

IS THERE UP ANYONE UP THERE?

www.bjdehut.com

Jesus: Hey Dad, it is me, you.

God: What is it me?

Jesus: Nothing big, I just wanted to check-in.

Holy Spirit: Who are we talking to?

God: Shhh. It is us.

You there! Feeling a little down lately? Don't quite have the energy you used to have? Try Mormon!

(Studio Audience replies wildly): More man!

Try Mormon!

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Sick of doing less? Do more! Mormon!

(Studio Audience replies wildly): More man!

Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints

1100 AM Service

1704 NE 43rd Street, Portland, Oregon 97213

Website: None

Religion: Christian - Mormon

"I need thee every hour."

Feel like life has been on a steady decline? Are you worried you'll never get it up again?

Try Mormon!

(Studio Audience replies wildly): More man!

Sick of doing less? Do more! Mormon!

(Studio Audience replies wildly): More man!

In the first event, we were a group of confused boys in suits, covering in a residential area with only a grocery store and a church nearby. Where else could we be going besides the church? Cat Daddy couldn't know we were going to a funeral. It was August, I would assume he thought he was directing us to a wedding. However, since it was a funeral, an event surrounded with talks about the afterlife and God. The seemingly random event had a powerful feeling attached to it.

The second event certainly seemed special at the time. But this is Portland, Oregon. It always rains. This time it rained on a group, clutching for answers. The rain wasn't special but our collective mood was. We were so shocked by mortality that a chirping baby bird or a shooting star would have equally mesmerized us. We were desperate for a sign that there was something more.

I truly believed these events were special for years. But, if God had the wherewithal to send us stupid boys a guide in the form of Cat Daddy, or a sign in the form of rain, why couldn't he just not take my friend away? Why would a God take anybody? Instead of making people die and having to make new ones, why wouldn't God just keep the ones he already had?

Those two events weren't the only things I believed irrationally then. Somewhere in the back of my mind I didn't even believe my friend was dead.

Thomas was studying abroad in Germany when he passed away. One night I was chatting with him on AOL Instant Messenger. I asked him when he would be coming home. I missed him. He replied, "I hope I never come back. I love it here." We chatted for a little longer and the last thing he ever said (well typed) to me was this: "I think I found a way to stay here forever. Hopefully it works. I'll talk to you soon."

Saint Michael & All Angels

1100 AM Service

1704 NE 43rd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97213

Website: <http://sma.org>

Religion: Christian – Episcopal

"Soon we'll reach the shining river. Soon our pilgrimage will cease. Soon our happy hearts will quiver. With the melody of peace."

I picked this church as my first review because I have been here before. When one of my best friends, Thomas Morris, passed away in 2004, his family had his funeral here. Despite the collective misery in the air that day, it was a beautiful ceremony. There were even two events that caused me to second guess my doubt in God.

The first was when my crew of friends arrived late. We rushed out of the car and ran down the street. We knew we were late and even worse we didn't know where we were going. We stood on the corner of 43rd and Sandy, dripping sweat and wondering where to go. Just then, Cat Daddy (owner of Voodoo Donuts) drove by in a drop-top Cadillac and whistled for our attention. We spun around and he pointed towards the opposite direction. "It's that way boys!" We ran where he guided us. He was right. There was the giant red door of Saint Michael & All Angels.

The second event happened at the end of the ceremony. The pallbearers had just escorted the casket outside of the church when it started to rain. Everyone looked up and cried. Someone said, "God is crying with us." It was a hot August day, so rain was certainly a surprise. It was a touching finale for the day.

Now that I look back on those events, I don't think they are as special as they felt then.

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