

Shiloh communes practice Christian principles

By JAMES RUSSELL
Of the Emerald

"We see Shiloh in living unto God in a modern, communal society. We exist for others and Him alone."

So says Thomas Reams, pastor of the Eugene single men's Shiloh House at 1910 University Street.

Shiloh House, a non-denominational Christian ministry, has spread rapidly across the nation over the past five years. There are now over 40 different Shiloh locations in 17 states — including at least five in Eugene.

Reams comments, "We've been in this particular house since May or a little before. The Shiloh organization has been in Eugene for just about four years."

The Shiloh chain grows daily and the Youth Revival Centers corporation which heads the movement is expanding with it.

In Oregon, Shiloh communes exist in the cities of Grants Pass, Eugene, Dexter and Medford. Eugene is Shiloh's national headquarters and the center of most organizational activity.

"Most of the people who come

to Shiloh Houses," says Reams, "are either former drug users, people who are looking for their place in life, many who have lost it or those simply interested in doing something for their fellow man, not themselves."

The corporation business office is also located in the 19th and University location, a former University fraternity house.

The 19th street location alone costs over \$2,500 a month to operate. Typically, along with other Shiloh Houses, it takes a lot of work to pay for and maintain the house — especially, inserts Reams, when you are without a religious denomination or solid money organization behind you. Shiloh, and the 'Youth Revival' corporation, is entirely non-profit and each house makes it on its own.

"If people need a place to crash, a meal to tide them over or clothes to cover themselves in time of trouble or distress that's our job, our life's calling," says Reams. No charge is made on those who 'crash' at any Shiloh House but those who stay permanently willingly pull their full share.

Communal living, personal sharing and Christian fellowship are daily happenings at each Shiloh House, says Reams. Regular prayer meetings also add to the mood and flavor of everyday experience.

Presently, only 13 men live at the 19th and University location but more are expected soon when new 'teams' arrive to continue a constant Christian ministry.

"That's how we do our work for the Lord," says Reams. Ministry teams of six men and three women are sent out into the field after witnessing preparation to start new Shiloh Houses across the United States.

A national newsletter informed



Shiloh House's dining area

Photo by Calvin Jones

followers that, "in this life we wander as pilgrims and strangers, knowing that we have an everlasting home while this present world and all things in it will shortly pass away. God has called us together to be a holy nation."

Witnessing and serving God are the Shilohites' main purpose to life, says Reams.

Dexter, Oregon, is the center of the ministry's teaching organization and a lot of the learning that most followers experience is done there. Medical knowledge, child-care development, practical education and many other aspects of everyday communal happening

are vital to the daily life of each follower.

Says Reams, "As we learn and work and help each brother, our witness goes out to others as examples of what Jesus and the love of God has for each of us."

"What God can do for everyone," he adds, "not just for the rich and powerful but the poor and meek also."

Repairs then, both physically on Shiloh and spiritually for those they meet, take up a lot of time for the Shilohites. Trust in the spirit, seeking the love of God and care for others are constant guidelines, says Reams.

In addition to the single men's ministry there are also several

other Shiloh Houses for married couples and one for single women in Eugene. Those interested should contact the main Shiloh office on Lost Valley Lane, phone 747-1246.

These other Houses also have their unique Christian-living communal setup. "The Lord has brought a lot of people around to be witnessed to," says the Shiloh ministry. "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

"Our glory is in God," reminds Pastor Reams, "if we can help those who are in physical or spiritual want, in trouble or in need of a friend then Shiloh will have done its job."

Campus gays hold noon vigil for 29 New Orleans fire victims

Twenty members of the Eugene Gay People's Alliance conducted a memorial vigil Tuesday noon on the terrace of the Erb Memorial Union in behalf of twenty-nine gay people who were killed in a fire in a gay bar in New Orleans on June 24. Evidence accumulated after the fire, plus a phone message from an anonymous caller to a New Orleans television station, indicate that the fire was deliberately set by a group intent on "ridding New Orleans of homosexuals."

Preceding the vigil, a statement was distributed which condemned not only the mass murder in New Orleans, but also "the more subtle murder our society practices daily on gay men and women. That murder," the circular read, "tells us we are sick and somehow perverted... tells us that our human joys and love are sin... strips us of our dignity, gnaws us from the inside, and hollows our lives..."

Speakers at the rally proclaimed that, whereas society's oppression of homosexuals is old, the reaction of homosexuals to that oppression is new. "No more will we hide. No more will we fear. No more will we die. No more."

A connection was drawn between the New Orleans incident and legislation, now pending before the Eugene City Council, which would ban discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the

basis of one's "sexual preference." One speaker asserted, "As long as the law treats any one law-abiding group of people differently from others, it condones a moral atmosphere in which the lives of people in that group are valued less than the lives of other people. It is in such an atmosphere that an incident such as the New Orleans arson is encouraged." The approximately 100 students who stopped to listen to the speakers were encouraged to write to city council members in support of the pending legislation.

Those who listened to the speakers were also invited to attend meetings of the Gay People's Alliance, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. in the Wesley Center on Kincaid Street off 13th. They were also invited to make use of services provided by One Step Beyond, a gay counseling center open on Friday evenings at 323 E. 12th Avenue; the number of the center is 342-8256.

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