




 WALK WALK WALK






 WALK WALK WALK



J-walk is the monthly magazine of CCECYOUTH.

CCECYOUTH is run by Central Coast Evangelical Church.

CCECYOUTH is for year 7-12 high school students

GIVE in service of others; share the GOSPEL of Jesus' death & Resurrection; and GLADLY rejoice in Him.

We also have G-TEAMS - the aim of these is to GROW TOGETHER.

We meet on G-TEAMS are



Friday nights from 7-930pm @ erina high school

smaller groups where we dig even deeper

Entry = \$5 (includes dinner)

We exist to GLORIFY God in everything as we: GATHER to hear his word; GROW in godliness;

Join us on Friday, or in a G-TEAM.

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J-WALK ISSUE 1

Welcome to the very first issue of J-WALK: CCEC YOUTH's VERY OWN MAGAZINE!!

I first had the idea for this magazine during **summer-madness 04**. There were a number campers gathered around a *girlfriend* magazine... filling out a questionnaire.

To be honest with you, *girlfriend* and other magazines like it aren't the most edifying things that a young Christian could read.

I quietly confiscated the magazine and placed it back on the campers bag as they were leaving.

It did get me thinking... We want you all to be reading the Bible. Yes. But what else is there that you can read that will help you grow as a Christian? There are a

number of books we like to recommend (such as John Dickson's series for young Christians). But what else?

When I was a teenager there was a magazine around for about a year called Zed. It was fantastic! It really helped me to understand the Bible and the world I live in.

Our hope for J-walk is that it would be a great tool to help you grow. A tool that will be fun to read—but also help you to:

- 1) Make sense of the world
- 2) Make sense of the Bible
- 3) See how the Bible helps you to understand how to live in the world.

We have some sweet material in this first issue... with many more great articles to come!! Make sure you check out our website to interact with the articles.

dnm

EDITORIAL

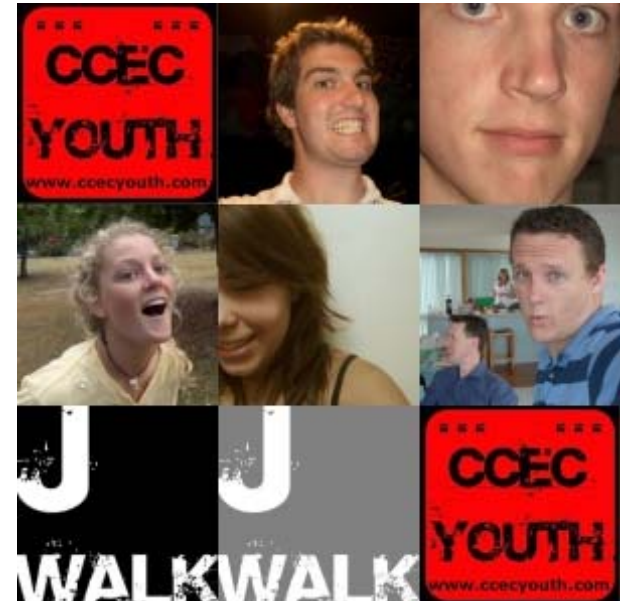
By Dave Miers

TEAM J-WALK

- Alex Hartley
- Dave Miers
- Jackson Stace
- Josh Bones
- Nicole Maloney

Guests this issue:

- Aaron Plunkett
- Andrew Hayes
- Andrew Heard
- Kelly Haynes



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J-WALK IS WALKING LIKE JESUS

By
Dave Miers

Who is Jesus? Who do people think that he was? Everyone has an opinion on Jesus. Some people think he was a cool dude. Others think that he is their homeboy. Some think that Jesus was a great teacher. Some thought he was a liar. Others said that he was a lunatic. While others claimed that he was the Lord of the universe!!

Who do you think Jesus is? Do you think about him? If you do—what do you think he is like?

About 2000 years ago there was a biography written about Jesus by a man named Mark. In the gospel according to Mark you see Jesus ask his close friends this question.

Who do people say I am?

How do they reply? Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah and still others say one of the prophets.

The whole way up until this point the question on everyone's lips is: *Who is this man?* In chapters 1-8 of Mark we see Jesus do some incredible things. He teaches with authority. He heals the sick. He walks on water. He feeds 5000 people with only a few bread rolls and a couple of fish. He calms a storm. He raises a dead girl back to life!

Everyone is asking the question... who is this guy? Where did he come from? How can he do all these things? By what authority is he doing all these things? And so that was the question

on everyone's lips—and everyone had an opinion on who Jesus was. Some loved him. Others hated him. While still others just didn't know what to think.

So Jesus asks his friends the question: Who do people say I am? The disciples share some of the ideas that are going around. But then Jesus turns the question straight back onto them.

Have you ever had that feeling in class when you think you know the answer—but you're just not sure—you being to believe that maybe you don't really know the answer?

My guess is that at this point the disciples think they know who Jesus is—but they aren't quite sure—and maybe they're wrong.

So Jesus asks the question: but what about you... **who do YOU say that I am?**

Imagine that you were there for a moment—what would YOU say?

What does Peter say?

He says: "You are the Christ".

The Christ? The Christ? Isn't that just Jesus' last name? Jesus Christ the son of Mr and Mrs Christ?

For most people today the word Christ is either Jesus' last name or a swearword.

But 2000 years ago the nation of Israel were waiting for THE CHRIST to appear.

J-WALK ISSUE 1

'CHRIST' isn't Jesus' last name it's actually a title that says something about who Jesus is.

The word 'Christ' is a Greek word that is translated 'Messiah' in Hebrew and 'Anointed One' in English.

Throughout Israel's history they had a bunch of different guys who were types of Christ: Anointed Ones. They were the Kings of Israel who were anointed to rule the people under God's authority.

But one of the problems with the Anointed Ones in the Old Testament is that they kept on failing. They didn't rule how God wanted them to—and they failed the nation.

God in his kindness made some massive promises in the Old Testament that he would one day send a Christ that would come who would be THE Christ. This Christ would be different from all the ones before him. This Christ would come and rule in a way that none of the Kings before him ruled. This King would come and his rule would be established forever (2 Samuel 7). This King that was coming would be God himself!

So...

When Peter says to Jesus: YOU ARE THE CHRIST—what is he saying? He's saying that you (Jesus) are this King. Jesus you are the King that we've been waiting for.

The first 8 chapters of Mark are all about 'Who is this www.ccecyouth.com

man?' The answer comes in chapter 8. Who is he? He is THE CHRIST. And so from chapter 8 until the end of Mark the big question is: what will it mean for Jesus to be the Christ? And secondly—what will it mean to follow the Christ?

Straight away Jesus says what it will mean for him to be the Christ. He explains what type of King he is.

MARK 8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

Jesus repeats this similar statement in ch 9 and 10 as well. What type of King will he be? He is a King that will suffer, be killed and rise again. That's why Jesus came. To do that. To die for us. But to conquer death and be raised again.

What did it mean for Jesus to walk on this planet?

For Jesus to do the J-walk—it meant he died a death he didn't deserve. It meant he loved us when we were unlovely. What type of King is Jesus? He's a servant King... not a king that came to be served but a King that came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

Immediately after this Jesus explains something of what it will mean to follow him In the end it's to be like him. To suffer and to take up your cross.



MARK 8:34 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

What does it mean for us to follow Jesus? What is the aim of J-WALK? To see that following Jesus is about trusting in him and denying ourselves like he denied himself...

Next month: part 2

Go to www.ccecyouth.com And discuss what you think it might look like to deny yourself and do the J-WALK.

**5
MINUTES
WITH
ANDREW
H FROM
MATCHAM**

**By
Jackson Stace**

JS What year are you in?
AH Year 12

JS What school do you go to?
AH CCGS - the grammar school

JS What do you do for fun?
AH I've fallen in love with surfing so I go out pretty much every chance I get. Other than that, hanging with friends, playing backyard cricket, listening to music, and of course youth group.

JS Who do you have most fun with?
AH My dad is always up for a good time, or TPJ (Todd) knows how to party. Will, a pommy mate from school, is possibly the funniest guy on the coast.

JS Would you rather be able to fly or move things with your mind?
AH Fly, duh! How cool would that be?
(JS note: Of course if you could move things with your mind you could move yourself through the air!)

JS What's the highlight of your week?
AH Friday night, of course! Youth group is my 'safe-haven' from school and stress.

JS What's something you've done in your life that has changed the way you look at life?
AH I've visited China twice with a team of doctors who gave lectures and ran clinics. We visited some remote villages, literally one-horse villages that lived on less than a few cents a day. The contrast between this and the

wealth of the nearby city, and our own lives even more, really shocked me. I was angry that people in Australia live such comfortable, complacent lives when they have the power to do so much more. The ability to help people is something I took for granted, but seeing how much impact we can have on people's lives has made me want to do all I can.

JS If you could go back in time and meet someone other than Jesus, who would you meet?
AH Other than Jesus? That's not fair! (Though I don't see why I would have treated him any differently than the crowds that mocked him.) I think it would be cool to meet Albert Einstein. If you ever hear any of the things he said, he was a very wise man with some really interesting takes on things.

JS What are you currently reading?
AH *The Screwtape Letters*, by C.S. Lewis. Fantastic book, read it!

JS In 1 sentence, Why did you become a Christian?
The certainty of God's judgement became too much to ignore, so I accepted His promise of forgiveness and an eternal relationship with Him.

JS What happened to make you come to that realisation?
AH I always knew God existed, and thought I was a Christian, but I was always worried that I wasn't good enough. After I realised that I could know for sure that I

was going to Heaven, I still wanted to live my life my own way - even though I knew one day I would have to make a decision either way. On Phat I decided that if I didn't choose God now, I might not have another chance, so I asked him to take over my life.

JS What bothers you most in this world?
AH The number of people living their lives for themselves, with no purpose or hope for salvation. More than that, that so many people reject hope for no good reason at all.

JS If you could change 1 thing in your life, what would it be?
AH Hard question! I struggle a lot in acting lovingly to people, especially my sisters. If I can't act lovingly towards them, how can I love my enemy?

JS What would you most like to accomplish in your life?
I would love to help people who live in poverty or with easily treatable disease. I would also love to see many people brought to Jesus, and if it is a result of anything I've done I would consider myself extremely privileged.

JS And finally...If you could only ever say 6 words, as often as you like but only 6- what 6 would you choose?
AH 1) Hi
2) Why?
3) Mad!
4) Bummer
5) Sorry
6) Medium-rare.



ELEVEN50 2007 REVIEW

By
Josh 'Bumsey'
Bones

The Eleven 50 Wrap Up with Josh 'Bumsey' Bones

The hall was still; only one voice could be heard. Rows and rows of chairs were packed with teenagers and leaders raptly listening to a skinny guy up the front as he explained to them what real love is; what God's love is. You could hear a pin drop. S u d d e n l y * W H H H H H I I I R R R CHUNKA CHUNKA CHUNKA CHUNKA* a blender bursts to life in the background and 60 people turn as one to give me a filthy look. Sorry guys, but banana smoothies wait for no man! With the possible exception of Jesus that is, but he was no ordinary man, was he?

This year Eleven 50 went off! Meeting for the second year in the youth centre at Erina Fair, each night about 60 teenagers and 15 leaders came to hang out, have fun, eat great food, and most importantly hear about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I tell you what; it was certainly a week that I'll never forget!

Each night there was heaps of entertainment available for even the most demanding game-junkie. From ping pong and table tennis, to foosball and pinball, and even a few decks of cards for the calmer people among us. When you add to that great coffee, even better cheese platters, and enough ice-cream and cakes to feed a small African nation, you got the makings of 4 fun nights!

Each evening the competition was intense in the Leader-Teen challenges that invari-

bly left the contestants in various states of disrepair, including one night when the poor volunteers found themselves liberally coated in honey! It was a tight competition all week, and right up until the end it was anyone's game, but unfortunately due to a lack of drug testing (because I'm sure they couldn't have won any other way) the teens pulled ahead in the end to claim victory over the poor, mistreated leaders.

The best part of each evening, though, wasn't the great food, fun games, or messy challenges, rather it was the chance we had to all get together and listen to different talks from the bible. Each night a different speaker shared with us an important message, from the talk about the two sons, where we learnt that we've all turned our backs on God and need his forgiveness, to the talk on two loves, where we saw what true love really was. It was great to see how much people were enjoying hearing these talks, and even more exciting to see that some teens gave their lives to the Lord because of what they had heard!

It really was a fantastic week, and I think that if you ask anyone else who went, they'll tell you the same thing. So next year when Summerfest is on, if your in yrs 10-12, make sure you get along, and bring all your friends!

Summerfest was good, but Xtreme Teenz was by far the best! We learnt about Jesus the true king of our lives, and the way we ignore him... but praise be to King Jesus who died and rose again that those who trust in him will have life forever!

We were privileged to have the world famous Chef Aaron and his cooking show. On 'Cooking with the King' we had a different king make a guest appearance each day, the guest list ranged from the king of boxing Mohammed Ali to everyone's favourite line of work wear King-Gee. The food wasn't bad, including the world's first world sandwich, banana splits and delicious biscuits.

Each day meant a new challenge as years 7, 8, 9 and the leaders fought it out for the Xtreme challenge title. At the start of the week it looked like the leaders might just lose, but sure enough justice prevailed and they turned the tables to romp home to victory! Leader phobia, art auction and capture the chain are some of the other activities we enjoyed.

Two big highlights of the week would have to be Tuesday Night Teens (TNT) and Pulp. TNT was all about royalty and all members of Xtreme Teenz were invited to hangout and dine in the royal court of Majestic King Moe, and Bronwyn of the Downes. We were graced with the presence of guests such as Princess Leia, Pocahontas, Simba and even Jedi Knights. All in all, a really right, royal,

rambunctious night!

The theme for PULP was super-mega-awesome-action-heroes, and I've never felt safer that night than with all the members of the Justice League, as well as the Sailor Scouts, ninja, and countless kids with underpants on the outside and towel capes around their necks all in attendance.

It was great to see our numbers grow each day as the news about Summerfest and Xtreme Teenz spread over the Central Coast, and the Xtreme Teenz invited their friends, family, and even that kid that lives down the street and smells a bit weird!

It was awesome to hear about Jesus in the talks, and have a go at looking at the bible for ourselves in our small groups while eating morning tea. Gotta love those bickies, brownies, cakes and cordial, yum! Overall, it was a great week.



X'TREME TEENZ '07 REVIEW

By
Aaron 'Plankton'
Plunkett

PHAT IS ALMOST HERE!!!!

By
Jackson Stace

Survivor. Boot Camp. Convicts. Samurai. Underwater Fairies.

If those words sound like nothing but the mindless drivel of a year 9 boy hooked up on too much Stargate Atlantis, then clearly you have never experienced the phenomenon known as Phat... In which case you quite simply need to.

Phat is CCECYOUTH's annual camp for Yr 7-12 and is considered the highlight of the year for all involved. Who can forget the great uprising of Ivano, the saddening betrayal of the Samurai, or the humble victory of Murve (gag!)? Memories abound of great fun, fellowship and digging into God's word.

The time is coming soon to again make Phat history and expand the great tomes of PhatLore*. Phat is precisely 33 days away- depending, of course, when you are reading this (If confused, refer to the actual dates of 11th-15th of April). If you haven't already, grab a Phat07 Registration form from your leader (or download one from www.ccecyouth.com) and sign up within 22 days (1st of April) and come to what promises again to be the best week of the year.

**Mentioned tomes do not exist so please don't waste your time and others searching for them through the jungle.*

GO TO
WWW.CCECYOUTH.COM
TO REGISTER FOR PHAT
AND CHECK OUT PAST
PHOTOS



- 10** - In discussion groups, ask "Why?" to everything everyone says.
- 9** - As a group, ask your leader to the movies and then when you are all there, tell her that you all just assumed he would be paying.
- 8** - Pretend that your leader has been calling you the wrong name all year. "Um...I don't want make a big deal but my name is actually Jess, you've been calling me Lucia for some reason"
- 7** - Go to ccecyouth with a green dot on your forehead.
- 6** - Turn up to ccecyouth in a Karate outfit and pretend you thought it was Wednesday night. In 'frustration', use one of the year 7 boys as a sparring partner.
- 5** - Ring your leader every night after dinner and give them a detailed account of grace including everything from who said it to how hard your mum was squeezing your hand.
- 4** - Ask your leader to explain predestination... every 5 mins.
- 3** - Lead them to believe you have quit school and count how many times they try to persuade you to return. (Particularly effective if you're under 15)
- 2** - Every time they suggest an activity, say to your leader "My parents forbid that sort of frivolity at home and frankly I'm shocked you would suggest it".
- 1** - Ask them what book in the bible they are reading and how they are finding it and then a week later when they ask you, tell them exactly the same word for word.

TOP TEN WAYS TO ANNOY YOUR LEADER

By
Jackson Stace



2007

PHAT . . .

**DIRTY FEET
&
DIRTY SOULS**

**servicing others at
ccecuyouth and beyond...**

Take just a minute to reflect on how awesome our Lord is. Think of all of creation, think on how the Lord made it all and has sustained it through every second of its existence. Think of the story of Israel through the Old Testament, think of how the Lord carried them through their trials, smashed their enemies, and saved them from destruction time and time and time again. Think about the incredible grace that has been shown to us in God's own son dying for us on a cross so that we can be in eternal relationship with him. There is just so much to our God that it really is beyond our comprehension!

Now picture this: God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of all things and Redeemer of his chosen people, and imagine him in the skin of a middle aged man, on his knees in the dust, washing someone's dirty, smelly feet. Sounds crazy doesn't it? But that's exactly what Jesus did for his disciples in John 13 (chase it up now!). That's right, Jesus, the Lord and Ruler of all things past, present and future got down on his knees and scrubbed the disciple's stinky feet clean.

Why would he do this? What on earth could he be trying to show them? That God is a God of clean feet? I don't think so, in fact it seems to me that there's something far

more significant than just feet washing going on here. Jesus washing the disciples' feet was to demonstrate two things, follow this through with me.

Firstly, and most significantly, Jesus washing those feet was symbolic of what he was about to do on the cross. When Jesus defeated sin through his death and resurrection, he didn't clean our feet, but instead offered to clean our souls. Anyone can clean someone's feet, in fact anyone can clean their own feet quite easily, but only Jesus can take away our sins and clean us so that we can be friends with God.

Secondly, Jesus was showing that he didn't come to be a ruler who pushes people around and tells everyone what to do. Jesus came as a ruler who serves his people, even to the point of death! This is something worth thinking about, if we are God's people saved through Jesus' blood, and if we desire to be more like Jesus, then how should we act? Jesus has answered it for us right here - we should serve.

But who should we serve and how should we do it? Well as Christians we should, of course, be serving God with everything we do, but what does this actually look like in our lives? It means many things, things that we hear every week in youth group like reading the bible so we can know God better and talking to our friends about Jesus so they can serve him to. But as well as this, it means serving other Christians.

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1 Peter 4:10 says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace". This means that we should constantly be on the look out to see how we can serve our Christian brothers and sisters. Think about what this means particularly for youth group, let me give you



some examples; if God has given you strong arms, maybe you could help setting up chairs; if God has given you a caring heart, maybe you could listen to people who are upset and cheer them up; if God has given you a clever mind, maybe you could help set up the sound gear or computers; if God has given you a big friendly smile, maybe you could go say hello to that new person by themselves up the back. Don't hear me saying 'only help out if you think your good at something', that's not the case at all! Maybe you don't have a strong arm, that doesn't mean the chairs don't need to be set up, get stuck in and help out anyway!

As Christians we are all about serving God, and one way of doing that is by serving oth-

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ers. Don't be one of those people who just sit in church or youth, listen to the talk, eat the supper, then leaves. Instead, be one of the people who is always on the lookout for what needs to be done, for who needs a friend, for how they can make someone else's life easier. Remember, by serving others, we are really serving God!

Can you think of ways to serve at ccecuyouth? Find this article online and leave your comments.

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**DIRTY
FEET &
DIRTY
SOULS**

**By
Josh Bones**

**5
MINUTES
WITH
KELLY
HAYNES**

By
Alex Hartley

AH Full name?
KH Kelly Michele Haynes

AH Age? KH 21

AH Top 2 or 3 things you hate?

Turning your dinner into a sandwich eg: putting your roast on bread

Mature age students at uni that ask too many questions (sorry if you are one!)

AH If you had to have a soap opera name what would it be?

KH Kellaline-a Mish-a-rina

AH If you could get rid of one of your body parts what would it be?

KH My ankles. They don't work anymore because of too many years of netball but I guess if I didn't have them it would be kind of hard to walk. So I don't know?



AH How long have you been involved in youth leading? KH 3 years

AH Why are you a youth leader?

KH Because I loved youth and it helped me to grow as a Christian and I'd like to do that for other people. I think it's important to get involved in different kinds of ministries as well because god wants us to serve others.

AH What year group do you take?

KH Yr 12 girls - seriously they are the best group to have!! Very encouraging.

AH In what way has this

year group been a challenge?

KH I feel like I don't have enough time to look after the girls and that gets frustrating. Also trying to teach from Revelation when I don't really get it myself sometimes.

AH What other struggles do you run into?

KH This year I'm just really struggling with time I don't have much of it, just trying to fit in uni, work, church, ministries and having relationships with friends... AND doing housework which you seem to have a lot of when you're married... AND its hard and it just seems to get harder.

AH Favourite thing about being a leader? KH

The girls I lead and watching them grow in Christ.

AH Best youth group related

memory from either being a leader, being in youth or both?

KH I have so many!! Playing survivor at youth camps with Al, Sarah and Nic when we were just little tackers in youth ourselves. When youth was at Kincumber Swim Centre... that house rocked!! Listening to Lucy sing on Bec's phone from when they stayed at my house (Sorry Luce it was funny!) Because I've been in youth and now am youth leading I've done a lot of bible studies with different girls and that's been really good and I have great memories from that. It's all

such good fun

AH If you were going to have a sandwich and could only have 3 fillings what would you have?

KH mmmm, tough question... I really like a good sandwich but it would probably have to be chicken, avocado and crocodile.

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

This is my favourite bible verse because I find it so reassuring. At night sometimes where there are storms I get soo scared, I know it's irrational and the world isn't going to end but I can't help it I just feel like that anyway. I love this verse because I know that every night when I go to sleep God is watching over me and it's just a very comforting thought.



**MY FAV
BIBLE
VERSE
AND
WHY...**

By
Alex Hartley

Postal Service - Give Up 2003

Ben Gibbard
Jimmy Tamborello



Give up is the first full album by Postal Service. Synth player Jimmy Tamborello from Dntel and Ben Gibbard singer in Death Cab For Cutie make up the band, both separately renowned for their own work in electronica and indie circles. It is through mail both postal and web based that the two communicate perhaps the grounds for the bands unique and memorable name. The CD is endowed with 80's synth/new wave throwbacks but make no mis-

take the sound produced is in no way derivative. The album opens with The District Sleeps Alone Tonight a melancholy story of broken hearts, apathy and self reflection setting a high bar which the rest of the album easily follows. Other highlights include the distorted and what can only be described as crunchy sounds of This Place is a Prison and the Super Mario style theme of Brand New Colony. Not much ambiguity surrounds the album title Give Up and lyrically we see this continued throughout the album with phrases such as 'I am finally seeing why I was the one worth leaving' and 'I want so badly to believe that there is truth' but for us as Christians it is encouraging to know that Jesus will never leave us as we can see the truth in the gospel. In Ephesians 1:13-14 we learn In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him were sealed with the promised holy spirit, who is also the guarantee of our inheritance... It is this assurance of eternal life that is truly one of the greatest things about being a Christian.

3.5 J-walkies

**CD
REVIEW**

By
Alex Hartley

The Book Thief

Markus Zusak



Normally i don't like books which take place outside my own social context, so when many suggested I read The Book Thief, lavishing me with comments of 'you'll love it' (which frustrated me how did they know I'd love it) and 'the BEST book ever' (really have you read every book there is??) it's safe to say i wasn't convinced. Then, when a copy was given to me, and I had exhausted all my other options, I sat down to read and truthfully I did love it. Set in Munich 1939 the tale revolves around Liesel, the book thief herself, who we meet at age 6. The story is recounted by a nameless narrator yet we come to understand

is one who is 'handling souls to the conveyer belt of eternity' - death. He follows Liesel suggesting hers is 'just a small story really' and gives us insight into the motives and reasons behind her actions. It is the childlike sensibility Zusak brings to the book which makes it of interest to an audience of all ages, an ultimately tells the story of treasures lost and found, really a story for all. It is easy to simply see ourselves on the conveyer belt to eternity going through the motions but as Christians we should be living differently. 1 Peter 2:12 says keep your conduct among gentiles honourable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. It is important that we walk by the spirit as in Galatians 5:25-26 we should not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another but 22-23 growing in the fruits of the spirit so that other may see those things of: love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control.

4.5 j-walkies

**BOOK
REVIEW**

By
Alex Hartley



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Jesus' Bones

This week we have been presented with the claim that the actual bones of Jesus have been found and are now in our possession.

If this is the case then this is an enormously significant archaeological discovery. It is perhaps the most significant find of all time. It would mean the whole Christian faith completely crumbles or at best becomes nothing more than the basis of a program of personal morality that may or may not be adopted as good to live by. But as the apostle Paul says – if Christ has not been raised then we are still in our sins and to be pitied more than all men because we have believed a lie (1 Cor 15).

Is this discovery truly what it claims to be? In answer consider the two sides of this case.

On the one side is a set of very slim circumstantial evidences. On the other is a very impressive set of eye witness accounts, an extensive set of ancient non-Christian testimonies which confirm the eye witness accounts, the existence of the early church, the experience of the early Christians and the perfect integration of all these pieces of evidence into a seamless whole.

Consider the slim circumstantial evidence first.

In 1980 an emergency evacuation of an ancient tomb discovered by engineers unearthed a number of burial boxes (ossuaries). A

number of the boxes had these inscriptions "Jesus, son of Joseph"; "Maria"; "Mariamene"; "Matthew"; "Judas, son of Jesus".

At the time the Jewish archaeologists made nothing of it and simply stored them away with the many, many other burial boxes. They concluded that it was a burial chamber probably used by three or four generations of Jews from the beginning of the Common Era.

The boxes would've lain untouched in the storage facility except that the man famous for presenting to the world the supposed bones of Jesus' brother (it seems a forgery) found them while doing research for a documentary and drew what he says were the obvious lines between the dots.

However, consider the following evidence.

The tomb was tampered with in ancient times and vandalized. Every fourth woman in the ancient world had the name Mary (remember there were three Mary's mentioned in the gospels alone) and Jesus was as common as John is today (perhaps more so). In fact, we have a letter dating from the first century written by someone named Jesus, addressed to someone else named Jesus and witnessed by a third party named Jesus.

The man who wrote the official report when the boxes were first found and stored states that, "The names on the ossuaries are very com-

mon names or derivatives of names." The echo of the names of the members of Jesus' family, he says, "is just a coincidence." Hence the archeologists at the time stored the boxes convinced they held little significance.

Add to this the enormous historical problems that arise as this possibility is contemplated. If Jesus' life didn't end in the way the Gospels' state but rather he married and had children why would he and his family be buried in Jerusalem when he actually lived in northern Galilee? How could he and or his family afford such a burial spot? If it is acknowledged that he was buried there because that was the site of his crucifixion, why was his child also buried there instead of back in Nazareth? And how did he have a child when there is not a scrap of historical evidence he was even married let alone had a child following along behind throughout his wanderings etc.?

Consider the evidence on the other side.

An impressive set of eye-witness accounts - bound together in our Bible are the earliest known records of the life of Jesus. They were included in our Bible precisely because they were early and known to be written by those that saw and heard Jesus and so were best placed to give testimony about him. Not only do these records bear the undeniable stamp of unpretentious historical remembrances, they all unambiguously assert that the Jesus of history was crucified under

Pontius Pilate around the age of 30 (no mention of marriage or a child).

They also are all united in their claim that he then rose bodily from the grave three days later and was seen by many people. These comments are entirely unadorned with the marks of fabrication. They are simple and plain as befits a straight forward historical account.

Further eye-witness testimony is added by the Apostle Paul who asserts that this conviction was proclaimed loudly and boldly by those first witnesses in the city of Jerusalem itself – within metres of his empty tomb.

History confirms much of this. We have an extensive collection of writings by *non-Christian* authors that not only confirm the fact of Jesus' crucifixion but also confirm that the early Christians claim he rose again bodily.

All of this is significant. For this modern discovery to be true it would leave us with only two possible conclusions about all this evidence. Either those early eye-witnesses lied, or they were deceived. The 'lie' conclusion flies in the face of the character of not only the writings of those men but the extra-ordinary lives they lived in sacrificing all to declare the resurrection of Jesus. The deceived conclusion flies in the face of the historical fact that the enemies of the Christian faith failed to bring forward the real body of Jesus. If Jesus was all along buried in a tomb in Jerusalem why didn't anyone point it out to those who kept preaching he was

JESUS' BONES

By
Andrew Heard

risen – in the very city his body was apparently lying? And if they did bring out the body, how did the claim that he had risen take such a hold among the people of the very city his body was apparently lying in?

Further evidence of the fact of Jesus' early death and resurrection is the establishment of the church. Something changed Jesus' followers from cowards who were afraid of servant girls to a group of men who courageously took the news of Jesus victory over death to all the world and in very short order convinced thousands of people (in Jerusalem and surrounding areas) that Jesus was bodily raised from the grave. The change was enormous, so the thing that worked this change must itself have been enormous – a resurrection.

Added to this is the spiritual experience of these early followers. This kind of evidence may not be admissible in a court of law but it is compelling nonetheless.

But finally, it is powerful that all these pieces of evidence explain perfectly the circumstances surrounding Jesus, his life and times and all that followed. They dovetail so well together it only makes sense if it is the simple truth.

By contrast the possibility his body might have lain in a tomb in Jerusalem until 1980 creates a minefield of historical oddities and difficulties – as mentioned above.

In the end it is a matter of the trustworthiness of the eyewitness accounts – men who were there – versus very

slim circumstantial evidence.

Andrew
4th March 2007

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