

'Here's Life America' finds it in 165 cities

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

It began in November. Billboards, lapel buttons, bumperstickers, newspaper ads, television and radio spots proclaimed, "I found it." A phone number was provided to find out about "it."

Once through the hoopla and fanfare, the "it" became apparent: "New life in Christ."

It's called "Here's Life America," an evangelical campaign planned and coordinated by Campus Crusade for Christ, headed by William Bright, of Arrowhead Springs, Calif.

The program, billed as the most highly promoted evangelistic drive in the nation, began with a test run in Atlanta in 1975, spread to 19 other cities in the spring of last year and now has expanded to 165 more, with a projected goal of 225 metropolitan areas and about 5,000 smaller communities to be blitzed by June.

Ultimately it is hoped that 60 million homes, or 90 per cent of American households will be contacted by the "Here's Life America" campaign.

The campaign is a manifestation of a nation-wide evangelistic media sweep of the country.

In June of last year, New York's Yankee Stadium housed 38,000 spectators waving tiny American flags in Rev. Sun Myung Moon's evangelistic Bicentennial rally. Moon's Unification Church suddenly sprang from oblivion to a media event through a series of million-dollar rallies.

In July, 1976, an admitted "born again" Christian won the Democratic party nomination for the presidency and Newsweek devoted an entire issue to the growing phenomenon of the evangelicals.

And now — "I found it."

"Here's Life Eugene," an interdenominational coalition coordinated by Mike O'Brien, 30, a former worker with the Campus Crusade for Christ and now executive director of Community Christian Concerns, began its campaign in November with 700 volunteers manning 30 neighborhood telephone centers throughout the metropolitan area.

Following the standard program set by Bright for the "I found it" campaign, volunteers enrolled in a mandatory 14-hour training program, consisting of multimedia classes on the presentation of the gospel. Almost all churches involved hosted classes, with every participant receiving the same training.

After a week of promotional inducements, the trained volunteers manned telephones to answer inquiries and proclaim the message of "New life in Christ."

Door-to-door neighborhood canvassing and presentation of literature were also part of the program.

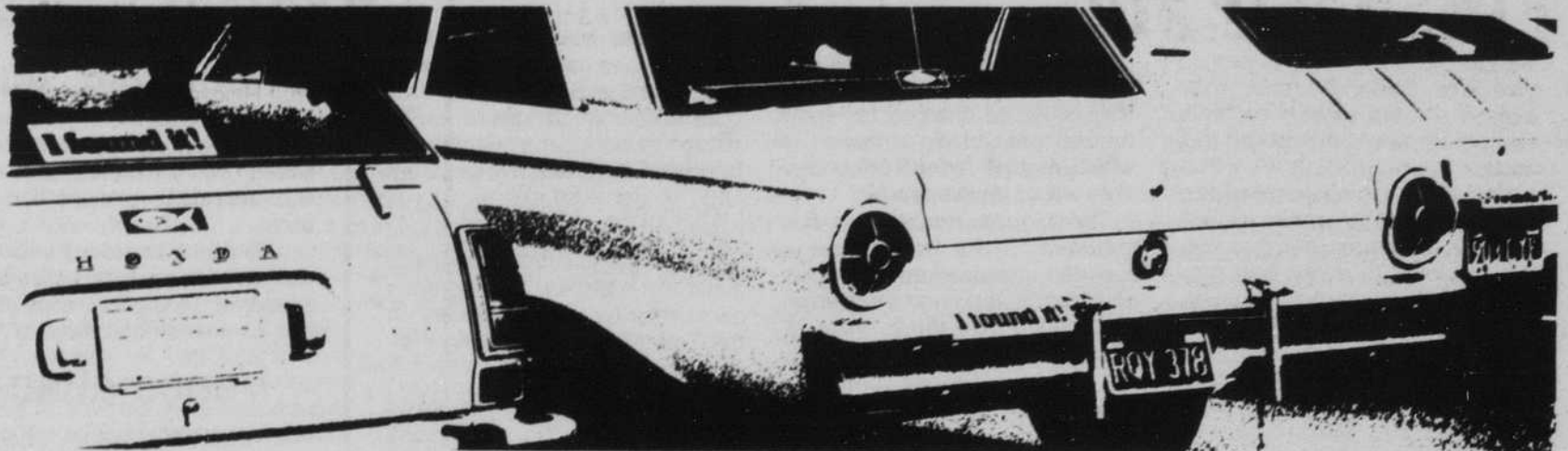
But was a multi-million dollar media campaign necessary to spread the gospel? "The basic idea," O'Brien explained "was to gain the attention of a large group of people who wouldn't have otherwise cared about spiritual matters."

He said, "It wasn't so much meant to be PR, but to grab people who wouldn't have thought about those things, and then let them have a chance to respond to it."

Advertising and the media, according to O'Brien, are "good tools" and can accomplish a great deal "if used for good purposes."

"We hoped to use the advertising to create an atmosphere which would give Christians opportunities to share the gospel in natural conversation with people."

Oregon Daily Emerald



Staff photo

There was no arm-twisting or pressure, and we weren't selling the gospel or anything like that. The largeness of the whole thing was partly the result of the enthusiasm of the people involved," he explained.

For his part, O'Brien believes "Here's Life America" to be a "one-time thing."

"I wouldn't make it a habit," he said, "It could become offensive if

you kept pushing it at people. But all we hoped to do was to gain quick attention, so the advertising is pretty well exhausted."

The campaign, which ended Dec. 4, was very successful, according to O'Brien.

"I think it was successful because it allowed the local churches to work together and say the same thing to spread the gospel and not worry about doctrines or

convictions," he said.

The response, predicted at the beginning of the campaign to be between 3,000 and 5,000 calls to the advertised telephone number far exceeded O'Brien's expectation.

"It was really great," he said. "In terms of figures, we had about 42,000 contacts, with about 3,500 responses to the media campaign."

While O'Brien considered the campaign a success a "sizable number" of area churches didn't participate.

"Some had the desire not to associate with other church groups. Others didn't believe in taking an active role in spreading the gospel," O'Brien explained. "To some people we were too conservative in our approach and to others we

(Continued on Page 12)

Environmental protection, Management, Navigational systems, Port safety, Boating safety and Saving lives.

These are just some of the fields you're likely to work in while you're an officer in the Coast Guard.

Of course, you'll get a lot of specialized training. Not in the classroom, but on the job while you perform your duties. That way you'll develop leadership and management skills. The Coast Guard's a small organization with relatively few officers. So we put your talents and ability to use as quickly as possible.

Coast Guard officers are well



paid. But what we really offer you is richly rewarding work. Work that's meaningful. To you and to your country.

The Coast Guard's got a lot to offer college graduates. So, before you decide what you're going to do after graduation, get the full story when our representative visits your campus. Your college placement office can arrange an appointment.

Or call us, toll free, at 800-424-8883 for the location of your nearest Coast Guard officer recruiter.

The Coast Guard.

Our representative will be on your campus February 8