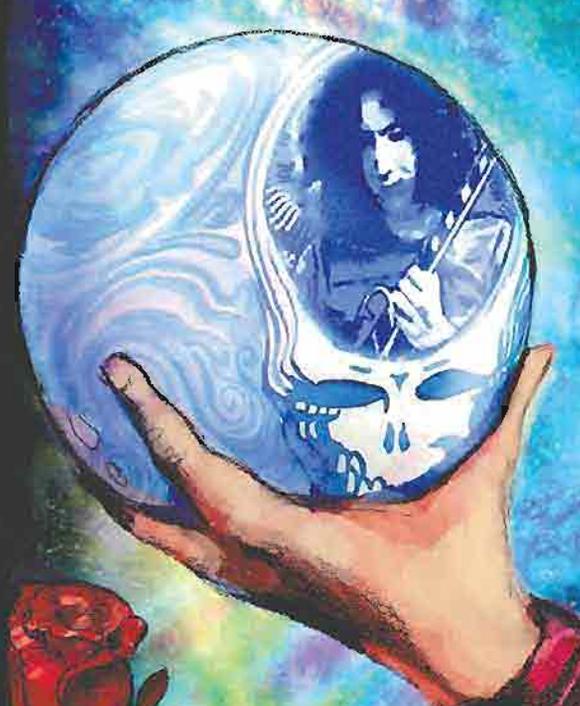


FREE

GRATEFUL

is Jerry now
Gratefully Dead?





Sir Thomas More had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote about Utopia. He was kidding when he described his “perfect” island where everything was ideal. The very name, utopia, means “no place” — the nonexistent land of man’s dreams. But no one told us that utopia wasn’t real. Even if they had, we wouldn’t have believed them because deep inside, we all wanted that idealistic life to be real. Somewhere along the line we decided that utopia must be possible. So with all ardor and enthusiasm, we made our plans, dreamed our dreams, and set out to find a place for our own free society. We could not find an island like in More’s 16th century dream, but we settled for something a little bit less – Haight-Ashbury!

What magic these two words had in our minds! A society of free young spirits founded on love, peace, and freedom, where equality and fraternity could just be! From far and near we grabbed our backpacks and left home. We dropped out of school and hit the road.

By air, foot, bikes, or hitching, our 20th century exodus had begun. Our Moses was Timothy Leary. Our Promised Land was San Francisco across the Golden Gate.

When we arrived, we were accepted. No one asked any questions. No one made any demands. No one was watching. No one had to prove anything. We were just ourselves and everyone was happy. We were really living our dreams. We could come and go as we pleased. We could wear what we pleased. There were no deadlines, no grades, no projects, no points to score.

We did not care about money, no one was trying to impress, material things didn't matter — only people mattered. Easy alliances were formed. Love was free. No demands. No commitment. Old taboos were ignored, barriers knocked down and spirits were high. No one was killing anybody, and people were beautiful.

It happened in Monterey, June 1967. The first Rock festival was born, giving birth to Woodstock, Isle of Wight, Altamont, Atlanta, and an endless procession ever since!

All day and night the music rocked & rolled on and on. We listened with remarkable fortitude for days. At the festivals we could sense what seemed to be the endless love we had always hoped for. In fact, a revolution of love was beginning. We could feel it everywhere. The world would never be the same. We were determined to make this hope, this life, this togetherness last forever.

Joan Baez called it *togetherness*, and she was right. Men and women throughout all generations have been looking for that bond of love that would make them one. The desire for an end to estrangement and hostility runs deep in the human soul. The toughest nut will crack under the right pressure and the hardest heart will yield to love, understanding, and a little kindness. The most estranged and antagonistic person will respond to interest and concern, once his suspicions have been

allayed. This togetherness is what we wanted and what we thought we had found.

This was the life of the flower children, the beautiful people. If we needed anything, we would just ask someone. If they had it, they would share it. If they didn't, no one thought any less of them. We panhandled to meet pressing needs and sold our art to the curious. But, it was the curious from plastic mainstream America that began to undermine our utopia. Tourists arrived by the thousands. They looked at us "hippies" the way kids look at giant pandas in the zoo.

"Look, a real live hippie."

"He's got nice eyes."

"He stinks. Let's buy some beads."

These sensation-seeking, middle-class American tourists with their pudgy stomachs swamped the serenity and devoured the distinctiveness of our youthful dream on Haight Street. As time went on, we flower children became more and more the center of attention and a phenomenon the media quickly exploited. Things started getting crazy as more and more people came to San Francisco and the good vibes produced by Orange Sunshine began to give way to paranoia and an increased fear of "The Man." *Buffalo Springfield* captured this sense with these words from their famous song, *For What It's Worth*:

*Paranoia strikes deep.
Into your life it will creep.
It starts when you're always afraid.
Step out of line the man comes
and takes you away.
You better stop now.
What's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down!*

Old-fashioned greed began to show its ugly head among us, and we began to insist on our rights and our own individualities. It didn't take long for many of us to see what was coming. Heroin and speed dealers moved into the Haight, the riot squad invaded our district, beating anyone they could find, and the utopian state sank in a pool of blood when the killing started. The peace we thought was ours began slipping away as an elusive dream. Like everywhere else and everyone else, we, the "love people" and "peace people," were seeing in ourselves the same rotten seed we thought we'd left back home.

But where could we go and what could we do now? Go back home? No! We had made a few mistakes, but the dream was still attainable. It became clear that the peace we wanted couldn't be found in the city. So we headed for the hills. Alternative people USA! We would

We wanted a new life — not a drug experience. We wanted to give up our old boring life and find something better.

do it! There is hope! We will make it! There is true love and true peace! A guru will show us the way! Which one should we follow? Who offers the best vibrations? Everybody seemed to have their own answer, their own separate trip.

As we went down endless roads wherever our own trips led us, there was an increasing sadness growing in our hearts, a sadness brought about because most of our dreams and visions proved to be unattainable. The highs went away and our experiments with community failed.

Then, we began to ask the question, “What is the use of anything at all?” The reality of people living in peace and unity as God intended is what we were looking for. But we needed to know how to find it. Our generation is going mad because we can’t find it after so many years of looking for it.

We hated authority because the authority we observed growing up was filled with hypocrisy, prejudice, and glory seeking. We had our fill of the kind of authority that says, “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say.” What was needed was good authority to make it happen! We needed leaders who could lead us by their example and who wouldn’t compromise.

We wanted to conquer the world with love and bring the healing balm of peace to this earth, but there was no foundation, no blueprint to bring our vision into a lasting demonstration. Our love failed.

Some people turned to Jesus in search of this foundation of love. The Jesus of the Jesus People seemed hip enough, but didn’t have the power to bring about the life either. We turned on the TV and heard Christian preachers talking about how we should live – something we knew that they knew nothing about. A life of love and unity is what they promised, but we knew we were not going to get it because those making

the promises weren’t doing it either. Someone said, “A student will be like his teacher when he is fully trained.” So all we could see was another form of Christianity.

So what’s the use getting our hopes up in one more empty sermon? Who wants to claim to see like the blind teachers leading us? “If the blind lead the blind, they will both end up in the ditch.” Can their Jesus save others when he can’t save them? And if they are just saved from hell but not saved from this wicked society, who wants that salvation anyway? We aren’t blind! A plastic Jesus who makes his plastic converts comfortable in a plastic society headed for destruction is what we detested and despised.

The utter failure of this “salvation” was the very cause of our rebellion.

Their failure to produce the “utopia” they spoke of is what drove us to Haight-Ashbury in the first place!

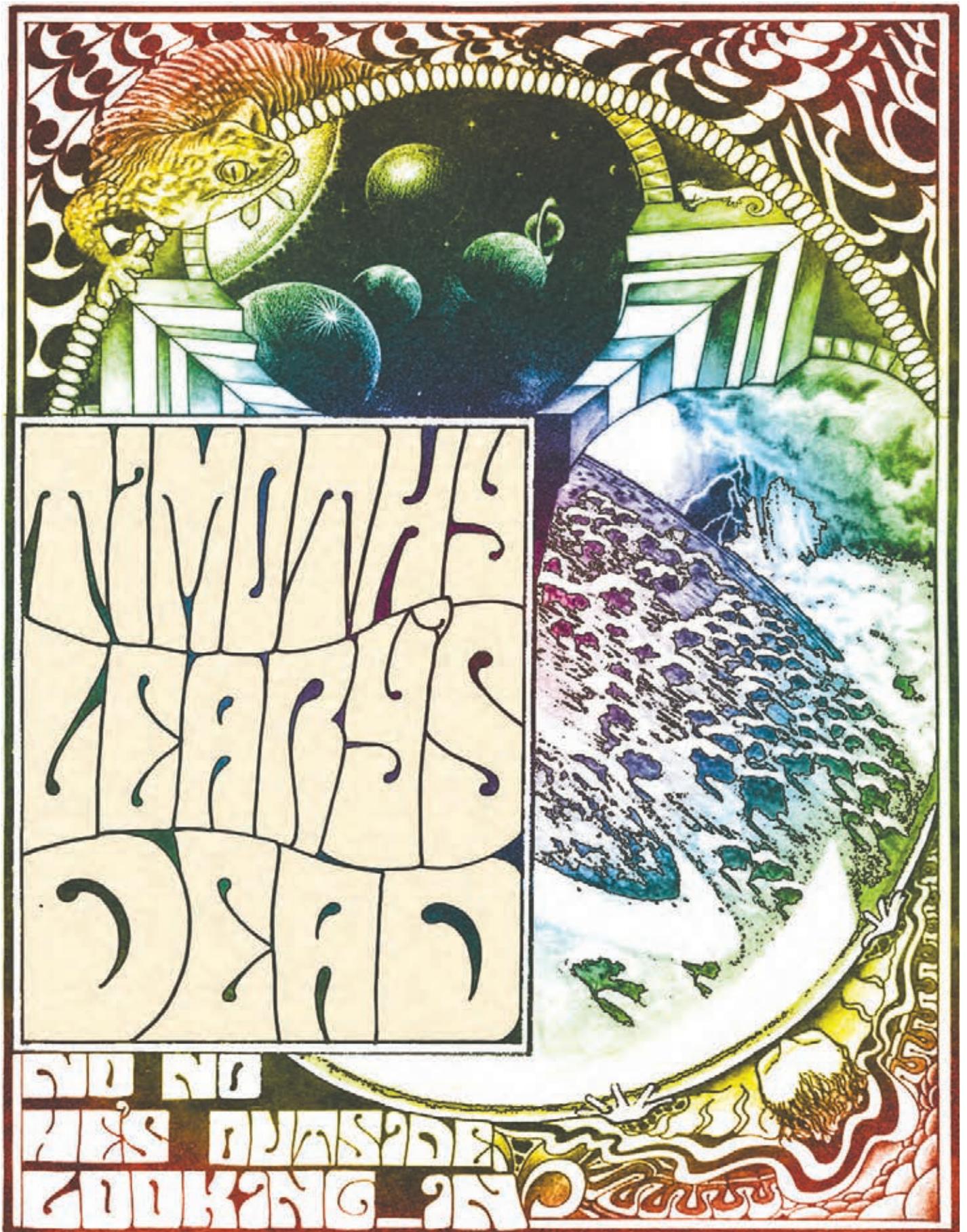
So now where are we to look and in what place can we find a hope that does not disappoint us?

Where is the real love of God that can fill our hearts? Preachers or teachers who promise us that we can know the Source of love and the Author of peace and the meaning of Truth, but are divided among themselves, cannot communicate love, peace, and unity

to anyone’s conscience. Mere mental concepts are all they can offer since they have a life filled with the same old selfishness and greed that we took to Haight-Ashbury.

So where do we go from here? I’m so tired of chasing after rainbows only to find a false light at the end of my journey. How can I ever find my elusive dream?





Doctor Timothy Leary began to preach the gospel of LSD and left Harvard in search of disciples. As high priest of the drug scene, he taught us that the risk of rational disorder is worth taking in view of the possibility of rational expansion. In other words, the risk of a horrifying head trip was worth taking in view of the possibility of a euphoric experience.

We were taught that LSD offered new perspectives, new horizons never before dreamed of.

We learned that we could expand our minds, deepen our consciousness and thus lift ourselves out of the mundane existence we saw in society. We began to dream of a state of anarchy in which glorious liberty dwelt, where we could be transported into fabulous, mind-bending realms. We thought drugs could make a note of music take on an infinite variation of tone and make flowers more glorious in a thousand ways. Colors took on new meaning and the total man was deepened and enriched and made transcendent.

It was preached as a means of religious experience and we swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. After all, what credibility did Christianity have as a valid religious experience? So drugs were the answer to a false hope called Christianity. We wanted to be set free to act in a way that would benefit mankind.

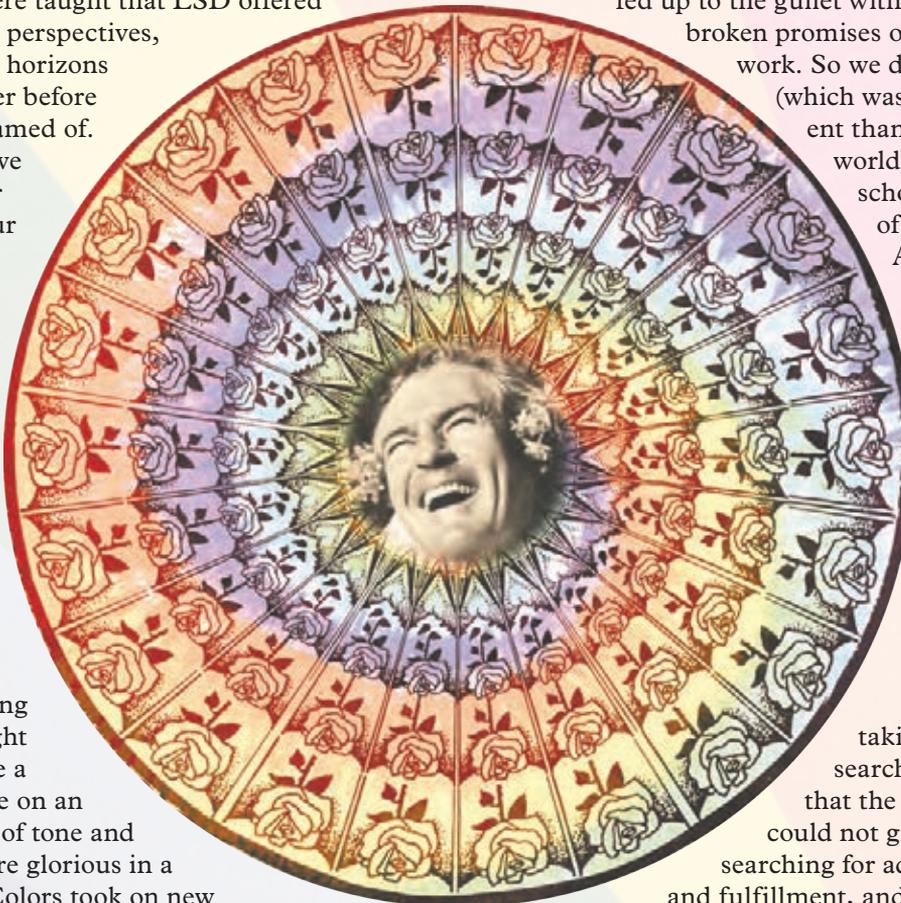
We were prepared, at least some of us, to take the calculated risk. Taking LSD was no longer viewed as an irresponsible action, but rather as a way to find oneself, one's purpose on this earth. It was worth the gamble simply because we saw the possibilities of enlargement and discovery. When Timothy Leary began to preach the drug gospel, we were ready to listen and believe in his hope and his future. He was our high priest and prophet, leading us into realms undreamed of. We were

fed up to the gullet with a false hope, with broken promises of a religion that didn't work. So we dropped out of church (which was absolutely no different than the rest of the insane world), dropped out of school, and dropped out of mainstream society. After all, most of us who were a part of the drug scene shared a common experience of Sunday school (as if we needed another day of school), and one hour of boredom once a week in our upbringing.


By smoking pot and taking LSD, we were searching for something that the Christ of Christianity could not give to anyone. We were searching for adequacy, meaning, and fulfillment, and we were shouting it

out loud and clear with all our heart. Since no one told us the truth, we had to be set free by our own gospel, a gospel we were more inclined to accept. All our life growing up we heard the words, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free," but no one told us the truth. "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed," was the message we heard over and over again. But the freedom we experienced on LSD seemed far greater than anything the bamboozlers on TV or in church pulpits were offering. None of them showed us the life of being a disciple, of obeying the wonderful commands that would truly set us free.

So when Timothy Leary came along we were ready to leave everything to follow him, since he was going somewhere we wanted to go. He offered a measure of hope and we were enthusiastic about his gospel. We were



ready for it. The time had come. Christianity had run its deadly course and we were ready for life!

Christianity never told us the most vital things that the Son of God had to say — to leave everything and follow him; to leave our possessions behind, our family and friends; that no one could be his disciple unless he gave up all of his own possessions. He also said, “Do not think I came to bring peace on earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword ... He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”



For a materialistic Christianity, this was absurd and blasphemous. We were looking for a real family and love, the love described in the Bible, but we had never seen it lived out or practiced. If someone had told us, for example, about a real family of love, and said that if we obeyed his commands we would not be destroyed like the communes we were once members of, we would have done it. If there had been such an example in the 60s, we would have realized that those who suffer hardship to endure in his word are really his disciples. They are the ones who really know the truth and are set free indeed. It would have saved us a lot of heartache and disillusionment.

We wanted a new life; we wanted to give up our old, boring life. We were looking for the life Messiah offered us, but no one could show us where to find it! Christianity was a circus of confusion, with its many shows going on all at once, where everyone was doing their own thing — whatever was right in his own eyes. Not only did it draw attention to itself, but each preacher, like a performer in a circus, drew attention to himself.

That is why we Christian kids rebelled. (It wasn't really a rebellion, though, for we had nothing substantial to rebel against.) The risk of a bad experience on drugs was worth taking in view of possibly finding what we longed for. But, really, a drug experience wasn't what we wanted! We longed for something deeper, and hoped that by taking drugs we would find it. In other words, our experience in Christianity was so empty that it was unable to satisfy the gnawing void inside us.

We went into the drug scene with open eyes, longing and hoping and yearning for something to fill us up. We were willing to take that calculated gamble with drugs since the glorified truth spoken by the clergy was not in the least being

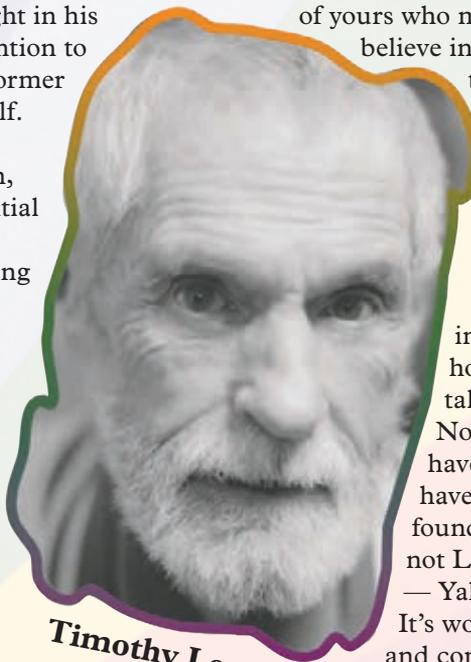
lived out by them, much less by the church who were their students. “And many false prophets will arise and mislead many.” We were some of the many, for you can know a tree by its fruit.

We had a case against our parents who got high on caffeine and uppers and downers prescribed very righteously by their quack physicians. Pot was not proven addictive and they called us addicts while they were addicts on every conceivable legalized drug, including alcohol and tobacco. We gloated in our righteousness as they did in theirs. We were disgusted with the whole hypocritical scene of the establishment, with Christianity being the most disgusting!

We shouted, “Unfair!” but they refused to give up what they demanded us to give up. Instead they condemned the innocent and made us lawbreakers because they would not legalize pot. All the while they were dying with emphysema, cancer, and liver problems (quite legally).

The adult society of cigarettes and alcohol and drug-store drugs became the champions of honesty and integrity, while we were demoralized and exasperated until there was no more hope of recovering and fitting into their way of life. They engaged in a perverted rationalization to arrive at the conclusion that we were the rebels and they were the standard by which rebellion was measured.

They told us that we could only be saved if we became like them, finding adequacy and meaning for our lives and fulfillment when we abandoned our lives to an all-sufficient Christ. But, we all in one voice scoffed at them and asked, “Where is this all-sufficient Christ of yours who makes a difference and makes those who believe in him all one?” We were searching for the Christ the church was supposed to represent. We were looking for the unity promised by Messiah in John 17:21-23. Then we would have believed.



Timothy Leary
(1920-1996)



So where are we today after all this injustice we endured? Are we bitter and hopeless about the past? No. Are we still taking drugs and searching for fulfillment? No, we have found something better. We have put our mishandled past behind us and have begun something new. What we have found has filled the void inside us. No, it's not LSD or even legalized pot. It's the Master — Yahshua the Messiah. His life is filling us. It's worth a chance, even a gamble, to risk all and come and see. We will personally talk with you and you can meet our friends, our brothers and sisters. For we have met the One who does make a difference.



Jerry

In a recent *Rolling Stone* interview “We Were Brothers” (March 11, 2015) Robert Hunter spoke candidly about some of the rougher waters that the Grateful Dead went through. Few in the Grateful Dead world were as affected by Jerry’s addiction issues as Robert was.

When I discovered the Grateful Dead in 1979, like many, my outlook on life radically changed. The scene at the time carried a scent of peacefulness and togetherness. We felt a lure of the late-hippie movement that centered around the band, with a focal point on Jerry.

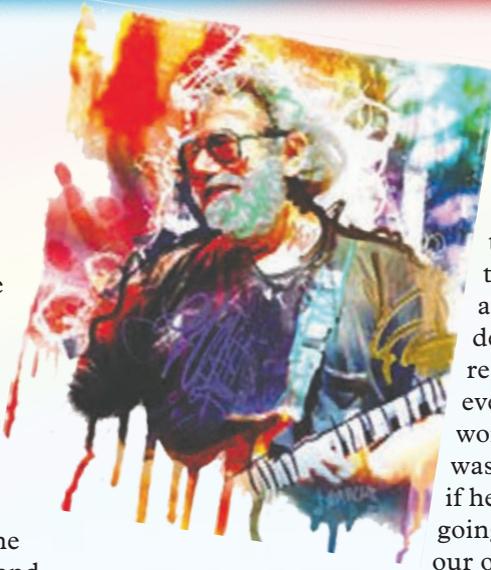
The insightful interview with Robert showed me the real man behind the bigger-than-real name, Jerry Garcia, along with the human struggle all of us can relate to.

Interviewer: When Jerry was busted in 1985, was it all catching up with him?

Robert: We all went over once to his house and confronted him, and he opened the door and saw what was going on and said, “Get out of here!” He was trying to shut the door and we all filed in and did the confrontation you could do. And he said he’d do something about it. That’s about all you can do, isn’t it? All I can say is that it more or less ruined everything, having Jerry be a junkie. I remember a time when “junkie” was the nastiest thing Garcia could call anybody. You had such contempt for anybody that would get involved in that.

But what are you going to do when you’re elevated the way he was? He once said, “They’re trying to crucify me, man.” And I said, “Jerry, never mistake yourself for Jesus Christ.” And he really took that advice. He took it hard and well. You’ve got to understand the whole weight of the Grateful Dead scene was on Jerry’s shoulders, to support all the families and everything as well as the audience’s expectations. There were times when [it] just drove him through the wall.

Comment: Jerry was viewed by many of “us kids” as some kind of Herculean, bigger-than-real-life character. But many of us found out about his problem with drugs and started to realize he was going through the same kind of things as we were.



Many on tour seemed to want to look up to him as a sort of role model in some sort of funny way. But he was not finding the spiritual path out of these destructive ways and neither were we. The death of Jerry seemed a real enough possibility, even in the 80s, that it worried us. In a sense he was like a drug to us, and if he died we felt we were going to have to go through our own sort of withdrawals.

Most in the scene didn’t know him personally, so all the personal identification with him was more of a fantasy in a way. His largely silent public image left a lot of room for many of us to create our own “Jerry” who was saying to us more than the real Jerry really was.

Interviewer: Then Jerry had his coma in 1986.

Robert: Jerry was diabetic, and before he had a coma, he was guzzling down fruit juice. It would’ve been better if he was guzzling down brandy. I believe that sugar put Jerry where he was. He was in terrible health — diabetic and taking immense amounts of sugar, and it did what sugar will do to a diabetic and overloaded him into a coma. I remember going in to see him when he was coming out of it, and he was saying, “Am I insane?” And I said, “No, man, you’ve been very, very ill, but you’re fine, you know, you’re coming out of it.” And he said, “I’ve seen the most amazing thing.” He’d been somewhere.

Comment: Many have a sense of an afterlife — a realm beyond the unknown. Life is mysterious in a way. That mystery whispers of a huge amount of details that we just can’t see but are obviously there. Unfortunately, in the atmosphere of the world around each of us, it’s difficult to trust in the simple recommendations of one’s own conscience, or even the premonitions of our intuition. Our conscience is really like a big brother who cares. So it’s just too bad this destructive nature kind of thing gets the best of people and ruins so much potential. The conscience is such an interesting “organism” isn’t it, if you want to call it that? From its gentle nudging all the way to its screaming warnings, it hints to human beings from their childhood, yet without any power of its own to



enforce any of its wisdom. It's like a personal friend who sees exactly what you don't see about yourself, and just always tells you the truth. But then you ignore him so many times that he hardly knows how to talk to you anymore.

Interviewer: You went scuba diving with Jerry in Hawaii during this period. How important was that to him?

Robert: That was his natural habitat. He was at one with that, underwater. You ever scuba dive? There's nothing like it. One of my nicest memories was coming back onto the boat with Jerry while we were diving and there was beautiful Hawaiian sunshine and dozens and dozens of dolphins were following us along. They were with us, not just following us. That whole underwater environment was good for him. Better than smack.

Comment: Nature is so amazing, isn't it? The vast ocean world with its thousands of fascinating creatures were better than drugs to Jerry. It's not just the colors and seeing new things, but the realness and creativity of nature speaks of an unknown something that satisfies the craving of the soul for stimulation. Things like drugs, money, fame, and reckless relationships try to fake it, but it's just like junk-food to the soul and you end up unsatisfied and hurt. Glimpses of the true so easily get overshadowed by the phony and we end up hurting ourselves and others. But still, we human beings crave the eternal that we sense. It's not easy though, it's really a battle to avoid the pitfalls.

Robert: ...He had been into rehab again, and he called me up and he was out and he was going to come over and we were going to get writing again and he said some wonderful stuff that was very uncharacteristic of him. He said, "Your words never stuck in my throat." Jerry didn't tend to talk like that, and there was something possibly, slightly alarming about it because he was dead within a week or so after that.

Interviewer: Alarming in what way?

Robert: Jerry wasn't like that — to hand out appreciation that way. It was always implicit with him. Perhaps there was a finality to it, that that was the last statement, whether or not he knew he was going to die in a week or not...

Comment: There is a sincerity of heart in human beings that desires to express itself throughout one's life. The good is so often quenched by the bad. Sometimes it dies when a person is still alive. Sometimes what's left

of it dies along with a person and their regret. A "why didn't I do all that I could have done" type of thing. When death comes close to a person's life, its profound effect reminds us of the sense of eternity, and the responsibility that goes with it.

Interviewer: Did you know he was going to the rehab facility where he died?

Robert: No, I knew nothing about that. I have no idea about what went down there...

I always saw it coming, but seeing it coming is not the same as seeing it. I didn't get the feeling he intended to live for very long. In fact he had said as much, at one point I can remember. He was conscious that it was not going to last forever, nor did I think he wanted it to. There are things about Jerry I just don't understand. Or maybe am not capable of knowing.

Interviewer: His psychology, in other words?

Robert: Yeah. There was an aspect of him that was rather deeply depressive, which people don't know about. You think Jolly Jerry, and that's fine when he's singing. But that man had an agony almost that he had to fight. I suppose it had something to do with losing his dad so young, and possibly his finger getting chopped off. Who knows, but there was a decided darkness to him. But you know, what great man doesn't have that? His bright side, his ebullient side, far seemed to outweigh [it]...

Comment: When Robert Hunter said of Jerry, "But that man had an agony almost that he had to fight," I thought of the thousands of young followers I encountered in the parking lots who were experiencing the same agony after destroying their lives in the party scene that his music, and drugs promoted.

Is Jerry grateful in death? When a man looks into the "crystal ball" of his past, what does he see? What does Jerry see? What will we see? When we are still alive is the time to consider these things.

We who write this paper live together in communities based on our belief in Yahshua*. Yahshua didn't promote the religions of today, but a life of love and forgiveness. He has the ability to restore our bad conscience and teach us how to be restored in our soul. If you read on you will hear some of our stories and more about the great hope and life we found. Our addresses are at the end. You are invited for a day or to stay, to a place where grateful people are gathered.

* Read about the name Yahshua on page 22.



A PLACE TO BELONG BUT WHERE?

Communes sprang up where everyone shared everything, and returned to the simple life. We tilled the soil and planted crops, scraping at the dirt and scratching out a living. We built simple houses and started families with varying degrees of propriety. The quiet life, the simple life, the life of love and peace was our goal.

Is there such a place where we can find all that our hearts long for – to live together in peace? If this place has been lost, can it ever be found again? If the true Holy Spirit of the One who created us could be communicated to us today, we could experience true life, true community. Yet since no one has “found it” in Christianity, where should we turn? Many have boasted for a while that they “found it” in their little utopias – love and acceptance. They say, “We share everything. I matter to people, not for what I’ve got, but for who I am. I’m wanted, needed, appreciated and never have been so happy.” Then a few days later they die of an overdose or get burned out trying to live together and instead become cynical, bitter, and hopelessly divided.

We fried our brains, wrecked our emotions, and did irreparable damage to our consciences trying to come together because the Christian Church did not provide the life of love and unity we needed. Since Christianity failed, drugs, sex, and rock & roll were the only hope we had.

“If by being Christians, we must live as Christians live, then we will not be Christians at all,” we said.

But if we could have had the Spirit of their Christ with his promises and the life of his first followers that was recorded to have been in the beginning, then we would have accepted him.

All of those first disciples who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that any of his belongings were his own, but all things were common property to them. There was not a needy person among them because all who were owners of land or houses would sell them (unless they were needed by the community for living space or farming) and bring the proceeds from the sales, and give it to the apostles so that they could distribute it to each individual or household, as anyone had need. They were continually devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to fellowship with each other, and daily they ate their meals together always full of joy and celebration. The result was that the disciples' lives affected all those around them to the point that every day new people were believing, giving up their lives to Yahshua,* and being rescued from the abnormal society of their day.

But since Christianity, which boasts of being the church of the living God, has proven that they have not obtained this life, we cannot accept their Jesus with his empty promises. Neither can we be sure he came in the flesh without seeing unity in his followers. How can we even know Acts 2 and 4 is not a myth? We read somewhere one time in the New Testament that Christ's followers would be one, and that the world would believe that the Son did actually come, if this unity really happened.

But since it hasn't, that is the reason we chose Haight-Ashbury over our parents' miserable Christian lives, full of selfishness and greed. They could not get along with anyone, except a few in their own denomination, much less those who were of another brand. And many of our own parents were deacons, Sunday school teachers, and on the board of directors!

So what about the Christ of Christianity? Should we scoff in his face since he couldn't save us like the

preacher said? If we had walked down the aisle at a Billy Graham Crusade, would we have ended up like all the rest, without a hint of the oneness with others that was promised to all who would follow him? If we did give our lives to him, a myth, what then?



So now, all these years later, we're looking for another Movement to come along. We've tried everything and we've gone everywhere. We're still looking for that precious so-called elusive dream called "Brotherhood" – that strange, indefinable something that makes men of all conceivable differences become one in love. What a noble search! What a thrilling objective and a wholesale condemnation of a materialistic, selfish Jesus! And what a slap in the face for all of Christianity today – every pastor, every elder, evangelist and healer, deacon and Sunday school teacher, and whoever else talks about love and doesn't deliver the goods! So don't tell us of your Jesus who died on a cross to save sinners unless you can show us who he has saved lately that actually lives by his teachings! Don't talk of a true brotherhood found in Christ unless you can show us where we can find it. Otherwise it's just a fantastic, unreal myth. So since the



life Christianity promises is just a myth, we must go on until we find our dream come true.

Or maybe there is a way we can go back in time to a place that we once read about in an ancient manuscript, the place where the amazing community life of

Where have all the flowers gone? Have they not gone to the funeral of Christianity today?

Acts 2 and 4 were being practiced. But since that is impossible, what can we do? What if we never find that life we read about? Who will judge us guilty enough for the sea of fire if we don't accept the Christ of Christianity?

Will not the whole of Christianity go there before us? Will we not get to heaven before them?

Yes, utopia means no place, but so does a Jesus and a church today called Christianity. It is no place, but preached as a utopia of sweet fellowship and joy, one with another. It promises much, but delivers nothing. Sir Thomas More's island is much more promising than Christianity's many independent islands.

could find people who could give us what we needed.

We were really looking for hope, not dope, or myths, or fantasies. That's why we headed East into mysticism, I Ching, and Zen. That's why we turned to Tarot cards, and to following the *Beatles*, especially when they took off to India.

There they sat at the feet of their favorite guru, clad in full-length white robes, long-haired and garlanded, as far from Christianity today as possible. Jane Fonda, the darling of the activists, even made her pilgrimage.

Mia Farrow, after her divorce from Franky, headed East too. It was the *in thing*.



That's why Haight-Ashbury was a valid alternative to Christianity in the 60s. But both have been destroyed by greed and selfishness, and divided beyond redemption. Where have all the flowers gone? Have they not gone to the funeral of Christianity today? Are they not right up there on the altar under the podium where the biggest propaganda of false promises ever heard is being proclaimed today? They gave us more talk and more lies than communism or any politician we've ever heard. They lied to us all our lives. They left us without hope. It was a different gospel, another Jesus, a different spirit.

That's why we left and headed for San Francisco, or to the hills, or to Woodstock. That's why we went wherever someone would offer us a little hope, a little kindness, a little love, where we could find clothing and shelter and daily food; where we would not be told, "go your way and be warm and well fed;" where we

But it ended like everything else – in disappointment; and worst of all, compromise. We just weren't stoned enough. Even Stephen couldn't get us stoned enough to stick together down on *The Farm* in Tennessee. Some say it was not important that the dream of the Movement didn't come true. They say that the experience of trying was all that mattered because it taught us what we never knew before. But we all know that's a cop out. If that hope and that dream of human beings from every race, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, living together in true unity, loving one another and constantly striving for justice in their midst is not possible, then everything we say and everything we do is meaningless. In reality, we haven't learned anything of value. All of our tripping, protesting, meditating, and getting back to the land led us nowhere.



JAIL

One time I was so miserable, all I could think about was jumping off the tallest building around. What stopped me was the thought that there could be something worse than dying.

There could be a place like...

(O)ne day, you wake up in jail. It's the darkest, blackest, gloomiest jail you've ever seen in your whole life. You can't imagine how they built cells where no light can creep in. It's so dark you can't even see your feet ... or your hands ... or even the tip of your nose. The pitch-black room cuts off any chance for you to see what kind of shape you're in. You might as well not even have a body, you think, 'cause you can't tell if it's even there.

You try to feel around, but your hands are chained. When you try to move your toes, they're chained, too; so tightly, they can't even wiggle when you try to get them to. It's the same way with your head and neck. They've got it pinioned in some sort of deadlock. Maybe you're strait-jacketed. Or maybe they've drugged you up with a sedative that makes you feel limp like a bowl of mush or a wet rag. They might have given you an injection in the base of your spine, a powerful nerve block, and you're as good as paralyzed until it wears off.

There's really nothing to do except to wait for the effects of that stupid stuff to go away. You fight back an overwhelming surge of panic and settle down to think. You figure the best thing to do is to try and cry out for help. "Help! Let me out of here!" you scream. Your voice travels about as far as your lips and gets drowned in a silence so thick you can hear a pin drop. Must be soundproof cells. You know it's your voice, though. You've known the sound of it ever since you were a little kid. Even if no one else can hear it, you do.

Solitary confinement is pretty solitary, you note. You wonder what you can do to get yourself out of your predicament. You don't like the lonely feeling that's settled down on your guts like a bunch of crows on a newly-seeded field. You want someone to talk to in the worst way, but there is only yourself, and you'd give your eye teeth for a way to shake off that nagging voice that says you're never going to get out.

You start to think about your recent past and in a split second a couple of numbing incidents pop up. The memory of them is as perfectly clear to you as the very

day they happened. You're walking up Church Street, on your way to the music school and Fred the Panhandler hits you up for a quarter. He hits you up whenever he sees you. Never mind other people, he always seems to find you. Maybe that's why your heart burns against him so, 'cause he always puts you on the spot. Or maybe it's 'cause his skin is black and he's on welfare, and the state is giving him more money for doing nothing than you get for working. Whatever reason, you tell him no, and an angry train of curses follow. You just let them fly and all your pent-up rage gets

released on Fred. He's hurt, you can tell. You know he's taken it before, but you've stripped his dignity away and humiliated him in a way no human should. Your pangs of conscience at the time are washed away by a flood of reasons and the whole scene gets filed away until this day, this moment, when you're alone with your thoughts. The pain feels so fresh and keen, you wish you could say something to make it right. But you can't. It simmers in your memory like a little sterno flame.

Then there's the time you ripped off those guys in the car. This incident follows hard on the heels of what happened with Fred. You're hitching to Hammonasset on a beautiful fall day to hike on the beach and wander around the saltwater marshes, the dunes, the old houses, and the scraggly trees. Four guys from the sub base in New London pull over and crowd in to make room for you. They're all stoned and they're getting even more wasted on the biggest hunk of hash you've ever seen in your whole life. It's as least as big as your thumb nail and twice as thick as the end of one of your fingers. You join in, everything's great ... then someone fumbles the piece as he shaves off some for another round. You join them in searching and you're the first to find it on one of the mats. Almost unconsciously it slips from your fingers into the top of one of your boots.

You continue to help them look, you poke around the floor mats, you reach under the front seat, you even check the crack between the cushions. It's not there. And when your exit comes up, you leave them at the ramp, still searching high and low for the missing hash that you know you'll get a beating for if they ever catch on. Why you remember it today and not back then seems a little strange to you. But, you figure, it's just another case when dooper's greed got the better of you.

It struck every time the bowl was empty or the last bit of the roach had gone out. You know the typical scene: a circle of friends, the camaraderie around the pipe, the other guys settling down in comfortable listening positions; *Europe '72* comes on. And there you are, sitting beside them with a

stupid grin on your face. You want more. Of course, you want more. You're never satisfied until you're zonked out of your mind.

The knot tightens in your stomach. "Is that all?" you ask yourself. "Aren't we going to do another?" You sit there for ages, trying to think up a way to hint at doing more without getting totally rejected. Finally you think of it, the perfect way to plant the suggestion. And you're as happy inside as a little child opening Christmas presents under the tree. And yet you know you're always stingier when it comes to doing your own stash; it's always easier when it is someone else's. It makes you a little hot under the collar to think about the way you were, way back then. Yet there's nothing you can do to get rid of that memory.

What you'd do to get high! What you'd do to find dope! It was like a fever that made your eye glisten with a false luster, your cheeks flush with deceitful color, your muscles twitch with unnatural activity, and your nerves throb with restless desire. That fever had such a grip on you, it couldn't be quenched. You felt such a slave to it. Time and time again you tried to shake it off. But somehow you couldn't. You always felt so empty inside and there was never anything to fill that emptiness gnawing away at your guts. Today when you think about it, it nibbles a little bit and worms away. You feel about as vital as a man who can't shake the cold chills and the fever heat of malaria.



There are other things popping up, in quick succession, dogging your steps like a bloodhound after an escaped criminal. Things besides dope that your heart panted after and coveted. There were your best friend's girlfriend, another man's wife, your buddy's best clothes, or someone else's car. There were jealousies and envyings and rivalries. There were rip-offs and shop-liftings and cheatings. You could stay in any one category for hours and never exhaust it. And after that, your mind flips back once again to the old thing about Fred the Panhandler and the guys with the hash. Another endless cycle begins and you play it through again like you would a Bach fugue, with a hundred or a thousand new twists to the old theme.

It's hard to face up to some of the things you did, hard to look into the darkness all around and know that it's penetrating into your innermost parts bit by bit. Or that it had been doing that all along for years.

And yet, you search for times when you still had some innocence left, before it slipped out of your grasp like a handful of sand through your fingers. Your eyes turn back to a time long ago, before you became cynical and unconcerned and indifferent; back before the public school system got a hold of you and regimented you into its citizenry. Lust and covetousness for the best of everything and whatever money can buy were bred into your little heart, year by year. They told you the sky was the limit to all your greedy desires. But once you started

to acquire the possessions you longed for, it only bred new desires within you for more. The worm of discontent gnawed at your peace and all your unsatisfied desires tossed you to and fro like the waves of the restless sea. Your conscience continually cried out for some authority, any authority in your barren life, and inside lodged a pain of a hunger that could not find any satisfaction.

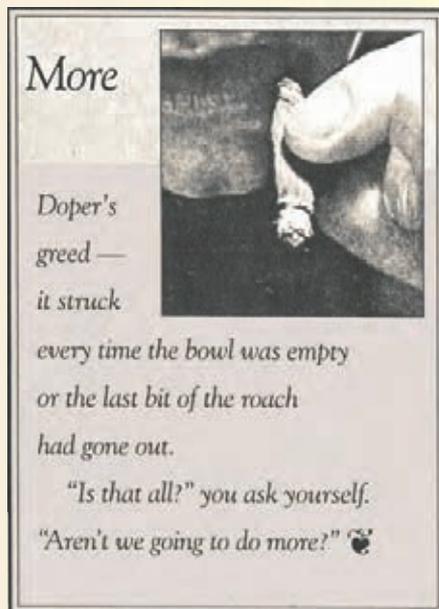
Under the pressure of work and social life and the lure of cheap pleasures, you lost the wonder of your earlier years. You could no longer appreciate a walk in a field or in the woods or by the ocean unless you had someone with you. Your intense joy at the freshness of the dawning day or the glory of the many-colored sunset wasn't savored unless you were

high. You lost your sense of wonder for the majesty of mountains and clouds, the infinity of sky and sea, the perfection of flowers or the sight of a young animal in its earliest moments. Instead, a restless desire for excitement took its place and all your purity was robbed, channeled into a lust for sports, recreation, drugs, and other pleasures. Now you can't produce those feelings again. You are empty.

Also your friendships became more demanding and painful. To know others in a deeper way claimed your wholehearted loyalty and commitment, your watchfulness and care. Much time and effort were required to increase in them. In the end, it cut deeply at the root of your self-centered life. A lot of relationships died from neglect. The tragedy of these embittered you and when you tried again, you tried more cautiously. Next time your defenses were up and your heart stayed guarded.

In the end, your innocence was sacrificed for other goals, other pleasures, and other pursuits. All that remained was the melancholy longing for a paradise lost. A sorrow filled you and you looked at all your wasted opportunities and wondered why you lived the way you lived.

Little do you know that in the next cell over is a vet who's playing back his whole scenario, watching it run



in reverse before his eyes. He's seeing the little zinging pieces of metal fly out of a guy's chest and wing their way back to his rifle. The man he just shot stands up again and he and his buddies take their rifles back to camp, hand them in, and others pack them away, crate by crate. They're all shipped back overseas by boats and planes and taken to big factories where women disassemble them.

Funny, he thinks, it's women who are chosen to do this special, careful work. The pieces are all sent off to huge, roaring furnaces and all the little parts get melted down into one great molten mass. As it cools, railroad trains line up nearby and take the crushed ore off to the most distant parts of the country. Far away from man or beast, in lonely, remote places, men bury the trainloads far beneath the ground where no one will ever find them or use them ever again.

And all around you, for miles and miles in every direction, other men lie tucked away in the folds of darkness. Like you, their thoughts busily race over the nagging past, and their mind's eye examines every detail of the misdeeds that brought their innocence to an end. Each knows his own agony of mind and each hears his own excuses over and over again. Each goes back through his own experience, trying to erase the effects his greed had on others. Go back through yours.



Go back to a time when the North Woods were pristine and alive, before the greed of men chopped them down and destroyed the giant trees year after year. Go back to the mountains before the miners appeared, back to a time when streams were unsluiced and valleys were lush and green. Go even further back before the plains belonged to the government. There you'll see herds of buffalo, cropping slowly windward, great shaggy beasts darkening the plains. Ride through just one herd. It'll take you all day to do it.

Watch oak trees shrink into acorns and wildflower seeds return on the wind to their source. Gold-seekers return East and railroads uproot track mile by mile. Ten thousand settlers all leave the newly-opened Oklahoma territory in one day. Greed runs backward and the ravaged New World springs back to newness. Millions of acres of hardwood and white pine take root again. Chestnuts and walnuts burnt for charcoal, chopped up for firewood, and laid in the mud for road beds, again sway in the wind. Golden plovers again fill the skies and passenger pigeons roost in the woods.

Go back to a land of canebrakes, bluegrass, wild grains, and salt licks. West of the Cumberlands, a thousand animals might be glimpsed there in one lucky moment. Push your way back through the mountains, back to the fertile valleys of the Mohican, Western Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Go back to a time when deer browsed on lush meadowlands in unconcerned droves, when the land was a riot of color and sound... when turkeys gobbled and squirrels barked and waterfowl took flight with thunderous wings at the approach of men ... when the skies were darkened for hours with birds and when grapes hung over the banks of rivers.

When men returned home at nightfall, their pant legs and the bellies of their horses were stained red from the scarlet beds of strawberries and ground fruits they had trampled through.

Go all the way back to when Henry Hudson's crew on the *Half Moon* were disarmed by the fragrance of the New Jersey shore; when others sailing further up the coast occasionally sailed through beds of floating flowers. Verrazano smelled the cedars of the East Coast a hundred leagues out, and Raleigh's colonists scented what they thought was a garden. The heavy odor of forests and fields greeted all who first came to the New World.

Sail back to Europe, bloodied by its wars and religions. Go back through the years to when Christianity was young. There, most of the early followers were led astray by a spiritless form of the life Yahshua led. Go back to him, the seed, the beginning of it all, the most tender, compassionate,

and caring friend you could ever find. Had you been there, you would have loved him. Had you heard him, you would have listened. Had you been in jail, he would have gotten you out.

But men quickly forgot how he was and what he taught. It was too hard and they wanted something easier. So that was what they got: a religion called "Jesus" and no way to touch his heart. That's what came over to the New World. It wasn't his spirit that came. His spirit didn't hate the Indians, or the wilderness, or the laws of his father. His spirit didn't lead men to be greedy or selfish. And his spirit didn't make the New World waste and void.

His spirit would never leave you alone. Or in jail. Or dead. He would give you life and take you home. His people have gone before you and made ready those homes. They are in communes. They are near.



“Grateful”
is such a wonderful
word. Just the sound of it
makes you feel good.

Think back to a time when you were very young,
when you were just learning how to swim. You got in too deep and you were going under.
Then just when you thought it was all over, the lifeguard jumped in and saved you. Remember how the rest of the
summer you could not keep your eyes off him? He was your hero. When he came to help you, you were so

GRATEFUL

OR REMEMBER YOUR SECOND GRADE TEACHER? SHE TOOK SO MUCH
EXTRA TIME TO HELP YOU LEARN TO READ. SHE DIDN'T NEED TO DO IT,
BUT SHE SAW YOU NEEDED HELP. YOU WERE SO GRATEFUL FOR HER

k i n d n e s s

You always wanted to do something to repay her, but the flowers you put on her desk each morning
could not even come close to expressing your gratitude. Perhaps it is something else.

There are friends who are very dear to you, and times that

WARM YOUR HEART

...but these are rare. There aren't really that many moments in your life when you were truly grateful. It is too bad, because the
ones you remember are so good. One time at a show in Worcester a few years ago, a guy just walked up to you and gave you
a ticket. That was one night you were very grateful. Once inside, you forgot all about it,
but afterwards you remembered and always wanted to get in touch with him again.

It's easy to forget times like that. It is not easy to stay grateful for long.



BUT NOTICE THIS: “THERE WILL BE TERRIBLE TIMES
IN THE LAST DAYS. PEOPLE WILL BE

LOVERS

of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,
without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure
rather than lovers of God ...have nothing to do with them.”



This quote comes from the Bible. A prophet is speaking of a
time to come when mankind will exhibit these qualities. It is going
to be a terrible time. One reason
why it will be so terrible is that
most people will be ungrateful.
Now this is not something that we,
in this generation, consider to be so
terrible. We never even think much
about being grateful. Yet, somehow
a person who is ungrateful is to be
avoided at all cost. Why is this?

Someone might say,
“I'll be grateful when I'm dead.”
Maybe that is where the name

GRATEFUL DEAD

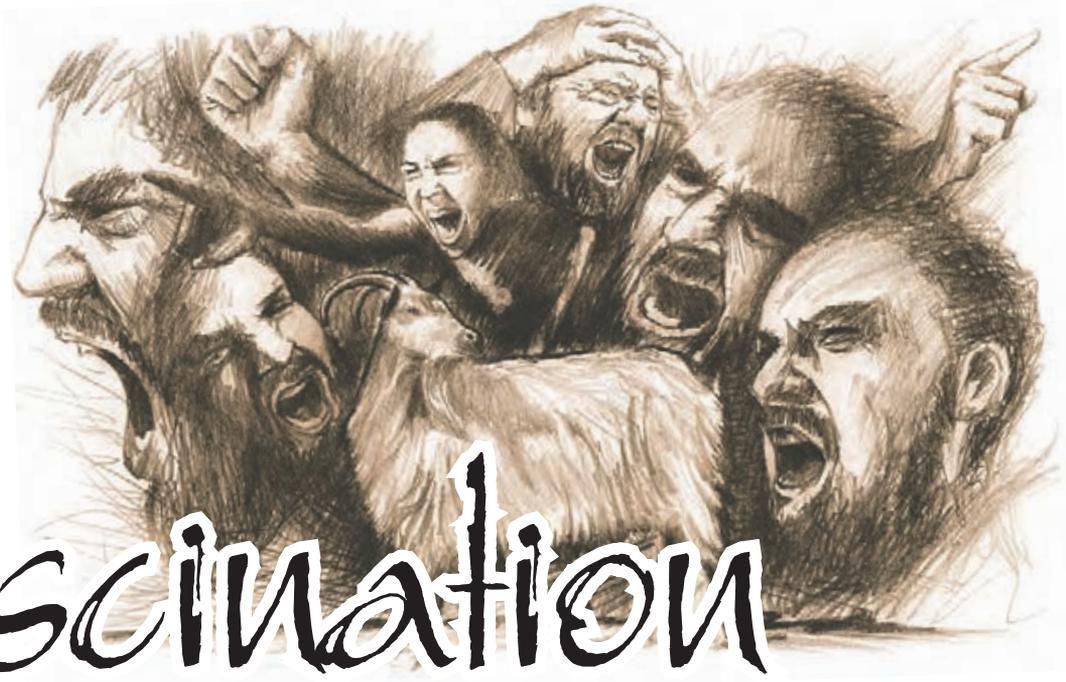
came from. Life is so messed up,
being dead could be something
to be grateful for. But who really
knows what death holds? Will
there be anything there to be
grateful for?

Is Jerry gratefully dead?



But if the prophet says that we
are to avoid the ungrateful, then
we better start searching for
someone, somewhere, who has
something to be grateful for. We
had better look to see if there is
anything in this life to be grateful
for. If there is nothing in life to
be grateful for, there will surely
be nothing in death. The grateful
living are the ones who will be the
grateful dead. Some living and
grateful people can be found here.
You are welcome to join us.





Fascination

He knew that no man had ever made it through the ordeal. Like an obstacle course through a desert, each hurdle, each almost insurmountable obstacle tested whether he would win the prize that held his heart spellbound. Each day the sun came up and each night it set brought him closer. Nothing could hold him back — neither fire, nor water, nor test after test after test. Like a man in the twilight working feverishly to finish before nightfall, he raced on, drawn by his love for something more precious than life itself.

What was it? Wealth? Fame? Power? Pleasure? Were these what claimed his heart's energy? Or was it something deeper, longer lasting, something living and eternal? It had to be. For he knew, as men have always known, that once this brief life on earth is over, we face an age so long that no one, not even the wisest among us, can grasp more than a tiny piece of it. Here we live our few short years that make all the difference where we will be forever. If he could complete the ordeal, if he could run the course, then he would not be alone. Others would follow, ones like him who would be with him in that unending future.

On the last day he faced his final obstacle. Death himself had come to test him. Like a scapegoat thronged about by those eager to cast their sin upon it, he passed through a gauntlet of his own people, a crowd lining the streets, hurling abuse and scorn and curses. Beyond that came a second, more dreadful torture. All his spiritual enemies had gathered round and formed a gauntlet, too: two long rows of savage beasts armed with long rods, swinging at his back as he passed between them — to break his spirit, to cause him to give up, to drive him to his knees, and into the ground, and down into death.

Like the scapegoat wandering around in the wilderness until thirst or hunger or wild animals killed it, he took the sins of the whole world far away into the fiery darkness in the core of the earth. In that wild landscape he finished the agonizing ordeal. In a tossing sea of volcanic sulfur and molten stone he received the storm of Heaven's full wrath against sin. Like a helpless victim drowning in the flood, he passed through a suffering too great for us to understand. A universe of hurt and shame, of unpayable injuries and ruined lives, of corruption and perversity was paid for, one crime at a time, in that brief three-day eternity. Finally it ended!

What had given him the strength to go on and on? Love, for certain; only love grants such strength to endure. But wasn't there something more? Something else that had captured his heart and was the center of all his attention? What could have fascinated him so? Who was it?

It could only have been those who would follow him and be like a bride married to him. They were the reason why he felt compelled to die. He wanted to save them from the horrible agony of unending death. He knew that once they heard what he had done for them, they would respond to his love with the same fascination he felt toward them. They would willingly give up everything for his sake — family, career, wealth, ambitions, dreams, comforts, even their very own life and interests. This sacrifice, on their part, would come from their genuine response to his sacrifice, and would bring about a new nation of twelve tribes. Though his ordeal is over, hers is yet to come. Through all the labor that will take place, she won't lose heart, for he is her fascination. He is Yahshua.



GRATEFULLY DEAD?

Friends familiar with Dead folklore say it's hard to find where their name came from. That's been my experience. I thought for years that the name came from the "*Bardo Thodol*" — *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* — until recently when I skimmed through a translation of that slender volume I could not find any trace of the name. Someone else told me that it didn't come from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, but from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* instead. He said there's a passage which reads:

*We now return our souls to the Creator
as we stand on the edge of eternal darkness.
Let our chant fill the void in order that others may know
in the land of the night
the ship of the sun is drawn by the grateful dead.*

Still another friend said the name was discovered by Jerry Garcia when he thumbed through a dictionary and stumbled upon the words *grateful dead* on one of the pages. I even read an account where Phil Lesh said the dictionary we're talking about broke apart when it fell on the floor and the two words were page headings opposite each other. Regardless of how the name appeared or was chosen it strikes me that something quite intriguing happens when we combine those words together. Even Robert Hunter in a recent interview in *Rolling Stone* magazine said he would have talked them out of using the name — it was so outrageous — but now "it seems like one of the finest choices possible." All in all, what the name *grateful dead* makes me think of are people who are dead who are grateful. And that is a hopeful thought.

Considering now that Jerry is no longer with us, we might wonder if he is gratefully dead? We also might wonder if there is a group of people, as the *Book of the Dead* describes, who labor to bring *light* into the land of the night? Is there a category of souls whose labor on earth gives them a measure of gratefulness even in death? But before we try to imagine that, let's back up a little and consider what being in death might mean.

The Thought

I've always felt a horrible outrage at the thought of death. It was so unjust, like a knife stab to the heart or the twist of a screw deep within. One day I wouldn't be on the earth watching the sun come up in all its peacefulness or see the moon rising in the early twilight. I wouldn't be around when the apple trees came into bloom to fill the air with fragrance or when the lilacs came out drenching the evening, or when the daffodils covered the hillsides. The clouds would come and go and I wouldn't be there to notice them. I wouldn't be able to see the sparkle of sunlight on water or feel the raw salt wind off the Sound,

or sniff the soft balm of melting snow. The seasons and life would run on without me. They would never halt and wait till I was there. Was there anything more unfair than that?

It wasn't fair that I would have to lie beneath the ground year after year and miss everything. Death was horrid and ugly; I didn't want to be a disembodied spirit, chained in the deepest recesses of the earth, held in agony by the excruciating, crushing loneliness. Who didn't dread the stillness, the imprisonment, the horror, the hopelessness, the helpless despair? And the conscious waiting that would go on — every second of every hour, day after day, year by year. The torment of mind would be acute, the pangs more fierce than losing someone you truly loved. Over and over again I would hear the thoughts of my conscience and feel the clutches of hopeless darkness all around.

Over the years I've met only a handful of people who believed that they were going to pass out of existence forever when they die. For the most part, people I meet think that some part of them — their mind, consciousness, or soul — will continue on. It seems that common sense or something deep in man teaches him to think that way. It makes sense that a caring Creator wouldn't just do away with one of the creatures He's made. He's mindful and concerned about them, and entrusts each one of them with an eternal soul they must care for.

Though man lives with the daily knowledge of his mortality, something also tells him that it isn't all over when he dies. Even as he lives and walks through the valley of the shadow of death he can at least hope that in death he might be part of the ones who have some measure of comfort.

The Fear

Man's greatest fear, his fear of death, comes from the awareness — again, either from nature, common sense, or conscience — that when he dies he will not escape the consequences of his deeds. As he anticipates traveling to that unknown country what he may dread the most is being the same person after he dies as he was before. Now that I believe the Bible there's nothing that makes me think that when I am in that future existence that I won't have the same mind and the same kind of thoughts as I now have in the present. It's as though the film running through a film projector breaks and everything in the theater goes dark; but once it's spliced and running again we find ourselves in the same film with the same characters as before. It's like that in death: we have the same habits of mind and heart that we've always had. Death's not a place where ordinary people turn into superheroes, rock stars, or saints; death is a place where people go when they leave their body behind. There, the Bible says, everyone will have to face the things they said and did and thought. It's sobering (and scary) to consider what it will be like to remain eternally in the same

state we acquired or maintained in our lifetime, especially if it was a selfish one. Each human being will exist beyond their physical death to find their destiny in eternity.

There's nothing the dead can do about their destiny now, nothing they can do to change the kind of life they once lived. But there is something we the living can do about our lives. We can live in such a way that when we're dead we'll have the fewest regrets or pangs of guilt as possible.

The Gratefully Dead are those who:

- kept alive their tenderness and compassion for others;
- continued to have mercy on others; though by no means perfect, they remained sympathetic and tenderhearted;
- never lost the capacity to love and relate to others;
- didn't fail to do good in a time of need;
- consistently spoke words that did good;
- neither despised others nor ignored them; didn't make someone feel unworthy of your company;
- stayed closely within the bounds of the moral order;
- retained the core values common to all mankind — loving your spouse, loving your children enough to correct and discipline them, loving your neighbor;
- displayed those indispensable properties of human nature — trustworthiness, respectableness, responsibility, fairness, justice, generosity, care, and neighborliness;
- didn't ignore God's life-giving instructions deep within the heart;
- weren't those who rebelled against their better judgment;
- proved loyal to the natural, inborn standard in their heart;
- lived by their better nature — the firmness or steadfastness to do what's right;
- were not led astray by the influence, the peer pressure of others who wanted them to do wrong;
- did nothing to permanently or maliciously damage others;
- acted the right way in their struggle against the forces of this world to take man down to a lower level;
- didn't lead others astray or make them into perverts;
- fought against being molded by social pressure;
- preserved their worth and humanity;
- were men and women whose secret deeds weren't shameful;
- had nothing to hide and didn't live in guilt;
- did all a person could do to make amends when he hurt others;
- made compensation (as much as one possibly could) for any hurt or damage to others;
- didn't live life in vain;
- had more than an empty, aimless existence;
- weren't impulsively self-indulgent;
- were ones who didn't let greed make them unkind, hard-hearted, inconsiderate, thoughtless, uncaring, unloving, unfeeling, unsympathetic, unfriendly, inhumane;

- didn't join the proud, the exalted, the self-satisfied elite class;
- didn't walk around with a high opinion of one's own importance or superiority;
- weren't concerned excessively or exclusively with one's self;
- weren't those seeking their own advantage, pleasure, well-being at the expense of others;
- didn't sell themselves to do evil;
- wouldn't allow themselves to bear guilt to the point of numbness or become mere brute beasts;
- asked themselves: what is my job accomplishing? what lay behind my choice of work? do I take advantage of others? is my work a picture of who I am?
- ask: is the quality of my life true to the truth that's been shown me?
- faced honestly the guilt and self-condemnation when they didn't live up to their expectations.

I admit that I wasn't someone who could have consistently lived the way that's described above. On the contrary, by the time I finished school, I had become a selfish person without much worth or regard for others. In my desperation to head a different direction than the one I was heading, I started to search for a place where I could change. That's when I met some people who lived together in a new kind of community, a community of the redeemed. One of the first things I felt when I walked in the door was a sense that they really wanted me, a complete stranger, to share their home and find out about what they had found — a life of love and peace, a peace that can only come from true forgiveness. The next thing that struck me was the way they followed the man Yahshua. How different Yahshua was from how I had always viewed him as a child going to church! How different this community was from any church group I had ever met! I especially liked how they loved to talk about Yahshua and the excitement that came from doing that. If their Yahshua had been anything like my parents' church said he was, I wouldn't have wanted to get to know him. But since the people I met in the Community were so full of life and love, I figured that he was that way too. Suddenly he became far more valuable to me than I had ever realized. I was hearing the truth about him for the very first time in my life.

Of all the things I've learned since then the one thing that touches me the most is how Yahshua was willing one spring day to take his last breath of air and then stop living his life on earth, just so others like me could be forgiven. For 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth he bore the anger of God against sin. When I consider the agony he went through in order to save us from death, it makes anything I do in the Community seem small in comparison. The Spirit he gave his followers after coming back to life makes all the difference in the world; his Spirit creates a place where the damage we did to ourselves can be tenderly healed. If you are interested in hearing more, please look us up on the web, or call anytime. And if you're in an area near one of our homes, please drop by and talk with us personally. The greatest life anyone can live is just a small step away.



LIFE AMIDST *Bitter Waters*

In my adventures, I learned quickly that "whatever you do, take care of your shoes."
Sitting around the campfire... late nights listening to bootleg tapes and jamming...
taking road trips and going to Rothbury (and later to Festival 8)...

...biking home from the Chicago Botanic Gardens amidst fireflies... listening to *Sunshine Daydream* in the forest while playing Ultimate Frisbee... and going downtown for a show... We were bound to cover just a little more ground.

“TROUBLE WITH YOU IS THE TROUBLE WITH ME,
GOT TWO GOOD EYES BUT WE STILL DON'T SEE.”

In high school we partied hard and life couldn't get much better. Who could ask for more chill friends and a better crew – my (honorary) brothers and sisters. We did everything together and even went to each other's family dinners... I was especially close with Skye.

To this day I've never met anyone with her fiery passion or the jealous love she had for her friends. Often times before parties and on quiet nights, Skye and I would go on drives. We'd have peace and stillness playing our favorite live sets and listening for the secret, searching for the sound. Mostly we planned our grand road trip out west that would take place the summer after we graduated. Then one day it was different. "Drive more gently," she said, "the bumps in the road hurt." Skye's stomach pain was extreme and after that day it only got worse.

Soon it got so bad she couldn't move and her family had her see a doctor — sarcoma cancer, stage 4. Everything changed fast. As she moved into the University of Chicago hospital, I refused to believe it and thought, "If anyone has the force of spirit to beat this, she does." and she did. What the doctors said would only last a few months turned into painful years in and out of the hospital. The last few months I

spent with Skye were some of the most convicting months of my life. When people have nothing left to lose and they know life's nearing an end, they live differently. Every day Skye poured out love, was completely forgiving, and wholeheartedly engaged to her max.

“DARK STAR CRASHES,
POURING ITS LIGHT INTO ASHES.
REASON TATTERS, THE FORCES TEAR LOOSE
FROM THE AXIS. SEARCHLIGHT CASTING FOR FAULTS
IN THE CLOUDS OF DELUSION.”

The last time I saw her frail body, I was cut to the depths of my heart with pain at the realization that I was losing Skye. She was the most real person I knew. I began to regret not living more openly and sincerely with her and others around me. I knew I had cheated myself and my friends by being mostly skin deep and not more open with the substance of my heart. Most of us are so dull that only when a dark star crashes do we wake up. Skye's love caused me to set up a searchlight casting for faults in the clouds of delusion that surrounded me everywhere else.

“SUCH A LONG LONG TIME TO BE GONE
AND A SHORT TIME TO BE THERE.”

There was so much more I could have said and done to be a true friend, but Skye forgave me when I admitted it to her. At the end, although I wanted to be just as real with her as she was being, I could see I'd already missed the opportunity. Skye needed people to be strong around her by then. She needed to know her love was worth more than the impending

loss we all faced. I needed to reciprocate love by overcoming my grief, for her. This act of paying the high cost of love might have been the first truly selfless and real thing I'd ever done. There were no good feelings to motivate me, I just knew I had to do it. Still, every time I saw Skye and her sincerity those last few days, I felt so fake. The harsh view of my life was before my eyes and I saw my self-seeking, pleasure-based life for what it was — self-absorbed and purposeless.

“KEEP ON ROLLING, JUST A MILE TO GO.”

Time and time again I pushed the limits, hoping to find reality. I have seen where the wolf has slept beside the silver stream... quick beats in an icy heart. Frustrated, I traveled hard and tested God, but wherever you go, there you are... Would I live or die? I didn't have a preference. On top of a mountain in Glacier National Park with a 104 fever I realized that if I was going to live, my life didn't need to be complicated. I just needed to be able to stay in reality, live the truth and love others from the depths of my heart. I needed to be free from my prison of selfishness and find others who were also free.

Since that day I've found a home. My home is where my heart is, and here, love is real and does not fade away. I live a life of purpose and true forgiveness in a place where my selfishness doesn't separate me from others when I'm open about it. I live, work, and spend all my time with my loving friends. Every hard circumstance brings me closer to them. Hard to believe, right? This is a place where everyone lives in reality, as Skye did, but without the looming fear of death. The faulty loyal — we are in love with each other and Yahshua, who loved us so much that He died for us so we could respond every day, measure for measure.

Just as deep calls for deep, together we are learning an undying love from Yahshua's example and manifesting that love in our lives as we actively love others. As the fruit of a tree produces more of the same tree, the fruit of Yahshua's love in our hearts is an unhindered, unending, tangible oneness and peace. We don't agree to disagree and we don't have some mystical unity in diversity. In love, we resolve anything that would divide us, because we are so deeply bonded we cannot bear being against one another. Together, we wage war on alienation and the clutches of desolation it had around our hearts. If you're tired of this world and its fleeting moments of superficial oneness, come find us. We love you.

**“ALL I KNOW SHE SANG A LITTLE
WHILE AND THEN FLEW ON.”**

It was raining the day Skye died. I heard she passed, crying as she looked out the window. Shattered and sad, my emotions, like waves of the sea, drove me towards and repulsed me away from others. Finally I took off in my car, unable to stay “real” with my friends. So many roads I tell you, so many roads I know, and all I want is one to take me home. My drive turned into a spontaneous road trip – from one end of the country to the other and back again. I had nothing left to lose.

D'roryah

LET'S BE REAL

“Hey! I never intended the church to turn out this way. I never intended the church to become like it is. I never intended the church to become a religious system like Christianity. I never intended my dwelling place to become a dwelling place for demons.¹ I don’t have anything to do with the church — her sins are piled up as high as heaven. Those who think I do have a very low opinion of me. They don’t know who I am or what I am like.”

—God, the Creator of the universe

GOD IS NOT TO BLAME for the religious system. He abandoned Judaism long ago. He scattered old Israel among the nations, destroyed their temple, and put an end to their priesthood and their sacrifices. Later He abandoned the early church when they stopped living together in love. They began tolerating divisions, and received another gospel that made room for their selfishness and independence. When they abandoned their whole-hearted devotion to Yahshua* the Messiah and stopped obeying His commands, they became Christianity.

Those who wish to follow Yahshua will find Him outside the camp of Judaism and Christianity:

Therefore Yahshua also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by His own blood. Let us then go to Him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured.²

We are not part of Judaism or Christianity. We have gone outside the camp to become what God intended from the first. We are a spiritual brotherhood whose love for one another stretches across the boundaries of nationality, race, and culture. We are a part of the “restoration of all things” spoken of by all the holy prophets since ancient times.³ One of the foremost things that is being restored in our midst is the communal life that the first disciples lived:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need... The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.⁴

This communal life is very much like the tribal life that Abraham experienced. Our hearts are being turned toward such forefathers, the men of faith who went before us and suffered many things to remain true to their God. At the same time, our hearts are turning toward our children to command them to keep the way of our God by doing what is right and just. By doing this, we hope to see the promise to Abraham fulfilled.⁵

There have been many groups over the centuries who have tried to go outside the camp and be God’s people. Unfortunately, every such group has failed to pass on their vision to their children. Inevitably the second

generation either abandoned or distorted the original vision. That is what happened to the early church during the first century. Its *nature* changed. It was not just a developmental step or a logical progression, like moths becoming soot-colored in order to survive in industrial areas. Rather, it was a dramatic transmutation, something as shocking as a cat becoming a fish or a snake becoming an elephant. The second state is not recognizable as having the same nature as the first. What began as a pure bride⁶ has become a harlot:

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast ... Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues, for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.⁷

Anyone who desires to go outside the camp must leave his life behind, whether Christian, Jew, or any other persuasion, and come into the place where God dwells: in a people who are the salt and the light of which our Master Yahshua spoke — His holy nation and royal priesthood.⁸ Their life together is the witness, the demonstration to the world of who God is and what He is like.

“I have revealed and saved and proclaimed — I, and not some foreign god among you.⁹ You are My witnesses,” declares YHWH, “that I am God.” (Isaiah 43:12)

That demonstration is the evidence people need to face their sinfulness and receive faith that God can save them. There they find a place to belong and are restored by God’s grace to do the works He created them to do. Apart from that demonstration there is no salvation, neither in Christianity nor in Judaism.

Let’s be real! Let’s!



¹Revelation 18:2 ²Hebrews 13:12-13 ³Acts 3:21 ⁴Acts 2:44-45; :32,34,35 ⁵Genesis 15:18; 18:19 ⁶2 Corinthians 11:2-3 ⁷Revelation 18:2,4,5 ⁸1 Peter 2:9,10 ⁹2 Corinthians 11:4

* *Yahshua* is the Hebrew name of the Son of God. It is what Miriam (Mary) and Yoceph (Joseph) called Him when He was born, as recorded in Luke 1:31 and Matthew 1:21. In Hebrew, the name *Yahshua* means “God is powerful to save,” since it is constructed from *Yah*, the name of the Father (as in *Hallelujah*, meaning “Praise Yah”) and *shua*, which means “power and authority to save.” We call him *Yahshua* because that is truly His name. It is a wonderful name, full of meaning and purpose. It is the name above all names.

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THERE IS A PEOPLE who woke up this morning with one thing on their minds — to love their Creator with all their heart, mind, and strength, and to love one another just as He loved them. Being just ordinary human beings, we are far from perfect in our love, yet, in hope, we persevere. Our goal? That the kingdom of God would come on earth as it is in heaven, so that love and justice can rule on the earth. Sound impossible? It would be, were it not that the Son of God came to earth to redeem mankind, to set us free from the curse of sin, and to enable us to love. Because we have come to see His worth and our own desperate need, we have surrendered everything in order to follow Him. Our hearts and our homes are open night and day to any who are interested in our life or are weary of their sin and want to know the purpose for which they were created.

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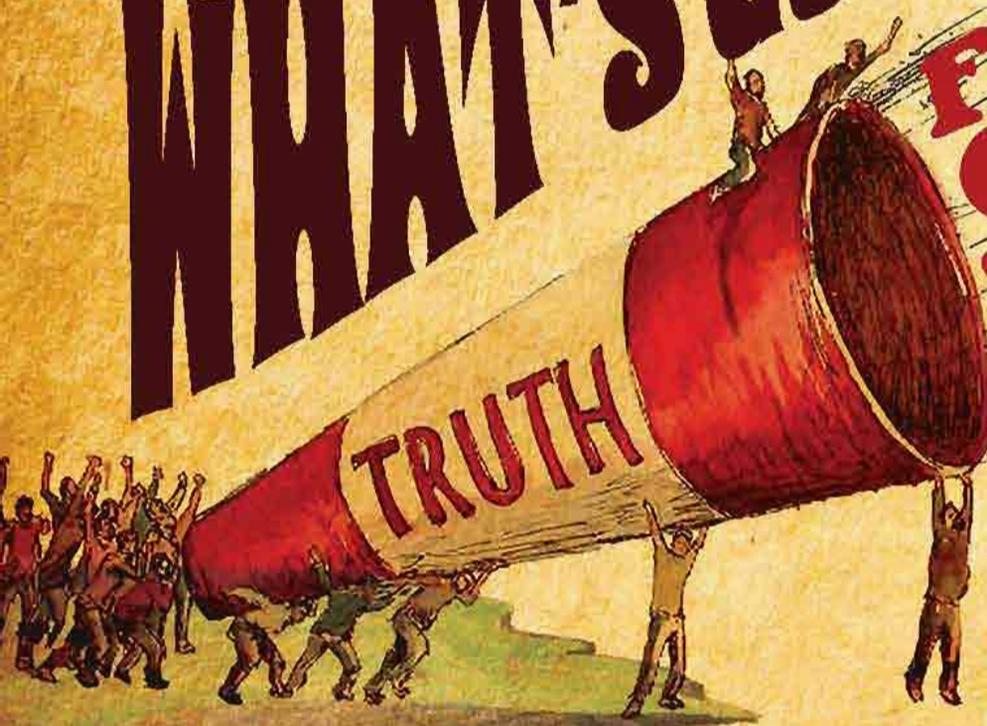
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