



YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE?

Crisis and Solidary

Where has all
our money gone

Alternative Funds

Social benefit for
humanity and nature

Is It Love or Sin ?

Discussed Article
about Homosexuality

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Deat reader,
Everybody takes it in the hand, but not all take it into the mouth, especially if they have a lot of it: One doesn't speak about money. We do! We even honour it with a whole issue, because money alone is not bad, it can only be spent on bad things, at the worst. We show you that there are alternatives. The mobile freak church (MFG) wants to get a lot of money quickly to work for the kingdom of God.

The making of the sick messenger costs money too: printing, shipping, photos and translation need to be paid. Much of this is done voluntarily, meaning without financial compensation. This is why I thank all co-workers at this point: the (guest-)author, Juppi, our office worker who is responsible for shipping, subscriptions and advertisement administration, Andi, who designs the cover and the editorial, Muck for his illustrations, Frank for his ideas and advice, the photographers and layouters, and last, but not least, my husband Andreas, who is responsible for the final layout.

Up until now, the translators, photographers, layouters and our office worker have only got a small allowance. We would like to give our regular authors and the chief editor payment. For this reason: my request to you, support us with your paying subscription, donation for the translation into English and recommend the Sick Messenger to others.

I will recommend myself for the next few months, because I need to write my thesis at last. Pray for me, that I make it in time.

My regards and blessings,



Bettina,
for the TSM
editorial staff.

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Editorial

Mirko Blessed Good-bye

After 15 years in the leadership of the Jesus Freaks movement, Mirko Sander has solemnly been released from his office. The participants of Willo Freak blessed him good-bye and wished him very well for the future. Martin Dreyer, founder of the movement, honoured Sander as an enduring and very creative leader with a great talent for organisation. In return for his work, some members of the movement handed him a voucher for a visit to his favourite distillery in England. To get there from the airport, he will be granted to drive a rented Jaguar – an old dream of his. Mirko said that he wanted to keep on serving the movement but at another place.

Deaconry Team Elected

The deaconry team, which is part of the new leadership team for Jesus Freaks Germany has been elected on May 23rd 2009 at the Willo Freak in Borgentreich by all regional and section leaders present. The deaconry team consists of a managing-committee and an overview team, called Ü-Team [in German - Übersichtsteam]. They have been initiated and blessed together

with the rest of the leadership team made up of the regional and section leaders. So the new leadership team does not only consist of three people, as it used to, but about 35 people.

Info for Donors

The Jesus Freaks International-financial team says a sincere "THANK YOU", to all who have supported the supraregional level of the Jesus-Freaks-movement financially in the last year.

To improve the communication with the donors, the financial team has set up the email address [spenden@jesusfreaks.de], that you can write to with your questions, feedback and ideas. Via this channel you can also ask for more information on the statistics on donations in 2008, for example, or send us you email address so that the finance-team can contact you more easily in future. All donors who are waiting for a confirmation of donation for 2008 are asked to mail their mailing address to [spenden@jesusfreaks.de]. The work with donations is made easier if the intended use for the donation is specified ("donation [for..]") and mailing address or email address of the donor is added.

Obadja has Broken Up

The heartcoreband Obadja has broken up, according to a statement by Dominik, Julian and Robby, (you can read about this on the Obadja-hompage) because band member Frede has joined the Wort+Geist-movement (word-and-spirit-movement). On the Obadja-Myspace-page Frede confirms the breakup. The new album will be released despite this development because the songs were recorded before the breakup.

Storch's Blog

Storch's blog "Die Schönheit des Simplex" ("The beauty of the simplex") is partly being translated into English and Spanish. There you will be able to read some of the theological insights of the pastor, preacher and author of our rubric „prayer“.

Who Are You?

We, the authors, layouters and translators, write, create and translate The Sick Messenger for you. All info about us at „Contact“ see below. But who are the readers? Please, tell us: who you are, where you live, maybe to which church you go and which subjects, texts are you interested in.

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Help - My Money Is Gone!

The financial crisis and solidary economy

The daily news show us how we are surrounded by quite a mess: real estate crisis, banks going bankrupt, economic stimulus packages 1, 2, 3, car-scrap bonus, even Daimler is losing. All in all: the financial crisis.

Due to the high unemployment rate we are all affected. It is threatening us or has become a reality for us already. The annoying thing besides having less money is that you have to fight and compete harder for yourself. At the workplace or in order to even get a job. When going to the job centre. When learning or studying, you always have to be better than the others. We are losing out on time with God, with people. I see myself exposed to all this and don't know what is going on ...

I want to have a different perspective for once – an outside one: what is the actual meaning of all this – what is its purpose? I am talking about getting up early, dragging yourself to training or work just to have someone bawl at you. Well.. In economic theory the experts agree that the core of economy is that we meet our need for material goods (cars, coke, suncream ...). The easiest case would be that I do business for myself: by getting up in the morning, producing the goods I need and then go home. That's it – as easy as that. That is economic activity!

Today we engage in economic activity by dividing labour and by being highly specialized. By doing so we produce much more than each one of us could produce working alone. A big number of jobs is not even in production any more but in

working on distribution fights about market shares – against the competition. Our economy has become so efficient that everyone could get a share of about 400€ a month if there was an even distribution. That means that nobody would have to starve if we only distributed the gain better!

/ And who is it now that is having a crisis?/

The problem of the industry is that it doesn't get its stuff sold! Our problem is that the highly effective economy needs less and less human work force to produce the goods and the surplus of goods is no use to us without a source of income. Unfortunately, in our society the surplus is not just given away for free. It does sound rather strange, in fact, to call something a crisis where we can produce enough and have to work less and less to make it.

As a possible way out of the crisis they suggest that the state goes into debt even more and gives us (our own tax) money back so that new cars can be produced and bought. Old cars have to be dumped although they still serve their purpose, namely to get us from A to B. That also sounds rather strange.

If the economy is there to serve the people and is not only an end in itself and if we could supply everyone adequately: why don't we approach economic activity as a social question and take the need of everyone as a criterion? This is the question where "solidary economy" starts. It believes in an economy where efficiency, partaking in prosperity and sustainability are equally taken into consider-

ation. The principle of competition should no longer be the centre of the economy as it leads to selection of the best accomplisshers and those who lose out. In short: Solidary economy means to take care of one's own needs while damaging others and the world around us as little as possible. It is possible that the economic efficiency will be reduced e.g. through fairer distribution of jobs.

I think that it is not only the self-interest that serves as motivation for work. As Christians, we fortunately can see this from another perspective. Starting point is the fellow human being whom I should love and not fight against. In my opinion, compassion is a strong motivation. Within the family, the own flat share, with friends it is usually natural to pay attention to the needs of others. When it comes to behaviour in the workplace this is unimaginable. Politics tells us to be egoistic, especially because economic activity is supposed to work best like that (which it doesn't when we look at its various crises) but the underlying factor is an even deeper fear of the others (companies, states) – that they floor us if we do not floor them. People act upon fear which contradicts the compassionate love of God for each other. And this leads to a separation of society between rich and poor. At the same time I see examples of a longing for a compassionate life. In monastic communities this concept has been working for hundred of years: living in tune with life, work and prayer. In the history of the (new) social movements the search for togetherness is obvious in

district projects, communi- ties, cooperative ventures ...

/ How can the idea of a better economic activity become real? /

Solidary action starts from below! I can look around to see what kind of impact my actions have, whether they damage or help others. I am a part of the economic cycle as a customer in a shop or at my workplace where I get my wages. Wherever I spend my money I have an impact. Saying that, the question is appropriate whether it makes sense to make a lot of money to be able to donate for humanitarian means. The question is whether my actions (when earning money) damage or help. It would be completely meaningless to do good in return for having already damaged someone.

In the supermarket I do not see how the goods were produced. I only see the price in Euros and Cents. It is invisible where people or the environment were compromised. There is no apparent connection to the news about poverty, exploitation or environmental damage. But in our globalised world this is all connected. Is it (for me, too) easy to not think about that in the shop.

Therefore seals of approval are a good thing. The European “Bio-Siegel” [seal for organic production: <http://www.biosiegel.de/english/homepage/>] ensures that groceries have been produced by meeting the criteria of environmentally friendly production. The fair-trade seal stands for fair prices for coffee and cocoa farmers to make sure that they are not exploited.

As an individual it is very hard for me not to just go with the flow and to act in an egoistic way. If I pay more for organic groceries or let my fellow go first, I seem to have got the bad end of the deal and then I lack the money. As a Christian I can look at the world with God’s love and get the energy from God to act less egoistic. Being good to your fellow human beings to represent love in the world is the aim and at the same time the starting point of better economic acting. Therefore it is an important step to go looking for people who share this value. One example is the “Foodcoop” where people join in together and buy bigger quantities of organic groceries than they could individually. This makes the prices cheaper and the distribution is organized privately. Churches decide to swap their coffee to “Fair-trade”. There is the idea of “Tauschrings” [exchange networks, like: „LETS – Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes] where services in the private sector like baby-sitting and tool exchange or even tomatoes from one’s own garden can be “traded”. There is also some kind of “payment” but the personal contact helps to see and

treat one another respectfully as fellow human beings.

Another interesting option for better economic activity is the so-called “Regiogeld” [regional money]. The idea is to have alternative “money” which is only valid in a certain area like a big city or a region and which enables companies as well as private individuals to exchange goods. The “money” here remains reduced to its actual function, that is being a means to trade. The advantage of such a network being local is that you will respect someone more if there is the chance of meeting him or her somewhere else again. I personally believe that this alone is not enough: we also need to let God open our hearts for each other. So everyone can start bit by bit to withdraw from the system of competition. When it comes to food and energy I already see a concrete picture. For other vital areas for e.g. medical high-tech, transportation infrastructure or global goods, most questions are unsolved. It should also be the task of politics to answer them as they want to have ways out of the common financial crisis. I think we need a different framework for the economy and a joint effort of many and last but not least God’s power to create such a solidary togetherness also in the field of economic activity.



Hendrik Lenk (31) lives in Leipzig, studied Environmental Sciences and is active in the Speak-Network. He likes to circle around the city by bike.

The Beneficial Tithe

Of handling money biblically

In the bible is written: the Mammon is there to serve us, and not the other way around. Plus money's not there just for us, but for God and all others as well.

Sure it makes sense that my money should serve me. It's mine after all. I worked for it or was given it because someone is so very fond of me. That's why the thought of my money not being my own needs some getting used to. Still, that's just what Jesus seems to imply when telling the parable of the talents which the rich man distributes among his workers so that they make proper use of these loan collections – and give them back with increased value later (Matthew 25:4-30). For me that means my money isn't mine, I only manage it.

Once this funny idea has sunk into brain and guts, it's awfully liberating. My money doesn't belong to me, therefore I don't have to worry about it all the time. My money belongs to God, though that implies I can't just blow it. For me, being responsible starts where I'm considering what I really need, arrange a monthly budget, and financially move within the very limits my account balance dictates to me. One rule of thumb is: ten percent for God (in fact the tithe), ten percent for the savings book, and the rest for living. Responsible economizing doesn't stop where I'm making an effort not to fall into debts. And if that does happen, then I pay them off as soon as possible.

Another thing exceedingly liberating in concern of handling little money is God's statement "Don't cling to money and be content with what you have." God said: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

(Hebrews 13:5). And I live in a country where, in spite of all the discomfort at the employment centre and the pension cut, one needn't famish, and doctors treat anybody. That's one reason to be thankful even with short cash and trust in God going on caring for us.

God makes it quite clear, even if it hurts, that our money isn't exclusively there for us. "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:10). Whether that's ten percent of gross pay or net pay, perceived or calculated ten percent doesn't matter. What counts is giving anything at all. And it's exciting to test out whether God's keeps his promise.

Giving isn't always a piece of cake for me. Still, I have given it a crack over the last years. During a visit at a pentecostal church in Nigeria, I gave wilfully for the first time. And when I returned to Germany, my dad had increased his monthly "sponsoring" for my studies. Coincidence or blessing? Some other time I promised God to give my next salary away. And he promptly gave me an unplanned job and thus unplanned money. To give away. But that's how it should be, in fact. Giving out of a free heart is the most important thing, I believe. That doesn't always come easy. Especially when that thought's

eating you up inside: "But that's mine!" Then it helps to see what else is mine. How well-off we are in our country, and what others lack.

Ever since I have started being generous every now and then, the jobs have been flying at me meaning I don't have to miss out on anything whenever I give money. Well, that doesn't need to be a rule, "give in order to get". The rule is much more: "Give away and have confidence that you're not lacking anything." Donating, giving, being generous doesn't finance your entrance card into happiness, let alone into heaven. But "the least of what you did for my brothers of, you did for me."

Finally – threadbare as the saying may be – money can't buy you happiness and your account balance shouldn't be a measure for your own happiness.

I try to see myself as an administrator of God's property. "Let me give what you want to give", that's my prayer. It's hard sometimes. After all I've earned all the money! But could it be that God enabled all this? Bestowed on me all those jobs, which are even great fun to me? When I look back my generosity was rewarded every time. Isn't that evidence of God's faithfulness?

Anja Reumschüssel



Are We Happily Destroying God's Creation?

A call for a change in our thinking

How much will a litre of petrol cost when there is no more crude oil left? Or shouldn't we start being more careful with this planet's energy resources before our wallets force us to?

I think the subject of energy demonstrates well that not everything can be converted into money even though people always try to place a monetary value on it such as when the overproduction of CO2 is counted as "blow-off". Whoever can afford it carries on as they have been doing and whoever releases less CO2 than allowed gets money paid out to them, though the goal should always be to generate as little CO2 as possible. But how do we create economical incentives? Is that at all possible?

Is a change of thinking not possible without a reward? Wake up, smell the coffee, we are happily destroying what our daddy has created!

Because I can still afford the fuel, I drive the 200m to the letter box because I'm in a rush. And because I don't see the Argentinian woods on the packaging that are burnt annually for cattle pastures, I im-

mediately order myself another burger because it tastes so good.

I don't want to attack anyone personally here or make everybody follow some rules and then judge anyone who doesn't stick to them. I would be the first person to break the rules anyway because I live in a 3000 km long distance relationship and regular flights can't be avoided.

An issue that is taking on more and more relevance is the one about privileges. If we are all brothers and sisters, why do I feel in me the right to have health insurance and a flat for myself and receive financial support from the state?

I think that a lot of our brothers and sisters have no idea that people can think in this way. They were not born in a state where they were surrounded by such patterns of thinking. Which one overrides the other – community with people with the same nationality passport or community with God's family? Or isn't it about awarding all people with the same rights and privileges? In other words the same ones as my own.

Shane Claiborne inspired me recently with his way of

thinking. As he considered going to Iraq he weighed up what it would cost to go to Iraq and what it would cost not to go to Iraq. Staying at home and watching the evening news versus plane ticket and mortal danger? (The flight was arranged for March 2003 and in the end, he was there when Bagdad was being bombed). With this thought, he certainly didn't mean the financial aspect, he meant what would the consequences of him going there be for himself and his life and for the people he would meet and talk to and who would read his books.

It is important to know that the value of something cannot be determined by the price. So that that doesn't sound like something taken from a poetry book, it is important to dream of, to think of and to live out alternatives. The more tangible this becomes, the easier it will become for others to look for starting points in their own lives and implement changes.

Ulli Hippe

Do not conform to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to test and approve
what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(Romans 12:2 NIV)

The Loan-Dolphins

Of social cash items

Sure anybody knows what loan-sharks are, thanks to the economy crisis they are more unpopular than ever before. This article focusses on another species from the ocean of finances: the loan-dolphins.

Yes, they do exist, the humane helpers of the financial world, who are responsibly on the spot whenever there's imminent danger and your own potentials have been exhausted. I got to know one loan-dolphin personally. His name's not Flipper, but Oikocredit (OC), whose work Manuela Weitzmann introduced me to. She's the director of the supporting initiative of Oikocredit Baden-Württemberg. OC is organized as a co-operative based in the Netherlands and has got 30 years of experience now. The international organization is a pioneer in the range of loaners focussed on social benefits.

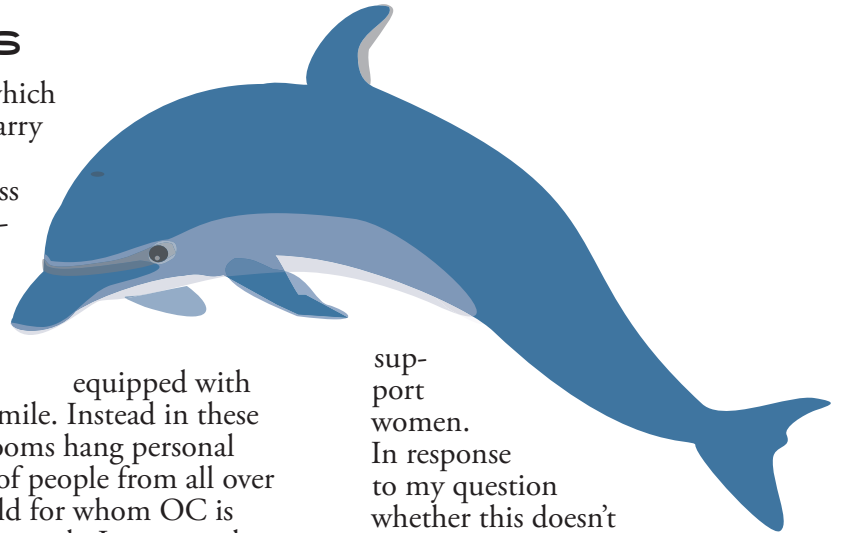
Even before our talk starts I'm getting aware of an initial difference between loan-sharks and loan-dolphins: no pretentious glass palace, but an inconspicuous, simple building with a lift which you even have to open the door to yourself. And for a moment I feel a bit affected with my dark pinstriped suit. On the sixth and top floor are the offices of the OC supporting initiative Baden-Württemberg, which due to its 4,500 members is one of the biggest in Germany. I'm a few minutes early, through the pane of the entrance door my eyes fall on a large Oikocredit poster showing an African woman at work. Ms Weitzmann arrives punctually and kindly welcomes me. While I'm taking some photos of her office, the director prepares a coffee for me. I notice the usual framed success formula slogans are not

there, which are to carry self-assuredness and motivation and are

mostly equipped with a paid smile. Instead in these office rooms hang personal photos of people from all over the world for whom OC is doing its work. I suppose that not even one success slogan picture, well-thought-out as it might be, could even come close to the motivation potential of these photos.

Ms Weitzmann sits down at a table with me, and we start our talk with her explaining the organization and the principle of the OC's work to me.

The basic principle is easy to get: Those who've got money invest it, those who're in need of it can loan it. In order to invest money at OC you buy cooperative shares, one share equals 200 €. Thus you become a member of your local supporting initiative, which is really not an insurmountable obstacle with an annual fee of 20 €. The annual fees cover all costs of the regional supporting initiative, which means that the invested money will benefit the actual purpose by 100 %: to provide money to poor people to whom no normal credit institution would loan any. The international organization covers its expenses by the lending rates. Some 80 % of the capital at hand is made available to micro finance organizations (MFO) as a loan. 20 % of it is used as a loan for rural and trade associations or cooperatives in financially weak countries. MFOs are organisations that grant microcredits to individuals, and they predominantly



support women.

In response to my question whether this doesn't effect resentment in the men, Manuela Weitzmann admits this does bring about problems occasionally, but experience shows (and now she's got a smile on her lips) that women invest more effectively, are better in budgeting and hence are the trustworthier credit repayers. They focus on the family's welfare rather than the wish to live it up large as most men do, she goes on. And now I can't help smiling either.

The lending is bound to obligations, e.g. ecologically sensitive work. I wonder whether they go by western standards and therefore maybe expect too much. I learn that the obligations are deliberately worded softly and allow leeway. Still they want to reach the highest possible standard not just by demanding but also by supporting at the same time. The loan-dolphins appeal to me more and more.

The MFOs provide great consultancy and train the borrowers. As a security measure, borrowers must produce a small collective which bails conjointly if need be. On the internet I've read about pay-back quotas of 95 %. Think I'm going to ask one of the sharks how their figures compare.

Of course we also talk about how the investor benefits from the investment. The return of

two percent certainly won't convince the classic investor, who in his mind is already calculating the annual inflation rate. But presumably that's not the idea, anyway. The return is modest, in exchange it doesn't vary in amount. But this concerns only the economic return, for with this investment, as opposed to the usual backers, the social benefit adds. And that doesn't appear as boring as clinical curve charts, but instead beams out of the faces on the above mentioned photos.

Ms Waitzmann also tells me about a personal success story. She points to a photo on the wall showing four persons in a paddy field on the Philippines. An international study group of Oikocredit, among them Manuela Waitzmann, is speaking

with a field owner. With great passion she tells me the story of those paddy farmers, who became marketable through the Philippine organization UMFI and its loan. UMFI in turn obtains a loan from Oikocredit, since no local bank is willing to lend them money. With the help of OC and UMFI the farmers have switched to organic products, market their rice via UMFI, and they sell it in national supermarkets. They get fair prices, which enables them to build stone houses, become mobile, and work more independently, for instance through the purchase of their own rice mill. Just one example for the social return of an investment at organizations like Oikocredit. My personal favourite return: the strengthe-

ning of the self-esteem of the so-called poor, for they aren't recipients of donations, but instead business partners in whose abilities one puts faith.

Of course you can also invest "normally" and buy, for example, a plasma TV from the higher return. Perhaps a nice report on microcredits is televised on Arte, flicker-free of course ...

We were talking for one hour, 60 impressive and exciting minutes letting me see credit transactions in a totally new light. Dreaming; I leave the building. Didn't Flipper once defeat sharks, too?

Achim Schellenberg

www.oikocredit.org



Manuela Waitzmann (2nd on the left) in conversation with the Philippine director of a paddy farmer cooperative (4th on the left)

Out Of the River of Red Ink !

Berlin must make savings,
Katrin has already started

While Katrin was doing her daily shopping I talked to her via mobile about the subject of debts. She's an inhabitant of Berlin – a town with 3.4 million inhabitants, whose mayor formed the sentence: "Berlin is poor but sexy."

The 26-year-old trained nurse, studying nursing management at the moment, slipped into the debt trap six years ago. At that period in time she was pretty careless with her money and didn't think much about her expenses. When later payback demands from an authority were fluttering into the house, the mountain of debt continued to grow and by last year reached a peak with her overdraft fully drawn upon. The monthly income credited to her account was already used up at the beginning of the month and didn't even cover food anymore. She called on a debt advisor and asked him about the likelihood of private insolvency. But he made it clear to her that with her finances there was still hope.

She went to her bank and let all of her obligations be summed up to a credit whose rates she was still able to get together. She begged the bank to deactivate her overdraft. Shopping miles and shopping centres became "no-go-areas" for her, and at the time of consequent saving began: 10 € for one week was to suffice for everything. That's less than 1.50 € per day and one third of what according to the standard rate Hartz IV [welfare] recipients are entitled to have for food only.

So for her, there was just the proverbial daily bread and every now and then also pasta. She tried to keep a book of household accounts, but gave it up soon. Today she helps herself get by with four envelopes containing the same amount for each week of the month. At the beginning of the month she draws that money with her cash card. Until the next month the card, which had made the squandering of money easy for her, remains in safe keeping. Thus impulse buys are virtually impossible.

As to her mountain of debt from then, only a four-digit amount is left. Given that, she admittedly can't make any big leaps forward. Still she's got more money at hand now so that something can be spread onto the daily bread. In everyday life and in her spare time she has to be creative. At the Willo Freak meeting she enables stressed out parents to have some children-free hours; in exchange the parents pool the money for her attendance fee.

As for donating, she had to extend her knowledge, too. In the beginning she tried to give a tenth even when she was highly indebted in order to receive the heavenly return in exchange. After this failed to materialise, let alone return double-, fifty- or hundredfold, she asked God why she herself didn't see any of the financial miracles that others were talking about. Thus she wasn't able to invest in God's kingdom anymore. And it seemed like her heavenly father had just been waiting for it, since a little later she experienced a financial

miracle as somebody gave her a larger amount of money.

She makes available to God



that little extra that maybe others don't have: her time and her ideas. For instance she's taken over responsibility in the association of her church and contributes her skills. Her group is a typical Jesus Freaks church in which a lot of members are short of cash, and so they thought things over together and found ways to make church trips possible for these Freaks, too.

At the end of the interview Katrin's also done with the shopping for the party she's giving tonight. "For such extras I need to put money aside before, though.", she says while the cashier is scanning her goods. She's already got the total sum in mind before the last article lands in her trolley.

Ronny Schellenberg

Sheepholder-Value

When the bible becomes the business section

Everyone is familiar with the shepherds from the bible. We know Moses and David as shepherds. Psalm 23 is known to everyone. At least the shepherds from the manger and Jesus as the Good Shepherd is anyway. If we think about shepherds, immediately their function to take care of the sheep comes to mind. But what about the economical background of a shepherd's work? The following four verses really came as a surprise while I was reading the bible:

„Look after your sheep and cattle as carefully as you can, because wealth is not permanent. Not even nations last for ever. You cut the hay and then cut the grass on the hillsides while the next crop of hay is growing. You can make clothes from the wool of your sheep and buy land with the money you get from selling some of your goats. The rest of the goats will provide milk for you and your family, and for your servant women as well.“ (Proverbs 27, 23-27, Good News Bible)

While I was reading these verses, I was surprised to find so much practical instruction in the bible. Please do not get me wrong – I do find the bible practical, but sometimes I miss very concrete advice like this for everyday life. And you should also ask what this text is doing in the bible.

You would rather expect to find this passage in a book bearing the title „The Seven

Ways to Efficiency: principles for personal and professional success“. The text could also be a conclusion by the debt counsellor from the documentary soap : “Raus aus den Schulden” [Come out of debts], if we imagine the existence of television and reality shows at the time of Moses and all the others. In this episode he would be challenged to get a run-down animal farm going again.

In any case, for me this constituted a light bulb moment, when I first stumbled across these verses. Ever since then, I find myself from time to time adopting this perspective. Noah would become the winner of a business award for technical innovation, Abraham would become a successful manager in a medium-sized agricultural business, Joseph an outstanding economical politician in times of economic crisis, Moses would be-

come a top manager, Nehemiah a project management and fund-raising expert, Paul would become a passio-

nate promoter and inventor of guerilla-marketing and Jesus – well, at this point I will stop, otherwise I might push it a little bit too much.

Marco Schellenberg (29) has been living and studying in Leipzig since October 2008. However, after one semester of business studies he discovered that a proper Jesus Freak should study social work.



Mobile Freak-Businesses

Making money for God's mission

Once upon a time (in the year 2004 AD) there was a Willo Freak where the leadership team at that time introduced "Freakass". For everyone who wasn't there: At a leadership meeting before, all the leaders of regions and different areas had been "forced" to do some

saws. These activities definitely changed some lives amazingly!

Shortly after that the worship band Obadja started to practise in the Mauerpark in Kreuzberg and at Alexanderplatz because they were lacking a practice room at the time. Because a lot of people stopped and listened, they took the chance

gospel, many more got saved and are still living with Jesus.

After that, Obadja started a three month tour and did, in principle, the same thing everywhere in Germany and Europe, sometimes it was wicked, sometimes not so much. Following this was the Freakass-Convoy, 40 people without a plan or destination driving through Germany doing street activities, heavy shows and wonderful miracles.

This Convoy again was the beginning of the Mobile Freak Church (MFC). Four to five people, two dogs, sometimes a child on the road with buses through the wilderness with a stopover in Portugal, with a vision to live on the street and to bring Jesus to the people. Many of you might have noticed that through different blogs and videos.

For two years the MFC has had a break now and most of you might think that it is over, BUT careful: don't be deceived!

After a mother pointed out to a father for the third time that she again didn't have money



Briefing at the Convoy

funny Jesus street activities. This was all recorded on video.

The idea was wicked and so the Freakass-Week was started in Berlin shortly afterwards. Freaks & friends from all over Germany were invited and about 60 people came together. For one week they went through Berlin with megaphones, flyers, guitars and drums, costumes and chain-

and started preaching. It was so great that they did it more and more often. They had the idea to arrange demonstrations and invite other bands.

No one except God can say what the whole activity achieved in the end, but it has been prayed for and prophesied for hundreds of people, thousands have heard the





Camps with Caravans

for nappies he started feeling a bit queasy and began to think.

After two of the four in the team started leading, the Ark in Munich MFC seems to have fallen through.

/ But God doesn't give visions just to try them out /

Some people seem to have sunk their teeth into this vision and don't want to give it up.

So a problem journal was made which included the following:

Shit, no money, don't want to live on donations and endless frustration about meeting so many people and having to leave them behind in their shit like e.g. the 12 year old punk (orphan) from Zwickau who I'll never forget or the guy in France who has been living in a bush for years, tattooed his own face with a biro and wants to die because he hates the world (and cries his eyes out when you pray for him) or the 16 year old girl who has been

on heroin for 5 years now, has aids and won't live much longer.

So the following things were needed: a lot of money, a place, time and that's why there is websein now.

The basic question was: how can we, the vision pursuers, make a lot of money in as little time as possible?

A friend who is also a counsellor (werdermann dynamix) encouraged us to find an ingenious idea and put it into practise.

So we brainstormed what our abilities were (IT, business economics, design & sales) and how we could use these ideally and effectively. After night long discussions we found our business idea:

We're gonna make web pages (woo!) , but a lot lot cheaper and more wicked than all the others.

In order to do that we locked ourselves for more than a year into our home office and developed a system that enables us to create web pages

in a fraction of the usual time and so we can offer them for a way better price.

This is the plan of action: make money through dirt cheap web design for everyone, buy a farm yard and have time through perspective working part time (at the moment it's still double fulltime).

If you want to push along this vision with us you can pray for us, give us feedback, recommend us or become a partner.

Katrin Jacob has a daughter, is married to Benni, is studying business studies and takes care of the finances in the company; she's member of the Jesus Freaks Berlin.



Dominik Narinder has two charming daughters, is married to Frauke and is the CEO of websein Company. He is at home at the Jesus Freaks Berlin.

More info: www.websein.com

I have a Dream.

The Freak-Academy: Have the Heart to Think

Have you seen it? On the internet the memos that Rumsfeld sent Bush every morning during the Iraq war were doing rounds: pictures of soldiers, who folded their hands around their machine guns to pray. And the subscript said: "Here I am, Lord, send me!" Such things continue, the worst that the world has ever seen. It makes no difference whether these pictures were put together by a minister for his president or by a bad journalist for his reader. The picture of a Christianity, that is able to turn the world into a nightmare for people, is too familiar to us. – If something like this develops out of this thing with God, then I'd rather have no God. When the Christendom is in the position to wage war, when the body of Christ is able to torture people, we must be able to judge whose side we are on.

And I don't believe that it's all done away with by worshipping and praying. Even blind

action leads – despite its necessity – usually only to even more atrocities. I believe and dream, that we as Christians can come together and do it better that we've been doing so far. I believe we need to think about what we can do, that we have to think very hard where

We need to know why things happen and why thinking is so difficult. I dream of Freaks who have the heart to think.

The FLT [Freak-Leader-Training] does not exist anymore, but FrAK, the Freak-academy, where something like this thinking, discussing and doubting should be possible does. We are looking for masses of people who read and think for themselves already, but also for those

that want to learn this and can listen. In autumn we will have the first Weekend. Get in touch, dammit!

Andi
Gehrlach

FR. AK

DIE FREAK-AKADEMIE



we stand in this culture, that continues lost wars and can still believe in God. I dream of people that don't just accept answers, but rather doubt than taking answers from people who themselves do not ask questions. I actually dream, that we want to understand, who we are and that we don't unpack old statements, but read all good books that we can find, that we do not read only the Volxbibel (the Bible in contemporary German youth language), but everything that is currently being written on philosophy, theology, social sciences and history.





I Have, Therefore I Am?

Just thinking: About greed

The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed – sorry for not having another word – is good. Greed works, greed is right. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed in all its forms, greed for life, money, love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind.”

With these succinct words Gordon Gekko, played by Michael Douglas, in the movie „Wall Street“ (1987) gets to the heart of a fact that turned out as truth again and again in the course of mankind’s history: Greed is a motor for development.

Because man is constantly unsatisfied with the status quo, he starts searching more for himself. The world that surrounds us is ruled by that principle. Ideologies have arisen because one person proclaimed the whole truth. Borders of states have arisen because nations lusted after further land for their people or because they became so insatiable in their greed that they had to be put in their place by others. Technical improvements were made because a part of mankind wanted to be better armed or faster

on the moon. Economic systems have come into being because a group wanted to be more powerful than the other.

The desire to have more material or immaterial property, the thirst for power or – simply – the greed is a motivating force for man to act. The fiasco of the Tower of Babel didn’t change that fact either. God merely set limits to man’s striving (Genesis 11,1-9) .

What is the basis for this omnipresent greed?

The theologian François Bovon writes in his commentary to the Gospel according to Luke: “Behind *pleroneixia* [Greek: greed] lies a fear that makes us accumulate more than the others have and more than it is necessary for life. And behind this fear is an incorrect conviction namely that to be would depend on what you have.”

You are what you have! That means vice versa, if I have nothing then I am nobody. Then I am a loser in the social-Darwinian fight for the leading places. The fear of the nothingness makes you greedy for life, love, money, knowledge.

Amid this human restlessness Jesus speaks: “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12, 15 New International Version)

As a matter of fact, in the midst of a crisis that causes

our Babylonian towers to collapse you can hear astonishing stories. There are people having lost all their belongings and camping in their cars on the street in the front of their former houses who say that they find something there that they have lost among all their property. They explain that there is a solidarity among one another they had never known before. One helps the other. The little that is left is shared. That which was destroyed by greed is cured amid and in the end by the crisis. Life can come back to the essential.

Jesus does not only give a warning to us in chapter 12 of the Gospel according to Luke. He administers us a medicine against the greed. Because we can know, that we have in him the promise for his kingdom, the fear of the nothingness can’t rule our life. Instead we are influenced by the striving for exactly this kingdom and in this way by the essentials. (Luke 12, 31).

Francois Bovon writes (see above): “If the believers are ruled by the kingdom of God and not by the fear of shortage, they will find the right relation to money. They know, that a minimum of it is imperative for life, even if it would only be to testify the Gospel but they are able to do as they want with the rest.”

Daggi Begemann

Giving Love the Benefit of Doubt

Why Christians have to convert when it comes to homosexuality

This article was first published at „Der Kranke Bote“ No. 1/2009. It caused a large discussion among Jesus Freaks. We’ve got many reader letters. Some people finally had the heart to come out as a homosexual. Obviously there is a need to talk about in our movement. At Willo Freak a round table took already place. So we want to give you the possibility to read by your own what is agitating the Jesus Freaks Germany.

Ted Haggard was a Christian role model. Successful evangelical pastor of a megachurch in the USA and influential president of the NAE, the National Association of Evangelicals in America. In this role he judged

/ How would you feel if someone told you your identity was sinful and abnormal to the core and that the Lord abhors you ? /

publicly practised homosexuality. However in 2006, following public accusations he had to confess to having committed “sexual immorality“ and buying drugs from a callboy. For many non-Christians this involuntary coming out was proof of the bigotry of evangelical Christians.

/ The other /

Haggard stepped down from all posts held. Although he has had “therapy“ and is now convinced that he is heterosexual, the evangelical scene who once looked up to him has abandoned and excluded him. The documentary filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi sought him out two years later (the film was shown at the end of

January on the channel HBO) and accompanied him as he travelled the country as an insurance agent with his family with rather mediocre success. “At this point in my life, I’m a loser“ he said into the camera. Nobody from the Christian scene seems to care for him.

The media debate about Christival [a German Christian youth meeting] in the past year gave off the impression that the youth congress was exclusively about whether or not homosexuality is a sin. And this issue is sadly threatening a division within the Anglican church. When we look at the fruits of evangelical teachings about homosexuality, we see a history of hurt, marginalisation, cantankerousness and hate.

Those affected are caught between a rock and a hard place.

/ And us ? /

Even among Jesus Freaks, opinions differ widely - everyone does just as he pleases (see Judges 21:25). Jesus Freaks once formed to be a church for outcasts, so we should also be there for non-heteros. And lesbians and gays who are new to a Freak group would of course be welcomed. But what do we teach about homosexuality in the movement? Some people accept homosexual Christians who are in a gay or lesbian partnership

into their group but deny them of leadership positions.

Then there are those hammer bible extracts. But not because they hammer an idea home but because they are used by many Christians (sometimes in an apologetic, friendly way but more often than not, in an ice-cold way) to hammer people over the heads when it comes to homosexuality.

How would you feel if someone told you your identity was sinful and abnormal to the core and that the Lord abhors you? What if at the same time you want to live the way God wants you to and the bible is important to you?

/ And the bible ? /

When we say that we will only stick to what is in the bible, then what we are actually sticking to is how we understand and interpret the bible. We read parts of the bible such as “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.“ (Leviticus 18:22 KJV) and link them with our contemporary ideas of homosexuality. Or the scripture in which Paul mentions “abusers of themselves with mankind” in his catalogue of sins – it is obvious that this is against homo sex – or maybe not?

I believe that there is a divine principle behind these extracts that applies to everyone: sex that is separated from a responsible loving relationship is not good for us in the long run and does not correspond to God’s desire for a successful life. We should not share our most intimate places, nakedness and dignity with someone just because

it is hot. If you do that then you are only being used and are using the other person. One night stands, infidelity, group orgies and prostitution are perversions of God's principle of love just as the sexual exploitation of young men by older wealthy Greeks is, as Paul condemns it in 1. Corinthians 6:9.

We do not know today exactly what was going on in the Israelite's camp to make God step in with such harsh words. The whole paragraph is based on "against sexual confusions" as the original inhabitants of Canaan practised them, such as all forms of incest but also sex with animals. What is interesting is that shortly before the man/man-ban came the banning of the use of children as human sacrifices for a false God. This

points towards pagan rituals from which the Israelites knew they should disassociate themselves. If all forms of sexual perversions are listed here, then surely the faithful gay couple that physically shows love and affection is not one of them, but sex just for gratification and cultic purposes is.

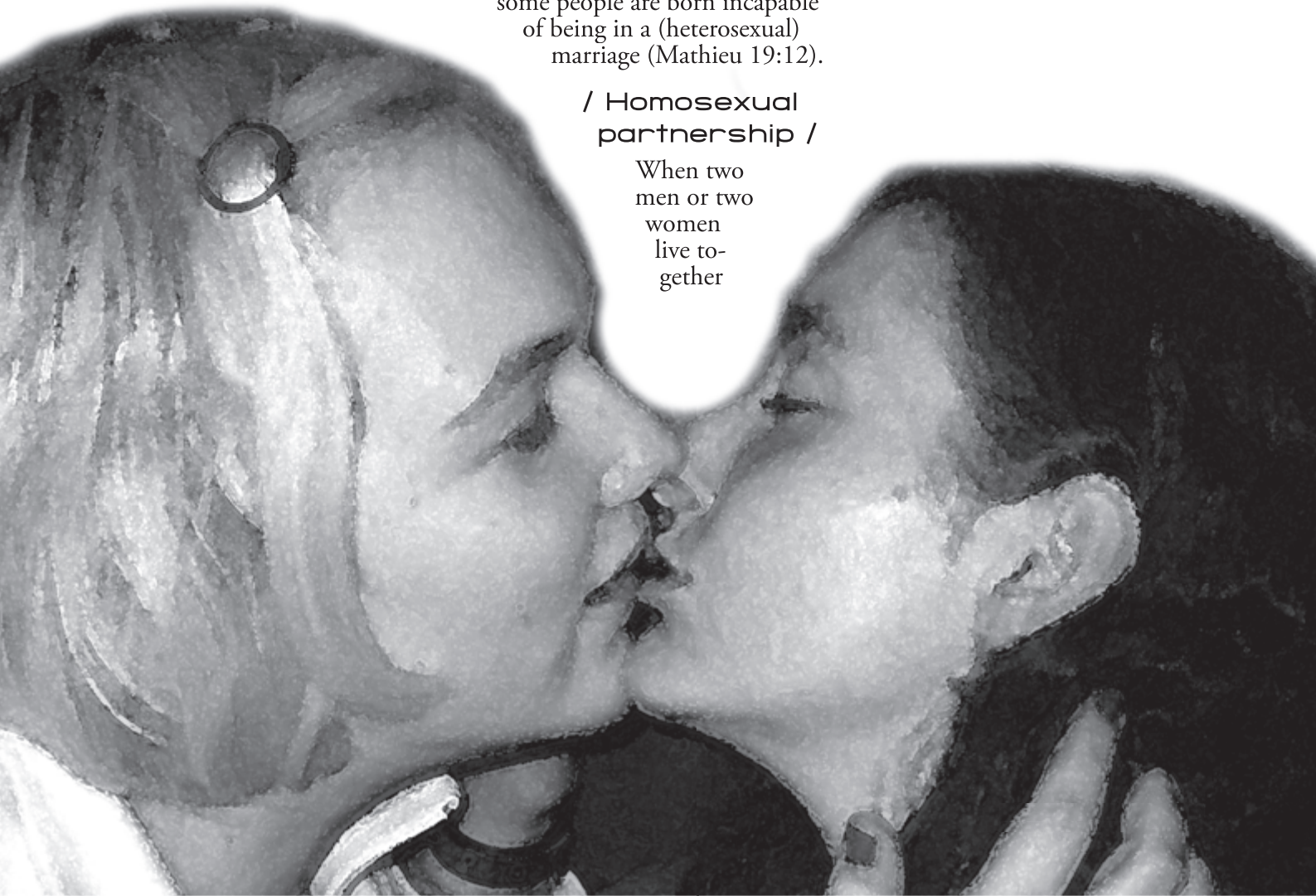
The argument that God created man and woman with the corresponding sexual organs and that therefore any relationship that is not a heterosexual marital one goes against Creation does not convince me, particularly as it is not taken directly from the bible. At this level one could argue that God's creation is colourful and diverse, sex is not just for reproduction and even among heterosexuals, every person is slightly differently polarised. Maybe this is what Jesus meant when he said that some people are born incapable of being in a (heterosexual) marriage (Mathieu 19:12).

in a committed relationship, let the world know that they love each other, support each other financially in a civil union and then go to bed with each other, are they not following Creation's model for love? If considered in this way, we should be glad when homosexual couples want to have their partnership blessed by the church. They have decided for the divine principle: sex and responsible love belong together. Maybe I'm mistaken in one or two places. But it is time to compete for a more balanced view of homosexuality in the church. That is what we heterosexual Christians owe to homosexual Christians. That is what we owe to a lot of people who maybe could get to know God if we Christians tore down the barriers.

Frank Hartkopf

/ Homosexual partnership /

When two men or two women live together



Barbecue with the Family

Church portrait: Jesus Freaks Marburg

Once upon a time or maybe twice or three times, a few Freaks in Marburg set about founding a church group. We really are the third generation of Freaks who have started up a church group in Marburg with the intention of keeping the group going. So it was that seven or eight motivated daredevils met some years ago to finally make everything better.

In the beginning, we were just a small bible group. But we were ready for Jesus, for a Jesus group formed by us and for barbecued sausages. So the small bible group prayed a lot and didn't stop asking God for his help and advice.

And God really did act and lots of people wrote us emails asking about when the new group would finally get going. And because we also wanted to have barbecued sausages, we invited all our friends and people who had written to us for a barbecue. Our first Jesus session as a church group finally got underway in September 2005.

We got in contact with a local barkeeper who received us very warmly and ever since then, we have been holding our church services in his pub. The room was much too big for us and there is still room for us to grow into although we now have just under thirty churchgoers. But we have everything your heart could desire. Stereo and stage are there and Uncle Peter, the pub landlord, cooks spaghetti for us every Sunday evening.

Eating together at the end of the evening has become very important to us, as we have time to chat and chill out. Sometimes we go out for a drink or have a cosy night in wat-

ching a DVD. In summer we often have our services on the bank of the river Lahn. There are small groups of people gathered there who are having a barbecue, playing frisbee or drinking beer and we can blast them with "good news".

As far as the people are concerned, we are not a particularly young group, actually the age range is very broad. Marburg is a town that people "pass through". The fluctuation is high because lots of people leave the group after school or further education. To begin with, we were just pious Christians from the two Marburg bible schools but our composition has changed considerably since then. Now, there are more students from the uni with us, people with and without work, school pupils and individualists. Many people get to know us through our homepage.

Our goal from the very beginning was that everybody in the group should have

a say in the most important decisions and that everybody should shape the church services and church group life.

That is why we have formed bible groups and other small teams and groups who take it in turns to devise a church service. In this way everybody has the opportunity to bring in elements to the services that are important to them, to say prayers that suit them or give a sermon or something completely different. What is missing in our happiness is a praise band. So every now and again, the band "Deep Feelings" has to make us happy.

So that's just about everything there is to say about us. If you're ever in Marburg or at Freakstock, you'll have to ask us if there's anything else you want to know.

Your Family

Maria Brech, Tim Gerspach

Church Profile to Cut Out and Collect

- Name and Town: Family - Jesus Freaks Marburg
- Homepage: www.jesusfreaks-marburg.de
- Church attendants: 20-30
- Founded: 2005
- Departments: high fluctuation
- Dogs: 0
- Children: 0
- Married couples: 2
- Worship bands: Deep Feelings
- Female quota in leadership: 30 %
- Small groups: 4
- Special: Maria Brech gonna marry the Pope.

