

PRISON-ASHRAM PROJECT
Rt. 1, Box 201-N
Durham, N.C. 27705

A Project of the
Hanuman Foundation

Christmas Newsletter

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If you have a copy of our book
INSIDE-OUT and are no longer using it,
please send it back so we can pass it on.

The Miracle of The Holy Shroud

When the Holy Spirit walked the Earth as Jesus of Nazareth, He allowed Himself to be crucified and His body was wrapped up in a white burial cloth, then laid in a closed cave. Three days later, the body was gone; only the shroud — the burial cloth — was left. Of the many spiritual mysteries Jesus left for us, one remarkable puzzle wasn't discovered until many centuries later, after the invention of photography. An unsuspecting photographer snapped a photo of the Holy Shroud in Turin, Italy, and found to his astonishment that the negative plate revealed a clear image (front cover) of Jesus Himself.

After several scientific studies and a lot of controversy, it's generally accepted now that the image was "scorched onto His burial shroud with a photothermal flash of radiation," although the same scientists have no explanation for how such a thing could happen. But it *did* happen, and the Holy Shroud is evidence that God's power lies far beyond human understanding.

— actual photo of Holy Shroud
courtesy of Christ Brotherhood.

We Love You All,
Bo + Sita +

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Prison-Ashram Project of the Hanuman Foundation, a non-profit service for prisoners and everybody else. Donations are always needed and welcomed.

Prison-Ashram Project
Rt. 1, Box 201-N
Durham, N.C. 27705

newsletter written by Bo Lozoff
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graphics: Michael Ferguson, Christ Brotherhood
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Will The Real Christ Please Stand Up?

The most wondrous mystery, the most sacred event, is the appearance in human form of the one Holy Spirit. It's almost beyond imagining: The awesome powers of all creation, the unlimited and eternal, in a limited, mortal body; a living and breathing human being, yet one whom by a touch or a glance may turn water into wine or bring the dead back to life. Such a being has walked the Earth not once, but many times. And although each appearance has been very special, the message has always been the same: *CALM DOWN; BE STILL; TURN INWARD TO THE ONE GOD, WHO DWELLS DEEP INSIDE YOU; DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY BY THINGS THAT GLITTER, JUST LOVE EVERYBODY AND TAKE COURAGE, FOR I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU.*

However it's been phrased, that's always been the gist of it. Jesus told us to pray in the closet, alone; Buddha said the "Big Mind" is within each of us; Native Americans taught that Waken-Tonka, the Great Spirit, speaks to us from within; the Jews were to listen for the "still small voice"; the Muslims say "La Illaha Illa Llah" (There is no God but God); the Hindus know that the "Atman", or Godhead, lives in every heart. Who cares how it's worded? It's all the same, because as every religion is quick to point out, there is only one God, one Holy Spirit. And that Spirit has always tried to convince us to catch the real message, yet each time we have gotten hooked on the form instead; not all of us, but by far most of us. It seems to be part of the design of the whole thing — the many and the few.

Many of us are religious, but few are spiritual. Spirituality is a definite level of reality, a mysterious but certain essence at the center of everything we see, everything we do. As C. S. Lewis said, "There seems no center because it's all center." But religion isn't a given; it's man-made, and a quick look around us suggests that maybe it's not made so well. Even when its followers aren't out on the battlefields slaughtering each other, religions seem to compete like so many college fraternities. Ministers, priests, and rabbis function mostly as lay psychologists or community organizers — which is very nice, but has little to do with the eternal mystical truth which is the source of every religion. And now, scientology has become a religion; Rajneeshism has become a religion; if there's anything the world doesn't need, it's more religions!



There's nothing wrong with religion being a path to the One. Each genuine religion through the ages has begun from the divine inspiration or authority of a being who *knows* the one God, and who tells us various ways to live right and turn inward so that we can become the same as they are. But within a few generations, time and time again we've come to worship the religion instead of the One; the particular body instead of the soul. Christians most of all, have no problem accepting that there is only One Son of God, One Light, One Way. The trouble is, even among Christians who try to respect other faiths, there seems to be a rock-solid insistence that Jesus of Nazareth was the only legitimate appearance of this One Holy Spirit. It's considered blasphemy to suggest otherwise. But in truth, this insistence itself is the blasphemy; it chokes and twists the very Spirit it claims to honor.

Jesus said, *GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.* Even during His days on Earth, Jesus sometimes took other faces or forms, almost playfully, as if trying to say "Hey, don't get hung up on what you see! Tune in to my spirit, not my face." Isn't that what happened with Mary Magdalene outside His empty tomb, when Christ spoke to her and she thought He was just a gardener? Isn't it what happened when He appeared to His disciples that same day as a traveller on the road, and walked all the way to another town with them, unrecognized? He even preached to them the whole way and sat down to dinner with them before He said basically, "Hey guys, you gotta stay sharp! This is still Me." In several other passages the Bible refers to Jesus doing such things, like leaving an angry crowd who sought to stone Him, *GOING THROUGH THE MIDST OF THEM*, without being seen at all. He moved in and out of the physical body with ease, because that's no big deal to the Holy Spirit, the creator of all forms.

But have we stayed sharp? How keenly have we tried to recognize the Holy Spirit moving in and out of form? When Jesus said *BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM*, was He referring to the thirty-three-year-old body carried in Mary's womb, thousands of years after Abraham's time? Why then is it blasphemy to imagine that He has appeared as Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and other men and women of all lands and ages? Jesus told us, *I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS; I WILL COME TO YOU*, and He also said *BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.* Has loving-kindness been our guide as we've met people of other religions? Did we see whether native Americans had love toward each other before we massacred them as "heathens" and then tried to save their souls with our gospel of Christian love?



Photo Giraudon.

Since man first drew breath on this planet, the one Holy Spirit has been taking and changing forms so that God's children in every land could have the opportunity to turn inward to the One Way, the narrow gate. Certainly Jesus said *I AM THE LIGHT AND THE WAY*, and *YOU CANNOT COME TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH ME.* But He also said, *FEED MY SHEEP.* Did the disciples run out to buy sheep food? And He said, *HE THAT EATETH MY FLESH, AND DRINKETH MY BLOOD, DWELLETH IN ME, AND I IN HIM.* Did anybody start chewing on His leg? Why then have we used His "only way" statements in the most narrow, literal sense, and looked down on three-fifths of the world's population who relate to the Holy Spirit in forms other than the single costume of Jesus of Nazareth? Blunt as it sounds, it's nothing but bigotry, no matter how eloquently we phrase it, or how politely we mingle with Jews and Buddhists and Hindus at spiritual garden parties.

Jesus addressed all these issues during His ministry. He came to tear down such empty-headed doctrines, not add to them. He tried to remind us that the Spirit is personal, that it has nothing to do with piety or respectability. He said *JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE*, yet for centuries we have assumed that anyone who calls himself a Christian is closer to the Christ than a person who calls himself a Muslim or a Sikh. It's scary to be wide open to love with no labels, so we've entrenched ourselves in separate religions and have taken refuge in our own definitions. Jesus said, *BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES, WHICH DESIRE TO WALK IN FANCY CLOTHES, AND LOVE GREETINGS IN THE MARKETS, AND THE HIGHEST SEATS IN THE CHURCHES, AND THE CHIEF ROOMS AT FEASTS; WHICH DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES* (take their money) *AND FOR A SHOW MAKE LONG PRAYERS*. Yet millions of sincere Christians support the fear-and-hate gospels of men like Jim Bakker and Jerry Falwell, simply because these self-righteous emperors loudly proclaim their connection to Christ. When will we learn?



Nearly two thousand years after Jesus of Nazareth tried to show us how to love one another and live in the richness of the Holy Spirit, we find our poor beautiful planet closer than ever to being blown out of the skies—not from any inevitable disaster like the sun leaving its position or the stars falling from the heavens, but simply from our own poverty of spirit; our fear and greed and terrible insanity. Spiritual sanity is not as flashy as religious cheerleading, but it's the One Way which has been preached since the beginning of time. Straight is the gate and narrow the way; it's only wide enough for one of us at a time.

The Christ Spirit is truly indestructible, eternal, just like the Bible says. When we dig in deeply, in our own "closets", we find that Christ, Narayana, Buddha, Allah, Yahweh, Waken-Tonka and all the other names evaporate into one indescribable presence which exists at the center of who we really are. It's all one; all-one; al-one. We have to do it alone. *THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS NOT OUT THERE, OR OVER THERE, OR UP THERE; BUT LO, IT IS WITHIN YOU.*

Religions can help, but only if we *use* them rather than blindly follow them. Religion reaches perfect success when we no longer need it at all, when we're so deeply connected to the Spirit within, that we become universal, spiritual human beings. It should be a boundless joy to a minister or rabbi who "loses" such a person from his congregatio. Jesus said, *IS IT NOT WRITTEN IN YOUR LAW, I SAID, YOU ARE GODS?* Isn't a Godly person beyond labels?

Right now religions are very strong and getting stronger, but the world is spiritually insane. If we have any hopes of pulling ourselves out of nuclear madness, we have to pull ourselves out of spiritual madness first. And if the world does go up in flames, all the more reason to get straight with God in a hurry. Either way, I pray that we celebrate Christmas 1983 by abandoning all religious divisiveness and beginning to live together as God has always instructed us to do—with great kindness and charity. Whether it's the crazy guy next door or the bitchy cashier at the grocery store or a faceless dictator half a world away, we can honor Christ by remembering to love and forgive, and to stand very very strong in the living Spirit, which is beyond all names and doctrines. If the person next to you calls it kootcheykoo, who cares, as long as the love shines through?



THE WORDS I SPEAK UNTO YOU I SPEAK NOT OF MYSELF, BUT THE FATHER THAT DWELLETH IN ME, HE DOETH THE WORKS.

—Jesus Christ

LETTERS



Dear Bo,

I got out of prison a little over a year ago. I went to Tucson and attended the 3H0 Drug Program, but it didn't work out for me. My father had a stroke and I returned to Michigan. I was in Michigan for only three months when I was arrested and sent to prison again, this time for 20 years with a 10 year minimum sentence. If I don't win my appeal, I'll be here until I'm 39 years old.

I hurt someone I really cared for, that's what put me here. I can't forgive myself, let alone expect anyone else to forgive me. I can't understand why my life keeps going in a direction contrary to my wishes. I try and I pray, but my ego takes control for just five minutes, and I do something I regret for the rest of my life. Is it really my karmic destiny to be nothing in this life that I want to be?

I appreciate all the help I got from you before. I guess it's time to start all over again. I guess with ten years of lock-up to look forward to, I may finally be able to get a grasp on myself. I hope so, I never want to hurt anyone again. I never wanted to this time but I just cracked and before I knew what I was doing it was over. I've suffered a lot in this life and I guess I'll suffer a lot more before it's over. It's all because I can't control myself; never have been able to. Any insights you may have would be appreciated.

Love, Dennis

Dear Dennis,

I remember you from the last time you were inside. Sorry to hear things didn't work out. But I think your image of "starting all over again" is way off base. You started on your spiritual search a long time ago, and your recent violence doesn't mean it's all been marked "null & void" or anything like that. Like it or not, everything that's happened has been a part of your spiritual journey. Don't feel like such a failure. Your own actions have brought more pain into your life, but it's still a road to the same place; now it'll be a rockier road, but a road nonetheless.

You didn't mention whether you still have a problem with drugs or booze, but I suspect they had something to do with your screwing up. Right? Changing old behavior patterns takes a lot of work. Maybe your heart was in the right place, but you needed to put more effort into staying straight or into doing stuff like meditation, counseling, yoga, and so forth. Maybe you didn't keep away from bars and hangouts; maybe you needed to keep a better diet. These are all very practical, very controllable things, Dennis. The bottom line always gets back to you. If you want to make your spiritual journey the number one priority in your life, you can do it; it's not your "destiny" to go on like this. And I'll always be willing to help anyway I can.

Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

My last letter was written in a very freaked-out state. But from my earliest memories, I've always been a disturbed person. Things that have carried over into my adult life. I was born with these things and they have gotten worse. I was born with (as my father says) a mean streak; the need to dominate, if not physically, then psychologically. As I grew older I attempted to repress this anger I was born with. I started drug use early but drinking was my downfall. Drinking brought out all my anger and still does.

I'm a lonely person and need to have a woman around me. I fall in love easy but it has never worked out for me. My nature seems to thwart me in everything I do. I try to be a good husband (married twice) or boyfriend but it just never works out.

I had a nice girlfriend this time, but she caught me in the sack with her best friend. Two days later she wanted me to come over and help her fix her car. But actually, it was only to tell me to get my stuff out of her house. We had a big argument and I forced her to have sex with me. After I left, she called the police and told them I had raped her (I didn't hit her, I just used psychological force). She

lied to them about our relationship and made them think I was just someone she had met in a bar who came over and raped her. There was a very nasty trial and I was found guilty. My case is being appealed and I will probably get a new trial.

The facts are, I did love this woman and I just cracked up for awhile. I have never done this before to a woman. Usually I just get pissed, and I have hit them or slapped them before. What I did was wrong and I know it. I'm sick about the whole thing. What I want to know is why? Why has my life been surmounted with problems since I was a child? Why is it only getting worse? I've thought about killing myself, but damn it, I believe in reincarnation, and my next life will only be worse.

I may be in here until I'm 39. What can I do when I get out with all this hate I'm now growing? I love God very much. I accept what I've done and where I'm at, but I don't see any reason for it. The things I've done in this life haven't been bad enough to account for everything that has gone wrong in my life. I've always been a very emotional person, but now I'm becoming hard and callous. I'm in a rut and I'm burying myself further. I have some awful thoughts going through my head that I can't get rid of even though I try. I'm frightened of what I'm capable of doing. I'm really frightened by what I might do whenever I get out.

I don't want to be mean or hateful. I don't want this girl to hate me though she does. I want to be good and know God. I want His love. He used to talk to me sometimes through drugs and meditation. But now though I pray every day and try to meditate, it just doesn't happen. All my mind does is run wild on horrible thoughts. There's a reason, I know there is; and God knows what it is, but I don't. I need a helping hand before I sink in my own shit. Thank you for listening to me. I'm sorry this letter is so negative, but I have to get it out. I really have no one else I can tell this to.

Love, Dennis

Dear Dennis,

Definitely sounds like sink-or-swim time for you, as you wrote. The thing that jumps out at me is, you seem to know all the right stuff, but you're still missing it by a mile. You can use spiritual buzz-words all day long—"accepting" what you've done & where you're at, what you need to do, etc.—but you're not really doing any of that. Your mind is still laying it off on your childhood, your hardships, and bad luck. You cry, "The things I've done in this life have not been bad enough to account for everything that has gone wrong in my life."

But what accounting system are you using? What accounts for a sweet little baby getting cancer, or old people getting mugged, or a farmer losing his crops? Any of us can sit around feeling that we don't "deserve" what's happening to us; that never helps, because it's completely without wisdom or faith. What was supposed to happen in your life? Look around and find the people who have lived with no confusion, no struggles; there aren't any. When you say things have "gone wrong" for you, it sounds like a plan was broken. What was the plan?

To really begin unloading your suffering, you have to be a lot more honest with yourself than you've been. Sometimes it may help to understand the past in order to change ourselves, but you're using the past as an excuse for having no control in your life. You're wasting the present by being trapped in the past. What you most need right now are patience, self-honesty, and self-restraint: Patience with how long it may take to quiet your mind and straighten out your life; self-honesty so you stop blaming anything outside your control; and self-restraint so you stop creating new karma through old, unwanted behavior patterns.

You have all the right ideas about God and the journey, but now you're back inside. You've hoped that since you had a lousy childhood, God would allow you to take a pill or swallow a drink, and jump to the head of the line because you're such a good guy underneath it all. But Dennis, we all are! The work is hard for all of us; it's slow and low-key and takes place in the course of how we spend every moment of the day.

If you get mean when you drink, then you should never drink again. If you get depressed or confused out on the streets, then you have to find a counseling center, church, ashram or monastery — some place you can get a little help in a calm environment. What I'm trying to say is, you should move carefully, like a guy who's had three heart attacks and knows he has to take things slowly.

If you lose your appeal and have to stay in for a long time, you have to face things as they are and do what you can do. Don't be so concerned with the flashy outward changes like last time, like wearing a turban or changing your name; that stuff is pretty childish if you're not making genuine deeper changes in yourself. Just let your wisdom and maturity unfold by studying your life all the time, and by sticking with meditation until you learn how to sit alone with yourself without being freaked out by your "horrible thoughts". Try not to be so reactive to such thoughts; just watch them and study them from a distance. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. And of course, write me anytime; I'm your friend.

Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

Whenever I receive a letter from you I always have to read it quite a few times. The first time my fragile ego freaks out. "What's he saying?", I ask. "Surely he must have mixed up my letter with somebody else." So I set it down and think for a few hours. When I read it again the truth always rings through. With each successive reading, my ego barriers are splintered and finally my heart opens to what is really being communicated. Thank you!

In 1976 I paid \$125 for a mantra from TM (transcendental meditation). It was the best money I ever spent. The problem now is that I'm kinda hung up on mantra meditation, though now I usually use "Shree Ram" since Ram Dass mentioned it in a lecture in a 1980. I've attempted to try Vipassana meditation, but I couldn't get my mind to follow my breath. I just can't seem to get in a calm state. My mind is often filled with thoughts that aren't good.

I still smoke cigarettes, I'm trying to quit but my will power hasn't been up to it. Occasionally I smoke pot or hash in here. I really haven't been getting enough exercise, I need to work on some yoga postures but I don't know very many. Could you perhaps advise me on a few postures and techniques that I should stick with for awhile?

There's a lot of people in here interested in working on themselves. Our Sikh (3H0) yoga class sometimes has as many as twenty people show up.

Whatever you think would help me would be appreciated. I often let other people read your letters or the material you send me. Right now, though, I know I need to calm down. I need to relax my mind before I can even begin to worry about where I'm headed. I have always loved God, but I've never loved myself so I guess that's not really loving God, only fooling myself. I really need to feel better about myself. I do want to be a useful person in society, I really do. I pray that your continued support will help my lotus to unfold, no matter how long it takes or what kind of obstacles I need to overcome.

Love, Dennis

Dear Dennis,

I'm really glad my letters seem to help you look at yourself more clearly. That's all any of us can really try to do for each other, so it's nice when it works!

Your problem about "being hung up on mantra meditation" is a false issue. It doesn't matter in the least whether you use your TM mantra or Shree Ram or your breath or anything else. It's not a big technical deal; all you're trying to do is calm your mind by concentrating on one thing. Choose one and then stick with it, and treat the others just like any other thoughts: You just notice them come up in your mind, you let them go, and get back to whatever you're concentrating on. Don't let your ego play games with the method you choose.

It might help if you cut drugs from your diet; not only pot and hash, but also caffeine and sugar (coffee, soda pop, candy, etc.). You'd have an easier time sitting still, and it would also be easier to quit smoking — which then would make it easier to sit still. I know it would take self-discipline to stay away from these

things, but you may as well face right now that what you want — a calmer, clearer mind — takes a lot of effort on your part. Maybe some people can eat or smoke whatever they want and not be affected, but I don't think you're one of them. You have to take some steps to stop being so wired all the time.

You asked me for yoga postures, but if you're in a 3H0 class, you have plenty of postures and breathing techniques. Again, the point is not to find more and more, but just to do the ones you know about. You might also try going to sleep every night like this: Lie flat on your back with no pillow, and mentally relax every part of your body starting from the

toes and going all the way up to your head. It'll take awhile to get used to going to sleep this way, but it's great for calming down and getting really super sleep.

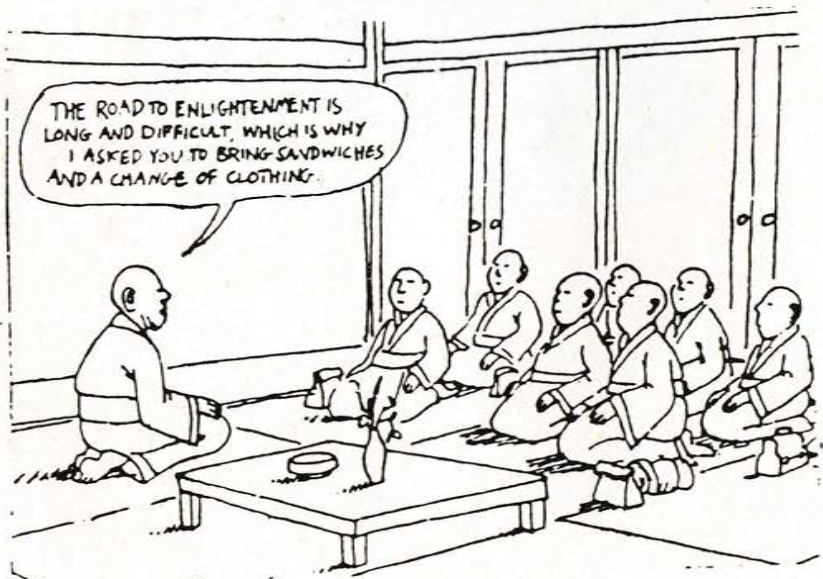
Try to realize that meditation practice isn't easy for anyone. You don't have to have a calm mind to do it; if you did, you wouldn't need to meditate. Just keep taking the time to sit perfectly still, even if your mind is going wild. In time, your self-control will progress from the body to the mind, and it'll get a lot easier. Jesus said, "In your patience, you possess your souls"; so try to keep a good, light sense of humor while you're paying all these dues. You will get what you pray for; it just takes time and effort.

Love, Bo



CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED SO HIS SPIRIT COULD SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HE SACRIFICED HIS BODY FOR THE DHARMA. HE NEVER DIED, HE NEVER DIED. HE IS ATMAN (THE SOUL), LIVING IN THE HEARTS OF ALL.

---Neem Karoli Baba



OFFERINGS.

Judith Stevens, manager of the A.R.E. Over The Wall Program, writes:

We send free books from the Edgar Cayce readings to any inmate who requests them. We also have a pen-pal service for those wanting to correspond with another person who is interested in the inner process of change.

Many of our staff members and speakers visit the prisons where A.R.E. study groups meet. We are all in this together and we would love to hear from anyone who might like books on meditation, dreams or other related topics.

Over The Wall Program, A.R.E., Box 595, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Scott Gassman writes:

I would like to announce the Volunteer Visitors Program at the Adolescent Reception Detention Center on Rikers Island. The purpose of the program is to find and place volunteers to visit with males 16 to 20 who have no visitors or family support. Please contact:

Volunteer Visitors Program, Montefiore Medical Center
Rikers Island Health Services, 15-15 Hazen St., East Elmhurst, NY 11370

For free books on the practice and theory of Buddhism, available in English and/or Chinese, write to:

Public Resources Dept., Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions
2150 Center Ave., Fort Lee, NJ 06024

The Christ Brotherhood sends out some very far-out materials, all free, which include things like handwritten gospels found at Nag Hammadi which most churches refuse to recognize. They also send a free cassette music tape, partially recorded in prisons. Here are some excerpts from their newsletter, PLANET CRESCENDO:

CHRIST WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN



The separation between the doctrine of Life and the explanation of Life began with Paul who knew not the ethical teachings set forth in the Gospel of Matthew, and who preached a metaphysicocabbalistic theory entirely foreign to Christ and this separation was perfected in the time of Constantine when it was found possible to clothe the whole pagan organization of Life in a Christian dress and without changing it, to call it Christianity....

My Religion
Leo Tolstoy

READ THE GOSPELS

AYWTEINACINESE
PENTICUT'ETONIE
ACOCUNTHYTNXN
INNOYMATUNKEY
INTHKEPTACICYN

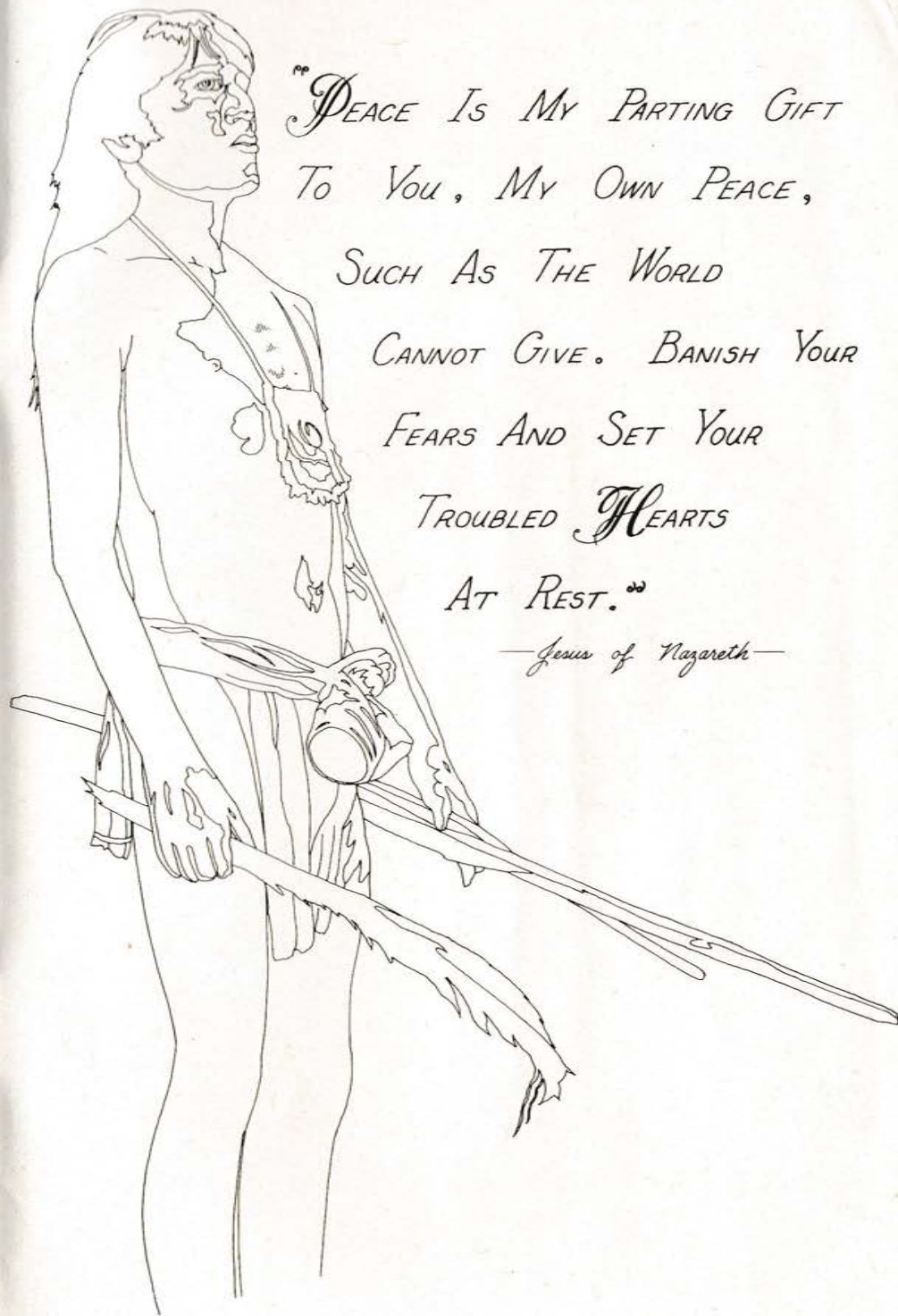
THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS was discovered in 1945 at the site of the very earliest monastery in all Christendom, near Nag Hammadi in Egypt, where it had been buried for 1600 years. While not recognized by the Church, it is an authentic collection of Christ's Sayings as recorded by the Apostle Thomas. See for yourself, write for a free copy, you will be amazed!

Christ Brotherhood, Box 11051, Eugene, Oregon 97440



The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Waken-Tonka, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.

— Frank Chilcote,
XAT Medicine Chief



*"PEACE IS MY PARTING GIFT
TO YOU, MY OWN PEACE,
SUCH AS THE WORLD
CANNOT GIVE. BANISH YOUR
FEARS AND SET YOUR
TROUBLED HEARTS
AT REST."*

— Jesus of Nazareth —