipeg, the identity tribes tended to overlap somewhat and since the Red Herring was the only coffee house where they could smoke cigarettes, drink bottomless coffee and hangout all night with out buying food we became the most popular hangout in Osborne village for a period of a couple of years.

During those two years was when I solidified some key insights and frustrations in why it was so difficult to see transformation take place in the lives of some of these young adults. Over the entire lifespan of the five years the Herring existed there were probably only a couple of dozen people who came forward with a recognizable conversion experience, although even today I still hear stories of different individuals who became Christians.

At the time I felt very frustrated with how slow the process was and how, when someone

made a move towards Christ, we usually saw three moves backwards right away. What I see now is that we lacked the sustainable community structures to help people transition into a growing faith. Although on occasion people did make the transition it was often very difficult and the ones who tended to make it had some prior church experience or support.

The Role of Identity

There is one key insight that I saw played out over and over again in the subcultures which made sense both of how I came to understand why people are drawn to these tribes and also what will be required to move people towards Christ. The key issue I believe in working with the various subcultures is the role of identity. We are all driven to seek and maintain some form of identity, as this forms our attempts to make our way through the world. Identity always comes from a source. Another way of saying this is that identity is primarily relational.

Advertisers know this point well because they are always trying to get us to make identity connections with their products by relating our lives to some kind of ideal world. In other words, on the most simplistic level, if I drive this car I will be perceived a certain way; I am making a statement about who I am. Christians maintain that the true source of identity is God which can be summed up in a single scripture from Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them”.

In fact one can see the whole story of redemption as a story of loss and regaining of identity. God first creates humanity in his image but due to the entrance of sin, that primary connection is marred. God then develops a formal relationship to the people of Israel through the law to sustain and maintain a people that he can call His own. Finally, He sends Christ into the world to re-connect people to the original source of identity and, in a sense, remake people in the image of Christ.

The rise of youth identity cultures cannot be separated from the identity vacuum created in the wake of the rejection of church culture since the 1960's. The generations that largely make up these identity subcultures have grown up without the assumed culture that understood Genesis 1:27. The impact of this shift is that they have little assumed knowledge of God as the source of identity.

The Source of Identity

Imagine you had the money to buy a Van Gogh painting (a few million dollars). One of the reasons you would pay that much money for it is because the creator of that painting was Van Gogh himself. He was, in a sense, the source of that painting. What happens if I take that painting and mass produce it as something that sells at Wal-Mart for \$19.99? The image becomes almost worthless once disconnected from the true source. I believe this is the kind of impact that forms the experience of people searching for identity in the subcultures.

One summer our family was on vacation and passing through South Dakota. As is our tradition, we were running out of money and looking for a cheap place to pitch a tent for the night. We found a little campsite in the middle of nowhere and set up our camp. At the time our daughter Cairo was less than a year old and so we laid her on a blanket while we got ready for the night.

At some point I was struck with a thought that no doubt many parents feel-perhaps even God. What would happen to Cairo if something terrible happened to Alex and myself? Cairo would be left alone in the middle of nowhere. Assuming she survived, perhaps through a kind family, she would not know who she was. She would have to make up stories of how she ended up there, perhaps abandoned, perhaps unwanted, or perhaps a terrible accident. She would never know that she was my daughter and that I loved her. She would be disconnected from the source of her identity and in that disconnection she would be forced to define who she was from the wilderness she was left in.

In a sense that is a picture of humanity without God, but it is also particular to the subcultures, in that so many of them have been abandoned by parents and also by virtue of growing up with so little connection to the true story. When we lose this primary connection to our parents and to the original parent God, then by default our identity has only has secondary sources left, namely culture, which is why people are seeking to create identity in the image of culture.

Of course we all take identity from our surrounding culture but the uniqueness of the identity subcultures is that they also represent a rejection of mainstream images and solutions for identity. Within the Red Herring extended community you often hear the mantra, “I’m different, I’m an individual”. Typically this is defined as being unlike mainstream images of

normal identity. The business man, for example, would be an image of conformity that would represent mainstream culture and would be an undesirable role model. Often the inverse would be the driver of identity.

Expressions of Identity

I saw this in females who tried to express an identity that was the inverse of a mainstream image of a female. I remember one young woman commenting that “I don’t look slutty enough, I look too cutesy”. There was also underlying attitudes that being dark, angry or messed-up was cool. There were also a variety of other constructed identities that I saw people adopt for themselves.

There was one person who took on the role of a vampire, which was a common myth to draw identity from, except in this individual, due to some emotional imbalance, at times he seemed to believe he was a vampire. One time he picked a fight in the middle of the coffeehouse and started hissing at another individual and talking about how he would destroy him.

There was also an individual I spent an afternoon talking with who claimed to be an angel. This is an example of how identity needs can be reinforced by spiritual experiences. This particular individual had some profound experiences which led him to believe that he was an angel.

We began to see the identity issue as a key barrier for people asking faith questions and an even bigger barrier for someone who wants to make a public choice of faith because if one’s identity is firmly tied to the group and he or she wants to make a different identity choice there is a strong pull towards conformity to the old group.

We saw this when, during the last year of the Red Herring, we started hosting Spiritual Discussion Nights every Wednesday. At first we tried to start from the bible and engage discussion but that really did not work well so we reversed our thinking and started from the culture. We discussed Satanism, drugs, suicide, anything and everything that opened up room to be real with people and also to dig into identity issues. There were often some amazing conversations and insights and I started to see that discipleship is something that begins before and after any clear choice to follow Christ.

There was one person in particular who had started to go with some of our key volunteers to a Vineyard church. Most of the time when you saw him he had a typical Goth persona with black Crow-like makeup and black ripped clothing.

Sometimes he would go to the Vineyard dressed like this and he was also hanging out on Wednesday nights at Spiritual discussion night. He asked good questions and myself and others had honest dialogues with him and I noticed less and less of the external persona over time.

Then one particular discussion night he came in with the full look and I could sense something had changed. At the start of the discussion he declared to the whole group “I have made my choice I have checked out Christianity and I have decided that I am a witch”. I never got to find out why the switch happened because he stopped coming around, but I would guess he encountered some identity barrier with some Christians and returned to the identity role of the Goth/Witch which brought him instant identity reinforcement.

In understanding the change an individual needs to go through, it is critical that there are some peers who can understand and, in some sense, have one foot in the world of the person who is encountering Christ.

I have seen over and over again that a person begins responding to Christ and there is a pullback because they feel they are losing themselves. They rightly feel the center of their identity switching and it can be scary. In a sense, discipleship is a process of switching the center of our identity towards Christ. For this reason, if we desire to help someone else work through an identity transformation in Christ I think we need to have some awareness of our own identity issues and needs.

I know it is common for Christians to say, “Put your identity in Christ and not in the world,” but I think the truth is that, to some degree our identity is always in both. In my experience, Christians often wanting to work with subcultures tend to see the subcultures in a glamorous way.

The Importance of Communities

I believe that what is needed are church communities of people - no matter how small - who are close enough to the identity subcultures that people can connect with them and see an image of Christ being modeled before them that they can identify with.

Finally we need to dialogue with people in a way that brings them into contact with their real experience. Often identity subcultures mask or romanticize pain and difficult life experiences in a valid attempt to keep their lives together. When people are able to be real about the painful

experience of being abandoned by parents or seeing a father beat their mother, then there is a pathway both to healing and honest spiritual dialogue.

Communities that encourage honest dialogue about the painful experiences that led people in a search for alternative identity will be better able to help people connect to Christ.

Let me finish with the story of John (name changed). John came to the Red Herring as an angry young man who had adopted a Goth persona. He had some Christian background through his mother but his step-father had made life very difficult for him he had also been rejected by some Christians in an earlier youth group encounter.

John was quite intelligent and had begun to look into Buddhism as a means to help explain his world. In Buddhism he thought he had found a way to accept his pain through the path of accepting life as suffering. The problem was that it was not working and he was deeply angry at God and the world around him. He began to ask people a question based on an experience.

When he was still attending youth group a friend had become very depressed and he had

prayed to God to help his friend. God did not answer and his friend committed suicide. His question was why did God allow his friend to die? The standard answer was that God gave his friend free will and unfortunately his friend used it in a negative way. I could see this answer was not helping him and while I was trying to think of how I should answer I saw the question from a new perspective. The image that came to mind was of Christ dying on the cross and while He is dying He cries out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

I began to see John's underlying question as the same as Jesus' question; God why have you forsaken me? The difference of course is that Jesus had a strong relationship with the Father, he knew who he was. He had heard the Father's voice say "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) Can we become the kind of church communities that help people hear that voice?

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"Being In but not Of" Effective Alternative Ministry

Peter Whole - Source – Minneapolis MN

My experience and observation of the "Counter Culture" is seeing it evolve from a definable segment of society in the 60's and 70's, to establishing sub-cultures with the "Counter Culture" in the 80's and early 90's, to now in this last decade having so many different sub-cultures that consider themselves alternative.

Once you could define the alternative types by the appearance, music style and lifestyle. Tattoos, colored hair, piercing, and funky hair have crossed into the mainstream. After all, Nirvana was the alternative band that went platinum.

But still there remains in the population of the West a definite element that either desires or has just found that they are part of those who are not part of the main stream. These alternative types, though they would see themselves as very different, after all what does the gutter punk, rainbow kid, hardcore, raver, hippie kid, have in common.

*Similarities of Counter Culture/Alternative Types

- Hate corporate
- Value organic vs. conventional
- Don't want to be treated as a number
- Value relationship vs. task
- Value authenticity vs. artificial
- Holistic vs. Compartmentalized
- Want something fresh, vs. stagnant
- Want to make a difference

Their culture, childhood, peers, and experience have also given them a similar view of the Church of Jesus Christ and Jesus himself (corporate, conventional, treat people like numbers, task-driven, artificial, compartmentalized, stagnant, and not doing anything to make a real difference.) It would not be hard to go to a common coffee shop in any of our cities and find a 19 year old who would respond to, "what does it mean to be a Christian," with "going to church on Sunday" or "the ten commandments." A God of love and forgiveness, redemption, atonement, A God that has a plan for each life, or a truly personal relationship with the God of the

universe would be void of their vocabulary and of their worldview.

"Being in but not of" (John 17)

A true key to effective alternative ministry, given to us (John ch. 17) by Jesus when he prayed in Gethsemane in his last moments before taken to be crucified is for us to be "In but not of the world". Mark 16:15 Jesus instructed, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Not just go into the global world, but to also go into all the world's sub-cultures as well. In Mathew 5:14 we understand the need for us to be light in darkness. The alternative culture is the keepers of the dark places in our society. For many of those we reach out to it is the norm that we are the only representatives of Jesus that they know and trust. And we are the only ones praying for these individuals to overcome their pasts and began a new life with Jesus.

Being effective at being a light in darkness involves being 1) in the world (being culturally relevant and relational) and 2) Not being of the world.

Being In

Most models of outreach and evangelism within the church rarely reflect being relational or culturally relevant. "Going to" the world (by coming into proximity during an outreach night and throwing some tracts and words) should not be mistaken with being in the world. I know gutter punks with tract collections. Half the young people we reach out to have been raised in the church and they have seen hypocrisies first hand.

Going through the external motions because you are "supposed to" to appease some ancient ritual vs. having a relevant and valid reason. Why believe what a stranger says to a crowd from a stage or on the street corner? His motives, "to serve the corporation he works for, ahead of my best interest," are ultimately questioned.

They don't need someone to just tell them about Jesus, they need someone to be Jesus to

them. They will not follow what logically make sense. Their lives are full of hurt, pain, and abandonment (if not directly they have seen it in their peers – which most the time is closer than family).

They will follow what they see and experience to be real. When they see and experience real love through a relationship of someone they have grown to trust, and then they are willing to be open about Jesus.

The Joshua House, Source's transitional /discipleship housing has seen young men make radical, lasting, life changes. One young man had as many as 20 friends come up to him after he had been there a few months and ask, "What happened to you? You used to be angry, depressed; using drugs, and out of control with your life. Now we see a real change." He had the opportunity to tell them it was Jesus growing him. When those friends saw and experienced something real, they inquired about what it was and were open to investigate if it could be something for them personally.

Most people believe Christians do not relate to them. For many it is a paradigm shift to meet a Christian they can relate to who is more concerned about being real vs. putting on a façade of perfection.

When people are treated as individuals vs. a number they are more willing to let others speak into their lives. When relationships are valued more than the number attending, you begin to communicate community vs. corporation. Many times it is the difference of quality vs. quantity.

The good Shepherd leaves the 99 and searches for the one that is lost, taking time and energy for the individual. A two-hour conversation would be consistent with "organic" or relational evangelism in comparison to a five-minute presentation. And most likely the first 90 minutes was spent listening to the individual.

Organic/relational evangelism also does not subscribe to the, "one size fits all," method. It embraces seed planting, looking for ways to serve and pray for, and getting to know the individual over time to be able to personalize how God can affect an individual's life.

It is ironic that the evangelical speaks of a personal relationship with God but often displays only impersonal expressions. Relationships were core to the ministry of Jesus. He changed the world by spending three years with twelve. Not by having the biggest show in town, but by genuinely displaying love and being relational with

individuals do we earn the right to speak into others lives.

Another attribute of alternative types is they will readily identify if something is only surface deep. Being authentic is a core value of this generation and the fact that it is so hard to find, makes it even more attractive.

Their hearts hunger for intimacy and know that authenticity is an ingredient. Valuing relationships, allowing each other to remove masks without being rejected and growing from weakness are all attributes of authenticity. And when anybody comes in contact with it, it forces him or her to figure out what the source is.

Being culturally relevant is the other aspect of "Being in" goes hand in hand with being relational.

By

- 1) knowing culture,
- 2) Being in culture, and
- 3) being culture allows you the opportunity and right to begin to make contact to speak into individuals' lives (or being relational).

The reverse is true as well in that how can you be relational with people if you don't know and are not in their culture.

I can know culture and be in culture by being willing to be vulnerable, to go to where they are at, to hang with them, to ask questions about their world, and to demonstrate that I can relate to them (this really isn't that hard to do you just got to be willing to go). Through prayer, gathering others with similar vision, discernment, and willingness to fail I can find cultural bridges to be friend people, grow relationships, and communicate the Good News of Jesus. I can be culture.

Shouldn't we through the power of the Holy Spirit be able to be more creative, have more passion, establish more energy, and impact and lead culture more powerfully than any pagan (as in Paul's use of pagan, "without Jesus) is able to muster?

But not of

The inherent trap of alternative ministry is to be swayed from God's kingdom by the cultures values. As much as we should be in and want to be a friend and a voice... As much as we want to treat people with gentleness and respect... We cannot be of. We are different. We have a master. We have sold ourselves, our rights, our lives. We are called to morals and obedience. When a Christian enters

the alternative scene, there should be no greater contrast in our society.

The alternative culture is the junior high kid of our society's family – the one that knows enough to point out the flaws in the family, but doesn't have the tools or maturity to figure out how to bring healthy change. So often, the alternative element of the family goes and seeks the dysfunctional neighbor kids for acceptance and rejects the family relationships.

It's time for us to move forward. It's time for us to grow up and bring to the table the grace that Christ has given us. We are a part of the Body of Christ. Be in every area of culture, but being of is being severed from the body.

I've ministered with those who were passionate about the Kingdom, now settle for serving mother earth or worse, rogue self.

Individuals, who began being hurt, frustrated, sometimes not accepted with the

Church. Who made reaching out more important than keeping Jesus fresh in their lives? Who gave up on meeting together for prayer and encouragement? Who used legalistic pasts as excuse to give up on the spiritual disciplines and not wean themselves off the bottle?

Many churches may reject your method of reaching out, but I guarantee you there are plenty of suburban church woman's circles full of people who love Jesus that would pray for you daily, no matter what you look like, if they knew you were trying to reach the unreachable for Jesus.

There lies the challenge. How do we show love and acceptance to the individual while not being of their culture? We do this by searching for the ways of their culture we can accept. By showing we are interested and will love the individual. And we best love by keeping Jesus fresh in us. By being in (relational and culturally relevant) and not being of this world.

Worldview, Philosophy, and Anti-globalization

Bruce Wright - Refuge - St. Petersburg FL

Philosophy and Worldview

In discussing outreach to the disenfranchised, the rejected, the counterculture, or whatever you might call it, why is it important to understand and have a philosophy or worldview? What is the philosophy or worldview, of the rejected and disenfranchised?

These issues are important if we are to effectively relate to and reach out to these various subcultures. But, more importantly the heart of Jesus is with the Rejected and disenfranchised. Furthermore, much of the worldview of these groups is closer to the truth of Christianity, than mainstream Christianity in the West, especially in the United States.

We are going to briefly develop two aspects. One, what is the philosophy/worldview of the rejected and disenfranchised? Secondly, what should the philosophy/worldview be of Christians, especially in relation to outreach?

These ideas are by no means comprehensive or exclusive. They are merely attempts to try to clarify the various worldviews and how we should relate to them as follower of Christ.

Much talk has been made regarding the growing anti-globalization movement and the growth of grass roots, people driven movements. These movements run counter to the established mainstream methods of resistance to injustice.

Many of those involved are from the counterculture; Peace Punks, Anarchists, and Neohippies. Thus, it is imperative that we as followers of Christ reach out to this group and beyond that, that we address these issues as well. How we deal with issues of poverty, racism, sexism, loss of liberties and respecting other cultures, in my opinion is at the forefront of what it means to be a believer.

Anti-globalization

I believe we have much in common with the anti-globalization movement. This movement seeks to empower the poor, so does Jesus. They

seek to prevent wealth and power from controlling the world, the kingdom of God is about this as well. They seek to prevent the loss of autonomy and diversity; likewise, Jesus doesn't want to take away our individuality.

This movement also seeks to encourage an organic collectivity of society, and isn't that what the Church is supposed to be doing. Finally, they seek to end the attempt of creating a one world economy and government and are against greed, this is also consistent with the kingdom of God.

In conclusion, we must not only be involved with these people and movements, but also help them to see that a number of their values line up with Kingdom values, when Jesus is at the center.

Now this certainly is by no means an exhaustive look at these issues, but merely an introduction. For further reading, look at these books, websites and scriptures:

Books:

"Globalize This"
"Stupid White Men"
"People's History of the United States"
"When Corporations ruled the world"
"The Presence of the Kingdom"
"Anarchy and Christianity"
"Mustard Seed VS McWorld".

Websites

www.Jesusradicals.come
www.commondreams.org
www.kingdomnow.org
www.freespeechtv.org
www.antiwar.com
www.kwr.org

Scriptures:

Isaiah 10:1
Isaiah
Proverbs
Matthew 5-7
James 2

Ministry to Specific Underground Subcultures

Ministering to Goths

Dave Hart - Sanctuary - San Diego, CA

Sanctuary is a Christian ministry for the music underground. We are on a mission to reach out to disenfranchised youth caught up in the most obscure musical subcultures. Sanctuary, San Diego primarily focuses on those in the gothic and industrial music scene, but we are open to anyone into alternative, punk, metal, techno and/or the Lollapalooza crowd. As we watch these kids embrace the message of nihilism and hopelessness in their music and their culture, we realize that there is a great need to enter the underground and offer a message of hope and freedom. Sanctuary is also a church.

History of the Ministry:

Two or three years after Sanctuary started up in Los Angeles, a San Diego concert promoter named Dave Hart began doing some concerts with STRYPER. He found himself continually surrounded by heavy metal fans asking questions about their musical careers, personal problems, and spiritual issues. God directed him to create a special place for these kids (almost like that movie "Field of Dreams" - "If you build it, they will come!") So he started a group called The Rock and Roll Refuge", totally unaware of the group in L.A. Eventually the two churches found each other, affiliated, and Pastor Dave became an ordained minister of the Sanctuary churches. Sanctuary, San Diego continues today with the original mission of reaching disenfranchised youth

on the musical edge, it's just that the edge has changed over the last decade.

How do you Reach out to this People Group?

There are a few keys to successfully reaching today's disenfranchised youth. One of the most important is to meet them where they're at. These kids already tend to view the traditional church with disgust and distrust.

Feeling they have been misjudged, misunderstood, and/or manipulated by the church, they have rejected Christianity as hypocritical, cruel and irrelevant. They will no longer come to the church. The church must come to them.

Sanctuary does this literally by visiting the kids in their own territory, the clubs and coffeehouses where they tend to hang out. We try to blend in, rather than stand out. We talk to them about their world, not ours; their music, their fashions, their culture, and their experience of life.

We believe that our freedom in Christ allows us to be liberal about cultural things, while being conservative about spiritual things. We believe in building bridges and developing real relationships with those who need God, so that we can introduce the ones we love to the One we love.

This is the same pattern Jesus followed when He left heaven to meet us where we're at -- laughing with us, crying with us, eating with us, dying for us (Phil. 2:5-11). He was not ashamed to

eat with the tax collectors, and sinners and prostitutes were his friends. Why should we be any different?

We are also reaching people throughout the world in cyberspace through our web site, through email, through news groups and chat rooms. We are connected with a number of other underground ministries throughout the world so we can be a resource for others trying to reach these kids for Christ.

Many gothic, industrial, or metal fans feel isolated and alone. They believe they are the only one who likes their music or lives their lifestyle in their little town --- especially if they are also Christian. By sharing our common interest in music and poetry on the computer, we help these young people realize they no longer have to remain isolated in their corner of the world.

Goths are usually intellectual, artistic, and articulate. They are into art, poetry, and music. They are passive, introspective, and can be dramatically emotional.

They can also be too self-absorbed, brood to a fault, and they internalize everything (even things that have nothing to do with them). As a group and as a rule, Goths take their stress and pain out on themselves, not on others --- cutters, piercers, slicers, suicide addicts. They will beat themselves up in their guilt and their sorrow to prove how real their pain is.

They are some of the most creative, interesting, wonderful, gifted people I have ever met, and some of the most troubled. I know these generalizations don't fit everyone exactly, but as a group, these characterizations mostly hold true in my experience. And I know these are entirely flattering portraits, but it is an honest assessment, and these are not killers.

Second, I think that we need to do some things as a Christian gothic community. We need to dispel the rumors about goths with the truth. Be honest about who you really are. We need to be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks us -- an answer about who we are as goths and why, and about who we are in Christ (for those of you who are IN Christ). We need to practice the character of Christ in all our dealings, in faith, not fear.

This Columbine tragedy has put the gothic sub-culture in the public eye in a way that not even a year of Manson's "Anti-Christ Superstar" tour could. It can no longer remain an underground phenomenon. We have been "outed," brought to

the surface and thrust into the mainstream, whether we like it or not.

Gothic is going to move from sub-culture to culture. It will become much broader and more inclusive than it started out to be. All things dark and black will now be labeled gothic. Anyone singing sad songs in a black dress will automatically become gothic.

You may doubt me, but you need to remember back to a time (if you can) before 1984, when heavy metal was just an obscure and extreme corner in the world of rock music. But after the success of Motley Crue, Bon Jovi, Def Leppard, and Van Halen - Heavy Metal WAS rock music. The same thing is about to happen to Goth, only this time; the changes are being born out of tragedy, rather than success. There's no going back. The gothic/industrial community will just have to learn to accept the inevitable.

What does this mean for us? For awhile it means that goths will be under a level of scrutiny, often accompanied by an animosity they have not been accustomed to. (Oh, joy! Even more mockery and abuse!) But after awhile the culture will adapt, as it always does, and gothic will become a cool cultural phenomenon copied by un-goths to show that they are "hip" as well.

And some people will get rich, especially movies stars and musicians. For Christians, perhaps it means an era in which gothic/industrial music and ministry will become more acceptable to the public. And perhaps some gothic version of Calvary churches will offer synthesized worship like incense. Maybe this is a good thing. Maybe not.

In any case, it will push the true underground even deeper. The expressions and fashions of the disenfranchised will turn and twist a little bit more and some strange, new sub-culture will strangle hundreds and thousands of young people before we can reach them with the message of hope.

It makes our job a little bit harder. Someone will have to start all over again learning a new culture, a new language, a new music, and a new mind-set. I wonder how much time we have?

Reaching the. For some time now, I have been crying out in the wilderness: "We must reach the underground. We must win the Marilyn Manson generation." Although the Trench coat Mafia at Columbine were not gothic, they were part of the Marilyn Manson generation. While I would never say that the entertainment media makes kids do

dangerous things, it certainly contributes to the cultural atmosphere, mind-set and world-view that makes inconceivable acts like this conceivable in the minds of angry and anguished adolescents like these.

Despite all its self-professed cheer-leading, the Church has been retreating for some time now. Perceiving the world to be too dangerous, they have drawn back from the deserts and the outlands where people most need to be offered hope and Living Water.

They have been busy building the walls of their holy cities higher and higher, happily singing "A Mighty Fortress is Our Church." They have even withdrawn from the mainstream, hoping that politics will be a more safe and effortless weapon -- although it is clearly not one of the weapons of our warfare (II Cor. 10:3-5; Ephesians 6). Like the Pharisees of old, the church is building barriers and denying entry to more and more of the outcasts and making them feel uncomfortable (Mt. 23:13, 15).

And yet, this is our destiny: to reach the unreachable; to search the highways and byways, inviting the poor and disreputable to a feast of His Love (Luke 14:16-24). Where are those with the eyes of God to look past the scary masks and the intimidating titles and see the hearts that are torn apart in fury and failure?

Where is the true Remnant that realizes it will always be dangerous to do Christianity right -- but are going to do it any way? Where are the brave souls who will say, "Here am I. Send me!"? (Isaiah 6). Where are the Christian warriors who will leave the safety of the City to spend their lives for their Lord? We can no longer cling to the old banner of "Come and see..." We must once again rally around the battle cry of "Go, therefore..." (Mt. 28:19).

The Last Days

One of the stories that came out of Columbine is of one of one of the gunmen who stood in the library and screamed "Does anyone in here believe in God?" Out from under the desks

where all her friends were cowering, Cassie Bernall, shaking but resolved, stood up and professed her faith in God. The gunman was reported to have screamed, "Why?" as he shot her dead on the spot. Cassie Bernall was an American martyr. To the best of my knowledge, she was the first Christian to die on American soil, specifically for declaring her faith, in almost 200 years. I do not believe she will be the last.

It would appear that we may well be in the Last Days, indeed. For the spirit of Lawlessness will grow until the Man of Lawlessness is revealed. And the Spirit that restrains him and his time seems to already be withdrawing (II Thess. 2:6-8). Does it not seem that we are in the beginning of the time of sorrows (Mt. 24)? What can we do in these dark times?

I believe that the Christian gothic/industrial community has been called for such times as these. Who else is more prepared to deal with dark days and painful times? You are a tribe of poet/priests and poet/warriors called to fight the darkness you know so well.

So what can we do in these dark times? Be who you are. Be confident in your unique calling. You are a chosen tribe, a holy nation of priests (I Pet. 2:9) and a peculiar people (special treasure) (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2) of a Holy (unique, special, set-apart) God. Be imitators of Christ. Look in the mirror. Surrender the weights (of fear, bitterness, the past, the pain) that hold you down (Heb. 12:1-4), and walk in His way. Do not forsake the fellowship of like-minded believers. Read the Word. Walk the Word.

Remember where you came from. Come along side the misfits and the disenfranchised. Be ready to die --- to your old life, to your dreams, to your glory, to your sin-nature, to this world, to this body. Remember it's all going to burn. Remember that our suffering will not last forever. Live to hear these words and these words alone: "Well done good and faithful servant" (Mt. 15:21, 23).

Can a Christian be Gothic

Pastor Ed - Sanctuary - San Diego

This is a personal question for me so I will address what being "gothic" means to me and why I have chosen to embrace this lifestyle. Let me start by explaining how and why I became a "Goth." I jokingly say that my dear friend Chase sired me to the "dark side" because he was the first one to introduce me to this culture. I became "gothic" during a time of extreme sadness in my life.

I was surrounded by others who were telling me to just be happy but I could not. I found solace in the dark sounds of Love and Rockets and Bauhaus. In The Cure I found honesty of emotion, something I desperately needed.

When I became "saved" I noticed that while I had the "light of the world" in my life, I was still an outsider. I could not adapt to the cookie-cutter Christian model. Eventually, I discovered Sanctuary and truly found it the right place for my soul. Now I am a Shadow Dweller, lurking with a candle, holding it out to others, sharing the light and the love of God to those who are also living in the shadows.

It is hard to understand the real meaning of who/what a Goth is if you are not a part of this scene. To me gothic is more than a fashion choice or a music preference. It is an attitude of how one views the world we live in. Some choose to look at life with a very shallow point of view, i.e.: "life is one big party and fun is the big goal in life." Others see it from a 'yuppie' perspective, looking for their identity in their work, money, possessions, etc.

Life from a "gothic" point of view is one that is bleak and somber, thus the dark appearance and style of dress. The world is dark to me because

it's so far from God's holy plan and design, that it saddens me greatly. I express my somberness to the world by my style of dress and demeanor. I relate to the prophet Jeremiah regarded by most as the Weeping Prophet.

Being gothic to me is also being real with myself, real with others, and real with God. I do not hide behind a mask to hide who I am and how I truly feel. When I am happy I express it fully, and when I am sad I express that as well. Most Goths express their bleak sadness openly and I see that as an honesty of humanity.

I admire the culture for its open and honest expression of self, no matter how perverse or strange, because this is how God sees us. We cannot hide our sins from Him and it is foolish to think we can. In 'normal society', people seem so concerned with appearances; they hide their true selves in order to gain the favor of others.

This mask wearing is accepted, yet stark honesty is often shunned, even by those in the church. This is truly sad. You see, being gothic is more than a fashion statement or a certain style of music; it is a reflection of how one chooses to see the world. This world is lost, hell-bound, and full of people in complete denial seeking to fill that God-shaped void within them with everything except the Cross. It is a world lacking in honesty of self or honesty toward others.

If I were to be anything but 'gothic' in my views I would be among the mask-wearing hypocrites. So I wear black and tell others who will listen that the world is empty and bleak. Yet it does not have to be. Though we live in the darkness, we are not of it. Thanks be to God for that.

Retro Hippies or Nomadic Travelers

Rachel Ford - Prodigal Project - San Francisco CA

Rejected and Pursued?

One day, about a decade ago, God drew our attention to a counterculture group of people: traveling hippies from around the world, whom we call “Global Nomadic Youth”, people who are not fooled by money or the status quo or most of the comforts of life. They see no meaning in big homes or various brand-new vehicles or six-digit salaries.

What they value is different, it is a spirituality intangible and beyond the shadows of material things. It is enlightenment that is just beyond their grasp, and they believe that if they are present in the right moment, or find the right guru, the right drug, the right music, they just might be able to reach it. This is their deception. The truth is, God is seeking them. He has already come to find them, that they might have life in abundance.

Most cultures and subcultures contain attributes that are contrary to God’s way, and yet some that are good. Among the travelers, the openness to spirituality and the dissatisfaction with the fumbling, failing world are signs of something that we have called their “unique ripeness”. What if this endless search could be brought to a beautiful conclusion? What if the love for traveling and simplicity of personal belongings could be redeemed as a love for the Nations and a desire to travel to see them reached for Jesus? What if the love for justice in the environmentally and social-justice minded kids could be redeemed as a passion to see the wonderful mercy of God brought to the wounded and oppressed?

God is more interested in this than anyone. He is the One who burned with love for them and had purpose for these wandering spiritual seekers before anyone did, and He has given us a longing and a passion for them. Passion to see them know Him and to see every one of them transformed and set free from their spiritual bondage -- walking free as the breeze in His eternal Kingdom.

What it is that we do

Romans 10:14 asks the question, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (NIV) Our mission statement is simply to reach every New-age traveler in the world with the gospel.

Our ways of ministering to the subculture of traveling hippies are as varied as the kids are

themselves. Although we are focused specifically on this subculture, their interests and needs are incredibly varied. We have outreach houses among the homeless kids in the scene where we prepare food to bring out with our wagons, have Bible studies, and offer showers in an effort to show God’s love.

In India and Israel our outreach may take the form of inviting travelers over for dinner and conversation, going to festivals, and learning international languages. In India some of us study Indian classical music and learn how to play Indian instruments. We become involved in the scene, spending time on the traveler circuit.

On Tour we live in an R.V. and travel from show to show with the kids, following a moving city of cars and vans and buses as they follow bands like the Grateful Dead. Conversing with the kids, making food, and responding in love to the craziness of Tour, we form strong relationships, seeing the same kids night after night.

Over the years, we feel that God has led us (through trial and error at times) in forming some foundational methods of ministry that are radically effective in this subculture. We believe that through incarnation, friendship, community, and simplicity, many New Age travelers will turn wholeheartedly to their true Father. The Holy Spirit has breathed life into our attempts to share with these methods, and it has been evident in the fruit that has been born. We are praying that He will continue to mold us and challenge us in becoming more like Him and reaching the travelers more and more effectively.

I. Incarnation: Living a Life of Understanding

When God captured Cathi Mooney’s heart for the kids ten years ago, she left *her* six-digit job and sold most of her belongings to move into a house in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. She was, perhaps unknowingly, setting the stage for what would become one of the core values of Prodigal Project Jesus Tribe. The truth is contained in what we have taken as our ministry verse. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 says, “We loved you so much that we delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”

Jesus was obviously the ultimate example of incarnation. Taking the position of a servant among people that the Word says were created by Him (nothing was created without Him!) He chose to live a life that would allow Him to understand

our weaknesses and sympathize with us. He calls us to do the same with people who need to know His truth.

That is to say: to reach the subculture made up of new age travelers all over the world, we believe that the most important thing is to live our lives on a level that says “we love you, we will live with you and live near you and live like you”. Cathi changed her whole lifestyle; started wearing patchworks, grew dreadlocks... she moved in to stay. Many others have as well.

Ten years later, so many of us have come from the global nomadic youth scene that we don't know where it ends and we begin. All we know is that we have a message of hope, of being loved by God and surrendering to His Way, and that in this we have become like the ones we are reaching. We believe that this is crucial in reaching these kids who are on the outside edge of society, simultaneously rejecting and being rejected.

Our desire is to be meaningful and sincere in our attempts to reach the travelers. We seek to be relevant to the culture, to use the language and the illustrations, the styles and appearance that these kids understand. However, this is not incarnation in the fullest.

Thinking that lingo, or style of dress, or even age or location will earn you respect is a mistake. You may walk up to some kids on Haight Street and say “Hey kids, I groundscored this phatty Bible so that I could kick it down to you... there's some way trippy stuff in here, bro,” and if they sense insincerity, they will laugh at you. Or be offended. Don't think, either, that being twenty years older than them means you need to act twenty years younger. Our experience has been that these kids look up to older people, seeing them as wiser and more experienced, and since many have not had the parental figures that they may have needed, a lot of kids are looking for affirmation from older wiser people.

The most important thing, when it comes to incarnation is to actually be in their lives. Love, love, love them. Eat, sleep, and think Kids! By spending time with them you will become incarnated into their lifestyle. With incarnation it is so important to be passionate about holiness, about being among the scene but standing apart, being like the kids, but unlike. Our incarnation must be untainted by compromise or aligning ourselves with the enemy and his ways.

II. Friendship: Walking beside people who need God

Jesus was called a friend of sinners, and He was mocked and berated for spending time with less desirable people. To really be the friend of someone that the rest of the world sees as undesirable is a strong statement.

Friendship has been a radically effective way of communicating the love of God to those who don't yet know it. A good example of this is the relationship that we have had over the years with street kids on Haight Street.

The vendors in the area do all they can to get this refuse of society out of their doorways, and at times it has been tense as we have continued to bring food out to the kids that are often despised. The results are seen in the faces of the kids when they see “the Christians” (as they call us) coming with our wagon loaded down with food. They will tell you “the Christians love us.” They know where to come for refuge when they need help or are spun out on drugs.

To reach them, be friends, endeavor to meet people, know their names. We have forged deep relationships with different kids over the years that have continued as they move in and out of jail, from country to country, or from gathering to gathering.

As friends, we can't help seeing their needs and extending the overwhelming mercy of the Father to them. This means that we look for ways to serve the travelers, whether with a shower or some food or sometimes a place to stay.

The heart of friendship is different than being friends with a kid on the street merely so you can share the gospel. It is being able to say, “We also shared our very lives with you, *because you have become so dear to us.*” God is delighted when we live and pray and act in ways that show unbelievers (and new believers) that they have become *dear* to us.

III. Community: Fam-fam

Everywhere in the scene, global nomadic youth are seeking family. Their language displays their longing: they call each other “the family,” “brother,” “sister”, “mama,” they speak of “our tribe,” “my kids,” and “my road-dogs.”

They have ideals about community and harmony. Often they become disenchanted with the abuses and corruption that they find in ashrams, on Tour, or at rainbow gatherings, because these things are mere counterfeits of what true adoption and family is.

The desire to find refuge with like-minded people is God inspired, and God desires His people

to live as one. Jesus said that people would know us by our overwhelming love for one another. Because this is so, another of our cherished values for reaching the travelers is living in community with one another.

We don't believe that communal living is God's law for the Body of Christ and we see many expressions of community within the Church as valid and fruitful. We of this Jesus Tribe, however, have felt a calling to share housing with one another, and to endeavor to welcome our pre-Jesus friends into homes where the standard is love and sacrifice for one another.

The people of this subculture long for togetherness. So if you seek to reach them, seek to be together. Dig deep, and welcome them into a family like they've always been seeking. Pray for us, that we would be knit together even more as brothers and sisters.

IV. Keep it simple: Just Jesus

We are committed to simplicity in all areas of our lives. Many of the kids that we meet give up their possessions to travel and seek the spirituality that they long for, most often becoming deceived by the complexities and convolution of the New Age movement. The Almighty God, whose name is "I AM", is in contrast, holy and pure. He is straight as an arrow and He is honest with us and relevant to our lives. He understands us and He makes Himself understood.

To follow Him there is no need to wear any kind of robe or do endless self-flagellations or prostrations. This is the truth about God, and so we are committed to remaining simple in our lifestyle and teachings, sharing only the life that He offers, which is eternal and fulfilling and completely free. We believe in the power of the gospel, and we believe that it is powerful when spoken freely so, although we seek to be friends and to be merciful, we don't shrink away from speaking the truth of the gospel wholeheartedly.

Nomadic youth don't want frills or gimmicks or to see us stepping on eggshells around something that everyone can handle: the Truth. The beautiful, life-saving truth will set them free. We don't ask that the kids would simply numb their brains and forget all their questions.

The answer is Jesus so, whether it takes hours or years of conversation about the deception of the New Age or a brief "Jesus loves you," we

will never offer anything but Him as the answer. After those questions are mulled over and chewed on there is something like what the disciples saw after the transfiguration: Jesus standing alone.

Discipleship: So what now?

We believe that our relationship with the travelers does not end when they decide to follow Jesus. The life of a new believer is inexpressibly precious, and Jesus has been actively, passionately pursuing them. He wants to continue in knowing them fully, and being known by them.

We have a School of Discipleship, at The Land in Leggett, Ca, where we focus on the very basics of what it means to be a servant and friend of Jesus. We are committed to seeing them grow and be transformed as the new man is strengthened by knowing the Word and spending time seeking God.

It has been called a "fast-forward" time of discipleship, with loads of time spent digging deep in the Word and a pressure cooker type of community that brings people so much farther in their process of sanctification. Discipleship is truly necessary for people who have spent many of their years in bondage to lies. The key is knowing the truth that God makes Himself known through His Word and that He has always loved them.

Pray for the Salvation of the whole Scene

The fruit of these ten years can be seen in the body of people who are now together in sharing the Good News of God with Global Nomadic Youth today. Many of these servants are the fruit of what God has done through years of ministry. Many have gone through the School of Discipleship at the Land. Many were drunks, addicted to drugs, on the streets, completely deceived in the demonic philosophies of the New Age, or on Tour year after year. Many of them have returned to the same scene to share their experiences and cry out for reconciliation between the kids and their Eternal Father. Others have gone elsewhere serving God in many ways. The harvest that God has prepared in this unique, spiritually minded group of people is ripe. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send more workers to bring in the sheaves.

Punk/Hardcore

Tessa Rhyne - Prodigal Project - San Francisco

What Are They Rebelling Against?

A society gone wrong.
Things are not the way they should be.
Mainstream Society.

It just *seems* like a bunch of people who look and
think and act the same.
The majority.
The accepted norm.

Those with different thoughts and tastes with the boldness to follow their hearts are forced to be on the outside of this mainstream.

But the current of this stream is strong, and those who resist it find themselves stuck, unable to move or only able to advance very slowly – and are the worse for wear because of it.

Many are casualties of this fight and end up washed up onto the bank, gasping until death finally takes them.

Those who continue to fight gather together, creating a small undercurrent of their own. Their own society, within which are culture, commerce and community.

Damaged from the fight, the mainstream has become their **Enemy**. But there are many in the mainstream with similar thoughts and tastes as the undercurrent. They lack the will to fight or they have a different **strategy/survival plan**.

What are they rebelling against?

Things are not the way they should be.

Hello there! My name is Tessa Rhyne and I am a follower of Jesus. I consider myself a punk rocker, but my identity is first and foremost child of God. I wrote this to give you a little bit of insight into the punk culture as I see it.

Punk rock means a lot of things to a lot of people. Some connotations are severely bad, others are quite good. Ask someone what it means to be punk, what is the definition of punk, and every person will give you a different answer. Different styles tend to have different emphases.

- Sometimes its anger, rage, and disgust spewed out in a chaotic mess of crust punk.
- Oi! is skinhead punk with rousing sing-along choruses of drinking, fighting, and brotherhood. The Dropkick Murphys sing, “Hail! Hail! The gang’s all here!” and The Forgotten sing, “fists up, back against the wall.”
- Pop punk (the most mainstream of punk) sings a lot about girls and acting stupid. Think of the movie Jackass.
- The big spiked mohawk, studded jacket look is more characteristic of street punk.
- Some punk is very political and used to inform, incite and call to action on issues ranging from anarchy to social justice.

There are actually several different themes that run through punk culture as a whole. I will discuss four key points.

Punk is Anti-Authority

In general, punk rockers do not trust authority. This can range from mistrust of individuals (like parents, authority figures and cops) to structures and institutions such as government, religion, and schools.

When parents make bad decisions their children’s evolving perception of the world is adjusted accordingly. Abuse, neglect, instability of a parent, even just common divorce (JUST!?!), enormously affect the growing child’s perception of authority.

Recently, I hung out with some punks outside of a large concert (Circle Jerks and GBH). There was a woman (very drunk and riled up) with an 11-year-old daughter. The mom was loud, trying to start fights with a few people (including the venue staff). The daughter was crying, pulling on her mom’s arm, begging her to be quiet and stop trying to fight. The girl was doing the best she could to take charge of the situation, to keep both of them out of trouble. It was painful to watch. The mom eventually passed out in a police car and the girl got a ride back home with the people they rode to the show with.

When children are forced to be the parents, when responsibility is out of order, then comes the understanding that those in authority will fail you; you must make your own way.

This mistrust of authority is applied to the frameworks of authority as well. Many punks view power structures as oppressive. If the people in authority can not be trusted, then the structure that gives them that authority and keeps them in power cannot be trusted either. Thus anarchy is a common punk ideal.

With this in mind, it is easy to see why so many punks are antagonistic toward the Christian /Catholic Church. It is perceived as an empty institution designed to subdue and control the masses. Rather than writing them off as rebellious and offensive, try showing them that God is trustworthy by being trustworthy to them. They are expecting rejection. They are expecting you to fail them. Sometimes all you can do is lift them up in prayer and ask God to touch them.

They are expecting God to fail them. One guy said his biggest fear was that God wouldn’t come through in the end because he didn’t come through in the beginning. Your trust in the Lord

must be secure. **Live your life with authenticity, listening and receiving from God.** God is faithful to you. Show that in your life and in interaction with others. Prophetic gifts will come in handy here – God is real! Trust comes when someone knows you are for real. With consistency and stability be a sensitive man/woman of God. Battle for them in prayer! If you are not communicating authentic love, the point is not getting across.

Punk is Reactionary

Punk rockers are very aware that we live in a broken world. Many songs describe the lives of the people around them – abuse, rejection, drugs, sexual perversion, drunkenness, death. These songs in essence say, “LOOK AT THIS! THIS IS REAL LIFE!!! THIS WORLD IS REALLY F**KED UP!”

- Q. So why do so many songs seem to be reveling in that lifestyle rather than revealing its negative effects?
- A. I think it’s along the lines of “If you can’t beat it, join it. Make the most of what you’ve got.” Sin is fun for a season. It numbs the pain of brokenness, but it also perpetuates the cycle of pain.

Punk exists as an affront to those who would live their lives in idealistic oblivion and denial of the pain around them. This point is illustrated very well in a movie called “Suburbia.” (It was directed by Penelope Spheeris in the 80’s and features Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. I recommend watching her other movies as well, “Decline of Western Civilization, Parts I, II, III.”)

The movie shows kids who have no family, or feel that they can’t go back to their family for whatever reason, come together in a squat house, forming their own sort of family.

This element of creating a family substitute is common in social groups. Skinhead crews, gangs, and groups of street kids act as families. Hippies have “fam-fam.” In order to find out your sexual preference, a person in the homosexual community might ask, “Are you family?”

I asked a friend of mine who has been part of the straight-edge hardcore scene for a few years what hardcore means to him. His answer: unity and family. For him, a person essentially without a family, this group gave him something to belong to. A place to give as well as to receive.

I was at a big hardcore show with him a while back. Tough guy hardcore. A hardcore show is not just a concert where the audience watches the band; everyone is a participant and makes the show an exciting time. The band provides the music, the crowd provides the energy. There are the people dancing crazy, flailing, acrobatic hardcore dance moves in the pit. There are the people in a circle forming the edge of the pit, front row to the action, serving as a protective barrier to the rest of the crowd. There’s the rest of the crowd, pressing in, ebbing and flowing as one body.

The lead singer of one band rallied the crowd, “Just because we’re up here on stage and you’re down there doesn’t mean we’re better or more important than you! There are no rock stars here! We’re all here to have fun.” Later, the lead singer of another band jumped down, stopping in the middle of a song to fight because he thought someone in the crowd was picking a fight with one of his friends. So it’s a dysfunctional family, but that’s the reason you’re reading this, right?

There is a deep root of rejection, alienation and self-hatred in punk culture. This is true of the majority of underground cultures, not just punk. Actually, I would say that this is true of people in general. Each group embodies this in a different way but punks and other underground cultures tend to be more outwardly extreme about it. The obnoxious behavior and severe appearance of many punks presents a challenge to you.

Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, they say, “You will reject me anyway, so let me just make myself that much harder to accept, since I don’t care what you think anyway!” This behavior can include violence, self-mutilation, acting out in purposefully repulsive and offensive manners, being smelly, and having extreme piercings and facial tattoos.

My warning to you is to not mistake some encounters with valid self-expression that may seem offensive to you as an example of the above. Spiked hair, multiple facial piercings, and a body covered in tattoos may seem like a cry for help or an image of self-hatred but it can just as viably be an outward symbol of joy, creativity, freedom and secure identity in Christ. God is the judge. Ask the Lord for discernment. Your job is to receive the person with love, not reject them because of their appearance or behavior.

They may have more to offer you than you realize. We all get adopted into the family of Christ and there are no red-headed stepchildren. In a healthy family, everyone is wanted and loved and

cared for. Everyone contributes something special. Take the time to get to know someone. Commit yourself to them. Let them be your friend. Let's be good family to each other.

Punk is Social Commentary and a Call to Action

Punk points out to the world, "HEY! SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?!" There are some strains of punk that take on more fatalistic tones, blasting society but passing the time with lazier, self-destructive ways of life. More motivated individuals take the challenge to change the world. Some are involved in Food not Bombs, an activist organization that hands out free vegetarian food to people on the street in city parks and at political rallies.

Lots of punks are involved with organizations, which fight in the name of compassion to free the rights of poor, oppressed and imprisoned people globally. They are taking things into their own hands. D.I.Y. (do it yourself) freedom is valued over the captivity of 9 to 5 jobs. Kids are publishing zines (small homemade magazines), distributing music, printing T-shirts and hosting events, making their voice heard.

Punk is tired of playing nice games of "cover up the lies and put on a public face." It exists to expose reality – "This is what is really happening! This is the RAW TRUTH of what I see, what I experience, what I feel! I am a real person and I HAVE VALUE!!"

Isn't this what Jesus did? He is the Truth that exposes the lies. He is all about releasing captives and freeing the oppressed (Luke 4:18). Jesus is the very one who brings about Justice. Jesus sees the worth of each person so much clearer than any of us. He's the one who demonstrated what it means to lay down your life for another person's worth – true compassion. Some punks are following after the pattern of Jesus without even knowing who he is!

I think the response here is a call to community. This doesn't mean you have to live in a commune type setting, but it does mean sharing your life with others, letting your life be invaded and affected by others unlike yourself. It's a challenge with the capacity to form in you humility, compassion, and grace.

Community narrows the gap between helper and recipient, because it recognizes the fragile humanity in each of us. Bearing another

person's weakness can seem noble until you must let them carry yours.

If the body of Christ would look more like the interdependent organism described in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, we would have a lot more to offer those who seek to fight for the good of others. Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have all written excellent books on community. I urge you to explore their works for a greater understanding of community.

Punk is Passionate

To me, punk rock music conveys passion and energy, a high level of emotion and urgency: Intensity. For many people, life is intense; this music is the outlet. You can scream about your anger, rage and hatred. You can shout at your enemies. You can spout venom and poison the people around you. Those are all displays of passion, of expressing what is inside. But there are other things to be passionate about. The sufferings of Jesus are referred to as his Passion. Webster defines passionate as having or showing strong feelings. Jesus was pretty passionate when he was flipping tables over in the Temple. One loves a spouse passionately. Some people have a passion for gardening. Passion can be directed in many different ways.

I have sat through too many church services where the words of the songs convey a passion completely undetectable in the tone of the singers. So many people are frozen, insecure, and unable to express what is truly going on inside of them. There is the nice mother of three who is unable to admit that deep down she is angry at God, or the middle-aged man who wants to leap and dance with joy and praise to God but is unable to break the mold of propriety he's been shackled with. He tearfully told me, "I'm third generation Baptist, and they breed it out of us."

Lord! Free your people!! If a scream can accomplish the purposes of God (Joshua 6:5) and shouts of joy (Ezra 3:11-13, Psalm 35:27, 66:1) bring God glory, then let it happen! Dance with all your might (2 Samuel 6:14)! God created us to be passionate people, not robots! As the inside of a person is transformed from darkness to light, their passion is refocused to the things of God. It is redeemed. Let freedom ring!

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 9:16-27. This speaks to me about how we should live and minister. I like the NLT, "For preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if

I didn't do it! (NASB 'woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.') If I were doing this of my own free will, then I would deserve payment. But God has chosen me and given me this sacred trust, and I have no choice (vs. 16 –17)."

I think this means that if you are truly living out the essence of Christ in your life, you can't help but share it with people. It is your passion. "To the Jews I became as a Jew... to those under the Law, as under the Law... To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some (vs. 20-22). I don't think that this means you are to pretend to be something you are not, or to be fake. People can spot a poser a mile away.

I think this means that being fully who you are (redeemed, beloved child of God with unique personality, giftings and calling, as well as preferences and cultural background) you will relate to people in the context of who they are (cultural and spiritual background, claimed identity, etc.). Take that and apply it to punk rockers or whatever subset of culture you run into. They may be from the same town as you but their worldview – language, value system, tastes, icons of success and failure, and social structure – is completely different from yours.

I am constantly realizing that the assumptions I make about people are wrong and that they cannot fit in my box. There are too many variables. I do a lot more listening than I used to. One of the greatest ways to honor a person is to listen to them. Wait on God for what to say and when to speak. But when He says, "go", then Go!

Ministry Life

Life as ministry. Jesus is in us.

Who are we to keep him bottled up?

What are you doing with your life? Who are you?

What is going on? Who do you associate with?

What do you like? What are your values?

What do you care about?

WHO ARE YOU?

What is your identity? What do you want?

Why do you want it? What is it good for?

What do you care about?

Make what is inside come outside.

Be who you truly are.

Your redeemed self.

Your self created in God's image.

The holy you.

Jesus is your friend.

Companionship. Love. Identity.

Walk in it. Walk it out. Wear it out. Be

outlandish. As long as that's what you are.

This is healing: encountering reality,

embodied in another person.

The aroma of Christ. A fragrant offering.

REALITY.

An encounter with the real.

Ultimate reality. Nothing is more real than God.

Jesus. Holy Spirit.

An encounter with the real.

Not creation, originator. Uncreated originator.

Source of being.

It's all about being.

Be being filled. Fully be. Inhabit reality.

Be. Exemplify being.

Fully be, and in so being,

be an example of what it is to be.

Be fully... healed... in relationship... be fully...

moved... fully taken up, absorbed.

Be fully loved... cared for... chosen. Be fully

intimate... secure... captured... freed.

Set apart by freedom. Set apart by the ability to

live from a secure center.

Set apart by the presence of God.

NOT fear. Not insecurity. Not hatred. Not

falseness.

AUTHENTICITY!!!!

Punk is a lot of things. These are just some of my observations and opinions.

Punks already know there is a problem.

We know the solution.

Main obstacle: authority/trust issues.

Plan: They are so hard and far from God that many can't feel His love. They have to experience His love through you. Jesus hugs them with your arms. Be real. Love and listen to them without judgment and listen to God for when to say something. Stand by them in presence and in prayer. Be their advocate in prayer and let God do His thing.

God loves the outcasts and a redeemed outcast is a beautiful thing.

SCREAM!

Brief History of Punk

Bruce Wright - Refuge - St. Petersburg FL

Punk has its roots in three musical strands, from three different countries:

- 1) Jamaica with the development of Ska and Reggae, featuring most notably the “rude boy” scene,
- 2) The United States with rockabilly and honky-tonk,
- 3) England with the music scene starting in the 60’s with the “mod scene” with their scooters and bowl-like haircuts, with bands like The Who.

Punk also has its roots in the political/social climate of the 60’s and 70’s in England, the US and Europe.

Youth disenfranchisement with the failure of 60’s hippie Utopia culture and the commercialization of Rock and Roll led to a new form of music characterized by loud chaotic distorted chords played with less technique, more heart, more angst, and more disdain for authority and the establishment. The lyrics tended toward Anarchistic and nihilistic views of power and authority.

Punk grew out of most notably, the working class and poor of England. The attire, combat boots, suspenders, jeans and shaved heads, as with the various skinhead groups, represented the working poor. The leather jackets, piercings, and the mohawk hair of punks also represented a reaction to conventional appearance and a desire for individuality.

In England, the bands of the early Punk era were represented by bands such as The Clash, The Sex Pistols, The Stooges and The Dickies. In America, bands such as the Velvet Underground, The MC5, Ramones, The Damned, X and later the Dead Kennedys and Crash, represented this sound.

Inherently, Punk is about Rebellion against controlling authority, independence, changing

society, eliminating injustice and inequity and non-conformity. Christianity, in its more pure uncompromised non-institutional form has much in common with this.

As Punk grew, so did many musical and cultural sub-forms, with it. Culturally, a variety of sub-categories of punk grew: Traditional skinheads, Nazi skinheads (racist), SHARPS (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), rude boy (Ska/Punk mixed), Hardcore, Straightedge Goth-Punk (Bands like Joy division), Gutter punks, Pop Punk, Peace Punks (those for Social Justice-CRASS, Anti-Flag), and Emo (Emotional Personal Lyrics).

In conclusion, this is only a minimal historical introduction; it only begins to cover the vast array of issues and styles involving Punk. As those who claim to follow the Christ of non-conformity and of the oppressed, Punk has much to offer. Issachar, in the Old Testament, told the children of Israel, to know the times in which we live. We, as the Church, must also know the times and become all things to all men (I Cor. 9).

Love and Acceptance to this group must come first, before they will accept the Jesus of Scripture. Much of the Church has been misrepresented by those of the narrow ultra-conservative view. We must begin to show them a different Jesus.

The following is a list of recommended reading: (gives more info on Punk Culture).

- Maximum Rock and Roll (A Zine)
- Anarchy, A Journal of Desire Armed (A Zine)
- Anarchy and Christianity (A book)
- Punk Planet (A Zine)
- The Philosophy of Punk (A book)

Gothic/Industrial/ Metal-heads

Billie Sylvain - Asylum - London UK

Asylum began as Street Warriorz in January 1990. I'd been hanging with punks and skinheads, when God asked me to become an evangelist to them. I told God to go and jump but he kept on nagging so I gave in. Friends of mine were running a Christian music shop in Soho and they did some artwork for ideas I had for tracts. Then we went to various alternative places to hand them out.

We got to know loads of people and shared the Gospel with most of them. It was during this time we befriended Pat who later became the manager of The Intrepid Fox Pub (The Fox for short). In March 1996 we started our Asylum club at The Fox and played a selection of Christian punk, goth, metal, etc. That same year we changed our name from Street Warriorz to Asylum.

Seven years later and Asylum is still here, still waging peace on the alternative battlefield. Asylum is becoming more well known now and more people who don't know Jesus are starting to open up to us.

April 1998 saw the addition of Asylum Live, a bigger version of our monthly Asylum Club at The Fox. Asylum live happens about every 3 or 4 months. We hire a goth\alternative nightclub venue called Gossips, in Soho, only a minute from The Fox, and we have live Christian bands and there's actually room for people to fling themselves about on the dance floor.

We've had loads of up and coming U.K Christian metal and punk bands wanting to play and minister at Asylum Live. We are working at building the club up; we have to charge an entry fee because it's expensive to hire the venue.

We've also had to look at ways to get non-Christians along to Asylum live. When we do the Asylum club at The Fox they're already there drinking, we just walk in and set up and we play Christian music all night. But we needed an incentive to get non-Christians to come to Asylum Live.

I decided that we'd have to include music by non-Christian artists and put them on the flyers to get non-Christians to come. So far it's done the trick. We have two flyers, one is for Christians so they know Asylum is actually Christian and don't chuck our flyers away or spread rumors about how dodgy we are. (Yes we've had both happen!) And one for non-Christians which lists all the non-Christian stuff we play, so they don't chuck our flyers away because of their misconceptions about God. (Yes we've had that happen too!)

We only play about 10% non-Christian stuff but we have to be very careful about what we play. Andy A who is the number 2 in Asylum and also the DJ, checks all the music for its lyrical content. If it's not suitable it doesn't get played.

In March this year we started a weekly music stall in Camden Market. Camden is now the heart of the alternative scene in London and it's where you go to get your clothes, and to see and be seen.

We sell Christian punk, hardcore, metal, goth, etc. and blast it out all day on our stereo. We'll be moving the location this month next door to the Black Rose shop which is a mecca for all things Goth.

Also, there's the Asylum band X, which will be changing its name due to the original X reforming after splitting up more than 10 years ago. Asylum's X goes out to promote Asylum and also to minister the Gospel to those who want to hear it. That's the low down so far. Please pray for protection, provision and finance for us.

What we as Asylum have learned about reaching out to gothic /industrial/metal crowd.

Asylum has been in existence for over 10 years and in that time we have learned many things. But I would say that out of all we've learned three things stand out to me in particular.

First, building friendships with people

Friendship or relationship evangelism is in my opinion, the most effective way of sharing one's faith in Christ. I and others on the Asylum team have been able to have a greater input in people's lives through being their friend. When people in the subcultures know you are really part of the scene, that you are really interested in them, that you respect their opinions, beliefs, etc. then they are more than ready to be more open and to hear what you have to say.

I've also found that people can challenge you about where you are coming from, or even open your mind to looking at things differently. It can be a real eye opener to hear how people in the subcultures feel about Christians because of the rejection, persecution, and lack of Grace that they have experienced at the hands of Christians.

If Marilyn Manson had experienced the true loving Christianity that Jesus taught then maybe he would feel differently about Christianity

now. Many Christians have a very blinkered way of looking at things. Many of us have been programmed to think, or react in a certain way, rather than thinking things through for ourselves. And this can still sometimes affect us no matter how radical we may think we are. People in the scene that you've developed a good relationship with are good at pointing out when you are becoming blinkered.

People that you've not built a relationship with will just walk away and avoid you in future and probably tell others to as well. It's harder to walk away from a friend.

When you are dealing with people in the subcultures you cannot afford to be closed-minded or shocked about anything, otherwise you can come across as very rejecting. If you are friends with people in the subcultures and you bother to learn about the scene, then you are less likely to have a typical Christian knee jerk reaction. It is just no good to say "The bible says...." "To a people who mostly don't hold scripture to be their source of guidance, or the standard by which they live their lives.

I have found that as I've gotten to know someone they have naturally asked me more and more questions about my faith and I have become more and more adept at explaining my faith to them. The relationships have been able to withstand the times when I may disagree with where they are coming from.

The second is to be constantly flexible.

The various subcultures under the alternative umbrella are constantly evolving and mutating. Asylum has learned that we have to change with them. Christians have a tendency to traditionalize and institutionalize. God is constantly fresh and relevant and while his character does not change, his approach changes

depending on what is needed. Jesus didn't just do the same miracles over and over again. Keeping abreast of the sub-cultures means that you have to read the magazines, listen to the CD's and even change the way you look. If you're still running around wearing 80's spandex and trying to get people in the metal scene to respect you, it's just not going to happen!!

The third thing

We've learned, sadly, is that a lot of attack and opposition can come from Christians who don't understand what you are doing and are therefore very quick to label you "Dodgy." But we're in good company as Jesus experienced the same thing!! Asylum is now at the stage where we feel it is more important to reach the non-Christians than try to please the Christians. Jesus was judged because people only looked at the surface of what he was doing. They saw him hanging around prostitutes, tax collectors, and other outcasts, going to drunken parties, etc.

Had they asked WHY he was doing that they would have seen that he was trying to befriend them and lead them into God's kingdom. People in the subcultures very rarely will come to Christians. We have to go to them. Or if we want them to come to us, we have to present things to them in such a way that they'll be interested and come along. Sometimes that may mean us doing things that (to Christians with little discernment) make us look like we are not right before God.

Someone from a subculture is more likely to take a flyer about Jesus from you if it has a skull and crossbones on it, than if it has a nice pretty butterfly and flowers!!

Underpinning everything that we've learned though, is the power of prayer. Prayer makes the difference. Without it, nothing gets done.

Ravers

Peter Wohler - Source – Minneapolis MN

Where have all the Ravers gone? If you have been in seclusion for the last three years, praying, fasting, and practicing your glow stick marshal arts, and now ready to search out the local

Raves to be that glow stick in darkness.... then you may feel a little cheated by the scene. The scene has progressed (or digressed?) and has evolved

from the organic-grass roots movement to a commercial nightclub scene.

Techno/Rave Outreach

We started FUSE (Techno/Rave Outreach of Source) in 1997. Two 22 year old Christians Dave and Matt had been in the scene since 1990. They were drawn in by the incredibly creative and unique music and parties and eventually were performing and producing Live PA music. The scene seemed to progressively become more about the drugs and partying than the music. In 1996 they were contemplating if they should even still be involved since so many of their friends and acquaintances seemed to be oppressed by the drugs and bad choices.

After the two were involved in a discipleship group and lived in the Joshua House, Men's Discipleship House, for a year we decided to form FUSE (Focused Underground Spiritual Environment). We formed a team around reaching out the Rave scene. We rented a house where four young men lived that became the hub for FUSE.

Fuse was a great example of the relational philosophy of Source. The outreach philosophy was:

- 1) Going out and meeting people where they were at,
- 2) Hosting drug-free events with local performers (that are safe, welcoming, and do not allow preaching or testimonies from a stage – we believe very much in presenting who Jesus is, but seen doing this in conversations as relationships build be effective – kinda like Jesus did), and
- 3) Inviting people to spiritual discussions, dinners, and Bible Studies (this also allows individuals to move at there own pace – they come back when they are ready for more).

We saw many that had to attend parties a few times before they would trust us enough to begin to talk with us. And the eventually they would show up to the spiritual discussion groups and Bible studies.

Every summer we took part in a 3-day Rave fest called Furthur put on by a proclaimed satanic group. They knew what we were about, but we had gained favor with them. Their leader also knew about the horror of the parties and appreciated someone being there with hearts to look after people.

The last one we attended 2 different young people died from drug overdoses. We also witnessed a young man on a bad acid trip jump into a fire that had 30-ft high flames. He was totally engulfed and you couldn't see him for several seconds. When he came out his pants were melted to his skin and his hair was smoldering. He was so out of it he was about to jump back in again when another guy and me tackled him. It took us 45 minutes for us to get him to the gate of the campground. The promoters were more scared of being shut down than giving him help. If we would not have been there he would have run off into the woods and died. He survived, but has lost half his lungs.

At Furthur we hosted a side tent that would play music during the day, provide soup and bread at night, be an oasis for those who desired to be drug free, and serve thousands of free pancakes during a Sunday Morning Worship service.

Attending raves, Dave and Matt performed at many, creating a Zine, hosting drug-free parties (that were creative and treated people with dignity), weekly spiritual discussion nights, Bible studies, telling Christians who found out about FUSE that they couldn't come back because they were preaching at kids, having young people who were not Christians refer their friends to us when they needed help, being covered by the local "City Pages" (and them writing a positive article about a Christian group), seeing former Satanists receive Christ, providing shelter and referrals to homeless youth, many conversations about what our faith is about, seeing Christian young people who were in the scene using drugs go clean, and hosting the last Rave in Minneapolis called Redemption in 2001 were all apart of FUSE.

The summer of 2001 we through an event called Redemption. It was said to be the last Rave in Minnesota. Over 1,000 attended the event, which was held on a farm 30 minutes west of downtown Minneapolis. We flew in national DJ's – most we were unsure what they believed, but were confidant that they knew what we were about and wouldn't do anything in appropriate.

We had three stages, interactive art, large canvases, sculpting, chain saw carving (the chain saw was not interactive), and a 50-ft high mural on a side of a barn. The whole event was to be a concert of prayer for God to bring Redemption. We had zines, an introduction of who we are and the event on the shuttle bus to get in, and a prayer and chill room. We passed out 15,000 flyers throughout the Midwest with text that asked, "what

ever happened to PLUR (Piece, Love, Unity, & Respect)?" "Why is everything in a downward spiral getting worse?" "What will turn things around? How will individuals overcome?"...."God we need redemption. Somehow do what we as individuals cannot."

It was an incredible event that ended with a storm coming where the rain actually washed off paint from where the mural had been graffitied. The Mural Miracle is too long to tell, but check out www.sorucemn.org to see the details.

At the time we did not know it was going to be the last Rave in Minnesota (there have been other parties but nothing outside of a nightclub of any considerable size.). The attendees were amazed at how incredibly creative it was, that is was drug-free, and that Christians threw it. It got voted the party of the year in 2001 and we still get in conversations around town about the party and the mural.

We continue to use FUSE as part of a production name mainly because of the positive recognition from the past. We no longer have the FUSE house, but now we have an Urban Art Center called the Fallout.

(www.falloutminneapolis.com). We have the same philosophy of outreach and hosting events. The events are not so techno centered anymore, but more like interactive warehouse theme parties that usually have elements of techno in them as well as bands and performers.

The model that we use could be done anywhere. What made it effective was being in culture, being a light in darkness, and being salt without dumping the whole salt shaker on it at one time.

Where have all the Ravers gone?

To nightclubs. Raves began around a counterculture movement that gathered around music that was not accepted by the mainstream. The early days of Raving parties took on their own distinct look and personality. Like many counter culture movements the scene drew those feeling isolated, misunderstood, and looking for identity.

Adding to the movement was the fact that any small group of teens or young adults who could be a little organized, produce a great flyer, and come up with some seed money could throw a Rave. The national and international performers were accessible if the price was right. The events were held in warehouses in industrial areas and all the proper permits would be obtained. No alcohol would present and the crowd was very manageable

compared to a drunken rock concert. If there was a problem with a Rave as far as the building owner or authorities were concerned about it usually was not discovered until the next morning. And most places a rave was never held twice.

As it grew into the 90's drugs became more and more apart of the scene and most the time the promoters were also a part of dealing drugs at the parties. By the mid 90's most urban areas had "Rave Laws," and Raves began to be held 30 minutes to 2 hours outside of metro areas (at some unsuspecting small town empty warehouse).

As Rave's entered the new millennium, many of the noble roots seemed to have given in to corruption. The scene that started around a motto of PLUR (Peace Love Unity & Respect), was about new creativity and music, was about being a refuge for those who did not fit in, was a place to receive community, acceptance, support, and even purpose...now seemed to be suffering the consequences of indulgence and being out of control on drugs.

Probably like most counter culture movements the next generation did not have the values that were the initial inertia of Raves. The average age of parties became younger and younger (in the mid 90's the average was probably above 20, where in the year 2000 we were seeing a majority of parties be attended by 14 & 15 year olds). The average Rave-goer went more thinking about the drug experience they would have vs. going to experience community. Promoters were more concerned about making money. National and international DJ's became popular enough to sign contracts with national promoters, which only allowed them to play big time venues and nightclubs. The small promotion group bringing in a big name is obsolete. Small town and rural America, especially the police forces, were aware of Raves now and on the look out for groups trying to conceal such permits. In the Midwest the National Guard in Minnesota and FBI in Wisconsin shut down Raves by greeting people as they arrived.

I hope this article doesn't discourage those into techno/electronic music/DJ's. It is very much a valid art form and certainly there exist remnants that reflect the techno roots of experimenting and creativity. We are to "Go into all the world," and I certainly hope that God continues to raise up individuals to bring His Kingdom to this subculture.

Types of Ministry

Post Modern Church:

Are we there Yet?

Andrew Jones - Boaz Project- Prague Czechoslovakia

A deep ecclesiology, from what I have seen, is still around the corner. The challenge of postmodernity has influenced our apologetics, our worship and our methods of communication. But when it comes to the way we build and structure our churches, not a whole lot has changed so far. But there are some exciting new models of church emerging that resonate with the postmodern experience of time and space. Are we there yet? Of course not. But there are hopeful signs that make me think we are well on the way.

I am writing this in Budapest, Hungary at a conference called Hope 21. A thousand people are here representing what God is doing in 36 countries. My area is Church Planting and yesterday I spoke to about 60 missionaries and church planters on what doing church was looking like in the postmodern world.

For my presentation, I wrote a song. A few songs actually. Enough for a whole album. None of it had any music - just song titles. Let's play it now.

The Church in the Postmodern World: The Budapest Album

Track 1. The Party in their House

The Kingdom of God is like a party. According to Jesus and his Kingdom parables, the Kingdom is like a house full of poor people partying. Churches in the postmodern world look more like parties.

They are often in houses, there are multiple rooms, food flowing out of the kitchen, people chatting, celebrating (like a birthday), grieving (like a funeral), dancing (like a dance party). This is all very good. But more and more, the party is in THEIR HOUSE and not in OUR HOUSE.

Instead of bringing new believers into our houses/churches/parties, we are sending people to THEIR house to help them throw the party and build the community. Matthew the Tax Collector, when he decided to follow Jesus, threw the party in his house. Lydia's heart was opened to the gospel and the church met in Lydia's house. Church needs to be missionary as well as missional.

We need to act out our "being sent" by actually going out to THEIR HOUSE and bringing church with us as we go. This track in my album is one of the key tracks so I have opened with it, although in my performance I started with some different tracks.

Track 2. The Tree and the River

This could mean the universal motifs that connect with almost any culture - the tree of life and the river of life. I often end up here when I talk with people into eastern religions. But this is not what I mean. I am talking about the apostle and the prophet. New churches and movements are built on them and their ministry. The apostle is like a tree. He or she gives roots, stability, growth, and covering.

The Prophet is like a river. Rivers flow, trees grow. Prophets see the city with God's eyes. They tap into the prayers and promises for the city. They dig into deep wells to release whatever God has stored up for the place. They enable God's purposes to be visible and acted on by the apostle. Prophets hear from God and Apostles move resources into place to give God what He wants. The combination of these two giftings is often the initial thrust in birthing something new. And their return trips are often the way the growing churches stay healthy and connected.

Track 3. The Baptist Monk

This is my favorite track title on the album. It carries great shock value with its juxtaposition of the evangelical and the Catholic, the active and the reflective, the city and the desert. I can't say that I actually know any Baptist monks, even though I have suggested that the Baptists should create some monastic orders.

There are some Baptist communities that are on the journey - Lower Greenville Baptist in Dallas, for example, has a Celtic prayer room and has Taize nights on Tuesday. St. Thomas Crookes in Sheffield, a Baptist/Anglican mix, is on the way to becoming an order rather than a church. They have prayer three times daily. 24-7 Prayer are starting up monastic structures they call Boiler Rooms.

I have met Vineyard monks from Ohio who take vows and share a common purse. It is a growing trend that postmodern spiritual seekers would rather be a part of a small, committed order or team on a journey than be an attendee in a large, impersonal worship service.

Postmodern churches will increasingly include the monastic model as well as the ecclesiastic. Patrick Johnstone, in his book "The Church is Bigger Than You Think" argues that church has always existed in 3 forms-

- a) the gathering (ecclesiastic),
- b) The community in training (I call it the monastic)
- c) The sending/traveling band
Or the (apostolic).

Modernity divided the church into CHURCH (the ecclesiastic) and PARACHURCH (the seminaries, missions, youth ministries, etc). What we are seeing now is intentional communities and traveling teams that not only support the church - THEY ARE CHURCH.

Track 4. The Couch and the Pilgrim Trails

Pilgrimage is becoming the way of missions for postmodern young people. Pilgrimage is a two-way experience --- giving your gift and receiving a gift from the culture.

Celtic pilgrims went to get books and they told the story of Jesus on the way. A pilgrimage is an open-ended journey that God could change at any moment, like He did with the Apostle Paul.

Pilgrimage often involves working and studying along the way. What we are seeing is an increasing amount of pilgrims traveling around the world in a Spirit led adventure with God. Rising up also is the support system to assist them - houses of hospitality, well-worn trails where people have gone ahead, festivals where they gather as a large group.

There are pilgrim points of interest and learning, and available couches in the homes of believers around the world for a new generation of couch-surfing apostles and prophets.

Track 5. The Return of Eucharist

Churches in the postmodern world usually end up with an increased respect and focus on the Lord's Supper. Services often give primacy to the Eucharist over the sermon. The Eucharist is an experience of community and intimacy with God. It is a statement of faith, a proclamation of our

hope, a reenactment of the narrative, the story that undergirds our existence and gives meaning to our lives.

In the traditional churches, the Eucharist becomes the central point of the service. In house churches, the love feast or meal becomes the main event and the backdrop to everything else that happens. A related track that didn't make it to my album was **entitled "THE REVENGE OF THE KITCHEN"**. I may add it later and talk about the ministry of the chef and the role of cuisine.

Track 6. The Shrinking Stage and the Expanding Entryway

The stages are shrinking because believers are no longer under compulsion to perform the gospel. The community of God becomes a better apologetic for God than the stage ever was.

The stage also shrinks because multi-media happens in multi-spaces, on multi-walls, in multi-rooms, by multi-people. Entryways, hallways and sidewalks become stages for art and expression.

Entryways grow for another reason - post modern people who choose to attend a traditional church do not want to be made captive to a service where they are not allowed to move or talk or drink their coffee. They can do all those things in the entryway and listen in to the message at the same time.

The entryway is a place of interaction and relation building. It will increase in size and importance. How do they do all those things at the same time? Its called multi-tasking and if you want to know more about it then ask your wife.

Track 7. The Settled Exodus

There are many Jesus followers who have decided that it is healthier for them to journey with God OUTSIDE the institutional church. They are the exodus from the Pyramids of Modern Church. They were abused (the servants) or not welcomed (the "Others") or stifled in their spirituality (the spiritual high-achievers) or they were valued only by what they contributed to the growth of the Pyramid (the artists).

Now they are the believers who do not belong, the Church without a church, the wildflowers in the Garden of God. The evangelicals used to be in this place, ever since the Roman Catholic Church treated them as 'separated brethren'. Now the evangelicals are becoming the institution who insists that all believers attend one

of their worship services to be part of the "IN" group that we call Church.

Sam Williams is a few feet away from me as I write this. When he was at Bay Marin Community Church in California, he announced that there was a spiritual revival going on around us - but the church was not really a part of it. He saw it coming. What is going on now is that many of these believers are finding ways to connect and share life with each other.

These connection points and celebration events look like house churches but they are different. Whatever they are, they are part of the postmodern church landscape.

Track 8. The Church and their Businesses

This track did not make it to yesterday's performance due to lack of time. But I do want to include it on the Budapest album. Postmodernity has a lot to do with integrating elements of life that were separated in the Enlightenment.

One of the happy remarriages is church and business. Nothing new under the sun, of course - the early church and mission had a lot to do each others businesses and were often defined by their having all things in common. The word for fellowship "Koinonia" has financial connotations. So does "fellowship", coming from an old English term from which we get the word "fee".

Kiwi Viv Grigg told me that. He is a missionary to the poor who has helped in the formation of evangelical monastic orders (play TRACK 3. of this album) Anyway, I came across a very postmodern church in USA in which the shared businesses of the believers were the key to connecting the believers together. And the businesses also formed the platform for their ministry outside their church and their country. Heeelllllooooo, future!

Supplemental Tracks

I am including a few tracks that were inspired by the speakers before me and performed yesterday.

Track 9. The Sperming of the Planet

On a large piece of paper, Oivind Augland of Norway drew his country as a sperm and told us that they were sending out young people around the world to . . . how shall I say it . . . spiritually 'fertilize' the world with the gospel. It reminded me of a quote that I played in my performance, from Roland Allen, a famous English missionary to

China. In 1933, in response to a request from his mission society for stories of success, he said . . . "I do not trust spectacular things. Give me the seed growing secretly every time."

Track. 10 The Ministers and their Parents

Another happy thing going on in postmodern churches is the integration of young and old, children speaking into the movement and the older teaching the younger. The modern world saw church get sliced and diced into sub-groups and more sub-groups of sub-groups that ministered to sub-groups. The postmodern world is a good opportunity to integrate the ages, as well as letting people minister as a family rather than an individual. I know for myself, there are a lot of times when my kids minister better than I do and say things that show a unique and innocent understanding of God. I need to let them speak, or the stones will cry out.

Track 11. The Honoring of the Women

This is from Roland Van Der Molen of Netherlands, who has created a Tolkein-esque fantasy game to train young people in spirituality and ministry. He reminds us that we cannot move ahead without the women. I was told about this years ago by a mentor, Pastor Paul Jackson. "Half of my audience is women", he told me, "which is why I try and read books written by women."

It is the women who will teach us much about how to function in a postmodern world. They are already overtaking the men on the front line. Out of the 1 million church planting evangelists in China, I have heard, 80% are women. If the house churches are structured around hospitality, conversational evangelism, interactive teaching and relationships of trust, then there is no doubt that women will play a major role.

BACK COVER

Ross Rhode spoke before me. I took over his job as an Outreach Pastor in Oregon in 1988 - small world! Ross is the author of some excellent articles on churches in the postmodern world. He believes that the first wave of postmodern churches was the seeker-sensitive/targeted churches like Saddleback and Willow Creek.

The second wave of postmodern churches was the Gen-X and missional churches like Mars Hill in Seattle.

Over breakfast this morning, he told me that when he re-writes his article, he will say that the third wave of postmodern churches is the current house churches, since they have taken the elements of postmodernity beyond the cognitive and into the structure and leadership. I agreed but suggested that house church teachers who present their strategies as a meta-narrative and the only way to do church are coming from a modern worldview and not postmodern. Same page. Say no more.

Planting an Underground Church

Brad and Mary Culver - Refugee' Community - Kitchener ON

Introduction

Language paints pictures. It is powerful. We can create barriers or remove them by the use of a word. A little experiment I always enjoy conducting goes like this: What does the word church bring to mind? Usually 95% of the responses go something like this: pews, stain glass, steeples, collection plates, hymns or chorus singing, order of service, do's and don'ts, ...these are answers that come from Christians and we know that church is none of these. Yet the word

church creates certain images. These associations get really weird when I query the unchurched.

The words we use have become very important, by reason of what they have come to mean. Therefore to make the good news known more effectively we must use words that tear down skewed images and present true pictures. Often when translating the Bible into other languages an equivalent in English can't be found. Words are then chosen that paint an equally powerful picture in that people-group's cultural understanding.

Sometimes we hold onto words, concepts and ideas because of our own comfort zones. God put on a frame of flesh, wore the clothing, spoke the language and became adept at one of the art forms of that time in history, not so he could understand us but that we could have the opportunity to know him.

The Church is People.

What we planted is a faith community. When we meet we are gathering. I am a follower of Jesus. I can dialogue about spirituality with just about anyone.

The Refuge - In August of 1993 half a dozen people met in our living room to seek God's direction. Our desire: present the gospel in a culturally relevant way to a disenfranchised generation. Our goal: love God and our neighbors with reckless abandon and encourage others to do the same.

We saw ourselves as cross-cultural missionaries. When Paul went to the non-Jewish gentile world with the gospel he spoke their language, used their customs, culture and stories to share **The Story** and established communities of Christians that reflected this [acts17:16-28; 1cor.9:19-28]. The heart of the Refuge was the Refugee Café, which we operated as a café, not a drop-in. It afforded us a means to serve others, carry on relationships and model the Kingdom. The Refuge was birthed not as an outreach or ministry, but rather as a faith community for the subculture. After six years our landlord pulled the plug. We still gather and are transitioning again.

We could give you, the reader, a step-by-step of what we did; laying out all the details, but simply duplicating our approach or exporting our program will not give life to a community. You've got to hear from God for your particulars. But there are certain principles that we apply in the life of the Refuge. We see these principles as universal tools for planting, developing and nurturing an alternative faith community. So we will share a couple principles and a few stories.

Principles and Rules

There once was a man who loved model trains. His life's passion was model trains. He ate, slept and drank model trains. He eventually became a follower of Jesus. One of the first things he felt he was to do was to get rid of his train sets. Those things had become idols that consumed his life and adoration. This brought him great peace.

Too bad the story doesn't end there. In his mind he had seen the light. Model trains were sin. If it was wrong for him it must be wrong for everyone. He went on a great crusade to stamp out model trains. He became ungracious, intolerant and self-righteous, basically a proverbial pain in the you know what.

All of us have the moral law written in our hearts: Don't steal, don't lie, don't murder... Even a headhunter in Pago Pago knows it's wrong to hunt heads because he doesn't want his head to hang from his neighbor's lodge pole.

The moral law is black and white. It's navigating all the grays in life that becomes perilous. Is it cool with God if I watch the Simpsons? Is it ok to listen to this or that kind of music? What about certain clothing, hair cuts, make up, drinking coffee, drinking wine, nudity in art, R movies, a certain job, having lots of money, nice stuff... God has invited His people to live by His spirit. He is far more intricate and colourful than any rules and laws we can conjure up.

We have been called to a life of freedom in Christ [the book Galatians]. Rather than being bound by ridged rules we are released to the fullness of grace through His eternal **principles of love** [Mat.22: 37-40]. Living love is more difficult and exacting than living law [Romans 14; 1Corinthians 8]. This entails us as individuals and as community to be cultivating an **active relationship with God** and each other. We are invited to a life of hearing and doing based on friendship with God, living by love-motivated principles [John 5:19; John 8:28-29] rather than merely following a set of do's and don'ts.

As young believers, my wife and I befriended a community of Dutch Reformers and an Italian Pentecostal group at the same time. After the Sunday morning gathering our Dutch friends would step outside and discuss their faith while enjoying deep drags on unfiltered cigarettes. When we visited our Italian hosts we would discuss the deep things of God around the dinner table while they gulped down glasses of home made vino.

The Dutch would never dream of allowing "the demon alcohol to touch their consecrated lips". The Italians would never "desecrate the temple of the Holy Ghost with nicotine."

This was such a strong topic that it made it impossible for them to hang out together without stumbling. The real tension was a matter of culture. The Dutch were comfortable with tobacco, the

Italians with wine tragically not each other. The sad thing was we loved them both. .

I am unable to have Crosby, Still's and Nash or John Lennon CD's in our music collection. Let's just say they were gods in my former life. It is best for me not to have those "model trains". Hey, if you know who they are and you enjoy their music go right ahead. Others may, I may not.

We need to encourage people to **know** whom to know is life eternal. As a pastor I don't feel compelled to tell everyone how they should live their lives but to encourage them in relationship with the one who can. Sure, from time to time God calls me to bring a word of correction or rebuke but I do it with fear and trembling [Rom.2: 21;]. I must trust that God can guide His people in their relationship with Him. I'm not the Holy Spirit. I need to be there to help encourage that vital relationship.

All of this may sound simplistic, but one of the major issues we had to deal with in developing our community was whether we would allow smoking in the café. Sounds silly doesn't it. It had the potential to divide us. I have observed that we in the underground can tend to be a little legalistic in our approach to life in the grays.

Living life by the principles of the spirit cultivates love, forgiveness, tolerance, acceptance and maturity. This principle became the soul of the Refuge. Grace can be messy and risky. Sure it's easier to just live by a set of do's and don'ts but its no substitute for the life of love and freedom that God has made available to his children.

Form and Function

Form is how something looks.

Function is what it does.

Here's a helpful illustration. There are lots of makes and styles of cars (form). No matter the bells and whistles or lack of them, all cars perform the same primary purpose (function). They get us from point A to B quicker and more conveniently than walking or taking a horse and buggy.

The type or form of car that a person drives or owns usually reflects need, taste, lifestyle, economics and a host of personal likes and dislikes. It has nothing to do with the chief function of a car, to move you from place to place. My wife, Mary for example is drawn to style (form). One day she hopes to get her hands on a sixty-seven Mustang convertible. As for myself, cars have always been strictly utilitarian (function).

It could be a rust bucket as long as it gets me where I need to go.

Sounds simple. Should be. Often, though, within the sphere of "church" it can sometimes get confusing.

People, even well meaning ones, can confuse form with function. Scripture is clear that "The Church" is not a building shaped or designed a certain way nor is it a specific order of service or worship [Acts7:48; 17:42]. Rather, it is a **living organism, the community of faith**. It's about people living in vital relationships with Christ and each other [Romans 16:6; 1Corinthians 14:12; Ephsians5:23-32]. God doesn't make his home in mortar, brick, rituals, traditions, or programs, rather only in the human heart. Not that any of these in the right application can't be useful tools to help assist us to get from point A to B.

The primary function of the church is essential to what makes it The Church. The function or heartbeat of this **living organism The Church is found in a life of worship, service, honest fellowship with each other and the divine, prayer and the application of the living word of God** (Acts 2:42).

So it is the function (a Christ centered holistic community) of the church that makes it The Church, not the form it may take. We have constantly experimented with form. Before the Café was closed we were transitioning into a dance club and it was working.

This is a key principle to be remembered and applied when in the process of planting or developing an alternative faith community. The form needs to be an appropriate vehicle that helps the community (people) to fulfill its purpose (function). Simply put, form is not a matter of orthodoxy but rather calling, culture, style and mission.

Friends or Targets: Community

In her book *Rediscovering Ophelia*, Mary Pratt points out that one of the greatest contributors to our burgeoning dysfunctional society is the fracturing of family and the disintegration of healthy nurturing communities. Isolation, loneliness, disconnectedness and a burning need to belong have given birth to counterfeit community, brand identification, gangs and culture cliques. People desperately want to belong. God desires to put the solitary into families.

The generally accepted and practiced model for evangelism in North America goes something like this: (1) present the message (2)

give an invitation to accept the message and become a Christian (3) if the decision is a positive one the recipient(s) are received into fellowship (community). This is done in various ways but the script is always the same. Presentation, decision, and assimilation.

We adopted and experimented with a different model. It was much later that we discovered we had implemented the Celtic way of sharing faith. To the early Celtic followers of Christ, community and sharing of faith could not be separated. They were one in the same.

First, they would establish community with people or bring them into the fellowship of their faith community.

Secondly, with in community they would engage in natural conversation, develop friendship and, through relationship, enter into ministry, care, prayer, etc.

Finally, in time, as the individual discovered they now believed, they were invited to commit. This holistic approach reinforces the concept that Christianity is more caught than taught.

For us the café became the hub of community. It became our natural point of contact. From there we could feed the hungry, teach life skills, encourage and facilitate creativity, dialogue about life issues and so much more, all within the context of developing relationship. We didn't censor or separate. These folks weren't targets but friends. Nurturing developing and maintaining community takes work. We shared our lives, birthdays, graduations, weddings, births and deaths. We have laughed together, cried together, worked out stuff together. In many cases we have come to share faith together.

I will never forget when one young fellow turned to me and said, "I don't believe like you do but this is my community. If I'm screwing up tell me." Relationship brings with it the privilege of speaking into someone's life.

The Community worked on three different levels. (1) The faith community: those who identified with as followers of Jesus, (2) the café community: those who identified with the café as their family, and (3) the larger community: those affected by contact.

John Finney in his book *Finding Faith Today; How Does It Happen*, contends that the Celtic model is more affective for use in the post-modern West than the traditional evangelical approach. His data confirms more people come to faith gradually than suddenly.

Professor Robin Gill has observed, "Belonging comes before believing, evangelism is about helping people belong so they can believe."

Bridges or Gates

I remember, as a kid growing up, our family crowding around the black and white TV in the living room. Each of us was trying to get a clear view of the screen. "Down in front. Sit still, I can't see, your heads in the way..." Ever hear the old saying, "you make a better door than you do a window." Think about that statement with me for a moment...

Simply put, doors keep us out, windows help us see in. We who are following Jesus must pursue lives that enable us to be windows not doors. Our lives, practices and attitudes need to reflect as best as possible the heart of God to other pilgrims and journeyers. Jesus was known as the man who went about everywhere doing good.

In the same way there are bridges and gates. A bridge helps us get to the other side. A gate keeps us from doing that. All around us are bridges, means that make known and shed light on The Story. God wants to teach us to see and use them. One plants, one waters but He brings understanding. Within the cry of creation and the call of the Creator could there be bridges?

The cry of creation is heard all around us [Ro.8:22]. One of the places creation's anguished voice is heard loudest is in the arts. Popular culture is laced with heart cries. From Reznor's *Hurt* to Couplands *Life after God* creation groans, "I know you're out there some where." The Creator responds. **I Am** here and I created you to **know** me. He makes himself known through the wonders of the natural world [Ps.19: 1-3] and through that wonderful gift of conscience, the moral law written on our hearts. What about the possibility that He also calls to us through culture.

In his book *Eternity in their Hearts* Don Richardson explores the concept of redemptive lore. The idea that deposited in all cultures in their legends, rituals, ceremonies, myths and stories are shadows of the Story

The Story.

These shadows are touchstones or signposts to point the way to Christ. C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and Simone Wie were all deeply influenced by myth in their journey to faith in Christ. Lewis spoke of the corn kings who die and are reborn and referred to Christ as the true myth. Chesterton remarked that there are only so many

variations on a theme. Tell enough stories and eventually you will tell the story. Simone Wie felt that Christ was the completion of all myth, the fulfillment of all legend.

Could it be that to the discerning there are bridges in our culture to be used to help post-modern pilgrims cross the raging sea of doubt to faith? Is there a cry from the human heart that resounds in popular culture that grace can respond to? Are there popular stories that, like parables of old, teach God's eternal principles? Is there redemptive lore in pop culture? Are there heroes and legends that are types that point to Christ? I believe there are.

The Wachowski brothers had a concept to make a cool, martial arts, special effects, metaphysical mind blowing movie. *The Matrix* was born. Melisa Mathison and Steven Spielberg desired to tap into the awe and wonder of childhood and create a whimsical tale about a visitor from another planet. The result was *E.T.* In the fifties Robert Wise and Edmund North adapted a story by Harry Bates and brought us *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, a tale of a caller from space that brings a message of peace. The creators of all these films vigorously denied any attempt at purposely recounting the story of Jesus. Yet, The Story is undeniably there.

Just about everyone that frequented the café had seen *The Matrix* and not many had read

the Gospels: yet we were able to dialogue about spirituality using the *Matrix* with people that would never discuss Christianity. The story opened up **The Story** to many. In the same way, everyone I know watches the Simpsons. Many times we have used Simpsons episodes like parables to share the principles of God. Inevitably people would come away understanding because they had a frame of reference in the Simpsons.

There are endless examples. They are there waiting for us to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit so He can point the way to Christ. Be open, be creative, listen to what the Spirit may say and pass it on.

In Conclusion:

There are a lot of wonderful stories that came out of this faith experiment (I love to refer to the Refuge Faith Community this way). If you desire more info, have questions or comments please feel free to contact us at: refuge@golden.net

Remember, success in the Kingdom is faithfulness and obedience. Seek God, be faithful, be obedient to the heavenly vision and walk in Grace. Something to keep in mind as we pursue God's heart in all of this is that different is not better, just different. We are all a part of the larger body of Christ. Remember, GRACE.

Alternative Worship

Andrew Jones - Boaz Project- Prague, Czechoslovakia

The baby boomers made worship relevant. Gen-Xers made it authentic. The next big shift could make worship non-linear, multisensory and art-driven.

It's called "alt.worship" and it's emerging from an unlikely source - the global alternative Christian subculture.

In an old cathedral in London, in a space with no stage and no chairs, a cross-shaped light is projected over the young people lying on the red carpet. A soundscape of soft chants fills the sanctuary, creating a soothing audio wallpaper. A video loop on one of the projection screens shows first a graceful male dancer and then a computer-generated image of a slowly rotating crown of

thorns. Poetry appears under the thorns: "God-man, your soul is overwhelmed to the point of death."

Two girls move through the center of the sanctuary -- one slowly, the other running to the cross where she is lifted up by the others and rotated slowly, then lowered to the floor. Both girls turn and invite the worshippers to come forward and receive the communion elements.

This is a safe place, a sanctuary for seekers who will not be "reached" or "got at." It is also a gallery for artists who deem their work too precious to be colonized into a preacher's sermon. It is a holy space, where the experience of God and

each other is not preprogrammed but open to the mysterious interruptions of a God who still speaks.

This is what the English call alternative worship, or "**alt.worship.**" Tonight at the Vaux, worship is curated (not led) by Andy Thornton. Next month someone else will be calling the people to hand over fresh art that reflects the ups and downs of the full human experience.

This art will be displayed in a way that makes it possible for every participant to experience God at his or her own pace. The curator can plan that journey to a certain point, but there is an element of the mysterious the curator cannot control.

In a way, "**alt.worship.**" is a return to a simple New Testament pattern of worship, where one offers a song and another a word. And it is a return to the Old Testament worship pattern of multimedia, multi-sensory worship.

Simplicity and complexity.

Pre-modern and post-modern.

Worship as self-expression

"**Alt.worship**" is not baby boomer worship, with its polished, culturally relevant gospel presentation.

And its not quite Gen-X worship, though they share values like community and authenticity. But "**alt.worship.**" is truly participatory, allowing the worshipers to create and observe the art of self-expression. Emerging from the global alternative Christian subculture, "**alt.worship.**" is cropping up in coffee houses and cathedrals, galleries and warehouses, throughout the post-Western world.

Steve Collins is the curator tonight at the Vaux. He is the creator of London's multimedia labyrinth at St. Paul's Cathedral, a one-hour, virtual-reality experience of God. "Alternative worship is not a style, but an approach," Steve explains on his internet site (www.smallfire.org).

"It is what happens when people make worship for themselves, in forms that fully reflect the people they are and the culture they live in. It's an attempt to make a space where people can be real and relate honestly to God and each other, without religious masks or imposed forms of behavior."

The "**alt.worship.**" scene in the United Kingdom began with congregations such as Nine O'clock Service in Sheffield (1988), the Late Late Service in Glasgow (1989), Visions in York (1991) and Grace in London (1993).

New Zealand started later but quickly caught up to England. Mark Pierson is a self-

described "renegade Baptist" and pastor of the Cityside Church in Auckland. In the book *The Prodigal Project*, perhaps the first book on "**alt.worship.**", he identifies eight underlying principles of alternative worship:

- 1) It incorporates participation,
- 2) The whole person,
- 3) Eclecticism
- 4) Multiple media.
- 5) Community-based
- 6) Culturally relevant. It leaves no room for prima donnas.
- 7) It is provisional --
- 8) It is experimental and will ultimately become something else.

Steve Taylor, another New Zealander, leads worship that has integrated native Maori cultural forms. His experience could inform American churches that are just beginning to look at their own native culture.

Echoes across the pond

The word "alternative" has a different meaning in America, one tied into the grunge/alternative music scene of the 1990s. Those of us experimenting with different forms of postmodern worship during the late '80s and '90s didn't know what the English had already accomplished. In fact, we are just now discovering each other. Since that discovery, the movement has been mushrooming all over the country.

Recently, in the Mission District of San Francisco, a group of Christians led by Mark Scandrette hosted what they called a house party. It really was a non-linear worship event.

"The night of the party, seventy-five people crowded into our small flat and spilled out into the back yard. Candles led up the front steps. Guests were greeted at the front door, handed the artist's statement and oriented to the various environments of the party. The artwork was hung on the walls in three rooms.

- A sound installation was played in another room.
- A 'Creation Station' was set up so party participants could help create a collage with art supplies.
- Later in the evening, two spoken-word artists performed."

The fact that all the art on display at the house party would be given away during the evening added intrigue. If a guest wanted to take home a piece, they needed to find the artist and hear the story that motivated them to create the piece.

Mark was assisted by some friends from a house church movement in the Los Angeles area. One of those house churches, *Ichthus*, was started by one of the original Gen-X churches in the L.A. area. When new people came on the scene who preferred to "rave" rather than rock, a new church, a different kind of church, emerged.

Ichthus, like similar groups, calls itself a colony of artists. They meet in their art gallery for various events -- love feasts, electronic music events and "iconic installations," which include non-linear video stations and the use of smell and taste to teach about the Kingdom of God. But they don't host a regular worship service, which makes them something of a puzzle to their Gen-X parent church. What makes them "church" is not their worship events but the meals, art projects and businesses that bring them together on an almost daily basis to share life together.

One of the new spiritual communities that relates to *Ichthus* is Counterpointe in Denver. Having come out of the rave scene, these believers found each other on the Internet. At Poetica, their occasional worship event, the DJs create a continuous ambient soundscape that is appropriate for the poetry being performed.

Ichthus, Counterpointe and the dozens of other postmodern ministries scattered over the country are generally overlooked by the mainstream. These communities don't look like the modern church and don't choose to define themselves with traditional labels. Mark Scandrette doesn't refer to his community as church, nor does he define his events as worship.

In fact, he rarely uses the word "Christian," preferring to use "followers of Jesus" or "people of God" as descriptions that create more understanding. It is contextual choices like these that keep postmodern ministries out of view from the Christian media and away from the conference circuit.

Like their counterparts in New Zealand and England, the underlying theory that supports their methodology is missiological. Regarding the rationale for his type of worship, Mark offers this: "We have spent almost three years now learning and relating to the bohemian arts culture of the Mission District. The party was an expression of this learning and a translation of values and beliefs into a social construct that was intelligible and attractive to our neighbors."

Growing sideways

Postmodern worship was developing throughout the '90s, in coffee shops, art lounges, clubs, galleries, house parties and occasionally a church building. But until now, nobody was looking. Perhaps they were invisible because of the "cold-war mindset," as Thomas Friedman calls it. That is the worldview of modern America that, like the Cold War, puts value on size and longevity.

People admire churches that are big, publicly significant and long-lasting. The emerging postmodern churches are just the opposite. Although it is too early to generalize, the trend is for them to be small, intimate groups that grow sideways through multiplication rather than upwards by addition. Rather than having a big presence in public view, they are somewhat underground, choosing to penetrate the culture from within.

They are indigenous, organic and flat-structured, often refusing to become institutional. They are seasonal, not perennial. They don't always last in the same form for very long. Their worship revolves around cycles and celebrations, feasts and festivals, rather than regular weekly events. They sometimes demolish what they have created and reconstruct themselves with a new identity.

Postmoderns are holistic thinkers and may not change one part without the rest. They may not change the way they worship without changing the way they think about church and leadership as well. While the mainstream church is open to renovation, postmoderns may prefer another reformation.

Multimedia labyrinth

For the past three years, postmodern worship artists have gathered in Austin, Texas, in March to share their journeys and experiment in alt.worship. In 1999, some of America's leading worship artists came together to install a multimedia labyrinth called "Ecclesia."

Based loosely on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, it was set up in the four-level atrium of First Baptist Church. A Gothic prayer chapel, poetry, installations of fine art, slides, film and guerilla theatre all ran concurrently. A drum circle on the bottom level ran for two hours. Right in the middle of it was a 92-year-old retired seminary professor.

The labyrinth led worshipers to the fourth floor, where they found a James and the Giant Peach rave, designed by my 7-year-old son. The three DJs used peach-flavored fog and candy to suggest an experience of heaven.

The next year, it was decided to move the focus away from a flashy spectacle. They hosted a house party and limited the worship elements to cuisine and conversation. The story of Boaz and Ruth was told through the menu, and the artists were the chefs.

This year, DJs, video jockeys and alt.worship practitioners gathered from London, Switzerland, New Zealand and around America on March 18 to create "Epicenter," a multimedia, full-sensory worship experience that told the story of sin and redemption. It included the multimedia labyrinth from London's St Paul's Cathedral among the worship stations.

The three-plus-hour evening concluded with communion in the church sanctuary -- but not like any ever held there before. Dirt and garbage was strewn on the tile floor at the front of the sanctuary, symbolizing the sinfulness from which God saves. Participants were invited to enter barefoot and contemplate the sacrifice of Jesus. Then communion was served using a common loaf and bottle of wine wrapped in a plain, brown liquor-store bag.

The way here

The postmodern worship movement in America was informed by the many art and cultural movements that swept through the country during the 90s. In my opinion, the most influential of these were:

The rave wave. The first postmodern music culture to become accessible to the masses was the rave movement, which sampled and remixed sounds into a non-linear soundscape in a multisensory environment. The rave movement demonstrated the potential for an interactive multimedia experience -- including worship. Rave culture started in the United States, but it reached the mainstream of English youth culture in 1987-88, long before reaching mainstream America in the early 90s. This helps explain why the English "**alt.worship.**" movement emerged much earlier than in America.

Art installations. By demonstrating how art could involve the participants, art installations showed that people can interact with truth and meaning in a safe place. It also showed us that many people would rather learn theology from a housewife explaining her painting than a minister giving a sermon.

Art therapy. Stemming from Boston, art therapy showed us that art doesn't have to be performed or displayed to be valuable. It can be a

tool to explore what is going on deep inside ourselves. And it is a language for everyone, even non-artists, to express our most profound thoughts.

Poetry slams. Starting in Chicago in 1988, the slam poetry movement rocked the concept of the spoken word and enabled ordinary people to become the powerful verbal communicators.

Independent film. Called the "punk rock of the 90s" by a San Francisco newspaper, the independent film movement put the power of moving images in the hands of the common people. If only we had i-movies 10 years ago!

Storytelling. The power of the storyteller has come of age -- again -- as the rational argumentation of modernism takes a back seat. Digital storytelling, using non-linear images, sounds and the spoken word, tells the story of God in a way that connects with its hearers and puts the focus back on God's narrative.

The way there

The shift from modern to postmodern in worship will require several changes:

From linking to layering. In the modern world, time has been considered progressive rather than cyclical. Much of postmodernism has to do with getting rid of progression, of beginning and end. We could say that postmodern worship is more vertical than horizontal. Rather than being a series of events linked together in a chronological, progressive fashion, the elements of worship are curated in a multilayered collection of moments that embrace all the senses, all at the same time.

A postmodern worship service probably is more like a stack of pancakes than a string of pearls. Postmodern minds get bored with a single, progressive medium. The problem is not that their attention span is short but that it is broad. It responds best when challenged with multitasking.

Ask the question, "What other media could we run simultaneously that would enhance the worship experience?" The various combinations of juxtaposed media will speak volumes. Random connections will arise organically and prophetically.

From moderator to curator. The role of worship leader changes. Once the worship leader was moderator, standing on stage, preventing chaos and keeping the service progressing toward its conclusion. Now the stage is either gone or it is only one of several focal points. The inspiration for worship is now coming from the worshipers themselves, who have given you their art to be utilized for the service. You are now the curator,

the servant of the people, installer of art and creator of an environment that is conducive to experiencing God.

In the past, worship artists - principally musicians and preachers-- were treated like outboard motors strapped to the church stage to drive the worship service faster and funkier. Now they are to be honored by allowing their art to release its inherent message, rather than making it say something that fits your theme.

From stage to station. Church buildings, like other buildings from the modern period, were designed to have a large number of spectators watching a man on center stage tell the big story.

Postmodern, interactive worship will always be at odds with chairs and a stage. Instead

we will find ourselves creating “art stations” that decentralize worship and allow for multiple media and environments in worship.

And once we create a culture of participation, the people will start coming to church with their fresh art, or even create it during the service. Why not let the artists set up a sidewalk labyrinth of art that leads to the service?

Transitioning to postmodern worship will take time. Few traditional Christians are ready for it, and some may never be. Much more experimentation will take place in the meantime. It’s risky. But people are finding that it’s worth the step of faith.

Underground Worship

Trevor Macpherson – Worldshakers Christian Growth Center - Vancouver BC

As I have visited many different Underground Ministries, I have noticed likewise a number of different styles of Underground worship emerging. Primarily it seems to depend on which key sub-culture they are reaching out to.

I have been to the Bridge in Portland where the worship is like being in a small nightclub. The atmosphere was dark and subdued, there is a full on band, heavy alternative music and half of the pierced and tattooed congregation were up aggressively dancing in worship.

I have sat in a park in Portland with a bunch of mainly retros, many with their dogs in tow, worshipping with a guitar and hand drums.

I have been part of the upstairs of a street church where it was dark, only lit by candles and

sticks of incense and the music was heavy alternative/gothic and totally spontaneous. Communion was a key part and was taken while sitting in a circle on the floor.

I visited “The Final Notice” a YWAM street work in the basement of a building right on the main hang out street, strewn with couches and the house worship band, “The Metal Monks” were cranking out worship at ear bleeding decibels.

I have been in the Church on the Edge led by an older punk couple, who have a punk band (that husband plays in) to reach out to the dudes in Huntington Beach, CA

We had a woman who came to one of the Underground Ministries Roundtable who has been ordained by an Orthodox Church, as a “Minister to

the Outcasts" and she goes among the outcasts performing marriages, giving communion and leading orthodox/gothic worship in the streets.

I have sat in the "Street Church" nicknamed the Hot Dog Church (because that is what they give out 7 nights a week) and listened while the Pastor cranked out lively Rockabilly worship and then opened the mike up for testimonies.

I have been in the dark, with Christian Industrial music being pumped through the church sound system and a strobe light is turned on and those who feel led go out into the center of the room and let the Holy Spirit lead the in Prophetic dance.

I was at Epicenter 2001 in Austin TX, where I set up a "Spirit led" art station that was to work in conjunction with the Spirit led "bass and drums" that a friend and I were doing down below in the poetry slam area. The next night I sat around an authentic Mexican food restaurant for hours, with 10 others, as we co-wrote the lyrics to a song that summed up what we had been learning at the Tribal Generation gathering. We then stayed up half the night writing the music and practicing it, for the worship session the next day, which followed a 4 wall video mosaic of the worship song "Light the Fire again" that I still can't get out of my mind. (Not that I'm trying to)

I have been crammed into the middle of a small tent, being totally surrounded by sea of people jumping up and down, as Mortal, in one of their last shows cranked out their form of industrial worship. Then I saw the lead singer challenge everyone in the tent with an "As for me and my house I will follow the Lord" declaration and then later watched as everyone got down on their knees in the dirt in dedication to the Lord.

I was there when the word was going through the crowd that even though Allan Aguire from the "Scattered Few" wasn't going to be able to play on one of the stages at Cornerstone, that he was going to play anyway over in someone's campsite. I followed a throng as we made our way over there to see what would happen. He had the reputation of being the bad boy of Christian music and although I wanted to see him, knew that if he started challenging the authority of the leadership of the festival, I would have to get up and leave.

Instead, he plugged into the generator powered amp that someone had brought and lead the 100-200 people sitting and standing all around, in simple worship songs. It blew me away. Only after this and much prodding from the crowd did

he play a stripped down version of some of his songs, which everyone there sang along with. One of the most beautiful being "As the story grows"

I have been in secular Industrial/Goth dance clubs doing prophetic dance warfare and have experienced some of my most amazing worship times. Which I was perplexed by, until a friend reminded me about Ps 23:5 You prepare a table before me **in the presence** of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

I was at the "Spirit of David: Worship and Warfare Conference", put on by Morningstar Ministries in Charlotte NC where on the last 2 songs of the third night something new in worship happened. Ray Hughes, a Pastor from Nashville, got up and gave a Biblical understanding of what was taking place. He said that the music that was happening was referred to in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 as a **"Spiritual song"** or in the Greek **"Ode Pneumatikos"** which he said is defined as an "unrehearsed, spontaneous, Spirit-inspired song".

Then on that last night of this conference, they started one song that lasted for three hours. During it, the musicians and vocalists swooped and soared as they were being led by the Holy Spirit. It was amazing! Declarative and prophetic words were also being spoken out and people around us were being ministered to by the Lord. Deliverance was taking place and I wouldn't be surprised to find out that some people were even healed. At the end of it all, a small cloud of smoke formed on the stage and lasted for about 15 seconds: as a sign from Him.

Since then, I have seen 'spiritual song' springing up all over the place. Bands like Kevin Prosch and the Peppercorns often do 'spiritual song' for half of their performances. Now younger, more alternative bands that have been influenced by these bands are also moving out into this new territory.

Spirit led Spontaneous Worship

What we are beginning to see is a worship band where each individual hears spontaneously from the Holy Spirit what to play and, because it is the same Holy Spirit, the music will blend perfectly. Then the congregation will, because of sensitivity to the Lord and unity, begin to spontaneously sing together the same prophetic song because they will each be hearing from the Holy Spirit what to sing.

The service will be a flow between these spontaneous songs and any known songs that the worship leader is hearing from the Spirit.

Essentially, the whole worship time will be truly led by the HOLY SPIRIT. Basically, the new sound that is coming is: "the Holy Spirit in music". That is different from our music anointed by Him; it is us releasing music into His hands. And if the Holy Spirit is in the music, then the world won't be able to copy it.

I believe, in a little while, you will actually hear a non-Christian say to another, "you just have to come and hear this group, there is just

something different about their music." "What do you mean? I don't know; there is just something about it."

Underground worship is popping up in a number of different forms and yet it does seem to have similar characteristics. Generally, it is more abandoned, spontaneous, honest, sincere and crying out for help and freedom.

Cyber - Ministry

Steve Knight - Billy Graham Evangelistic Association - Minneapolis

Editor's note. Although this article by Steve Knight the editor of the now defunct Kamikaze, is not specifically for the Underground the principles are still relevant

"For the Church the new world of cyberspace is a summons to the great adventure of using its potential to proclaim the Gospel message. This challenge is at the heart of what it means at the beginning of the millennium to follow the Lord's command to 'put out into the deep': *Duc in altum!* (Luke 5:4)." --Pope John Paul II, *"Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel,"*

Why is Internet Evangelism So Important?

12% of the adult population is already using the Internet for religious purposes. The most common of those purposes is to interact with

others via chat rooms or e-mail about religious ideas, beliefs or experiences. That represents about 25 million adults who rely upon the Internet for religious expression each month." --Barna Research, *"The Cyberchurch is Coming,"*

"Search and you will find: Fueled by a rapidly growing number of venues and resources, more people than ever are seeking faith, community, and solace online. In this special report, we look at what's going on, what makes it different, and how, for some, the Net has become a religious experience all its own," --"God Sitings," *Yahoo! Internet Life magazine,*

"A recent survey for a television series on faith and religion in Britain reveals that the majority do not describe themselves as 'religious', but rather as 'spiritual'. That same majority still believes in God and prays. This finding is echoed in a recent report in *Le Monde* (10th July 2000)

that there are not fewer than 170,000 pages on the Internet containing the word 'God' and offering spiritual guidance." --George Carey, *"Preaching Christ in a Broken World,"* Amsterdam 2000

The Internet is now the primary communication tool for U.S. teenagers, according to a recent study by AOL. Eighty-one percent of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 e-mail friends and relatives, while 70% use instant messaging (IM) applications to keep in touch. Older teens (aged 18 – 19) are even more likely to use the Net for communication. Ninety-one percent use e-mail and 83% use IM. Fifty-six percent of respondents in this age group said they preferred the Internet to the telephone. Fifty-eight percent of younger teens and 61% of older teens go online for schoolwork, while 26% of younger teens and 61% of older teens go online for news and current events information. (*CyberAtlas, January 31, 2002*)

The Internet is Both a Tool and a Community

"The Internet is yet another communications technology that can be used by the church to get the message out in a compelling and relevant way. But this technology has a difference: it not only allows us to communicate on a global yet intimate scale, but it also allows us to 'inhabit' a virtual environment and create disembodied communities. ... We use the Internet, as a tool, and yet we also inhabit the Internet, as a space, a community. ... Many in the church will continue to insist that the Internet is simply a 'tool' rather than a place where community happens, and therefore will miss the chance to meaningfully participate in the growing community of online believers and seekers." --

Andrew Careaga, author of "e-Ministry,"

We Must Be Proclamatory ...

"To minister effectively to this age we must become creative in our communication! We must become flexible. While principles do not change, strategies must. Paul says to us in I Corinthians 9:22, 'We must become all things to all men so that by all possible means we may save some.' The motor vehicle gear that takes us effectively over the plain will not take us over the hill. The clothes for summer will not do for winter. Tower of Babel out there demanding of us creativity and excellence. ... No matter how much we baptize mediocrity and outdated traditions, they

will not regain their utility in the highly competitive, rapidly changing, inter-active computer culture of the 21st century." --Gerry O. Gallimore, *"The Evangelist Communicates Effectively,"* Amsterdam 2000

"How do you reach a generation that hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings?' ... First and foremost, we will need to have a proclamation that is not only heard but also seen. We cannot just speak the Gospel. We will have to embody the Gospel." --Ravi Zacharias, *"Evangelistic Preaching in the 21st Century,"* Amsterdam 2000

... and "Reverse Incarnational"

"Effective evangelism on the Internet requires believers to do a bit of 'reverse incarnation.' We must enter the culture of cyberspace and dwell among its inhabitants, in essence becoming 'incarnational' in cyberspace (even though we are leaving our bodies -- our 'carnals' -- behind). We need to take John 1:14 -- 'the word became flesh and dwelled among us' -- and turn it inside out, so that we flesh-and-blood Christians become words in cyberspace and dwell among others in the cyber environment.

For this to happen, the church on the Internet must be about more than just slapping up a static web page. The church -- and by this I mean believers of all stripes -- must actively engage in the cyberculture through the more interactive avenues of instant messaging, chat, blogs, online communities ... At the same time, the church must always be incarnational. Cyberspace does not replace physical space. Cyberpresence does not replace physical presence." --Andrew Careaga,

"... by providing information and stirring interest it makes possible an initial encounter with the Christian message, especially among the young who increasingly turn to the world of cyberspace as a window on the world. It is important, therefore, that the Christian community think of very practical ways of helping those who first make contact through the Internet to move from the virtual world of cyberspace to the real world of Christian community." --Pope John Paul II, *"Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel,"*

"The fact that through the Internet people multiply their contacts in ways hitherto unthinkable opens up wonderful possibilities for spreading the Gospel. But it is also true that electronically mediated relationships can never take the place of the direct human contact required for genuine evangelization. For evangelization

always depends upon the personal witness of the one sent to evangelize (cf. Rom 10:14-15)." --Pope John Paul II, *"Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel,"*

Counting Conversations Not Conversions

"The Internet is all about having conversations and engaging one another. Step into a chat room and see how people are truly connecting with one another. (Sure, it'll feel disorienting the first few times, but stick with it.) If we understand that the 'tech' of the Internet is really a medium for connecting with others in very real and intimate ways, then we will grasp the idea that we really can have something similar to 'f2f' [i.e. face to face] relationships fostered via cyberspace.

"I like what my friend Jim Hendersen says, we become 'Christian consultants' or 'spiritual consultants' to our friends. Not salesmen. Not preachers. Not manipulators or broadcasters. We're friends, and we make ourselves available as consultants or guides to people in their spiritual journey.

I often say (actually I have a book about this coming out next spring, called 'More Ready Than You Realize') that the essential thing is 'to count conversations more than conversions.' If we are always trying to convert people, we'll shortchange conversations--with all their questions and twists and turns and ups and downs -- and as a result, conversions won't happen. But if we focus on asking good questions and keeping conversations going, conversions naturally occur." --Brian McLaren,

Conclusion

· The Internet -- also known as the Web, the Net, and cyberspace -- is the next frontier of evangelism. The Internet presents exciting, new opportunities and challenges.

· Evangelism on the Internet is vitally important because of millions of people are online and thousands more are going online every day. Many of these people are already searching the Web for spiritual truth and direction.

· We have a responsibility to harness the Internet as both a powerful tool for spreading the Gospel and a wide-open community in which to communicate the Gospel.

· In order to harness the Internet for evangelism, we must be proclamatory as well as "reverse incarnational" -- counting conversations, not conversions.

"The Internet causes billions of images to appear on millions of computer monitors around the planet. From this galaxy of sight and sound will the face of Christ emerge and the voice of Christ be heard? For it is only when his face is seen and his voice heard that the world will know the glad tidings of our redemption.

This is the purpose of evangelization. And this is what will make the Internet a genuinely human space, for if there is no room for Christ, there is no room for man. Therefore, on this World Communications Day, I dare to summon the whole Church bravely to cross this new threshold, to put out into the deep of the Net, so that now as in the past the great engagement of the Gospel and culture may show to the world 'the glory of God on the face of Christ' (2 Cor 4:6). May the Lord bless all those who work for this aim." --Pope John Paul II, *"Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel," for the 36th World Communications Day, Sunday, May 12, 2002,*

by Steve Knight (Internet Senior Editor, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)
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Discipleship Experiences and Environments

Peter Wohler - Source - Minneapolis

A must for the new millennium.

Let's start by stating the importance of Discipleship. Given the example of Christ and the whole great commission deal of "Go and make disciples," I would state that every Christian church, ministry, or mission organization needs to have some practical concept of Discipleship integrated into what they do. To go in, do outreach, serve people, tell them they need to make radical changes, tell them they need Jesus and then give no direction for them after they decide to follow God or rededicate their lives is hypocritical at best.

When I think about Discipleship I think of

- 1) those that are new in their faith or rededicating their lives to God and
- 2) those that want to be involved in ministering to the alternative scene.

I would like to briefly address the later before looking at the need to provide for the

former. I believe we all need a Paul and a Timothy in our lives. If you are a young adult feeling a call to ministry I would encourage you to look for Godly older men/women to glean from. They may just be wearing business suits and living in the suburbs. Resist the temptation to isolate and do what ever you can to be part of a body.

I also encourage you to seek out others who are doing a similar vision to visit and even work under to get experience. Source hosts an annual Urban ministry Training and internships throughout the year with that goal in mind.

This article is not so much about the importance of discipleship but the need to begin to see effective discipleship happen with new commitments in the alternative scene. The model of discipleship of getting together once a week for a 60 minute Bible study is never how Jesus viewed discipleship and it is falling short of the hunger for

community and relationship a generation is calling for.

Let's add in a society that is so much under a crisis of family, broken homes, pre-teen sex, drugs...which all lend to individuals going into adulthood prematurely and having dysfunction living as their only model of how to live life. And if you did not know, the divorce rate amongst Christians is the same as non-Christians.

As we focus on the counter culture, the alternative types, those who do not want mainstream...we see individuals with many times huge emotional baggage, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sex-aholics, prostitution, drugs, financial debts...included to this is they are coming from a culture that is possibly very anti-Christian and does not want them to succeed in their new lifestyle.

Yes there have always been young people who have fallen through the cracks. But the piece of the pie is no longer less than 1%. The numbers have grown to a much larger scale...possibly 30-40%. And the cracks are much deeper, larger, and tougher to get out of.

The need for effective discipleship, which begs, for healthy discipleship environments is overwhelming. I believe most churches do not see many in the mainstream stick around because the church does not display that which they can relate to. Most make attempts to become connected with a body of Christ but find no one is receiving them as new Christians and no one is addressing the real issues they are dealing with. They interpret this as they must be too messy for the church and as a result see Christianity as not for them.

They need a place to make a break from the past and set a foundation for the future. A place to be nurtured in what it means to be a child of God as well as learn life skills, how to manage money, a work ethic, and healthy conflict resolution.

Source has run the Joshua House, transitional housing for young men since 1995. 15-20 men have lived there annually. The house has had different generations of leaders, each with a slightly different style. However, we have seen the fruits of allowing men to grow at their own pace balanced with healthy expectations and always giving grace to the teachable hearts.

We did not set out to do a Discipleship House. But after we started reaching out to alternative young people, the need became obvious. How do you disciple a homeless youth, or a 19-year-old living with those he has used drugs with since he was 12?

Our models of discipleship also need to embrace a fuller meaning of community as well. The hunger for community is woven into this generation. And if it is not offered as part of their Christian experience it will be found outside the Christian body. This is also seen within the youth of the church. I have talked to many young adults that were raised in the church and now want nothing to do with it. What's the attraction to alternative religions?

I know young adults that completely fit the postmodern mantra who have given their lives to Islam. How could a religion that is more legalistic than any modern conservative Baptist be attractive to an individual that wants only acceptance and detests rules? Because they were taken into a home a treated like sons. A homeless 15-22 year old converts to Islam, over 80% of families in the Mosque would take them into their home.

A homeless 15-22 converts to Christianity; he's lucky to get a ride to the nearest shelter from the local church.

I believe we are coming to an age when every other church could have a Discipleship house. At Source I would say about 1/3 will do fine without it, 1/3 would make it but it would be an incredible help with it, and 1/3 won't be professing Christ within a year if they don't have it. Environments can be effective tools. But a house and a program will not take the place of the relationships and nurturing the individual needs to not just grow, but really make it.

***If you would like to here more about discipleship environments or the Urban ministry Training get a hold of me and would love to chat. If this article has gripped you, don't let it go because the task may be too big. God in you is bigger.

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Church in a Hamburg Hip Hop Night Club

Jesus Freaks - Hamburg, Germany

Jesus Freaks (Germany) got started in 1992 when two or three people met in a small living room in Hamburg. There was one uniting thing: They were enthusiastic about Jesus. Their belief: He did not just die 2000 years ago, but he resurrected from the dead and is still alive today and that he is strongly interested in mankind.

We were eager to experience this living Jesus, and wanted to see his actions. Those who joined our meetings usually came, because they believed in Jesus, but were not accepted in other churches, just because of what they were.

In many Christian churches you can only find neat people. But there was no place for freaks to meet. A place to meet without being criticized for earrings, tattoos or torn jeans. These churches kept giving us the impression: If you want to be a real Christian, you have to look like we do, wear clothes like we do, like the music we like ... But

the Jesus that you can find in the Bible seemed to be different. He minced no words, criticized everything he did not accept, but first of all, everyone was accepted the way he was.

In this living room many of us started to pray free of any shyness. Before God we were what we were and just wanted to receive everything he wanted to give us. We asked Him: Can we be the way we are and still live a radical life with You? What could a church look like that is full of freaks? How could services, sermons, worship, things that gathered dust for centuries, look like for freaks?

The first answer was an answer that we had not expected: The presence of God that we experienced knocked us out. I know, this sounds strange for someone who never experienced this, but Jesus was so real and near that you thought you just had to reach out with your hand to touch Him.

In this time real miracles happened. Almost all our prayers were answered. Many abruptly stopped taking drugs, because they were so filled up by the presence of Jesus. I think, Jesus did all this to make one thing clear, to say: I like this idea, I have given it to you and I will bless you.

We tried a lot of things to find out, how to celebrate a service without organ and without a liturgy. This news spread quickly: there are freaks who believe in Jesus, and so a lot of people visited us: Christians, atheists, Buddhists, nihilists, punks, hippies, normals, junkies... Some said: What a bullshit and never came back again.

But most of those who came could feel that something was happening in our meetings that they could not explain rationally, and they came back. One of those who had declared firmly that he did not believe in God, told us after his first visit: ... I am not a Christian yet, but after this experience I will never be able to say again that there is no God. It took him two more years until he made his mind up to believe in Jesus.

The meeting that we had, was named Jesus-Abhaumng-Abend (hang out in Jesus) grew quickly. When neighbors threatened to throw us out of our flat if we continue to pray the Lord's prayer with 25 people at 1 o'clock in the night, we moved to a cafe, in the Schanzenviertel in Hamburg.

There this small group became a group of 200 by 1994 coming regularly to our Friday evening meetings. Many freaks decided to start a new life with Jesus. We celebrated the Lord supper with beer and bread, baptized those who wanted to in the Alster river, had marriage celebrations, and even had to bury some of those who belonged to the group.

After a totally unexpected wave of press visits and reports on a lot of channels and in a lot of papers like Spiegel, Focus, Stern, RTL, NDR, ARD and even international reports in BBC and The European we decided to become a church officially.

The church founding service took place in a **Hip-Hop club in Hamburg** St. Pauli, with more than 800 people attending. Later we regularly celebrated our Friday evening there.

We have a great fear of becoming as intolerant and getting stuck like many other churches did. Especially when you need structures and leadership this can become incalculable and unbearable. We have to live with this danger and have to fight against it, hoping that the One all our church is about, will help us.

Of course there is a permanent accusation to us being a sect. This thought is very common in narrow-minded Germany. When you say you believe in Jesus and do not belong to the Catholic church, many people immediately think about animal sacrifices, group sex or mass hypnosis. NO YOU ARE WRONG!!!

In the next years the whole thing grew to an extent that was beyond the borders of Hamburg. All of a sudden we got mail from freaks all around Germany who had the same idea but had never dared to make it happen. In a very short period of time Jesus Freak groups sprang up like mushrooms. We decided that although we came from and worked in different cities, we had to be close to one another.

We realised that we could only pull through our vision, a Jesus movement in Europe, when we worked together. So, Jesus Freaks International was founded as the official union of all churches and groups.

Once a year Freakstock takes place where we all meet and party together with Jesus. Since the Jesus Freaks have existed many people have come to know the resurrected Jesus. We ourselves went through ups and downs.

To walk with Jesus as a church, a group and a movement is not always easy and it involves changing one's mind and continual development. But as long as we are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, it will always continue and we will come to the destiny that God has for us.

Methods of Outreach

Starting a Coffee House Outreach

Dan and Angie Cleberg - Red Rooster Coffee House - Aberdeen, SD

My sister, Kileen, and I started The Red Rooster Coffeehouse in a small (pop. 25,000) South Dakota college town seven years ago. Hanging on the wall under a lamp near the front of the shop we have a picture of a group of circus freaks. It's a photo from the 1940s film "Freaks" and in this movie the circus freaks sing, "You're accepted, you're accepted." This picture serves as the theme for our coffeehouse. We have seen God shape it into a community that is open and caring to all types of people and we have learned the value of the coffeehouse setting in reaching out and demonstrating the love of God.

Coffeehouses are where people gather and are usually in no hurry, they talk and they listen. It's a place for sharing thoughts and ideas, where relationships happen and unintentional networking is formed. It's a picture of the Kingdom of God as people are brought from isolation to community.

A coffee house is a perfect setting for connecting with people, especially the more you get away from the Starbucks type of coffee house and get closer to the old-comfy-couches-artsy-Bohemian type. They're a safe place for people to speak their mind, for us to hear, respect and value them. It's an easy place for us to demonstrate the character of Jesus, and win someone's conversation

by simply buying their coffee for them. And because coffeehouses are second homes to many, there are plenty of regulars that you can end up in progressive, long-term relationships with.

People in underground subcultures are looking for acceptance, people they can trust in and rely on, and a safe place to hang out and be themselves. They can find that at coffeehouses.

Rob

The first day our coffeehouse opened I met Rob, an anarchist gutter-punk. I connected with him on the subject of rock music and demonstrated God's love by buying him a collection of KISS albums at rummage sales. I prayed for him, cared for him and eventually our conversations led to spiritual matters. One day he gave back the KISS albums saying they were interfering with his relationship with Jesus. Just a few weeks ago I dropped him off at church for a Wednesday evening service.

The most effective way to reach out in coffeehouses is the same as in any setting: Be intentional, be progressive, and be Christ-like. As you connect with people take notes. Write down their names, things about them, their interests, and their struggles. Pray for them. Connect with them based on their interests, care for them based on their needs. With the demonstration of the gospel as the foundation of your relationships, sharing your faith in conversation will be a natural part of the process.

In our coffeehouse we don't let people hand out gospel tracts or leave them lying around and we don't allow "power-witnessing." We've had to cool some overzealous jets. We value each person that comes into our coffee house and we take the time to know them and where they are coming from and demonstrate the gospel to them before we talk about it. We invest ourselves into people. We don't throw out sales pitches. (I've put a halt to some aggressive Amway dealers too!)

Rob, Tony and Sharon

Tony moved to town to work at the Wheat Growers Association as a safety inspector. Our conversations became long and deep. I prayed for him and looked for opportunities to care for him. One day he overheard a conversation I had with Rob about God. He stepped up and said, "I have real trouble believing in God since I took a World Religions class in college." Rob replied, "Oh, this book that Dan gave me will really help.

Here, take it. I'm done with it." The book, more conversations and prayer eventually led Tony to faith in Jesus. He is now a leader in his church and God has led him to work as the volunteer coordinator at the local Salvation Army. He also married Sharon, a Christian girl he met at the coffeehouse.

Developing sacrificial, long-term relationships is the best outreach. A coffeehouse is a fertile garden to grow these relationships.

People have asked me, "I have a vision to open a Christian Coffee House to do outreach. What should I do?" My response has been, "Don't do it!" I say that for two reasons.

First, a Christian coffeehouse is for Christians. You need to rub shoulders with non-believers to be an outreach. We initially had to shed some rumors of our place being a Christian coffeehouse. We intentionally sought to make ours a place where everyone feels welcome, believer and non-believer alike. Today, among others we gather lawyers, punks, bluegrass musicians, gays, pastors, new-agers, the knitters club and emo-kids. We have a chance to connect with them and help lead them to a place where they can "Breathe Deep the Breath of God!" As a Christian coffeehouse many of them would not have even considered coming in. Unfortunately, this is the result of a history of believers giving a false representation of Christ. It is our goal to do our part to get His good reputation back.

Second, why open a coffeehouse for outreach at all? If there are one or more coffeehouses in town already then you can do the outreach and let them do all the work! Hang out in their coffeehouses, form relationships with the regulars and the employees. Demonstrate the gospel, but let them make the drinks, sweep, do the dishes and pay the bills. If there are no coffeehouses in town there may be other places where people hang out. Maybe there's a cozy cafe or truck stop that sees a lot of regulars. Anyplace where people hang out regularly can be a great outreach opportunity.

But, if your town needs a coffee house and/or you're convinced God has given you a vision to open one, then start it out right. Pray, pray and pray some more. Let God go ahead of you and set it up. It'll save you a lot of trouble.

We started with prayer. My sister and I prayed every day about this idea of a coffeehouse. Pretty soon my fiancée (Angie) got a job managing a coffeehouse in her hometown. Eventually she moved here to marry me, so the lady who owned

the coffee house decided to close shop and offered us all of her stuff (machines, dishes, furniture, signs etc.) at an amazing price. We moved the equipment here and Angie trained us in. That's how God works and that's why I say, "PRAY!"

Practically, to be successful in business you need to be educated and surrounded by good counsel. My sister and I both have degrees in business, which was helpful, but we couldn't have done much without the advice of "smart people" with experience. It would be good to work at a coffeehouse for some time if you can or at least in some food service job. Try to get exposure to as much of the workings of the business as possible (bookwork, employment, marketing etc.).

There are great resources out there to help start a coffeehouse. "The Idiots Guide to Starting a Business" and a search on the web aren't bad places to start. A mission/vision statement and a business plan are a necessity to get you off the ground and in the right direction. For these I strongly suggest Tom Sine's book "Living on Purpose" (www.msainfo.org) and Tim Bock's workbook "Mission Improbable" (tbock@jpusa.org). Bock's workbook gets the reader to consider all the things needed to start a business as a mission, from checking your motives to developing a solid business plan while Sine's book leads the reader to reconsider their notion of success and to write a mission statement for life based on the Kingdom of God.

"Location, location, location" is what smart people will say is most important in starting a business. You must be where the people will see you and have easy access to you. We have found this to be very true, but when you have outreach in mind you may make a choice that doesn't look like smart business. Jesus People USA started steel siding supply business in Romania. The economy there is terrible but the need and the opportunity for bringing restoration to people's lives in the name of Jesus was so great that they chose to make what seems to be a poor business choice.

For the Red Rooster Coffeehouse we chose a central location in the historic downtown of our city. We looked at the avenue where the mall and fast food spots are and though we may have made more money it wasn't the vibe we wanted, too hurried. The location we chose turned out to be just right for outreach. We're within 2 blocks of elderly and "down-and-outer" apartment buildings, the high school, a couple of music stores, some bars and a strip club. We are in the main floor of an office building so we ended up being the waiting

room for hair salons, a dentist, counselors, CPAs and lawyers among others. You can imagine the variety of clientele we see and the opportunity we have to act out God's love.

Because we have made ourselves an outlet for creative expression we have also connected with artists, poets and musicians. There has been some debate in the Underground Railroad about the use of non-Christian music in outreach, but for me it has never been an issue.

We want to touch the lives of all that come into our coffeehouse. If someone comes in and has a point of view that is different than mine I respectfully listen and value their point of view and try to find a place where we can connect. I don't censor them or try to correct them; I attempt to form relationship with them by demonstrating the goodness of God. The same goes for bands and musicians. We wouldn't shun customers because they weren't Christians nor would we reject musicians because they weren't believers.

When bands are booked to play here we take care of them with free food and drinks and a place to stay. We enthusiastically listen and value the musical gift God has given them. We extend this attitude to artists who display work in our gallery and poets who read for open mic. Rather than not allowing them to express themselves because they're non-Christians we try to find a common ground based on a foundation of caring where we can connect with them. It's God's goodness that leads people toward His Kingdom.

On the other hand I have chosen not to book many Christian bands because they seemed too aggressive with a "message" and/or an agenda. But I have been very pleased with many musicians who are believers who have come and have really connected with people before and after the show.

Jeremy, Kol, Tony and Sharon

Before we started this business I was in a Christian band. Because of our blunt lyrics I wouldn't have allowed *my* band to play at the coffeehouse. So, sometime after we opened I started a band with Jeremy, one of the regulars. Not a "Christian" band, we sang about hot sauce, Y2K, other regulars and things like that. We were fun and included a dose of audience participation.

One day Kol, whose band played often at the coffee house came in and asked if I knew of anyone who needed a drummer because his group wasn't playing very much any more. I invited him to play with us. I began to pray for him, develop a

friendship and look for opportunities to demonstrate God's love to him.

One night I was driving back to town from a conference on outreach. As I was considering all of the things I had learned I sensed God saying to me, "Talk to Kol about this, I've been working on Him." This would be a little awkward for me because I had almost no serious conversation about God with Kol up to this point and I thought he would have no idea what I was talking about. But a few days later I overheard him talking to Sharon saying, "God has really been working on me lately." I told him we needed to talk and long-story-short Kol is going to the outreach conference with us this year and Tony is helping him out financially to get there.

The final thing I would advise about coffee house outreach, whether it's your place or someone else's, is that you need to have a community for them to join once they begin to go in the direction of considering a relationship with Jesus. I have helped people find local church communities to be a part of but in the case of alternative types they don't feel comfortable or accepted in a regular church setting. My friend Joel, bartender, music store sales guy and the lead singer of a local band said to me, "When I moved to town, I knew God

loved me but I didn't think they (church people) loved me." We had long talks, prayed, studied the bible with other guys and now he's excited to be a part of a local church.

Others, though, are either so hurt or turned off by church that we have started meetings for people at different levels of seeking. We have Chat 'n' Chew (a meal and open-ended discussion), Campaigners and Alpha (meetings to introduce Christianity to non-believers). "Experiencing God" Bible Study and Sine's "Living on Purpose" have been effective tools for discipleship. None of these meetings are at the coffeehouse or are linked to it in any way except by the relationships that started there.

If you are planning to start a coffeehouse let us know. We feel it is part of our calling to help others start coffeehouses and other mission businesses. We can help with many practical things from espresso machines and dishes to marketing and merchandising. Please contact us!

I challenge you to make it your mission to grow the Creator's community, to build God's Kingdom in a coffeehouse (or wherever you are) as it is in heaven.

Dan and Angie Cleberg - MEEPO@aol.com

Bringing in Bands

Bruce Wright - Refuge - St. Petersburg, FL

Concert Promotion

- Biblical Philosophy – Jesus Parables; I Cor. 9
- Why learn how to promote?
 - To be effective
 - To do it well
 - To not look like you don't know what you are doing
 - To have bands work with you
 - To diminish financial loss

What bands do you promote?

- **Who**
 - Local secular that respect your views
 - National secular that respect your views
 - Local/Regional Christian that aren't 'preachy'.
 - National Christian bands that aren't 'preachy'
 - Bands that understand your ministry and support you
 - Bands that are relevant to the group you are trying to reach
 - Bands with artistic integrity
 - Christian Bands that are accountable
 - Christian Bands that want to talk with the kids and not just leave.

Where do you have the shows

- Your neutral venue
- Clubs
- Secular venues

- Halls & Schools
- Outside

When

- Weekends
- Summer

How do you promote?

- **Grassroots**
 - Neutral flyers (don't say 'Christian Punk') indie vs. professional (flyers can be done both ways)
 - Emails
 - Personal list
 - Internet listings for your area i.e. Punk websites, band sites etc
 - Fax to free listings
 - On radio, especially college community stations
 - Newspapers
 - Zines and music mags
 - Flyers of Music, CD Stores
 - Alternative clothing stores (Hot Topic)
 - Flyers at schools and colleges
 - Hand out flyers at secular shows
 - Youth pastors
 - Christian rock radio
- **Philosophy of using secular or general market bands?**
 - (not for everyone, unless you are called to)
 - Good art vs. Bad art
 - Being witness to secular band

- Have Christian band share stage with secular band
- Good and relevant literature table
- Staff examples
- Secular band guidelines
- Don't dis Jesus
- Not racist, or sexist
- No drugs or alcohol

Redefining Street Ministry For The Emerging Generation

John Moorhouse (Bear) - Advanced Institute of Ministry - San Francisco CA

A few years back, my Christian walk had become really difficult. I was caught up in a cycle of self-condemnation that led to embracing compromise in my morality. Before I knew it, I had fully backslidden from the Lord and found myself in a worse condition than before my conversion. My relationship with my family took a dive and, being discontent with my current surroundings and situations, I decided to hit the road in anticipation of enjoying a life of sin.

I had ended up in the streets of the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco where I encountered a crazy new life that was completely different to anything that I had ever experienced before. My bed became the cold, hard ground and my food, the solicited charity of strangers. For the first time in my life I realized how much I had taken for granted the basic necessities that I had access to so freely. Survival had become a constant focus and I had to learn quickly how to adjust to this strange new place.

Having come to a whole new level of brokenness and personal destitution, my view on life took a dramatic shift. The people on the streets acted like they were content and had a handle on things, but though they were projecting an image of freedom, peace and happiness, on the inside they were hurt, lonely and in bondage. Self-medication was the only way they knew how to cope with the stresses of this kind of lifestyle.

Drugs were the common denominator that brought the people of the streets together. It was also the way to insure a somewhat better existence on the Haight. Ironically, it was also the force that created the most turmoil among those who sought to benefit from its profitability. It was really hard to find peace while violence was becoming more a reality of everyday life.

The Street Perspective Today

Here I was, a backslidden Christian who leapt from the arms of the modernist church into the cauldron of the post-modernist streets. The people that I met were exploring all kinds of different spiritual paths from Buddhism and Hinduism to Wicca and the American Indian religions.

Feeling disillusioned from experiencing the failures and disappointments of a modernist society, they sought to find a new way to have meaning in their lives without possessing a dogmatically absolutist viewpoint. The world that they had rejected was to them both arrogant and foolish and as far as they were concerned it didn't work. To them, there had to be some other way to find answers to life that didn't condemn and exclude others.

A product of the cultural melting pot that this world has become, these are the streets that we face today. This is the condition in which we find

the lost. The old methods of evangelism are losing their ability to be relevant in today's changing society. So the question now at hand is how do we effectively communicate the gospel to this post-modern generation in a way that is relevant to them without compromising our beliefs?

Modernism and Post-modernism

I think that it is necessary to first define what I mean by modernism and post-modernism. For the longest time, most people have been sheltered from experiencing cultures that existed outside of their own, being completely oblivious as to their existence. Each person's world view was shaped by their own geographical confines. When someone from a culture encountered and interacted with another from outside their own, both parties had discovered a strange new phenomenon: the cultural assertion of two different realities.

So the question that plagued them was "who is right and who is wrong?" The natural response from both parties was "I am right and they are wrong. And I must get them to accept my reality as the truth." This is the modernist mindset that has been dominant for some time now. Today, we co-exist with many different cultures and beliefs among us. As a result, the modernist perspective is becoming looked upon as the height of arrogance. People are no longer asking themselves "who is right" but rather what do these different beliefs have to offer me in my pursuit of answering the questions of life.

The Post-modern Dilemma

In light of the post-modernist perspective, we are presented with some new challenges in communicating the truth of God. First of all, the belief in an exclusive truth has been discarded and therefore they cannot see any one religion as possessing all of the answers. Secondly, any attempt to discredit the claims of another religion becomes extremely offensive to them. The post-modernist tends to lean towards a more humanistic approach by expecting to find the answers within themselves. They have become skeptic toward believing in something that they have not yet experienced and so it becomes discredited until otherwise proven.

Because of the post-modernist viewpoint that is held by most people, an attempt to give them straightforward street preaching will cause them to put up their defenses and not consider

anything that you have to say. They will sense that your motivation for approaching them is to convert them to your belief system and, in turn, they will shut you out. Their views of Christianity tend to be negative and they will impose upon you the worst stereotypes available unless they see that you are for real.

Fortunately, the post-modernist view doesn't present us with a list that is entirely made up of obstacles. There are potential bridges that can be found in their need for spiritual sensitivity, experiential/personal spirituality, practicality, social needs, peace and a desire to break out of former norms.

They are looking for spiritual people to mentor them and show them what is practical and effective. With that said, I would like to touch upon an approach that I have found to be highly effective in communicating the heart of God, and which demonstrates the core of what faith is supposed to look like: Friendship Evangelism.

Friendship Evangelism

A practical solution to the problem of facing the post-modern perspective is to seek to build relationships with these people. By doing so you invite them to openly see who you are and what you represent. Saint Francis of Assisi once said that we must "preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words."

Unless they can see a genuine difference in our lives in comparison to the rest of the world, they will in no way be interested in what we believe. Another benefit from establishing relationships is that you get to learn where they are coming from, discern their spiritual barriers and be able to take specifics into prayer.

Planting Seeds by Meeting Needs

Probably the most effective aspect of friendship evangelism is meeting the needs of the people. You would be surprised how much you can touch someone's life by simply giving them food, clothes, blankets or even a shower.

In doing so, they experience the love of God in a genuine, tangible sense. "The kindness of God leads us to repentance" (Romans 2:4B). When I look back upon how I came to the Lord, I see that it wasn't the words that reached my heart, but rather it was the love of God manifested through the life of the believer. This is the essence of authentic Christianity.

A good way to start off meeting needs and building relationships is to set up a regular feeding schedule. It should consist of feeding once to several times a week. That way, you can interact with these people on a weekly basis which leads to relationships. If you do this under the banner of a ministry, you can claim a non-profit status and be able to get food from a food bank for super cheap (18-30 cents a pound, as well as a lot of free items).

There are also a lot of organizations out there that exist to provide non-profit groups with items like blankets and clothing. It is most practical if you live in the area that you are focused on doing ministry in because you can invite people inside to have some food, take a shower or spend the night when needed.

Being fully Hospitable without Becoming a Doormat

I do want to warn you that when you start to meet the needs of the lost on the street you will eventually get some people who will try to take advantage of you. The best way to deal with this is to be really loving with them while explaining that you cannot give them special treatment because it would be unfair to everybody else that you are trying to help.

It is important to be hospitable yet without becoming a push-over. If you confidently assert yourself in your decisions, they will most likely back off. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be cunning as serpents and gentle as doves" (Matt 10:16).

The Role of a Shepherd, the Heart of the Father

Remember that you are a representation of Jesus to these hurting people. A lot of them may have never read the Bible or even been to a church, so we are their only connection to the heart of the Father. We must strive to facilitate that heart and extend His love to them through obedience to the voice of God.

As a shepherd, He loves and cares for the sheep in the deepest possible way. "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). If we take on this attribute as a loving shepherd then they can begin to have a right understanding about who He is and how much He loves them.

Exercising your Unique Gifting

One thing that I have come to realize is that even though we are commissioned to preach the Gospel to every living creature, not everyone has been given the gift of verbal evangelism. I would even venture to say that those who have the gift comprise of about 10% of the body of Christ.

The beautiful thing about friendship evangelism, however, is that you don't have to be an expert on apologetics in order to have an effective impact on the lives of those you want to reach. Rather, God will use the gifts that He has given you to work in other ways that verbal evangelism cannot. We must be as sensitive to the Spirit of God as possible so that we don't lose touch with the creative ways that He is moving to minister life to the lost.

Jesus, the Ultimate Role model for Evangelism

One way to understand the manner in which God desires for you to reach out to these people is by examining the way that Jesus interacted with the people. He was often found hanging out in the streets with sinners while meeting their needs with healing, food, love, and listening to their problems. The only time He got up on a soapbox and started preaching, is when He had multitudes following Him. But when He was with the people in the same manner that we encounter people on the street, He was intimate, gentle, loving, and compassionate. Jesus fully emptied Himself so that whatever He did it was by the will of the Father and the strength of the Spirit. Likewise, we must die to our own agendas and initiatives, laying down our own strength and receiving that which is perfect from the Lord.

Spiritual Discernment through Conversation

Once you have established a relationship with them and they can see that you are genuine, then you will have the ability to speak into their lives more freely. But even so, you must use tact in order to remain relevant to their understanding of things spiritual. Listening skills are the most important to employ in your conversations with them.

By listening carefully you are not only conveying to them that you care but you can discern where they are coming from. I often find

that even the most basic conversations can tell you a lot about one's perception of who God is.

One time I was talking to someone and I asked them about where they were from, he ended up telling me about how he came from a broken home and that he had a lot of anger towards his father for not being there for him. From this I was able to discern that he viewed God as somebody who didn't really care about him and thought of Him as being distant.

People have a tendency of projecting the attributes of their earthly fathers onto God because they are the example of a father figure that they have been exposed to all of their life. They will not always be this open with you but you can depend on the Holy Spirit to reveal things to you about the person that you are speaking with.

Finding a bridge

A good gateway into a conversation about Jesus is to look for a common ground in experiences of life that will allow you to share about how the Lord has helped/healed you with that issue. When you do this I find that people will usually start sharing with you about their own spiritual beliefs. At this point it is of extreme importance to listen to what they are saying and not try to immediately point out why their belief is wrong.

Instead, listen carefully for something that is true so you can use it to connect with them. Since absolute truth is cohesively integrated together, you can use a shared truth to act as a bridge to relate other truths of the gospel.

When expressing truth it is best to try and explain it through a medium of something that can be experienced. The truths that you share will not hold credibility with them unless they are based upon something that you have personally experienced. The parables are a good example of relating truths through something that can be encountered in life. Anything else, they will regard as hearsay and not give much thought into it. This can also be a way to invite or challenge someone to experiment with experiencing God.

For example, somebody could say that they do not believe in a personal God. Then you can talk to them about how you have personally experienced Him. After that, you can challenge them to ask God to reveal Himself to them in a

personal way. This opens up a door to talk with them more and ask them about what they have experienced through their experimenting.

Keeping your Guard up

"Be sober; be vigilant for the devil your adversary walks around like a roaring lion, seeking for whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) Whenever you do any kind of ministry that deals with the people that Satan has in his clutches, you become a threat to him. He will try to do whatever he can to stop you from releasing a soul from his grasp.

Trusting in the Lord's protection is vital during these times. God will not allow Satan to mess with you in any way that you cannot handle but he will try your patience. We must come against the gates of hell with the power and authority of God through prayer.

Coming back to the Heart of Jesus

It is truly amazing when I look around at the different ministries that the Lord is moving through. I see the Lord calling the body back to a place of simplicity and authenticity. The church today is starting to awaken to a practical, organic approach in ministry. Waves of creativity are coming in droves and they are sweeping throughout the church, reviving us to a fresh new perspective.

At first I felt that the Lord was showing us a new way, a different approach to our walk with Him. But as I am taking part in this, I come to realize that this is the way that it was meant to be all along. God never changes; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. However, He is always relevant, always fresh. When we come back to the place of truly abiding in His Spirit, we become in tune with what He is doing and how He wants it done.

The material that I have previously mentioned on how to minister to the streets is not new. This is what the early church looked like. The only thing that has changed is the environment in which it is presented. God's ways are timeless and will always be effective. It is up to us to lay down what we have built on top of them and return to what He gave to us the way that He intended it to be.

Living on the Street

Richard Wiles - Black Friday - Seattle, WA

I left Atlanta, GA at the end of September 1996 to answer a call that God has had on my heart for the past ten years, to reach the alternative culture and street kids in Seattle WA.

Little did I know what I was getting myself into. I came out with all this great expectation. See, I already had experience with inner-city ministry in Atlanta and I was sent out from that ministry. I left with a lot of people praying for me and they blessed with over \$2,000 for my trip and to get settled in.

Even so, I knew that it was going to take some time for me to get settled in and put down roots and get plugged in where God wanted me to. I thought, however, that maybe during this process, I would have the advantage of lying low and be out of the enemy's direct attack, but that was not to be, instead I got slammed in spiritual warfare like never before.

Since I've been in Seattle I've stumbled, struggled and, basically, have had my butt kicked.

I fell in the area of sexual sin, even though I had had victory for the past three years. I had a hernia operation in Dec., which meant that for the first time in my life I couldn't go home for Christmas. I had no money and, because of the operation, I missed some key job opportunities.

I was feeling depressed, wondering where God was and felt like I had blown it. I began to wonder if God could even use me now. Ironically at the same time, I began to see more of what God had called me to do and it was so large and beyond my ability that I began to be afraid of failure.

I had been on "fire" for Jesus; I had left everything in Atlanta, family, friendships of over

17 years, job security and a loving, supportive church family. Now it was just Jesus and I. Then to make it worse, I had these prophecies over me about being this great warrior for God. So I came out to Seattle to really take it to Satan. I definitely didn't come out to fall and fail!!!

Jesus in all His infinite wisdom, however, knows so much more than me.

I now see what He is doing in me. Jesus has peeled back and exposed my weakness to get at the roots so He can bring total freedom. I realize that with the area of lust, even though the fruit of it had been gone for 3 years, I needed to see that its root was still there and was simply buried under my self discipline and zeal.

Things that happened when I was a young and during my seven prodigal years had given me a pretty big root system. I found out recently, when you remove a big tree, you first cut it down in sections, all the way to the stump. To remove the stump, you need to remove the dirt and expose the root system, and then you can pull it out. So Jesus has been exposing the religious and sinful dirt in my life that had been covering these roots.

In the area of finances I have learned so much. I see now that if I had gotten those jobs I wanted when I first got here I would be trusting in them instead of Jesus. I have since seen the Lord meet all my needs and He now has given me a good Landscaping Job. I feel that the vision God has given me will eventually take millions of dollars to do so I need to be stretched. That way I can have the faith and wisdom to pray in the provisions.

He also has exposed just how much I've trusted in my own strength and ability to do things. A line from a movie I just saw, about "Samson and Delilah", really stuck with me. A guard angry at Samson for his refusal said, "You are prideful and stubborn". Samson's response was "Prideful and stubborn, yes, but no longer vain."

When I came out with all this ability and knowledge, I was going to take Seattle for the Lord. Well instead, I've really had it taken to me. I feel like Peter after denying Him, sitting by the sea hopeless and broken hearted. Jesus had to get Peter out of the way so then Peter could let Jesus be his strength and then He could really use him.

Next, I've learned that when you start to get all these great prophecies, it is not to build up your spiritual ego, but to remind you of who He is in you.

The Lord has done so much and is still doing in me. He has pulled me back up. Brushed me off and put me on my feet again. He has given me a greater level of compassion and joy.

Jesus is merciful and faithful and no matter how bad things get, He won't give up on us and He will finish what He has started in us.

Report #2

So much has happened recently! I am now living on the street on Capitol Hill. I am homeless, not by my own choice, more like God shutting all the doors everywhere else. It was something in my heart I felt I might have to do at one point, but fought its possibility since I came out here.

It has been one of the best things that has happened to me. In a three week period the Lord has given me a daily talking, hanging out with, relationship with over 50 street dwellers. Instead of doing outreach I am doing inreach, but isn't that what Jesus did. It has taken me a while to realize that.

The first night I went out and sat on the step of the vacant bldg on Broadway. I was so scared, I had no idea what would happen! Shortly after that a guy named John David Buck came and sat down and we talked and he started introducing me to others. JDB had not sleep for 7 days and we prayed for him and you could see an immediate change where he got sleepy right then. Walking back to my truck he prayed to receive Jesus and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

There was a change that night, but he is in and out right now. JDB wears these wild clothes, rants and raves about his backwards forwards

philosophy, up and down Broadway Ave. all day long.

The Lord has told me to give him a lot of grace right now because I think a lot of Christians have given up on him, so he is waiting for me to do the same. When he gets turned around for Jesus, everybody on Capitol Hill, from street dweller to professional will know the power of Jesus. I am just loving on him, telling him Jesus will not give up on him and he has a destiny and he is going to make it.

Report #3

Greetings from Seattle, WA. Things are beginning to move along here as the Lord is truly faithful and wonderful in his mercy. There is a lot to catch up on so here we go.

Jesus really blessed us with a great Christmas. We didn't have any money but we wanted to do something special, for some of the guys on the street.

We were able to bless 30 people with personally wrapped gifts with their names on them, which included a black hoodie, thermals, socks and other personal gifts. The ages ranged from a 50 year old handicapped Apache native American named Bear, to a 5 year old named Marisa.

One street punk had a present with his name on it, the first in fifteen years, and a girl who was raised Jehovah's witness celebrated her first Christmas ever with us. The 5 year old Marisa was given 3 large bags of presents, so overwhelmed she stared for awhile at them before opening them. Rob her father, began to cry and then gave me the only thing he had...a leather handmade watch. Sarah a lady sits on the corner and sells handmade jewelry, had a family from the church buy presents for her. As she opened them she was amazed at how the gifts perfectly matched her tastes. She said she could tell that God's hand directed the family as they bought the presents.

Jesus had begun to put some things on my heart about having a personal touch in ministry. So I went out asking questions and found out that most street mission services do parties or dinner before Christmas day, and generally just hand them items or give them a pile to grab from.

The Lord showed me that we should give them presents that were wrapped with their names on them, and give them Christmas on Christmas day. I went out and got sizes from the guys and then took the information to my church, and they responded by adopting names and buying presents and giving in a offering totaling over 500 dollars.

We also had some friends of the ministry give as well in the amount of 250 dollars.

This led to a deeper relationship with them, as they began to understand how we truly loved and cared about them. They also got a glimpse of God's provision as they knew I didn't have any money to start with. The attack we came under during this time was very heavy; I was sleeping in the back of my truck the night that it dropped to fifteen degrees Fahrenheit. In the end I got a fever of 107.

The night after Christmas, the Union Gospel mission gave us money for us to take the key street couple out to dinner. It was a great time but five minutes after dropping them off, as I had just gotten on the interstate, the drive shaft on my truck fell off. God gave us the strength through the sickness and provision to get the truck fixed.

This spring the Lord began to take me into a time of transition, and calling me closer to him even though at times I didn't draw near to him like I should have. I struggled with feeling that I had one hand tied behind my back spiritually and wanting more of God's power to be released.

Now that I have a job and an apartment, I also feared the depth of my relationship with the street guys would change as I spent less time out there with them.

The Lord was speaking to my heart about spending more time in his presence. As opposed to spending most of the time on the street, a greater longing for intercession and belief for the soon

outpouring of the Holy Spirit was birthed in my heart.

I realized that God is the one who gave me the relationships from his favor, not just from my time on the street, and the Lord put some things on my heart for this summer. I'm working with a pastor from a suburban church who has been bringing pizza to the park on Sundays for a year now.

This Sunday we will start our first Bible discussion after pizza, and in a couple of weeks add worship to that. I believe that this will lead to a church plant which goes along with one of the things that originally God put on my heart about taking church to the street dwellers.

I struggled with this over the past few months, because I didn't want (pastor) responsibilities to keep me from ministry on the street. We have known from the beginning of "Black Friday" that we were called to take teams of spiritual warriors and Spirit led musicians into the 10-40 window in Asia to do and teach spiritual warfare.

We believe that this summer will begin the foundation of this as we invite people to come pioneer in worship, as well as intercessory warfare dance. If you feel called to this or want more information contact me at

Richard Wiles - blackfriday@hotmail.com

Max Life House Parties

Bryce Wagner - Creative Pool, Lassaune, Switzerland

Have you ever been evangelized to? One time I walked into a concert run by a local Church. Some friends had told me about the place but no one there knew me. It was obvious that the Church's chaperones thought (or maybe hoped?) that I did not know Jesus and wanted to make the most of this golden opportunity to put a notch on their spiritual guns by bringing a supposed heathen into the kingdom.

The awkwardness that they and I felt is a testimony to our need as the body of Christ to address a few important issues:

How do you make non-believing youth feel welcome while surrounded by Christians?

Is a Christian artist obliged to make "Christian art"?

Do we love non-believers or do we just love the idea of them coming to our churches and fellowships?

Let's look at these questions and others in the reflection of "the Creative Pool" a dedicated group of young, missions minded artists in Lausanne, Switzerland... The Creative Pool runs a bi-monthly, invitation only party called the "Max Life Party."

Considered by some to be the most extravagant and perhaps controversial event run by believers in the French speaking part of Switzerland, these parties endeavor to bridge the relational gap between Christians and non-Christians in their region.

Here is what one partygoer named Melanie (22 years old) had to say about her Max Life experiences:

Max Life? It's a place to meet new people, experience new styles of music, art and video. There is a great ambiance and the people are really friendly... it's one of the few places where I can meet Christians and yet feel completely at home.

What happens at a typical Max Life Party?

First of all, there is a warm welcome when you arrive. Then you discover the party theme decorations that are all over the house --- always quite impressive! After meeting the other partygoers, there is a nice buffet meal for everyone. The night usually kicks off with calmer entertainment (acoustic coffee shop style music and other ambiance music, video installations and art expositions). Later the party transitions to the underground (it's literally underground) club where DJ's mix their music while people dance, play a round of pool or talk around the bar. People are free to come and go and do as they please.

The Max Life parties officially began in April 2001 with the "flower party" and have continued with themes such as the blue party, St. Patrick's Day, tropical party and the Christmas Masked Ball. But who runs this thing? And more importantly, how does it work? Bryce Wagner the self described "people motivator" behind the Creative Pool and the Max Life parties had a few words to share with us...

Bryce, what is the vision for the Max Life Parties?

To make new contacts and to develop deeper friendships... basically it is networking and encouraging healthy growing friendships based on love. I have noticed while being here in Switzerland for the last 10 years that the Swiss are very good at making a solid (small) group of deep friendships and then they mostly stay in that circle for the rest of their lives. This is a good thing that is missing in many other cultures. An even better thing would be to have an "open circle" of deep friendships allowing a networking flow in and out of that, expanding our horizons.

Authenticity and real love are the most important keys for interaction between Christians and non-Christians. I want people to leave our parties knowing, "These people think that I am important - and that my thoughts, dreams, aspirations and my art are important, too."

Are all the artists that perform at Max Life Christians?

No, because all are created in the image of God and have the capacity for divine expression. Also, since the vision is about making new contacts and developing deeper friendships, it makes sense to invite non-Christian artists who will of course bring their friends and further create new contacts.

Is it true that you offer alcohol at your parties?

Yes we do. Having wine with dinner and going out to a bar with friends for a beer is very much part of Swiss culture. For my crew who know God, I hold them to a biblical standard of integrity and biblical values. For the people who come and do not claim to know and follow Jesus, I do not require them to act like my crew does.

We have found that it is amazing how much you can influence people's actions through the atmosphere and spirit you create in an environment. We CAN control an atmosphere to communicate personal responsibility and friendship, and we have found that people will adapt to what you create. I have been pleasantly surprised that at all of our MaxLifeParties I have never found anyone that I would consider to be drunk. I have not found anyone doing drugs either. I believe the atmosphere of friendship, communication and profound art can create the desire to be mentally checked-in and not wasted, to be able to make the most of a MaxLifeParty experience.

What do local churches think about Max Life?

Most don't know much about the parties, including my local church. But, for the most part, they see the fruit and are excited by that.

One lady from my church came up to me before one of our recent MaxLifeParties and asked me how the gospel was presented (if at all) in what we do. I told her that we ARE the gospel to the lost that come, but she wanted to know CONCRETELY how or if the gospel was being preached. Before I spoke with her the following Sunday some amazing events took place in the life of one guy named Oliver.

Oliver had met some people from the Creative Pool at a club in Lausanne and was invited to one of our parties. That night he had about 12 Vodkas at a fairly popular club called "the Loft." He was really out of it when the police stopped him on his way home. The cops were convinced that he was wasted on more than just alcohol and decided to have him strip-searched with a full cavity inspection!

Finally, they set him free and sent him home on the bus as dawn was breaking. Just then he ran into Daniella from the Creative Pool who was going to help set up for the following night's Max Life. He ended up going with her and helped decorate the house all day long for the party and finally showed up the next night for the Max Life.

The party was a real success and towards the end we had a sort of improv worship time with my wife singing on top of one of the DJ's mix. Oliver just started tripping out... no drugs, no alcohol, just the Holy Spirit!

When it was all over he pulled me aside and pointed to my Max Live backstage pass saying, "You know you really have the right name for this... Max Life. The other night I had a real minimum lifetime, one of the worst nights of my life. But, tonight was really a Maximum Life night. No one was drunk or stoned, but there was an aspect of creativity, acceptance and family." That is what Max Life Parties should be.

Can you tell me how this project and the people involve cooperate with your local church?

The Creative Pool has several departments (or projects) and MaxLifeParties is one of those which focuses on serving in the Social. As I mentioned before, this project becomes "spiritual"

to the extent of the spirituality of the contacts and relationships that are developed.

It is important to note here that out of the Creative Pool we have another project which has a specific focus on the Spiritual (The Gate). The Gate is a weekly "Reading and Discussion Group".

It is communicated clearly to everyone that it is a spiritually focused service. It uses some concepts from Alpha Courses adapted to our culture. We eat together, read the same passage out of the Bible in 3-4 different languages and translations and then we let the group dissect it. Every opinion is valued and encouraged. We do have a selected "leader" each time who is not allowed to give their opinion but can only ask question about the text to help guide the group into personal revelation.

We have had several people who made first contact with our collective of artists through a MaxLifeParty and now come to the Gate. However we avoid mentally connecting these two, The Gate is an option (or tool) for developing a deeper friendship with someone in the Spiritual realm but is not a "step", if you would.

(My church has) the best pastors in the world that understands the Local Church, Networking and the need to have societal impact. The Gate is not only a "project" of the Creative pool but it is also an official "Cell Group" of our church. I am also a department head at (my church) for the young adults so much of the human resources for our MaxLifeParties come from my pool of friends and artists, many of whom go to my church.

If people would like to come closer into contact with God or a church, do you invite them to church?

Yes, whenever it is appropriate. Sometimes I invite them to the Gate cell group, sometimes to our Church, sometimes to dinner, sometimes to go snow boarding, we can be Church a lot of places... the goal is to be sensitive to the person and their spiritual and social needs.

Another person who makes the Max Life's clock tick is Michael, better known as DJ Peach. He keeps the Max Life partygoers moving late into the night with his vinyl mixing. Here's what he had to add:

What makes Max Life work?

I think it is people's openness to free communication and meeting people. Not just appreciating someone's art, but also their perspectives and their whole life experience. It (Max Life) is meant to be a very extroverted experience. You just show up and talk to others with a positive attitude. That ties in to the spiritual aspect too. The Holy Spirit puts a thought in your mind, you share it, someone else connects to that thought and brings in something totally different and God can bring good things out of that. It's a very cool experience.

What is different about mixing at Max Life as opposed to a normal club gig?

You don't feel pressure to put on a show; it's more a back to mind feeling. You can just enjoy and do the best with your music. No pressure to compete. Art over industry. I've really enjoyed Dj-ing for what it can be at Max Life. Just meeting others... feeling God's love... playing music I like. It's nothing paranormal, but God does show you things for others and you just feel that He is here.

What else have you learned through these parties?

That God's grace is so much bigger than we can imagine. It always brings out the best whenever we give it space to work. It's not a license to sin, but it makes us aware of our need to deal with it. Hopefully people are in contact with His grace through Max Life since people's image of Christianity has been much abused - like grace. So we must take things to a new level in art, parties, etc. Secular artists are a much neglected target audience and to me the Max Live is there for them.

God is doing something very different in Lausanne, Switzerland through the Max Life Parties and the Creative Pool team that runs them. Though the specific "form" may not apply to all cultures everywhere, I hope that some of the principles that they deal with will be helpful to those of you out there who are shining lights into the underground. Godspeed.

Written by Joel William Rogers for Bryce Wagner of the Creative Pool

Reaching out in a Party area

Billy and Brenda - Street Level - New Orleans, LA

FLESHING OUT CHRIST IN THE FAMOUS BIG EASY

It was the biggest party of them all. Walking through the square during Mardi Gras this year blatantly reminded me once again that we live in a post-Christian culture. In a straight row, with their tables butted up against each other, the Tarot card and palm readers sat barking their services. Behind their line, a Christian group painted as mimes performed a drama. In front, a man with a mega phone shouted Christian slogans. I looked around me and there were banners that proclaimed God hated faggots and banners that boasted their Mardi Gras crew names, most often the name of a Greek God such as Bacchus or Orpheus.

I stood still and let my eyes gaze over the crowds. I saw Blacks, Whites, Asians, Males, Females, Lesbians, Gays, Gutter Punks, Hippies, Arians, Bikers, Jocks, Business Men and Women, Clowns, Street Musicians, Artists, Families and Police. A small impromptu parade of half clothed people dancing themselves into frenzy passed. The only thing missing was the temple to the Unknown God.

Billy and I both commented that this must be a close representation to the Greek market during festival in Paul's day....definitely not a Christian culture.

As we stood in silence and watched the crowds jostle their way around we were reminded of the verse that speaks of 'sheep without a Shepherd'. It was a bit overwhelming!

If Jesus were here in the midst of this company where would He be and what would He be doing and saying? Who would He identify

with? Once again we were pressed to evaluate the relevance of the obvious forms of evangelism we were seeing displayed to a culture that would openly give the keys of the city to the devil and then expect him to behave himself. Should we be carrying signs, crosses, holding open prayer meetings and worship services, preaching on the corner or passing out tracts?

How on earth do we reach this culture???? In our heart of hearts we knew that we were to do none of the above. What we were to do was to be a ministry that stands in the gap, praying for God's mercy on a city that has gone whoring after other Gods. To ask the Holy Spirit to draw men's hearts and provide divine appointments for us to demonstrate the peace of Christ where there is madness.

We moved to New Orleans in 1994 and onto 'Bourbon St.', shortly thereafter. It soon became clear to us that people from all over the world came here to the French Quarter to party party party!! Behavior and actions that would not be tolerated anyplace else would be, not only tolerated but encouraged here.

Those good citizens who would never even speed in their hometown, given a few beers, would let it all hang out physically and mentally here. Just like all the filth and dirt the mighty Mississippi picks up on her long sojourn southward ends up here on the banks of New Orleans, the world brings its trash and dumps it here. The most disheartening aspect of all of this is the attitude of the city itself. A statue of old Man River stands up on the river front. It is a man with arms reaching

up, cut off at mid elbow. The inscription reads, “The city that care forgot”.

The meaning becomes very clear. No one even cares, whatever will be will be, can’t do anything about it don’t want to do anything about it.

To effect change became our prayer. We knew that in order for people to be reached the city itself must change at its core, which is the French Quarter. Every city has a history that shapes its personality. We started to read and research our city and pray that God would give us guidance. God had planted His love for these people in our hearts and we needed to know how to express it.

Ah, the people of the French Quarter, what a glorious conglomerate and lovely group of aliens they are, very tribal in nature yet a community within New Orleans.

There are the blue bloods, having old family money and gated mansions, there are business men, mafia, clowns, Tarot card readers, magicians, strippers, bartenders, mimes, artists, musicians, witches, warlocks, voodoo priests and priestesses, hippies, punks, homeless, Catholics, crazies, vintage quarter characters, writers, politicians, gays, lesbians, straights, aspiring young and old has-beens, blacks, whites, French, Italian, Irish, Coonass Cajuns, the tourists and now, US.

Everyone fits, everyone belongs. You can be anything you want to be and change that from day to day and it is just the way it is here. It truly is diversity with unity, something the church could learn about at another whole level. So many tribes, so many cultures, so few workers, and so little time.

As I’ve looked at what we have been doing these past nine years the famous quote by Teddy Roosevelt comes to mind, “Walk softly and carry a big stick”. We developed some basic principles. I would like to share those with you.

Basic Principles

- **Walk softly in your city**
- **Learn about the culture—it’s history**
- **Learn about the religious history--**
- **Be careful not to insult them or their traditions**
- **Show respect for their beliefs**
- **Pray and Pray and Pray some more for city leaders etc.**
- **Carry always with you the ‘big stick’ that is... (Be ready to give an answer for the faith that lies within you)**
- **Meet people where they are—find common**

ground listen more than you speak

- Strive to see people through God’s eyes with His heart

- Love people one at a time

- Be prepared for the long haul—people have lots of

baggage

- Know that the success or failure of your efforts is

in Gods hands

Being Christian in a party city is not a job for a lone ranger. Burnout is a sure thing if you are out to save all the sinners. We soon learned that we needed others. The Bible is pretty clear about the fact that we were designed to live and breathe within community, loving one another and offering a corporate expression of the love of Christ, who is our head, to others. Party people are desperately seeking intimacy. It is a pseudo-sexual intimacy that they find. The old song of the Jesus People is true, “they will know we are Christians by our love”. Party people will be drawn to a sense of family and belonging. Their hearts cry out for acceptance. Christian Community, in whatever form it takes is not an option but a lifeline in the city.

Perhaps one of the most important elements of preparation for reaching out in a party city is the necessity of Bible Study, both within the community and individually being able to feed yourself. It is the word of God that will be your strength and shield and many times your discernment.

The lines of right and wrong become blurred in a chaotic environment and a party city is chaotic most of the time. If you don’t know what the Bible teaches and you haven’t incorporated it into your daily life, when the times get dark your heart will become shadowed and clarity will give way to confusion. The warm fuzzies come and go but the word of God is powerful and sharp, able to discern even bone from marrow. It is the weapon of choice and you can’t leave home without it.

In a very real sense, when we obeyed God’s call for us to live in and love the French Quarter New Orleans we became captives of this city, not actually physically captive, although sometimes it feels like it. In Jeremiah 29:7, the instruction to the captives of Babylon was, “Do not dwindle away!!!! Work for the peace and prosperity of Babylon. Pray to the Lord for that city where you are held captive, for if Babylon has peace so will you.”

Like most party cities, New Orleans is a city known for its injustice, perversity and overall lawlessness. Note the scripture says to work for peace and prosperity. Peace always involves issues of justice. It is important to aggressively work for justice within the sphere of your influence. Know what is going on. Stay abreast of the political situation in the city. Ask God to show you ways to be involved in the city. Take ownership—seeking to redeem and rebuild the walls.

The prosperity of a party city usually comes at the expense of doing away with a strong moral code. Are there laws being passed or amendments being voted on that would curb the overall indecency? If so, get out and vote. Work for peace and prosperity so that the city itself will change.

The scripture also says to pray, and as I said earlier pray and pray, because God can give you direction and clarify his will to your more and more each time you return to him in prayer. You may get a clearer picture of where your city is and what God wants you to do.

Being a Christian in a party city and committing yourself to that city is sort of like parachuting into a war zone of the world and extending the welcome mat of God's love and sacrifice to the door of every heart and home.

Being a Christian in a party city and committing yourself to that city is to leave the harbor and launch out into the joy and risks of the deep sea.

The mission is not to hug harbor or drop anchor where it is safe or cheer as other boats sail into the deep. The place for the Christian Community is on the height of the seas where it is turbulent and dangerous, where storms gather their fiercest intensity. Jesus is calling us to be wave riders...Only dead fish swim with the tide.

Being a Christian in a party city and committing yourself to that city is to move in and determine in all of your relationships to live deliberately Christian.

It is to be actual friends to the sinners:
Showing unconditional love for them
Having them for dinner
Listening to their band play no matter how poorly
Talking about things that aren't interesting to you
Going out of your way to build relationship with those Christ has given you
Drinking endless cups coffee just waiting for someone to show up

A CAUTION: Reaching out in party cities does not give a high visible harvest. Sometimes we

have wondered if we're we doing any good at all. It is such hard ground and we have planted and watered only to see the enemy steal the flower. Spending day in and out in a pagan environment, no matter how much you love the people, can cause tunnel vision, and wear you out mentally, physically and spiritually.

Because of the way we are built we want to stick with it until the task is done, we may get to the point that we don't see the forest for the trees so to speak. We can easily become fatigued in every area of our life if there are not some safety measures built into our lives. Taking time to get out of the city and stand before the night sky or play in the waves or just be in a place where sin is in the closet not walking down the street for all to see, is imperative. Jesus himself slipped away to be alone with the Father and he took his disciples on several occasions up into the hills for rest and relaxation. It is a fact that it is a privilege to serve God in the city and be part of what He is doing but He doesn't actually need our help. He is more interested in our hearts and our relationship with Him wherever that might be. Build into your month a few days away and into your year a few weeks away for renewal and fun! It will make God smile.

Very lastly, after the party is over and the rest of the Christians have left taking their signs and songs and egos with them, you will be left to pick up the pieces and continue your walk as an image bearer of God, i.e. One whose life is so transparent before your friends that they can see Gods image in you.. You may serve for a day, a week, a month, a year, a lifetime in a party city and wonder if you are making any difference. But know for a surety that demons scurry away when they see the light and others will see Christ's image in your life and feel his love for them through you and someday you will stand before the lamb and see the faces of those whom many deemed hopeless.

So I leave you with the words of George McDonald...

I said: "Let me walk in the field;"

God said: "Nay, walk in the town;"

I said: "there are no flowers there;"

He said: "No flowers but a crown."

I said: "But the sky is black, there is nothing but noise and din;"

But He wept as He sent me back, "There is more,"

He said, "There is sin."

I said: "But the air is thick, and fogs are veiling the sun."

He answered: "Yet souls are sick, and souls in the dark undone."

I said: "I shall miss the light, and friends will miss me, they say;"

He answered me: "Choose tonight. If I am to miss you, or they." I pleaded for time to be given;

He said: "Is it hard to decide?"

It will not seem hard in Heaven to have followed the steps of you Guide." I cast one look at the fields. Then set my face to the town.

He said; "My child, do you yield?"

Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into His hand went mine, and into my heart came He; and I walk in a light Divine, the streets I had feared to see.

Reaching out through Underground Music

Glen Galloway - Soul Junk - San Diego, CA

I've been at this for 10 years with Soul-junk. It was July of 1993 that God spoke to me while on tour with Truman's water (a noisy indie band I sang and guitaried with from 91-93, I was the only Christian and the lyrics were all pretty ridiculous/angry/abstract).

He told me I needed to quit touring with them and start a new band that would be centered around him. People felt strongly one way or another about Truman's water in '93. We were abrasive and always mouthing off in interviews about how cheesy and derivative music was - even underground music. People who liked us were fanatical, but we had plenty of non-lovers.

When I was leaving the band I expected to be in similar situations with Soul-junk and having people really upset that we were so openly all about Jesus. The Holy Spirit had shown me that where Truman's water had been "offensive" in terms of being so noisy musically, Soul-junk's noise/offense would come from Jesus.

All my expectations of how this would play out were way off. First off, nobody ever really got visibly offended at Soul-junk's singing bible verses or songs all about Jesus. We had plenty of people coming up wanting to talk about "spirituality" or give secret "I'm a Christian too" signs, or asking if it was supposed to be some sort of elaborate blasphemous joke. I had expected flying ashtrays and people heckling and trying to beat us up or throw us off stage or something.

At the same time, almost every one of the doors that were open to me in Truman's water were quietly closed to Soul-junk. Clubs I'd played at regularly, booking agents in Europe and the States, record labels, 'zines, etc...Nobody really

made a big stink about it, but we just didn't get invited to do the stuff Truman's had.

There were a few exceptions - we released our early records on non-Christian indie labels and we were booked by a non-Christian booking agent who'd get in club's faces about being prejudiced if they didn't want to book a Christian band. and every now and then magazines like Magnet or Your flesh or Alternative press would cover us.

It was weird - I was ready for getting beat up, but the silent treatment just kind of slowly ate at me. It took me years of looking for loopholes, playing in front of Christians and non-Christians in almost any environment imaginable to realize that it was nothing personal. In general people clam up when they hear religious stuff in public, and the way

I was bringing Jesus to them wasn't producing a reaction. I was used to people freaking out over Truman's water and I figured reactions would be even more polarized over Soul-junk, but Truman's water was an attack on the senses, whereas Soul-junk was directed toward the spirit - and I'm convinced we didn't have enough Spirit to get the job done.

No doubt everybody who's heard Soul-junk has a strong vote pro or con - any band that sticks its neck out as far as we have spiritually and musically can't help but generate opinions. Obviously, none of these opinions bear any weight next to Father's.

The real issue to me was that at Soul-junk's beginning God had shown me the book of Luke and the book of Acts as a picture of the life I'd be living. I'd assumed it'd be town to town indie-rock-style in a van, preaching thru song with signs following.

People's opinions of aesthetic items (they rule/they suck) today are about as charged as people's snobby rich/poor judgments used to be, but both systems of judgment have no real eternal value. God's as (not) impressed with our aesthetics as he is with wealth.

My purpose isn't to hold up my band or my experience as any kind of lesson or model - what matters about this whole progression is that about 4 years ago I reached a point where I had to face that what was actually occurring wasn't anywhere close to the original excitement/possibilities/promises that the Holy Spirit showed me I'd bought into a whole package based on the assumption that what you really need to get the gospel

To a godless culture is smart and raw music/art/film. I saw dead culture and dead religion as the same enemy, and I figured the reason most people were rejecting Jesus was because they'd seen him presented in a dumb way. Over the past 4 years I've had God shake me pretty hard on what I think I'm accomplishing in his kingdom.

I know very much good is going on in the Christian underground...but I see way too much of people trying to take what little anointing they've been able to lay hold of and just go package it artistically smarter. Way too many people still looking to scene credibility (whether it be hard-core, indie, underground hip hop, metal, techno, etc...) as the anchor/backbone of their music.

I've really about-faced on where I see the flow of Spirit-inspiration finding its way into culture. I used to think the church had rejected raw creation so the Spirit was giving all the best ideas to people outside the church. Now I believe the only source of really raw creation the Holy Spirit is interested in is coming out of the church - and that'll come out of the church losing its inhibitions towards the things of the Spirit, not out of educating itself in culture.

The raw creation that'll come out of a pure flow of the Spirit thru a completely yielded church will make what we see coming out of the world right now (that impresses us so much!) look incredibly weak. In the mean time I see very little value in studying the raw creation that comes out of the world's fellowship with demons or trying to be "subversive" or something in that environment.

So much of the Christian underground has this weird taste that comes:

1) From pulling away from the legitimate body-of-Christ church (because older brothers seem to act so culturally irrelevant and so stuck in

trying to understand the things of God out of the fleshly mind), while

2) Ending up themselves more hard-line against the things of the Spirit. I've seen younger brothers exerting all their pushing-boundaries muscles on things like legitimizing swearing and drinking, meanwhile digging deep into orthodox theologies/philosophies and away from the Holy Ghost. As if learning to tolerate swearwords and "be real" was more valuable and risky than learning to cooperate with the Father and flow with the Spirit in doing all the stuff described in the Bible like speaking in tongues and living supernatural miracle-filled holy lives!

To me the fascination with making Christian culture hip/underground is as much as a rabbit-trail as making Christian culture production-savvy was 25 years ago. Unfortunately, you can't really tell people that, who are in the middle of being fascinated by it...it just sorta needs to be played out. At some point soon brothers need to realize that there's nothing man can produce or mimic from each other that can get anywhere close to what Father wants to work thru us.

At some point the young men of the church 1John 2 talks about will be ready to step up and acknowledge there's no idea or direction out of the natural mind that can hold a candle to the mind of Christ, the mind of the anointing.

I'm so hungry to hear people who are strong and the Word of God lives in them and they've overcome the wicked one. I've had my fill of people whose music sounds strong by worldly standards, but they're as beat down as the world that they're trying to "reach."

All of the non-issues that the apostle Paul effectively obliterated when he spoke in Romans and Corinthians about offerings sacrificed to idols are trying to reemerge as the focal point!

Brothers are spending all their energy, experimenting with how much of the world they can take on and still hold onto eternal life. "How much of the earth can we hold onto" instead of "how much of heaven can we yield to."

The reason that this question is so useless is the unstable lukewarm heart behind it. We need God to give us a ravenous hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Everybody who wants a strong identity these days feels the need to grow up hard - and that comes from plugging our identities into the world's ID-bases. In underground culture, these identities get based on holding up one single style/aesthetic against all the other styles and sense-inputs out

there. Strength in the world comes from independence (which when you get down to it is based on either euphoric denial of reality OR hatred, anger and rebellion).

Without Christ there is no healthy source for identity. People who come out of these lifestyles into life in Christ have tremendous potential to be mighty in the kingdom, but it's not a simple matter of slapping Jesus' name over that old worldly strength/ID-base.

There's a dramatic recalibration that needs to take place - Jesus' blood buys eternal life and a new identity as a son of God and it's the Holy Spirit clothing us in power that activates that life and identity in our own consciousness. Without that indwelling power, we have a weak theoretical grasp of Christ is in us and we end up wandering back to find our practical strength and identity right back where we left it, gritting teeth trying not to get dragged back into sin in the process! (Or working out a complicated rationalizing system if we do get dragged back.)

The devices of Satan are all centered around either directly occupying/destroying people with these or repackaging and distracting with them. Notice how the culture of the world continually puts new faces on old ideas, all the while dulling the hearts of the listeners and pushing them towards illusion, cynicism and perversion.

There is an aesthetic mechanism involved here. Demons are actually hard at work "inspiring" gifted people to put new faces on old idols because there's no lasting power in them and the illusion needs refueling to be any good at attracting and deceiving. Then how sad to have the people of God running along behind studying how to put together a good illusion! (If it's the only power and inspiration they have access to, what do we expect?) How sad to hold up the fact that our illusion is a great copy of a worldly illusion and think it'll have any power to communicate the power of the gospel.

How sad to think artistic cred or self-deprecation or self-expression are inroads or things to have in common with the world. Jesus isn't accepting man's testimony, and he isn't quoting "oh wretched man that I am" trying to identify with man's worldly sorrow, and he isn't interested in self-expression - he watches and hears the Father and does and says likewise. There's the power and the inspiration, and it's all by the Spirit, who searches the mind of God and makes it known to us.

I make more music than I've ever made in my life right now, but I'm not compelled to make a CD or play in a band. I'm compelled to preach the gospel. I'm compelled to live anointed. I'm compelled to take the remaining years of this short life I live and spend them truly as a son of God. I'm compelled to take hold of the great and precious promises and by them participate in the divine nature. I'm compelled to arm myself with being ready to physically beaten for the gospel, which means getting myself in situations where the manifestation of Christ is so hot in me that the demonic and dead-religious has to lash out.

The anointing of the Anointed one has to get so precious to us that we won't settle out for less.

- Anointed music is NOT the spoonful-of-praise-sugar that helps the preaching-medicine go down.
- Anointed music doesn't cater to men just like anointed preaching doesn't cater to men.
- Anointed music has the presence of almighty God so tangibly thick in it that it scares the daylights out of most people. It cuts to the heart, reveals the secrets of the heart and causes people to fall down either repenting or overwhelmed with fullness of joy in God.

There's a screaming need for the young men of the church from 1John 2 and the sons and daughters of Joel/Acts 2 to be able to produce this on the spot as the Spirit dishes it out. It isn't a reaction against anything that's come out of dead religion or the world's lusts/pride. It's a pure flow straight from under the throne of God, and it comes only by yielding.

This is what will break things open for revival and rampant salvation. Anything less is a distraction at best. I hear the Spirit of God calling for these young men and women to rise up in the anointing. This means more than slapping Jesus-stickers on guitar cases and semi-Jesus-lyrics over their favorite records and hitting the tour circuit.

This means don't speak out or sing out until the Spirit is like a fire shut up in your bones. Many people speak or sing out of their inadequacy and confusion and think other brothers are comforted or enlightened by it! The life of the Spirit is not a game. We're here to build up each other's faith - not share poetry and commiserate.

This means stop speaking against the body of Christ and the pastors Father has raised up and plug in to a Holy Spirit-fueled ministry you can serve in complete submission. yeah!! The antidote to the deep root of rebellion the world's culture has

spent almost 50 solid years trying to wedge into the church.

People move across the country for girlfriends and boyfriends and jobs and family. How about looking high and low till the Holy Ghost plants you in a local church you can pour your life into (just like Jesus did/does)?

I love the brothers deeply, and I see a powerful move of God coming on his church. It

seems ridiculous to say that raw anointed music with healing for the nations will pour out from God's house when these days what's pouring out is so watered-down and it seems like you need to get in a club to hear anything real, but the Spirit's word to the church in this hour is very clear - get in the house and get it ready for what Father's going to bring in.

Performance Art (Divine)

Alexander Schneider - Asylum - London UK

"In order to change the social ills that we see", Levin claims, "we will first need to change our vision. Historically the model we have in place is inherited from the Renaissance, which created the spectator who is outside the picture and separate from what he sees. The vision we need to develop is not one that observes and reports, that objectifies and enframes, but one released from these reifying tendencies and rooted instead in a responsiveness that ultimately expresses itself in action." Suzi Gablik, "The Reenchantment of Art"

In 1992, shortly after they had started their existence, the Jesus Freaks, believing that to reach our oversaturated information society more radical means needed to be used, on occasions went out to hand out bread to homeless people, stood in a line on a busy street on orange boxes at a certain equal distance from each other, reading out the same verse of scripture over and over again, had "Striptease-Sermons."

In the 1970s New York artist Gordon Matta-Clarke founded a café with friends that was to run as an art piece.

In the 1950s main stream art critics and artists believed that art needed to be pure, not only free from influences of the "world" but also from influences from other art forms. Painting should be two dimensional and abstract. Performance art was part of a revolution against this, wanting to spread art out into every area of real life, taking it out of the galleries into the streets, your garden, your flat.

For me this is very important. Not only the deconstruction/liberation of the art object (anything can be art) but also of the artist (not doing things that no-one could do (Mastership, Genius) but even aiming for people to participate. Art can be both for itself and for the people. Art

can be by the people for the people. Seems to me that 1950s philosophy spread a fear that art would cease to be art (i.e. something special/sacred) if it mixed with common life. I think it is the other way round. Life would become more special/sacred if art mixed with it, was integrated in it.

Not: Art + Life = Life, but Art + Life = Art.

Every communication can be seen as consisting of three things: A transmitter, the wave (medium) and the receiver. Take art as communication. I, the artist, am the transmitter. All that is in my influence is the wave, the piece. I cannot truly control the reception.

God, though, is not limited. Even if I were not to care at all about him in my creating, even if I created to spite him, he can still work in the reception, he can still turn everything to his will. My task, I believe, is to trust him for what I do and how I do it, what it will say and to whom. It is not my experience that this would be termination of my identity in the work, but that it is collaboration.

For the way I see things is a gift from him, and the part of him that I understand and no other is what God wants to show through me.

Art is always communication. Yes, but I don't always have to know what I'm saying.

Here are some prophetic actions from the bible:
Hosea 3, God speaks through Hosea falling in love with an adulteress.

Isaiah 8 God speaks through the naming of the child of Isaiah and the prophetess.

Isaiah 20 Isaiah has to walk naked and barefoot for three years. Then God speaks through it.

Jeremiah 16 God forbids Jeremiah to marry or have children and speaks through that.

Jeremiah 27 Jeremiah has to put bonds and yokes on his neck to emphasise God's message and has to wear them until another prophet, Hananiah, breaks them that "same year".

By adhering to borders which I have set myself I am limiting what God can do. Limits may be good and beneficial, as in poetry. Poetry exists only by its limits. But we should, in our mind, be free to do whatever, so that we do not confront God with a set menu of things he can ask of us.

Some people will be all-purpose tools and some very specialized. But listen to God for what tool you should be and not to cultural preconceptions, or your own ones.

Question: "When you do art do you try to make it look Christian (make sure that all who see it know that it is "Christian" and that you are a Christian) or do you ask God what he might want you to do and do what you consider good, always allowing God to have the final say if He wants to. He might be perfectly ok with what you are doing. He is the source of all creativity (Only God can create as he is the creator, everything else is creature and can enhance or corrupt, not create).

In a sermon on "Walk humbly with your God" (sorry couldn't find the chapter, verse and book) I wrote the main verse on pieces of paper, one word each. I also illustrated one fact I was talking about in four simple drawings on papers the same size.

I rearranged the seats that day so that four people sat behind me, holding the drawings and another row of people held the verse somewhere to my right. The holders of the paper were asked to hold the paper up whenever I mentioned the verse or parts of it.

Likewise the guys with the drawings. As we were not very many that day, nearly everyone in the room had a task. Everyone enjoyed themselves very much and I think it helped that everyone was incorporated in the sermon rather than just listening.

Once I had to do a small show with people from my Tutor group under the theme colour. My idea was to somehow leave paint-imprints of me on the wall. I thought of tripping into it, of stumbling but then I decided running into it.

I knew what this would roughly conjure up, ideas of resistance, violence, hurt etc. but for me it stuck with the notion of "running into walls". There was some quite frustrating stuff in my life at that time.

I decided to run into the wall covered with paper three times. Each time there would be a new

piece of paper and a new colour (either red blue or yellow). I did it the first time, went to wash myself in a sink in the sculpture workshop. A friend came to help me and told me laughing that I had broken the wall (it was only MDF). Then another one came and confirmed it.

I was quite excited anyway, but then it hit me. I did not expect this wall to break, same as I didn't expect the walls that I was running into in my life to break. I was perplexed and finished the performance using the bit of the wall next to the hole. But here God spoke encouragement to me in my own work without me knowing.

A lot of my work is musical as well and here the deconstruction of the artist/author is most easily perceived. One of the projects is called "the 25 piece orchestra". It consists of 25 people or more that improvise music/sound for approximately half an hour with whatever they like (I'd love there to be a big choir section). The first and only time it played was in my college made up of student friends of mine.

All thoroughly enjoyed it and the outcome was quite musical. We had everything from a guitar and a drum machine to squeaky pens and Velcro. One important thing about the 25 piece orchestra though is that it is not really bound to certain people, except maybe to me. I plan to do a gig with it on Freakstock this year and none of the cast of the first performance is likely to be there to play.

Another project, on its English side, is called "Schneider performs Neumann". My best friend and I decided to make a pact to every month write a performance for each other, post it, and perform it at the same day in the last week of each month, he mine in Leipzig/Germany and I his in London.

We have come up to Number 15 now. Once he had to get 50 people to blow their noses at the same time (sadly he didn't get that many). Once I had to buy 50 Euro worth of coloured wool, make it into smaller balls, take it to a public place (I chose Hyde Park) and then take each ball, tie one end to me and give the ball to a passer-by, asking them to take it along their way and tie it somewhere when it is unrolled. This was a very amazing piece.

Two years ago in my Foundation Course I used a porcelain sink I had found on the street, painted it half blue and mounted it on the wall in the usual height of sinks, supported by a pile of bricks. Then I taped the headphones of my walkman to the ends of the pipes coming from the

taps and played Schuetz chorales through them (German choir music).

In a group discussion about it people talked of it reminding them of a church, of cleansing from sin and other spiritual things. I had not given any explanation beforehand.

I think the beginning of an answer for many questions in Christian life is to believe that God is real and alive, a force to be reckoned with.

So with art. It is not I who has to make art that pleases God and/or "reaches out" but my willing heart is already pleasing to God. But as God incorporates every aspect of my life into the relationship with him and into serving, so will he with art. All I have to do is want him to be in the work and be brave enough to go where he leads (though I'm sure he will supply courage along with an idea that demands the same).

Underground Evangelism Street Sheets

Steve Malakowski - Outcast Press - Phoenix AZ

Steve has sent street sheets out all over the world for a number of years and they have been very effective and well received, here are some samples



Reaching out through Film

Reed Daigle - Street Level - New Orleans LA

Christianity and the cinema have had a long relationship dating back to the very beginnings of cinema. The cinema can be a beautiful means of glorifying God and of carrying out the Lord's work in society. It is an art form, and not simply a means of communication, though it is that as well.

In this chapter, I give a brief history of the beginnings of cinema and show that Christians were involved with it from those very beginnings.

I then go on to say discuss cinema's role in the church and society and how the cinema can take God's message of hope to society.

This chapter is actually an excerpt from a research paper that I had written for my course work in film studies at the University of New Orleans. I kept those parts that I thought would most fit for the focus of this book. I want to thank Trevor Macpherson for the opportunity to share this with you who read it. I thank Jesus our Savior

for the love He shares and the opportunity He has given me to pursue this art.

From the very beginning, Christianity has had a formative relationship with the cinema. "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:3-4).

"The next step was taken in 1887 in Newark, New Jersey, when an Episcopalian minister named Hannibal Goodwin first used celluloid roll film as a base for light-sensitive emulsions" (Cook 4).

This is the same celluloid roll film that George Eastman began to mass-produce and market in 1889. Some of the first films ever made featured Christianity, such as *The Passion Play of Oberammergau* (1898), patterned after medieval Passion plays and featuring thirteen minute-long tableaux from the trial and death of Jesus, and *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (1898) by Georges Méliès, the director of the well-known film *A Trip To The Moon* (1902) (Miles 6).

With a bit of history out of the way, I now venture into some of the theory involved with the relationship between Christianity and the cinema, the role of art in the church, and cinema taking that role.

Art and imagery have always had a very important place in the lives of Christians. "Within historical Christianity, religious images gave a focus to and informed piety. Cinema can be seen as continuous with a long tradition in which images have been used to produce emotion, to strengthen attachment, and to encourage imitation" (Miles 3).

While attending a Catholic grade school, I can remember going through the "Stations of the Cross," which were representations of the events during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. These images provided me with a mental picture of what took place during these crucial events in the life of Jesus. I had an image to put along side the words of the account. How much more vivid is a film presentation of these events.

Imagery is what helps us to visualize the invisible. Though images have been an integral part of historical Christianity, especially within Catholicism, some in Protestantism have often times equated the use of imagery in the church with idolatry. Some have viewed the commandment, "You shall not make for yourself an idol... You shall not bow down to them or worship them" (Exodus 20:4-5) as meaning that the image itself was inherently an idol, whether used that way or not.

However, as Martin Luther, the first Protestant, has stated in regards to the use of images: *It is possible for me to hear and bear in mind the story of the Passion of our Lord. But it is impossible for me to hear and bear it in mind without forming mental images of it in my heart. For whether I will or not when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart just as the reflection of my face naturally appears in the water when I look into it. If it is not a sin, but good to have the image of Christ in my heart, why should it be a sin to have it in my eyes?* (qtd. in Johnston 75)

In recent times, there is not much debate over whether images are idols or not, but there are those among the Christian community who regard film and all "secular" entertainment as having no part in the life of a Christian.

In this case it seems that "the relationship between art and morality is unclear, so that one is invited either to divorce the two completely, or to suspect any attempt to relate them" (Schillaci 22).

However, as Robert Johnston points out, "Escaping society has little Biblical warrant," and "It is also the case that all the positions except avoidance can be given strong theological support". If Christianity is to be relevant in the society at large, it must speak in that society's language. Cinema is to a large degree, today's language. It transcends class, race, age, and nationality.

Does this mean that cinema is simply another means to "preach the Gospel"? The answer is, of course, yes and no. Schillaci says that, "Each age must experience a new incarnation of the gospel 'message,' one that communicates with the age on its own terms"

And so it is true that cinema is a means to put forth Gospel truth, however, as Margaret Miles states in *Seeing and Believing*, "to assume that visual pleasure serves only to seduce viewers into mindlessly accepting the film's values distorts a spectator's experience and eliminates the primary motivation for analyzing a film".

A film's message does not stop when it is created, but it continues to live in the minds of the spectators who in turn, with different life experiences and preconceived ideas, mold the images into unique cinematic experiences.

In the translated words of Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein, "The spectator is compelled to proceed along that selfsame creative road that the author traveled in creating the image. The spectator not only sees the

represented elements of the finished work, but also experiences the dynamic process of the emergence and assembly of the image just as it was experienced by the author” (32).

Without going too far into film montage theory, a film is a montage, which is to say that it is a collection of images juxtaposed in such a way so that the ideas of different images combine in such a way as to create a new meaning. This meaning is also dependent on the spectators’ ideas of these elements. The filmmaker, as well as the spectator, takes part in carrying out the creation of a movie. We err when we deny the power of cinema to connect with the audience in this manner, and we err when we base our morality solely on the movies as well, but we also err when we view movies as mere entertainment.

We are accustomed from religious instruction to derive a practical “moral” from every word or event. But we sometimes fail to realize that Christ himself took a somewhat different approach. He most often merely told a story, a parable, and let the people draw their own conclusions. We are very much like the Apostles: we can’t enjoy the simple, moving story, but immediately demand, “What does it mean? What should we do?” In this, Schillaci says that we should not always try to squeeze a moral out of a story; sometimes a movie is best left to stand on its own. However, maybe in the instance of the parables that he taught, Christ wanted his disciples to ask those questions. Perhaps it was the stories that actually prompted them to seek the morals and lessons in order to apply in their lives.

Movies can do the same, by prompting people to ask questions when viewing them, instead of simply “killing time.” The cinema has proven to be a great vehicle, though it is much more than simply a vehicle, for portraying Bible stories in visual form.

From the various reenactments of the life of Jesus, including *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (1964), to the Turner productions of other Biblical personas including, *Moses* (1996), *Abraham* (1995), *Jacob* (1994), and *Joseph* (1995), these portrayals are brought to life on the screen, thus bringing the stories a little closer to people’s minds and memories. Other films, such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) or *Godspell* (1973), set the life of Christ in a different context or time setting.

Though one can find moral lessons in movies, and one can use the cinema to spread a message or retell Biblical events, the dynamics of

the cinema, as an art and as a mass medium, dictate that there are other, perhaps even more effective, ways of using the cinema to the benefit of church and of society.

The cinema has various roles to play in the Christian church, as well as society in general. These include that of modern man’s “morality plays”, prophet, and “cultural exorcist.” Movies can and do play an important role in discussing current moral dilemmas. So, as a “morality play,” a movie can present a moral dilemma, offer a solution, and thereby raise consciousness of it and promote discussion in the society.

Margaret Miles shows two ways in which this role is played out. “Film is an accessible medium in which competing issues of public and private life in a pluralistic society are formulated and represented for consideration and interpretation” (Miles xv).

In this way, the issues are “put on the table” so to speak in order to raise awareness of them in the society. Moral dilemmas are therefore presented. “A director can imagine, and a film can visualize, the resolution of a situation so that cinema audiences can picture more concretely how the issue might be dealt with, what it would look like and feel like if a particular resolution were to be adopted” (Miles 18).

In this sense, the movie presents a solution to a moral dilemma. It may be because the author feels that this is the correct solution, or it may be to imagine what would happen if this particular instance was the solution. Trends in society are many times started in movies, but many times the movies give us a view of societal trends that are already in existence.

Sometimes we are unaware of social change until we see it in the popular media, especially in cinema. “Art in this role is a prophet. And one of the prophetic roles of art is to reflect social change before we are aware that it is taking place,” says Schillaci (12). Speaking of “cultural exorcism,” he argues that, “the artist has become the Cultural Exorcist, driving out of the society the subpersonal demons which warp and twist human life” (20).

The Cinema and Christianity have enjoyed and endured a long relationship with each other. There have been some misunderstandings and upsets along the way, and although recently it sometimes seems that there is a lack of communication between the two, I think that there is hope in their inextricable union.

The cinema has proven to be a great aid to the cause of Christianity in its ability to communicate Biblical stories and personas to a large and diverse audience, and in its ability to present current trends in society. Cinema has given society a means to discuss moral, ethical, and spiritual dilemmas, problems, and questions on a grand scale.

In movies, Christians gain an understanding of how they appear to others in society, and they also give an accurate presentation of themselves to the world. The cinema has sparked controversy and protests among Christians over films like *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and it has spread the Gospel message in countries all over the world with films such as *The Greatest Story Ever Told*.

The past couple of decades have seen a lack of Christian representation in the cinema and a lack of spiritual themes, but with films such as *The Apostle*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Left Behind*, *Keeping The Faith*, and *The Big Kahuna*, we are seeing a reawakening in the interest of spiritual matters, specifically those of Christianity.

I project that with the increase of digital film making, and therefore the decrease of the cost of film making, more and more individuals and independent producers will be able to make their voices heard. This goes for any group, not just Christians. There will be more offerings of fair and accurate representations of Christ, Christians, and Christianity, because those who truly know it and believe it will have the ability to produce those representations. This will happen without the aid of

some Production Code, which enforces certain values on those who don't hold those same values.

Christians cannot expect non-Christians to produce accurate portrayals of Christians, nor can they expect to find movies that promote Christian ideas to come from Hollywood. Christians will have to produce the films that promote their beliefs, ideas, and concerns.

I think that there is a renaissance in the cinema beginning among Christians. There are some things that must take place within this movement. Some filmic conventions must be developed, or at least made better, to show religious commitment and devotion.

There already exists voice over to signify prayer, and close ups on faces during times of enlightenment or contemplation, but some of these have become so cliché that there must be others to take their places. One can show physical and social action to represent religious commitment, as in *The Mission* (1986), or *Dead Man Walking* (1995).

It is difficult to capture a conversion cinematically, however in *The Apostle* there are a couple of good examples. Another thing that should take place, is the laying aside of bullhorns.

Though Christians do have a duty to preach the Good News, they also have a duty to make good works of art. If God could create a world of beauty like the one we live in without scripture verses printed under each tree, then in that image, Christians can also make honest, realistic, and artful films of integrity, which can speak much louder and truer of God than any filmed sermon.

Underground Moms

Judy Macpherson – Worldshakers Christian Growth Center – Vancouver BC

God has always allowed a special bond between mothers and their children. It is not like any other relationship in the world! At the very end of his life, even Jesus, in the torment and the weight of the sins of the world, took some of His last breathe to assure His mother was cared for.

Regardless of the fact that most mom's spend the first few years of Motherhood in a state of fear and fatigue; the next few years saying "No" or "don't put your fingers in there"; at least a half dozen years trying to convince you that school really is fun; another half dozen years praying that you'll make it through High School AND if you do, that you will choose a post secondary

education that is "Not too far away, dear", so they can do your weekly laundry; which they actually complained about before.

Laundry and food are often the last leverages a mother has to attract these grown up critters that used to cry if she didn't let them into the bathroom with her. After all is said and done, regardless of your choices and your deeds, Mom is the one who always defends you to others, saying; "It is just another stage... it too will pass".

Regardless of the usual relationship patterns in a family, sometimes the enemy sticks his hands in to foul the relationships and causes the breaking of these natural and God-driven bonds

between Mother and child. Sometimes it is a matter of another person, who perhaps has a controlling relationship with Mom (could be Dad, Grandma, boyfriend, booze) that destroys the nurturing bond that should be there.

Whatever the reason, the result is the same. This child, whether 4 or 40, needs unconditional love, nurturing, hugs, respect, support AND food and laundry services. This is how one "Mom" can help to save a generation of lost souls --- just do Mom stuff. Don't misunderstand; this is not a simple thing. This is a ministry with oceans of tears, gallons of prayer, eons of time and good old physical service. So far, the "warring angels" haven't taken to making dinner or doing the wash so Mom's still the Queen of physical sacrifices.

In cities all over the world, Mom's are answering God's call. Some of these moms have no church to help fund their work, some have never had children of their own and some appear to be in as much need as those they serve. One of my favourite Moms is "Mom Agape" in Vancouver, Canada. She is severely disable, on a meager disability pension and needs a scooter, as she is unable to walk.

But this incredible servant goes out seven nights a week, often alone and very late at night, to the streets of Vancouver where the poorest and most disadvantaged people exist. She often has wagons hooked on to the back of her scooter, kind of like the "gravy train" as she unloads food and hygiene supplies, vitamins, fresh fruit and medicine to her street family.

Some of the faces are the same that she kissed, prayed for and fed the night before. Some are new faces she has never seen and some are answers to her prayers. Her blessings. The fruit of her kindness. Some are kids who have returned to

Vancouver to thank her for helping them; some to share how they finally came face to face with Jesus, and some to say they blew it again and need her more than ever. Is this an angel in disguise? She could be... but then again, she says she's "just a Mom"!

Police and Politicians who tell her to stop helping these street kids, "or we'll never get rid of them" persecute Mom Agape. But she persists; I guess there really is no law against being a mom.

I am a Nurse and a Pastor. These are both aspects of my vehicles of service to young and disadvantaged people. I do whatever I hear the Father tell me to do, which usually involves nurturing and mothering an unloved generation. A ministering mom is not something you do; it is something you are. No matter where you go, or in what capacity, the 'Mom' part just sneaks out and takes over.

For the past 12 years I have been a nurse to prisoners in federal correction facilities in Canada. Many are young; most have never known real love and all are in need of some kind of "medicine". Sometimes a kind word, a smile and a respectful attitude are the beginning of healing for these people. It is not my skills as a nurse that give the most healing, it is the love I carry in my heart for them -- love created by the Father himself.

If your city has a "Mom", bless her and see if she needs a hand. She reaches more people with God's true gospel than all the street preachers combined. Pray for her or them... some cities are blessed with many "Moms". Give her words of encouragement to help numb the pain of the rejection these servants often face. They must be extremely powerful in their spiritual duty, or the enemy would not try so hard to silence, cripple or discourage the street Moms of this world. God Bless them all.

Feeding the Poor

Bruce Wright - Refuge – St. Petersburg FL

- Why minister to the poor?
 - It can affect anyone
 - It lends credibility to our message
 - Jesus Example
 - Scriptural Reasons : Isaiah 58, Proverbs, James 2, Matthew 25, Luke 6, Amos, Mosaic Law
- Economics
 - Diminishes Crime
 - Lifts up esteem
 - Poverty violates human rights
- Just thing to do
- Who are the poor?
 - Young and old
 - Men and women, mostly women
 - Street youth
 - Mentally ill
- Unemployed
- Downsized
- African American
- White American
- Other nationality
- Drug dependent
- Multiple issues
- Most Americans-One paycheck away from the street
- Where are the poor?
 - Rural
 - Inner-city/Urban
 - Big Cities
 - Appalachians
 - The South
 - Reservations
- How do we minister to the Poor?

- The Poor must participate and lead
 - FTH , BTH; PEHRC; Homeless Coalitions; The Ripple Effect; Welfare
 - With compassion and not judgement
 - Food distribution
 - Clothing distribution
 - Housing
 - Halfway houses
 - Communes (Catholic worker, Bruderhofs, JPUSA and Sojourners)
 - Treatment
 - Squatting (taking over abandoned houses)
 - Permanent housing
 - Grants from foundation
 - Creating sources of income:
 - Community garden
 - Collectives
 - Businesses
 - Advocacy:
 - Welfare Reform
 - Discrimination
 - Prison Industrial Complex
 - Jobs with living wages
 - Unions
 - Distribution of wealth – Philosophy
 - Using the Arts
 - Art of the poor
 - Benefit shows for the poor

Resource Organizations:

KWRD
PEHRC
League of??
CRYS
Refuge
Labor Party
Critical Resistance

Books:

“Rich Christians” by Sider
“Soul of Politics” by Wallis
“The Presence of the Kingdom” by ??
“Communism in the Bible” by Miranda
“Stupid White Men” by Moore
“P Theology of Liberation” by Gutierrez
“People’s History” by Zinn
“Organic Faith” by Sider
“The Future is Up to Us” by Perry

Periodicals:

Catholic Worker
People’s Tribune
Sojourners
Crysis
The Nation
Cornerstone Magazine
Prism

Websites:

Catholicworker.org

Dealing With the Spiritual Darkness in the Sub-cultures

Trevor Macpherson - Worldshakers Christian Growth Center – Vancouver BC

Editors Note: Since our common focus is a people group, we in the Underground Railroad come from a number of different doctrinal positions. We chose to agree on the essentials and in all else show love. Deliverance is one of these areas where there is much difference of opinion. By placing this appendix in the book does not mean that it is the position held by the UR, it is solely to give help to those who do hold that deliverance is valid.

The Ministries that we have Today

One of the crucial areas that we have discovered in ministering to the sub-culture is learning

how to we set them free, from the major strongholds and bondages that continue to pull them down and trip them up.

Even in the experience of most average Christians, we discovered, that while in many areas of their walk they are doing pretty good, there are usually one or two areas, where year after year they have an ongoing struggle and can't seem to get victory, in no matter what they try.

Often, the reason is that these areas are not just a single problem, but can actually be a very complex intertwining of strongholds, grounds, mental disorders, inner healing issues, physical problems and the flesh.

In dealing with these complexities, however, the normal approach has been to work on just one area at a time. The drawback with this is, if you try to deal with just one of these areas, only that aspect gets dealt with and leaves the rest of the problem behind. That which is left behind then works together to grow back the part which was just dealt with (much like cutting off the top of a weed, but because the roots are left behind, the weed grows back). So, although there may be a change, rarely do people find that it is very long lasting?

The church today has deliverance ministries, inner healing, discipleship, healing teams, counseling, etc., to deal with each of these areas. It is becoming fairly apparent that as good as each of these are individually, the only solution and victory for many is going to come when all these areas are dealt with together.

An Integrated Healing Approach

The premise of the approach that we are using is to let God totally lead the process from beginning to end. To let Him slowly, surely and effectively unravel this very complex intertwining of the enemy's work in our lives.

There are many who minister to people and have enough discernment or wisdom to see some of the spirits that need to be dealt with; some of the inner healing issues; even in some cases the multiple personalities and physical healing needs. What they don't know is when and in what order this all needs to happen; only God knows that.

We might try to do a deliverance before that area is dealt with in their life; or a healing before the spirit that is causing it, is cast out; or do counseling before the inner hurt causing the problem has been healed, and on and on. Only God knows all of this and it only makes sense to let Him lead us in the process of healing.

1) The Garden

A picture that illustrates some of the connections between the above disciplines are the aspects

involved in planting a garden. Remember that Jesus told us our heart is like soil and the seed is the word (Lk. 8:11-15).

- a) The first thing you do is get rid of the weeds (confession and deliverance)
- b) Then you break up the ground & remove the rocks (inner healing)
- c) Next, you input fertilizer to provide missing or needed elements (counseling)
- d) Finally we come to the planting of the good seed (discipleship)
- e) For growth - it is the watering of the seeds and plants (spirit led walk)
- f) And sunshine for energy (worship and intimacy with God)

If a gardener did only one of these things and not the others, what would the results be? In fact, could he leave any of these out and still have an abundant fruitful garden? The answer is no, and it is also apparent that there is a timing and order for each of them.

Let me pose some questions that might help in seeing the connections:

- 1) What would happen if you only did 4, 5 and 6 (which is what most Christians do)
- 2) What would you do if a weed's root were too deep to pull out by hand?
- 3) What would happen if you did these out of the order that they are in?
- 4) Why does the process start with weeding?

Most Christians have worked on #4, 5, 6 (planting, water and sun) but because the first three have been neglected, there is very little fruit and what fruit there is, is small and scrawny. After a while the abundant life just doesn't seem possible and they begin to accept a pale imitation of the Christian life.

In this process, we focus on the first 3 aspects and deal with them in unison. We start first with deliverance and then work on inner healing and counseling at appropriate places in the process. The basic goal is to get rid of anything and everything that hinders the growth of His word in a person's life.

The 4 Ingredients in the Healing Process

Deliverance

a) A Fuller Understanding of Deliverance

As with the garden illustration, we start with deliverance (weeding). We have discovered that this deliverance method is far more effective than any other one we have ever used or even seen. Not only does it make sure that we get the unclean strongman,

but also all the works, workers and familiar spirits that serve it. We also discover if there are any more spirits left; if so, how many and when the Lord wants to do the deliverance.

An illustration, which indicates the difference between this process and the manner in which deliverance is normally done, comes from W.W.II.

Hitler's power was not in himself, he was just a short man that most of us could take on one to one, but with his strongholds, e.g. Luftwaffe, Gestapo, Panzer Tanks, Axis, the Storm Troopers, Romul, the SS, etc. he was a very powerful man.

b) The Old Process)

What would happen if an underground group killed one or a few of his generals in one of these strongholds? Would that have stopped Hitler's plan? No, all that would have happened is someone lower down would be promoted up and they would have just carried on. This is a picture of deliverance as it is normally done. It deals with one or a few spirits, which gives a bit of freedom, but, then one of the lower spirits just takes over the grounds or strongholds that are still left behind and carries on with the enemy's work.

c) The New Process

Alternatively though, what would happen, if the underground group could wipe out the whole Gestapo, all of its workers, all the files and every informant all at once? It wouldn't completely cripple Hitler, but it would definitely slow him down and he would have to start from scratch if he ever wanted to build it back up again.

This, then, is a picture of the process that we are using. We get the strongman, including all of his workers, the works, the familiar spirits, all of the grounds, and sever all lines of power. Then we bind up everything together and cast the whole thing out. The result is that, although the enemy's work is not completely dealt with, one significant aspect of the whole work has been completely dealt with and cast out and is no longer able to be used by the spirits that are left. If they want to use this area, they are going to have to start from scratch all over again.

d) Questions and Answers

Q) Can a Christian be demon possessed?

A) No!

Q) *Can a Christian be demonized and need to have demons cast out of him?*

A) Yes! In the bible, the Greek word that the King James translated, "demon possessed" is actually the word demonized. So while we can't say a person who has the Holy Spirit in them, is demon possessed, they can be demonized.

Q) *But how can that be, if they are a Christian and the Holy Spirit is in them, then how can a demon be there too?*

A) Demons are creatures of darkness and any area in our life that has not been practically surrendered and filled with light is therefore still in darkness

and open for the enemy. The whole purpose of deliverance is to expose these areas of darkness and brokenness to the light of Christ and these unclean spirits must flee.

Q) *Are there any examples of Christians in the New Testament having demons and getting deliverance?*

A) Yes. - Peter was demonized at a low level when Jesus turned to him and said, "Get behind Me Satan." There was an open door and an area of stronghold in Peter's life that allowed Satan to come through and attack Jesus. It was this same area at work, when he denied He knew Jesus. Because he had grounds in Peter's life, Satan was able to ask to sift him like wheat. It finally took the weeping repentance & brokenness to bring deliverance and freedom from this stronghold.

Simon the magician, in Acts 8:13 it says, "that he believed and was baptized" but then down in Acts 8:23 after he has tried to buy the authority to baptize in the Spirit Peter says, "I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity."

- Finally, the people who came to Jesus and had demons cast out. Because it was during the transition period we don't know if we can technically call them Christians or not, but we do know that they came because they believed in Christ, so they were believers. Also Jesus warned against casting demons out of non believers because since they couldn't be filled with the Holy Spirit, the unclean spirit would come back with 7 more and they would be worse off.

Q) *Are we allowed to and should we talk to demons?*

A) Yes, Jesus who is our model questioned the strongman legion in the demoniac of Garazene, as part of his deliverance. Luke 8:26-31, Mark 5:1-13

Q) *But if demons are liars, then how can we go by what they say?*

A) When they are commanded by Jesus they are forced to tell the truth, remember in the deliverance of Legion, Jesus did go by the information he received.

Q) *But wouldn't it be better if we talked only to the Holy Spirit*

A) This seems to make sense, but why then did Jesus (who had far better access to the Spirit than we do) talk to legion, as well as the Holy Spirit. From the passage we see that Jesus had already commanded the spirit to leave and yet the spirit was still there, He then entered into a short questioning of the spirit, which then made it possible to get the spirit out. I assume if that hadn't been enough He would have asked more questions until he got the spirit out. There seems to be something about making the spirit disclose

its own practices that weakens its power, which make the deliverances more effective and complete. We have discovered by our experience with doing many deliverances that those we have done without forcing the spirit to "spill the beans" just aren't as effective as the full process. But again, to me the main question is, "why did Jesus do it"?

Q) In terms of doing the deliverance itself, in the area of balance: how important is it that we go "by the book" vs. making decisions as we go along.

A) I'll try to answer this by some of the issues that come up

- 1) I still go by the book and have for the past 6 years; you never stop going by the book
- 2) I will ask the spirit to elaborate on what it is saying if I feel it will help the person to hear more details
- 3) If I feel like enough has been exposed then I will ask, "Does Jesus say we can do the rest of this "short form"? If Jesus says yes, we do the rest very quickly if He says no then we don't.
- 2) One our biggest problems in the past is people who have discernment keep wanting to add their 2 cents worth as part of the deliverance instead of using their discernment in a passive way. The best deliverance is if the person doing the deliverance only asks the questions and doesn't add anything.
- 3) There are 2 reasons for this, if you let the person getting deliverance, get it; it's much more personal and healing and it keeps it vertical between them and God and the demon. As soon as you add something into it then there is a chance to get things going horizontal and usually gives the demon an opening. One time a person heard something from the spirit and was finally seeing something he had never been able to see and I blew it by saying something like "finally", well he immediately became defensive and started arguing with me that it wasn't true, even though he had just got and it made the rest of the

deliverance very difficult, we almost didn't get it done. So the person doing deliverance has to stay out of it as much as possible.

5) Basically we shouldn't be making ANY decisions; we might have an idea, but we ALWAYS !!!!!!! ask either the Holy Spirit or the demon "What does Jesus tell you". Remember we aren't the dentist; we only do what He says

Q) There was an access door that the person was unwilling to name publicly. How critical is this? Where is the balance between respecting a person's privacy and confession of sins that ye may be healed?

A) What I do is give the person a piece of paper and they can write it out for me and nobody else needs to see it

Q) Near the end of the deliverance we deal with principalities. Aren't they a "ruling demon."? Therefore, we are kind of nervous about going after them. Shouldn't principalities be addressed with apostolic anointing only?

A) We aren't actually taking on the principality. We simply ask what does Jesus tell you about your principality. If there has been enough intercession by the believers in that area, occasionally they say they have to leave it. So we say then do what Jesus tells you to do. So the focus is not on us doing anything except, saying, "listen to what Jesus tells you to do".

Q) Often there is a tremendous change in a person after deliverance, but there are some that seem to get worse, why?

A) The process of deliverance is like lancing a boil. If it can be drained quickly, the healing is seen much more quickly, but if it drains out slowly, especially if the enemy has used depression in the person's life, it will just look like more of the same and they may begin to give up hope that they will ever get healed. The healing has begun; it just doesn't look like it yet.

Inner Healing

If we were to just do a straight deliverance it would only take about 15 minutes but in doing this process, we usually take about 2 hours. It is the inner healing and counseling that takes the extra time. There are probably 3 main things that come out in the inner healing area

a) Discovering hidden memories

There are things that have had a major effect in their life but, because the memories were unknown, the area has remained unhealed. As these get

discovered whole areas now come into the light and can be dealt with and healed. For example, if you were abused by a parent, but couldn't remember it, you wouldn't know of the need to forgive them before healing could flow into those areas.

b) Discovering the enemy's works

As the person hears the demon describe in detail that something they have heard all their life and has plagued them, (e.g. I'm insane, or I'm stupid and no good, I'm ugly, worthless etc.) has actually been

coming from this spirit and has no basis in reality, that all of it has been a lie, there is a release that allows healing to begin to happen in that area.

Uncovering roots of Bitterness

Many people have large areas of undealt bitterness in their lives that they have pushed out of their conscious mind, but it often just sits there under the surface. In many cases this pool of bitterness becomes the source of erupting anger and hatred. These areas need to be uncovered by the Holy Spirit and the person needs to both forgive the people and repent of their wrong reaction to what took place.

Healing and Integration of MPD

We come at the whole area, MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder) through the area of deliverance. When we are doing deliverance, the demon that is bound up and commanded by Christ to answer the truth, has to, unless they have grounds. The more grounds they have in a person's life, the more they are able to resist. What are grounds?

Grounds are an area of unrepented sin in the person's life (some of the more common ones are bitterness, condemnation, deception, unbelief and sin that is hidden). When the person repents of this area, the spirit is again forced to answer the truth.

There are times, however, when you can't get anywhere and in some cases you can't even get a clear answer from the Holy Spirit. When this happens it could be an indication that you are dealing with a person who has MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder). The problem is, the particular demon you are dealing with is attached to an unsaved personality, and therefore, it has mega grounds and is able to resist a lot.

What is MPD?

MPD develops in a person who, when they were a child, experienced some deep trauma or abuse and as a protection from it and similar experiences, they split off a fragment of themselves to handle that area (e.g. a girl is being sexually abused every night by her father, but needs to go to school the next day, as though nothing has happened).

A MPD handles this situation by splitting off a personality to handle the abuse that takes place at night; then the core person is able to go to school and, because of the amnesia effect, they often won't know anything that took place the night before. With each different abuse or trauma the person can split off another personality. A person can have anywhere from 2 to hundreds, but usually there are from 5 to 15 major personalities. There are also unsaved personalities, as mind-boggling as it may seem.

How can a Christian have an unsaved personality?

In most Christians who are MPD, the core personality and a few others are Christian, but some of the others are not. From an overall perspective, if the core has accepted Christ, the whole person is saved and will go to heaven.

From the practical aspect, however, these personalities were not conscious during the salvation experience and therefore still function as a non-Christian. They will often know about Jesus, having heard about Him from the other personalities, but they have not yet personally accepted Him.

Here's an illustration that might help you to understand MPD -

Consider if you had an accident and somehow one of your fingernails split into 3 parts. Together, the three fragments are still covering the same area, but now there are actually three separate nails. Each nail is important, because all of them are needed to protect the whole area, but the job has now been split up and each of them is protecting a slightly different area than the other two.

One of the main problems, however, is that often many of the personalities are not aware of what is taking place. Using the above illustration, each fingernail fragment is now only aware of what is happening in their area and no longer the whole nail.

So then, the personality who comes out to handle the times when they are being abused, only comes out during those times and with that kind of life experience they have a very narrow outlook on life. They don't have any nice or normal memories. In fact, all they can remember is being hurt. Realizing this perspective will go a long way in helping you to understand why one personality seems to have only anger, the next one, depression, the next one hates all men and the next one is suicidal, etc.

Integration of Personalities

The process of healing for MPD is called integration. This is where the different fragments come and join back into the core personality. Before this can happen, each fragment must first find Christ, if they aren't saved. Once they are saved, they need to be healed of the traumas and hurts they each carry.

How do you pray for a multiple?

The best way to pray for a multiple, before full integration, is for the person to be able to stay in the core personality more and more of the time. Usually a person "flips" out of the core because they can't cope and they flip into a personality that can handle that area. The eventual goal, though, is for the core personality to be able to handle everything, so begin to pray for this from the very beginning.

Why can't the core personality cope with certain situations?

The strength of the person has been split between the different personalities and so there is no one personality that can cope with everything, even the core personality. That is, until integration gradually brings the fragments back into the core one by one and the core becomes stronger and stronger.

General Indications that Someone has MPD (For a more complete test - Appendix #1)

We have found that there are three main things that give us an indication that a person might be a multiple:

1) You notice quick and fairly significant mood changes. Going from feeling that "life is great" to being "extremely depressed" to "rage" and back to "calm" all in the same day

2) When the person does change into a different mood, they seem to hit the ground running, e.g. they don't gradually get depressed, they start in full depression

3) People will tell them about things they have done or said, but they can't remember them. Also, there are often significant parts of their past that they can't remember, especially during their childhood

Questions and Answers

Q) Why does it seem like a person who is getting integration goes through times of chaos?

A) Unfortunately this is quite common. A person, who is a well functioning MPD, the whole thing is moving in a flowing pattern. It needs to be healed, but when the healing starts it is kind of like throwing a wrench into the gears and turmoil ensues, but it really is just part of the process.

It definitely can be frustrating at times dealing with those with MPD, but it is far more prevalent then many realize. They did a study at a major university and found that 11% of the students were clearly MPD (we are not talking extreme examples like Sybil, just normal disassociation to cope with abuse in their life.

If they could say 11% were clearly MPD, then my experience would say that there are at least another 11% who are or are borderline. Now in working with street people or alternative kids that number jumps too at least 50% or more. So it is absolutely vital that the church learns how to help people with MPD.

Q) We recognize that MPD is a reality, and that it is likely to be far more common among street kids than among middle-class religious folk.

A) This is true but there is way more among middle class religious folk than you expect. If your group is normal 1 out of 4 of the people you know are MPD

Q) We recognize that people bury things and develop coping mechanisms that can become alternate

personalities (MPD). Couldn't some people have buried some things (that could lead to MPD), but are not MPD? By way of illustration: if a person drinks a bottle of beer a day, that does not make them an alcoholic, though it could lead to alcoholism later if it becomes more prevalent.

A) No, MPD isn't a growing process. It comes from abuse that is serious enough to cause a shattering of the personality into pieces. Once it has happened, the person can create new personalities later on. But, they became a multiple at that first fracture and it always happens as a child. I have never heard of a person becoming a MPD as an adult.

So basically they already are or they are not, but there is no growing into it.

Q) We aren't therapists should we even be dealing with MPD's

A) We only bring up MPD when we can't get deliverance done any other way. At that point we have to deal with the personality or we can't move ahead. So we aren't doing therapy with them, we are only dealing with it as it relates to hindering the deliverance aspect.

Also, I don't usually try to convince the person that they are MPD. I just tell them to ask the Lord to show them if they are. So far 95% of the time God has showed them. Sometimes it is right away but usually it is gradual, because one of the symptoms of MPD is denial, so it is really hard for them to accept it. In fact if a person accepts it right away, then I wonder if the really are MPD. I have integrated sometimes up 3 or 4 personalities before the person actually accepts they are MPD.

Q) Since the term "MPD" seems to carry a stigma with it, couldn't we instead address it with some other terms, with those likely to be sensitive to the label, maybe we could deal with the issue, without using the tag.

A) Since denial is such a problem, the more you can take out the stigma out of MPD the more you will help them. Also it is very common. In the past 6 years everywhere we have gone we have found lots of MPD's and they aren't all street kids, in fact they have only been a small % of those that we have done. Most MPD's are very successful, - Drs. nurses, businessmen etc. And usually no one, not even themselves know that they are MPD. Also the more open your group is about it, the easier you are going to make it for the outcasts coming in to get healing. It's not just the poor needy

Also it is very important to make this delineation, MPD is not a mental illness or a disease, it is a disorder. This means people carry on normal lives and basically unless you know what to look for no one will know.

So my suggestion is to take the stigma out of it right away, and treat it like it is, a much more common disorder than any of you realize and that it is very healable. There was one woman who was a pillar in her church but when we did deliverance it came out that she was a multiple, but because of the stigma around MPD's, she just could not accept that she was one of "those kind of people" and so close off and stopped getting deliverances.

I think if that church had worked to help people see that MPD's are not "those kind of people" she maybe could have kept getting help.

BTW we have usually found that there is a higher percentage on church or ministry boards.

(Remember they are usually very successful)

Q) During the healing process what about those times where everything seems so dark and hard.

A) This has happened to others, so I can say with confidence that it will only be for a season. It will change and you are going to have freedom that you never had before. Part of what is happening is the enemy is trying to intimidate you from carrying on in the process.

Unfortunately, a number of times he has succeeded and the people have totally backed away. So as hard as it might get at some points, don't give up the fight.

Counseling

The counseling aspect takes place most often during and at the end of the process, but can also happen before the process if you are not able to get started. We use mainly two forms of counseling.

As the Holy Spirit begins to prompt you that wisdom He has imparted to you in a certain area, is something this person needs to hear, you then take time at that point and share with them. The goal here is not to share all the wisdom you have, but only those aspects the Holy Spirit indicates.

Holy Spirit Led Wisdom

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