



# Allen Creek Scene Investigator

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3 ~ JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004



*As we lift up our soul in prayer to the living God, we gain the beauty of holiness as surely as a flower becomes beautiful by living in the sunlight. The Kneeling Christian*

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## MAKE A DIFFERENCE; MEET A NEED

It was so clear to me: if Christ Followers don't do something to help this situation, it won't matter if we are right. The situation: Mexican families in cardboard boxes for homes. The latest wave of news about the AIDS crisis in Africa. Seeing World Vision children online, who just need \$30 a month to live. The steady stream of needy persons who call the church office. The plight of Christians sold as slaves by Muslim militants in the Sudan.

It was in all these situations that the thought hit me: it doesn't matter if the church is right, if we don't meet these needs.

Now you need to know something about me. I'm not a bleeding heart – even when I should be! To my own shame I admit that I lack compassion for hurting people. I hate handouts and free-rides... I was raised to believe in personal responsibility and hard work, and that people with opportunity and freedom ought to make the most of it. And I still believe that the best way to help a person socially is to help them spiritually, because sin is what fundamentally wrecks lives.

But here's the thing: if followers of Jesus Christ don't do something about the needs of the world, we have no legitimacy to talk about God's Solution to our most fundamental need. Friends, the great competitor of biblical Christianity today is relativism. And relativism asks the question, how do we know what's right? "Maybe your right isn't my right," etc. But we need to hear this: relativistic people are open to WHAT WORKS.

So when you consider the person in your life who is asking spiritual questions – what will turn them to even consider Jesus Christ as a legitimate source for answers? What will first grasp their attention in a marketplace of ideas that is crowded with truth claims is when they see something WORKING: us, at AC3, working together to restore life to a closer semblance of what every human knows instinctively it ought to be: life, community and wholeness, physically and spiritually.

Lest we forget, I remind you that this principle works in reverse too. Some deceptive cultic groups, that ultimately trap and enslave people, first hook their audience with good works. We don't claim to have the truth BECAUSE we meet needs... we meet needs, BECAUSE the truth works. The truth ought to have it's practical outflow. But it doesn't always.....**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**

*There is nothing less threatening, or more safe to give your neighbor than a free gift that meets his felt need.*





## THE JOURNEY~ EXPLORATION

If you've been around AC3 for any length of time, you've probably heard someone talk about QUEST. Maybe you've even wandered past the QUEST Center in the Lobby and thought, what IS this QUEST thing all about?

Simply put, QUEST is the name we have placed on a comprehensive series of group experiences designed to help the participants move from wherever they may be in their spiritual journey – onward, into deeper understanding, life change and finally, full devotion to Jesus Christ.

QUEST as a program, looks like this; three separate groups which are independent from one another, but are designed to interconnect like the stages of a rocket. The three groups are:

**INVESTIGATIONS** This 6 week group is designed around YOUR questions about faith. "Why should I trust the Bible?" "What about evolution?" "How come God let's bad things happen to good people?" These are all great questions and they deserve great answers. The environment is open, friendly and geared for discussion, not lecture. There are no dumb questions. Whether you're skeptical about Christianity or you feel like there are just a few "road blocks" in the way, INVESTIGATIONS will launch again January 28, 2004.

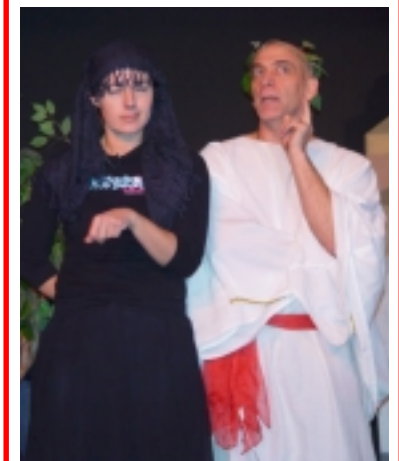
The second stage of QUEST EXPLORATION is **FOUNDATIONS** This group meets every week to fill in all the gaps in what Christianity is all about. Over 12 weeks, you'll learn everything you ever wanted to know about the Christian faith. "How can Jesus and God the Father be the same, but still different?" "How are Christians supposed to behave..for REAL?" "What does God expect me to do with my money?" "How does forgiveness work?" The basic tenants of the Christian faith are explored in a comfortable and fun setting with a group of folks who are on the same journey you are!

**CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN COMING February 21, 2004!** Learn how to make a lasting difference in the lives of those around you by sharing your faith. Most people are uncomfortable with the word EVANGELISM. It reminds us of street corner shouting, door to door sales and really bad hair pieces! None of that has to be part of sharing your faith. Learn about your own personal style, and how you can make a difference in the lives of those around you without compromising who you are.

**AC3 MISSION COMING January 24,2004!** Learn about the vision, mission and purpose of AC3. This class is also required in order to become a member of Allen Creek. Learn why AC3 does what it does, what things are important to us, and what we believe. A fun, interactive event that provides a "peek under the hood" of what goes on around Allen Creek.

Watch the next edition of ACSI for information about the other QUEST Electives: **NETWORK** and **LIFE on PURPOSE** and **Applications**.

## Holidazed Photo Album





## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### SEEDS OF GRACE

*“The purpose of Seeds Of Grace Ministry of Allen Creek Community Church is to help provide the basic needs to all who regularly attend, whether believer or seeker, by being the hands and feet of Christ and putting the focus on the spiritual as well as physical needs of Snohomish County.”*

(Mission Statement, in part). From the hearts and spirits of two women and one God came the idea for “Seeds of Grace”. This ministry is a budgeted part of Allen Creek’s monthly income, and offers four types of community outreach for Allen Creek Community Church. The creators and directors of this service are truly spiritually gifted in the discernment of the needs of the people of this church and the larger community of Snohomish County.

**The Benevolence fund** is available to help Allen Creek attendees through tough times. We all have financial need at one time or another as we struggle to become faithful stewards of our finances. This fund is there for us in our (hopefully one-time) desperate need for a little extra.

**The Community Fund** is available to non-attendees of Allen Creek for the same reasons. It is an outreach offering to the community of Snohomish County at large. Julie LaMascus and the front office staff have some on-hand resources to meet immediate need and then refer people to Dee Turner or Helen Lawson for larger need requests.

**Small Group Projects/Community Outreach Projects.** Does your small group want to help someone out? If you need a little extra cash or need the whole activity funded, you may contact Seeds of Grace and they will contribute what they can.

**Seeds of Grace Projects.** Have you heard of “**Master’s Feast**”? This meal is provided the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at Word of Life church in Marysville. The volunteers for this feast have created a small community that prays before eating and welcomes everyone with open arms. Come serve one Tuesday and experience community and giving at its finest. Then there is “**Stitches of Love**”. This small army of women knit or sew outfits for premature babies in critical condition, and make quilts and afghans for the elderly in retirement homes or wherever they are. They are recruiting people to help them out—for the needs far outweigh the means. Patterns are given to the volunteers and they work at their leisure. Can you help out? “**Graceful Connections**” are those postings on the bulletin boards in the bathrooms that try to connect people who have a need with those who have an offering through “want ads”. All postings must go through Dee Turner. Do you have a skill or some “extra stuff” to offer others who may need them?

For more information contact Seeds of Grace at [seedsofgrace@ac3.org](mailto:seedsofgrace@ac3.org). Here, in the Seeds of Grace ministry, is the heart of Allen Creek Community Church. In this outreach program, the word “Community” is truly emphasized by action.

## Troubador’s Christmas Photo Album





## FOOTPRINT ANALYSIS

### Kids Just Wanna Have Fun!

Kreek Kids is a safe place where kids can have fun each and every Sunday morning! If you would like more information about our children's ministries, check out their bi-monthly newsletter link found at: [http://www.ac3.org/kids\\_youth.htm](http://www.ac3.org/kids_youth.htm) or hard copies are available on the Information Tree, located in the Kreek Kids Check-In Center. You can also contact Twila Crain at 360-659-7335 or [youth@ac3.org](mailto:youth@ac3.org) for program details.



## TEEN SCENE

### Middle School Students Gone Wyld!

Middle school students enjoy a variety of wyld and fun activities that are designed just for them each and every month. From exciting off-site events with a seasonal twist, to the fun of attending a bi-weekly Wyldlife area event on Tuesdays, there is always something going on for this age group. Two recent off-site events included a Murder Mystery Party and a Random Acts of Kindness Night where cookies were dropped off at unsuspecting recipients homes.

Middle school students are also encouraged to join the Sunday morning 8:45 AM class designed just for them. Sunday morning is a time where students take a deeper look at basic biblical truths and what these truths mean to them. Want more details? Contact Tod Corser 425-334-8064 or [tlcorser@yahoo.com](mailto:tlcorser@yahoo.com)

### Attention Senior High - Party Central is Back!

If you are a senior high student looking for a way to connect with other students like yourself, we have several options for you!

First, our quarterly Party Central is back! ACT3 youth ministries (Allen Creek Teens) will continue to sponsor exciting large group events that give you an opportunity to invite your friends to and will revolve around some type of awesome music, food and fun.

The fall Party Central pulled in two live bands and also offered a mega X-Box tournament. Giveaways included cash prizes, a guitar and DVD player. The next Party Central is slotted for March so watch the youth kiosk in the lobby for more details as they become available.

Secondly, join us weekly at The Shop for on-going fun, learning and friendship building activities. Tom and the student SWAT Team (Students With A Testimony) are continuing to refine their weekly program and have the first quarter agenda of 2004 dialed in! 2004 at The Shop will start by focusing on purity, self-image and spiritual warfare in a way that you and your friends will understand and enjoy...guaranteed! Never a dull moment with Tom Ross in the lead!

If you would like to check out ACT3 Newsletter the link can be found at [www.ac3.org/kids\\_youth](http://www.ac3.org/kids_youth). If you would like more information about senior high ministries, contact Tom at 425-319-7007 or

[ttcross@earthlink.net](mailto:ttcross@earthlink.net)





## ON THE DOCKET

### UPCOMING EVENTS



#### TIME OUT for Parents!! A Parenting Class and Some Time Away!

Hope for creating lasting change  
Skills to get started

Support to make it happen

Class: 6:00-7:30 PM

Free Time for YOU!: 7:30-9:00

**this course is FREE**

4 weeks of classes begins March

5th 6:00-9:00 PM

childcare for infants through 5th  
grade provided

For more information call :

(360) 659-7335 or e-mail

[parenting@ac3.org](mailto:parenting@ac3.org)

## GOOD \$ENSE

Money lures with its  
power and promises  
and then, like a  
traitor, sabotages  
our lives and  
dreams. Come,  
learn how to break

free from the financial bondage holding you at  
our

**GOOD \$ENSE BUDGET COURSE.**

**COMING March 6th.**

There is a \$15.00 per person or \$25.00 per  
couple materials fee. Scholarships are available.

**E-mail Chuck at**

[AC3GoodSenseMinistry@worldnet.att.net](mailto:AC3GoodSenseMinistry@worldnet.att.net)

for more information.

**“Old Testament Challenge”:** The wisest of people learn from the successes and struggles of others. Since history repeats itself, looking back on the journey of God’s people and learning from their victories and pitfalls is one of the most valuable things we can ever do. As we look closely at the highs and lows of Israel’s history, we will discover lessons that can transform and shape both our present and our future. These seven interweaving small group studies, and personal study assignments search the history of Israel and reveal God’s presence with his people as they follow him on an amazing journey of faith. Watch the Lobby displays and [www.ac3.org](http://www.ac3.org) for more information.



Allen Creek Sports Ministry wants to invite everyone to the Annual AC3 Super Bowl XXXVIII Party. The party will be starting Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 2:30pm for the pre-game warm-up and kickoff is at 3:25pm on the really big 180" screen.

We will be providing:

~Hotdogs, buns, condiments ~Nachos ~Chili ~Popcorn ~Lemonade and coffee

We are asking each family/group to bring:

Their favorite lounge chair, beanbag chair, floor pillow, etc.

Food to share by last name

A-H: Desserts

I-S: Salads

T-Z: Munchies

One 2-litre bottle of pop

All of your friends and family



For all you Survivor fans hang around after the football game for the premiere of Survivor “all-stars”



## COMING INTO Focus

As AC3 begins to focus more energy on sharing the gospel by meeting needs in our community - both within the church and without – I hear folks beginning to ask questions about what role they might play in making this happen.

When we look at Jesus' life we don't get what seem like very comforting answers. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, freed the captives and comforted the heart-broken. And so we're right back where we started! Most of us can't do these things, or at least ENOUGH of any of these things to make any real difference.

But look deeper into the life of Jesus. All of the amazing, loving things he did, happened inside a context. Relationship. He was at a friend's wedding when he changed water into wine. He healed his buddy Peter's mother, he raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, he did some of his greatest teaching while lounging around at the neighbor's.

He never owned his own home. He stayed with friends. He went to a party at Matthew's house. His last meal was with his close companions at a friend's house.

Here's the deal: God has always done the healing. God has always been the one to meet the need. Really, all we need to do is provide the house.

One of the greatest un-met needs in our community is relationship. George Carlin describes our culture's relational status this way:

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less. These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes.

So, you can't heal any sick people, or feed 5,000 with a loaf of wonder bread and a tin of sardines...but could you open your home once a week to have some folks over? Maybe have a meal, or watch a movie.

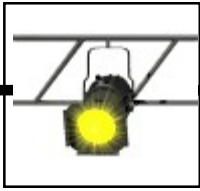
So you don't have a degree in counseling or theology, but what if you simply invited your neighbors over for a little Monday Night Football therapy?

Are you feeling the pull to meet a need in our community? Are you feeling under qualified? Don't forget what the Master did first...before he did anything miraculous: he showed up.

The "Trading Spaces" group is a great example. Every Saturday night for 8 weeks, from 6 to 12 folks got together in a Marysville living room to watch the show, eat some snacks, laugh and talk about their own Trading Spaces projects at home. They started a pool, so that at the end of every 8 week session, one lucky member's name was drawn, and the rest of the group went to their place to do a room a REAL room make-over. What a blast!

### Trading Spaces Photo Album





## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Seattle...city of 2.5 million people. Why did all these people end up here? What do they have in common? That is what this story is all about and it begins...where else, in a coffee shop. It is Seattle after all. Seattle the Musical is a high-energy presentation that will explore the uniqueness of Washingtonians as typical people from the greater Seattle area sing and dance their way thru several musical genres while exploring what makes them who they are. Seattle the Musical kicks off Saturday night, January 3rd at 6pm. Come for dinner and explore with us the things that make Pacific Northwesterners unique. (repeat of this service occurs on January 4, 10:30am).

### Connection/Connexus

**February** ~ *Myths that make us Miserable* - Using Greek mythology figures to look at some character traits that get us in trouble.

### Community

**January** ~ *What's with Isreal?* - A series out of Romans about proper Christian perspective on the Jews.

**February** ~ *One Heart at a Time* - Take evangelism out of the theory category and into reality.

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 ~ Make A Difference; Meet A Need

For example, Beta was beat out by VHS in the early 80's as the preferred mode of video storage. Why? Was it a better answer to our video needs? No. Beta tapes were smaller, more reliable and had better picture quality. So what happened? As I understand it, Beta was out-promoted, out-advertised, out-sold by VHS. It may have been the best product, all it's claims may have been true... but it died the death of bad marketing and stayed on the shelf, largely untried. What a waste.

The good news of Jesus Christ may be true, it may *be the Answer* as I believe with every fiber of my being that it is. But, what's the word on the street? What's the status of the promotional campaign? The word is, Christians are insensitive and self serving and only care about forcing their version of morality on others. So let's change the word on the street; change the song people hear from a dirge to a melody. Knowing that before they will **come and hear** the answers, we have **go and do...** mercy.

The best part about compassionate pre-evangelism is this: it's the easiest way to interact with our world. There is nothing less threatening, or more safe to give your neighbor than a free gift that meets his felt need. And we are never more like our grace giving God than when we are giving no strings attached gifts to people in need. And we are never providing a more irrefutable argument for our faith, than when we show that it has made us the kind of people that give lavishly.

AC3, to start this year... commit with me that you will consider all the ways you can meet needs that you alone can meet. And together, we'll show Jesus is the truth, so that someday your friends and mine accept him as the Truth.