

“Is he crazy?”: Students Encounter Confrontational Evangelism at ISU

Joe Marino

EVOKE

About the Ethnographer

I am a Junior at ISU with a major in anthropology (focus in cultural and linguistic) and minors in Political Science and Latin American Studies. After graduation I plan to go to grad school, but not quite sure where. I would like to do research in Latin America, as well as the US, and plan to focus on migration, transnationalism, diasporas, and conflict resolution. Away from school, I like to play soccer and golf (frisbee and regular). I love to listen to music, I am a huge Chili Peppers fan, but lately I've been on a Compay Segundo kick.

EXPLORE

Question

What questions is your inquiry contingent upon?

While working on this project some new questions have come to mind. Although I am still having trouble finding a concrete research question, these questions pertain to an obvious (at least to me) issue raised by the 'encounter':

How did the Brother Jed 'encounter' affect students' perceptions of religion and faith? How do these perceptions reflect on other students? How do students approach religious and/or ideological conflict?

As of yet, I do not have a focused research question that would act as my hypothesis. However, doing interviews, looking over my notes, and class discussions have all helped me think of some broad questions that help me make more specific questions for my interviews. These are just some of the broader questions that have come to mind?

1. How does the socialization process of each student prior to college effect how they react and cope to the Brother Jed 'encounter'?
2. What affect does this have on the social networks of these students, and reciprocally, how do their social networks affect the students' feelings and reactions at the 'encounter'?

The following questions are more specific questions directed to the interviewees. This question was raised by Tom—a student that I talked to directly after the 'encounter'—who said that “a lot of people said things that they probably wouldn't have said anywhere else.”

3. Have you ever felt the same way as you did at the 'encounter'? Have you ever felt the need to speak out—about anything—the way you did at the 'encounter'?
4. Did you say anything at the 'encounter'? What? How did you feel after you said it?

Did BJ respond to you?

5. If not, did feel like you wanted to say something? Why didn't you?
6. Describe your experiences with Christianity-
7. Describe what 'diversity' means to you-
8. Do you feel that ISU is 'diverse'?
9. Describe your experience in the military (Sam)-
10. How did you feel when the 'conversation' turned to the 'war'? (Sam)
11. How did feel about the students who were at the 'encounter'?
12. How does this make you feel about ISU?

The following are some questions that I have not been able to ask for various reasons, however, I would like to ask them and incorporate them into my research-

13. What constitutes being a friend?
14. How would you describe your friends?
15. Would you say that any of your friends are from diverse backgrounds?
16. Were any of your friends at the encounter?
17. Did you talk to anybody about the 'encounter'? What did you talk about?
18. Do you feel comfortable talking about your beliefs in public? Why or why not?

How do ISU students react when "business as usual" is disrupted? (EBC)

How does this affect their relationships with other students?

How does this affect their perception of student life at ISU?

How do ISU students feel about the practice of free speech on campus?

How does this experience affect there lives as students here at ISU?

How does religous preaching affect the lives of ISU students?

Plan

How will you go about answering your inquiry?

Sept. 26-

*Participant observation-

-take field notes (try to capture crowd dynamics, spacing, dialogue, and

environment).

Sept. 27-

- *Participant observation-
- interview people in crowd
- interview BJ
- *Impromptu interview with Tom

Between Sept. 27 and Oct 10-

- *Set up interviews
- contact participants
- *Think of broad research question
- *Post field notes

Oct. 10-

- *Interview with Vittoria

Oct. 13-

- *Get pictures of encounter from photographer
- *Modify research question
- *Explore literature
- read EBC report
- read Jacob's report

Oct. 20-

- *Interview participant
- *Contact University Police
- discuss instances of conflicts and resolutions with BJ and maybe other public presentations on campus

Oct. 27-

- *Post field notes and interviews

Nov. 5-

- *Establish Research Question
- *Post Outline

Nov. 10-

- *Post Rough Draft

Dec. 1-

- *Prepare Presentation

Dec. 4-

- *Final Report Due

I will conduct interviews with students who've seen Brother Jed and/or other religious representatives who've spoken at ISU.

I will try to find a various sample of students with different backgrounds [i.e. religious, gender, sexuality, academic class (i.e. freshman, sophomore, etc.), etc.]

I've already contacted field-research by watching Brother Jed and taking field-notes including dialogue, crowd proximity, and general student/crowd affect.

OBSERVE

What observations, or findings are you encountering in your research?

In these notes I identify the participants at the encounter by sex (male=M / female= F) while assuming that all are students (S). Brother Jed is identified as BJ.

While taking these notes I tried to capture things such as weather, time of day, etc, that may have an affect on the encounter.

Files:

[field notes.doc](#) (Tue 01/09/2007 15:08)

[In these notes I identify the participants at the encounter by sex.doc](#) (Thu 01/11/2007 14:55)

INTERVIEW- Tom 10/26

Today I talked to Tom further about the ‘encounter’. He reiterated that he was excited by the size of the crowd and by the students that let their feelings and opinions be known. In his last interview, Tom mentioned that “a lot of people said things that they probably wouldn’t have said anywhere else.” Fueled by his interests in activism, he said that he is trying to find a way to “reproduce something like that.” Tom feels that there is virtually no activism at ISU or a forum for students to speak their minds on issues that are really important to them. He compared ISU to larger schools, like the University of Illinois (UI), saying that everyday there are students at UI that are passing out flyers for one thing or another trying to inform students about ‘important’ issues. If this is true, who is to blame for the lack of activism at ISU, and more importantly, how do the students react when they see it?

On an issue such as religion many students, if not all, have beliefs and opinions that have been influenced by past experiences. In Tom’s case, he was “indoctrinated” in Christianity throughout his childhood. When Tom was young, he and his mother lived in various places including the South. Moving from place to place, Tom and his mother were ‘confronted’ by many denominations of Christianity. Tom admits that he is no stranger to such methods used by BJ to “preach the gospel”. (BJ 9/26) “There was a time that I would have totally agreed with what [BJ] was saying.” Now, however, Tom is an atheist. He says that as he grew up and learned more about science, he began to “break free” from his religious ties. The turning point for Tom was when he began to question authority and “realizing that [his] parents were crazy.” Through his teenage years and on in to college Tom read books on philosophy and talked about religion “all the time.” Although his beliefs in the structure of the Christian faith were fading away, his “emotional bond with God” was still prevalent. Although his belief in a “higher power” was slowly fading as well, he was still bound with God not by believing that there was a God, but by the “guilt” of not believing that was constantly reinforced by others.

Now, Tom says that he is comfortable with his beliefs in that there is no “higher power”, but rather, “there are forces in nature that we are not yet able to understand.” However comfortable with his beliefs, Tom is not comfortable with saying that he is an atheist; instead he tells people that he is agnostic. He says that the term atheist “has such a negative connotation” and that it is such “a loaded ‘evil’ word.” At the ‘encounter’, Tom

never disclosed his stance on God or religion, but he was very active in the crowd dynamic. When BJ said things that Tom knew something about or didn't agree with, he was sure to make a counter point or address contradictions in the bible: "[BJ] brought up the issue of Jesus being God and I said that [the book of John] is the only gospel that claims that Jesus is God." Tom admits that he was excited by the crowd and that at times he had to hold back in fear of "saying something stupid." One of the most impressive things about the 'encounter' was the dialogue and exchange between the students. He made reference to the many 'Christians' in the crowd who offered their personal stories and tried to persuade other students to view Christianity as a 'loving and peaceful relationship with God'. Tom also made reference to the exchange between Sam and a gay male student when the argument shifted to the 'war in Iraq': "I don't think anybody wanted to see a fight," he said.

INTERVIEW 10/24- Sam

This is a follow up interview with Sam in which we were able to sit down and talk about the 'encounter'. At the 'encounter', Sam was admittedly "enraged" by the way BJ chose to address the crowd and was very active in the dialogue with BJ and the other students. I started the interview by asking him how he heard about the 'encounter' and he said that he just walked up and saw the crowd but had never heard of BJ before then. He said he stopped to see what was going on and his initial reaction was confusion and he "didn't know what to make of it." As he continued to listen he felt "utter disgust" and thought that BJ was a "fricken lunatic". Throughout the interview, Sam kept saying that BJ was "totally wrong" and that he was "using the bible wrong". Sam strongly believes that the bible is "God's word" and "everything in the bible is true" and nobody can deny that. He read a few bible verses to me, including 1 Peter 3:15-16—which was read aloud at the 'encounter' by a female student—which says: "15But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=1+Peter+3:15) Sam said that this was in direct conflict with the way BJ was preaching, which was "filled with hate" and "humiliation". The other verse that Sam read to me was from Galatians 1:9—" 9 As we have said before, so I now say again: if any man preaches to you any "good news" other than that which you received, let him be cursed." (bible.cc/galatians/1-9.htm) "There, he's cursed!" "He's a false profit!" Reflecting on his feelings of 'rage', he said that BJ was "totally going against what I believe in" and that he was "defaming Christianity!" Sam admitted that, for 1-2 weeks after the 'encounter', it "really, really bugged [him]." I asked him if he had talked to anybody about it and he immediately said "No...well I did talk to my girlfriend, but that was it." "I am very selective of my friends. I would much rather have a one-on-one—I don't need to go out or be with a large group—that's not me. I would much rather sit down and have a nice talk—my girlfriend and I just like to sit down, have a nice meal—take her to a nice dinner—and talk." While he was saying this he was languorously gesturing with his arms and hands, opening them with palm up while nodding his head.

"I am very selective of my friends, Joe. [voice getting quieter, with fingertips resting on

his right temple after adjusting his glasses] Like—I don't associate with gays, or lesbians, or—sinners—I associate with Christians and musicians—I'm a musician, my girlfriend is a musician." I then asked him how he felt about the students at the 'encounter' and said he had mixed feelings.

"I'm not surprised because it's [ISU] a state college not a private college like Wesleyan. You can't expect the best because it's ISU not Wesleyan—of course there is going to be gays and lesbians and people from other religions but I don't associate with them. If he [BJ] went to Wesleyan they would've—if this was a military base they would've kicked him out in 5 seconds!"

On that note I asked him how he felt when the discussion at the 'encounter' shifted to the 'war in Iraq'. I asked Sam if he is ever confronted about the 'war in Iraq' and he said, "it happens all the time." "People don't understand what we do for this country."

"I get enraged when people downplay the war—many of my friends in service were lost in the war." After this he took off his watch and said, "I'm going to tell you this story about my friend—and this is the only story about the military I want you to put in your report!" He then told me a story—which I will refer to as the 'watch story'—about his "bunk-mate" in boot camp that died during service. He told me about how when they first got to boot camp they didn't get along at all, but after a while they became "best friends". While gesturing with his watch, Sam told me how his bunk-mate came from a poor family. "His family was so poor that they couldn't afford to come to the graduation, but, with the money he earned in boot camp he could've flown his family in to see him graduate—but instead he bought me this watch as a graduation present, I said, 'what about your family?' and he said, 'now I want you to have this.' Six months later he was killed while serving his country—this watch means a lot to me."

Sam said that his friend lived a "life of sacrifice", which became the title to a song that Sam wrote for his friend.

We then returned to the topic of talking about the 'encounter' after it happened and he admitted that he did talk to his parents about it: "my dad was floored!" Sam says that with the exception of his girlfriend and his parents (and me), he hasn't talked to anybody else about it. He says, "I'm quiet—I don't like to spread rumors."

Me—"What do you mean rumors?"

Sam—"You know, when somebody tells a story to someone else, then that person tells someone else—each time someone tells the story it gets changed from person to person—I'm not going to just run into Watterson Café and tell everybody 'hey there's this crazy guy out on the quad...' you know? Ok, maybe 'rumors' isn't the right word—'passing word'."

Me—"Ok, how did you feel being able to talk to your girlfriend about it?"

Sam—"It was very good because, you know, I'm very selective of my friends, I like the one on one..."

Me—"What did you talk about?"

Sam-“She asked the same questions you’re asking me, ‘how did you feel?’, ‘what did you say?’ ... stuff like that.”

To view these pictures, copy and paste into address bar:

http://nocoolonesleft.com/crowd_3.jpg

http://nocoolonesleft.com/crowd_2.jpg

http://nocoolonesleft.com/crowd_1.jpg

<http://www.nocoolonesleft.com/preacher2.jpg>

These pictures were taken by an art major here at ISU named Nick Duncan. I saw him taking pictures at the encounter and I asked him if I could use them for my project. Obviously he agreed and I promised him that I would give him credit for his work. I am very grateful that Nick let me use these pictures because they turned out to be very valuable to the project. These pictures show the interaction between the crowd and BJ at the ‘encounter’.

(The pictures will be referenced by the end of the URL, i.e. preacher2, crowd1, etc.)

Preacher2 shows BJ and the vibrancy with which he addresses the crowd and tells his stories. The energy that is exuded from this man in his sixties is a key attribute of his method of preaching known as confrontational evangelism.

In both crowd1 and crowd2, students confront BJ with signs that conflict BJ’s feelings about the issues that they present; abortion and homosexuality. In crowd2, the girl standing behind BJ is holding a sign with an arrow pointing down at him that says I (heart) gay people, where the heart is colored in with pink. This is in direct conflict with BJ’s feelings of ‘gay people’ in that there were many instances where he would describe how “homos” are going to hell unless they change their ways. In one instance, BJ told a story of an invitation to the funeral of a homosexual woman. It just so happened that the woman was the daughter of a very good friend of his:

I responded by saying that I would pray for her, but I would not go to the funeral.

He then said that his friend (the woman’s father) and he had a major falling out and that they do not talk anymore. In another instance he was asked what he knew about homosexuals and homosexuality:

FS1-“What do you know about homosexuals?”

BJ-“Well, I...”

FS2-“Do you know anything?”

BJ-“Of course I know about homosexuality... I’ve read about it.”

BJ holds a stance against abortion which was made evident by a sticker on his briefcase that says Abortion is not a right it’s a WRONG. In crowd1, a male student holds up a sign that says Should of been aborted! 666! There is no arrow or any marker that indicates who the sign pertains to, but, I think it is safe to say that it is meant for BJ. The sign

provoked some laughs from the crowd (shown by the male student in the center background), but there was a slight undertone of aggression projected by the student holding the sign. This particular student was present at the 'encounter' for a lengthy period of time (more than 1 hour), during which I never witnessed him smiling or laughing. This is not to say that he never smiled while at the 'encounter', only that I never witnessed it during my participant observation (approx. six hours).

What is interesting about crowd1 and crowd2 is that these students used signs instead of dialogue to confront BJ. Sadly, I do not know for certain why they chose this method or what their motive or goals were in using them. What I can do is raise a few questions—or rather hypotheses—to explain. One hypothesis is that maybe holding a sign would represent a more permanent rebuttal or confrontation than the few seconds it would take to express the message verbally. Another explanation would be—assuming that the students have already heard BJ's stance on the issues—that the students are confronting BJ with an opposing view of these issues, not necessarily because they disagree with him, but because they know that BJ would disagree with them. In so doing, they are using BJ's beliefs against him.

To be continued...

This is a mix of interviews with 'Sam' which were conducted during the 'encounter' (one on each day). These interviews started off as being anonymous until I decided that Sam would be a good person to talk more in-depth to. Sam first came to my attention when I saw him arguing with a male student about the war in Iraq. Sam was a Petty Officer 2nd class (branch unknown) and had just recently returned from Iraq. The argument started as a criticism of BJ's views of the war. BJ is definitely in support of the war and he makes it known by saying things like 'all jihadists must be killed and their evil washed from the earth'. The male student was confronting BJ's views saying that soldiers in Iraq are killing innocent people and the war is justified by lies. Sam then made his presence known and engaged the male student in a progressively aggressive argument.

As was the case with all of the field interviews (interviews conducted at the 'encounter' itself), I briefly introduced myself and my project to Sam after the argument about Iraq died down. I first asked him, "How do you feel about all of this?" His immediate first response was "Enraged." "I'm an assistant pastor at a church here in town, and he's preaching false doctrines! He's not making any sense and he's just making students laugh!"

Shortly thereafter, Sam came to me as I was taking notes and he said, "The reason he's drawing such a crowd is because, have you ever seen, you know those crazy people in big cities preaching and begging for money? You don't see that down here and students flock to it because they never see it."

On Wednesday, Sam returned to the 'encounter' and seemed to be a bit calmer. Without question, he started to tell me his feelings about BJ. "It's disgusting," he said quietly but firmly.

"I've been looking up bible verses. I have strong things against him. Galatians talks about false doctrines. He's a false profit. He's stupid, obnoxious."

I then asked him, “How do you feel about him being able to stand here and talk like this?”

“I understand his freedom of speech. I wouldn’t stop him, it’s just his demeanor and the way he is doing it is stupid.”

“How do you feel about the students?”

“I have mixed feelings about them. I don’t know. Kids like the attention of other kids. They enjoy the confrontation. It’s entertainment between classes.”

In these short observations and interviews Sam gave me insight to his strong feelings for his religion and the way it is presented. I will be talking to Sam further in an interview about these feelings, and his experiences with and perceptions of conflicting points of view regarding religion and the war in Iraq.

Brother “Jed” Smock is a Methodist minister who travels around the country to preach at various college campuses in a manner which he calls “confrontational evangelism.” He is the founder and president of the organization known as Campus Ministry USA.

On September, 26 Brother Jed (BJ) came to ISU to preach on the quad. I had heard about him before, as he comes to ISU every year. People have told me that he once almost got into a fist fight with a male student because BJ called his girlfriend a whore (BJ says in his long winded speeches that women only come to college to get “screwed”).

On that Tuesday afternoon, he was surrounded by a large crowd of people—some laughing, some blurting out questions, some talking on cell phones, others talking amongst themselves—when I walked up. The crowd gathered in a semi-circle around BJ while keeping a distance of about ten to fifteen feet away from him. As I walked up and began to take notes, a male student walked directly up to BJ saying in a raised voice, “Hey, I’m Jewish—am I going to hell?” Just as BJ was passively saying ‘no’ the student said, “Well I don’t believe Jesus is the messiah—am I going to hell?” Brother Jed simply replied, “Well, then yes.” The student then forcibly blew the smoke from his cigarette in BJ’s direction and said, “Have a nice day” and walked away from the crowd. In this instance BJ was somewhat non-aggressive—which he sometimes was, usually when the crowd was smaller or when there was a chance for physical confrontation—but in other cases he was very lively and not so quiet.

When the crowd grew in size, many questions and comments were blurted out by students which seemed primarily to be fishing for laughs from the other students. Many of these comments were focused on either sex or masturbation. One male student who was standing in the middle of the crowd asked in a loud voice, “If I fucked somebody up the ass, is that wrong? Anal sex, sir, that’s what I want to know.” This drew some laughs from a few people around him, but BJ either didn’t hear him or just ignored him.

The language that BJ used to talk about issues such as homosexuality would draw quite a rise from the crowd. He would call people 'homos' and 'lesbos' and say things like 'lesbos lick 'em out'. BJ used quotes from the bible like 'a man shall not lie with another man as he should lie with his wife'. At one time, BJ tried to explain how homosexuality was wrong by using the index fingers from each hand to illustrate the inefficiency of male to male sex (which of course got a few laughs). BJ would say that 'God does not love those who chose to break his will (homosexuals) and that he would not welcome them into paradise but cast them into hell.'

The greatest confrontation received by BJ was from students who claimed to be Christian. I talked to a few of these students and there was a theme in their reaction to BJ. They said that although he calls himself a Christian he does not preach God's word as Christ would. One male student implored BJ to "Define Christian!" As he started to reply by saying "...one who is Christ-like..." the student said, "Exactly! Christ-like! The bible says that Jesus would confront sinners by first rebuking them, but would then commend them! You're not commending anybody here, you're just condemning them!"

A female student holding a bible then quoted 1 Peter 3:15-16, which says "15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."

Another themed response from Christian students was that they were afraid that the view of those who are not Christian would be tainted by listening to BJ. A few students then tried to profess the 'love and forgiveness' that Jesus represents by telling people telling their own stories and experiences with Christianity. When this happened BJ would listen quietly and patiently until the students were done.

INTERVIEW

After the 'Brother Jed encounter' on Tuesday, I went to Jimmy John's to get something to eat. I sat at the tables outside the shop and started to go over my field notes. I then a student who was just at the 'encounter' go into the store. I knew I had to try to talk to him as this student in particular was a major participant at the 'encounter'. When he came out, he looked and smiled at me in slight recognition. He asked, "So what'd you think about all that?" I simply answered that it was interesting and asked him if he had a few minutes to talk about it. He said that he was supposed to take some food to a friend (he was carrying two sandwiches) but that he could spare a few minutes. Right away this told me that the impact that Brother Jed (BJ) had on at least this one student was strong enough to forget about his friend's (as well as his own) stomach for a while.

I started by asking him what he thought about the 'encounter' in general. He began by criticizing BJ's "zealous" method of evangelism. In contrast, however, he said that he respected BJ for getting out there and expressing his beliefs in the face of much confrontation.

The most interesting part of the interview came further into the discussion when this student commented on the other students at the 'encounter'. He seemed to have a hint of pride in his voice when he said, "A lot of people said things that they probably wouldn't

have said anywhere else." I have no doubt that the "people" he mentioned included himself. He said it was ironic, however, that it took someone like BJ to stand there and be blatantly confrontational for students to come together and argue/discuss their beliefs.

*This student will henceforth be referred to as 'Tom'.

DISCUSS

Discuss your inquiry, taking care to separate speculation from fact or data

Files:

[Just some crazy guy preachin\[1\].doc](#) (Tue 12/19/2006 13:53)

First of all, I think I learned from these readings that I do not have enough data to start coding terms or situations. Actually, this feeling doesn't come from the readings it comes from my personal feelings. I feel that there are a lot of things that can be done with this particular project and I am just barely scratching the surface. However, I am learning a lot about the perceptions of Christianity and evangelism in general. Although my informants do not give common classifications of such things as Christians (Vittoria has made distinct classifications of Christians that she has encountered), classifications are present just the same. According to the O'Reilly reading, I am doing just fine with my research in that I am constantly analyzing my data as I am collecting them while learning from them and allowing my focus adapt to the data. I am sorry that this is not a substantial entry, but there will be more to come soon.

REFLECT

Link

Connect with other resources and materials.

This is a link to

"Wingspread Declaration on Religion and Public Life: Engaging Higher Education
Compiled on behalf of participants in a Wingspread Conference by the Society for
Values in Higher Education"

...it is documentation of a conference held in Racine, WI in July 2005. The conference dealt with the issue of religious diversity in the university.

<http://www.svhe.org/files/Wingspread%20Declaration%20Text%20format.pdf>

The data that I have collected show that students are interested in religious discourse as well as other issues such as race, gender, and sexuality.

OTHER

A space for other notes, findings, comments, etc.

I feel that you have a great topic and I am excited to read/hear your presentation and see what conclusions/findings you draw from your interviews.

I do feel that you should define encounter first in your paper before introducing "encounter-ing Brother Jed."

'Is He Crazy?' Students 'encounter' confrontational evangelism at ISU

Joe Marino

Illinois State University

-Outline-

I. Abstract

II. Introduction

- a. Searching for a research topic
- b. 'encounter'ing Brother Jed
 - i. Introduce the term 'encounter'
 - ii. Preconceptions
 1. Christianity
 2. Evangelicals
 3. 'Gossip' about Brother Jed
- c. Introduce Brother Jed
 - i. Campus Ministry USA
 - ii. Book 'Who Will Rise Up?'
 - iii. Confrontational Evangelism
- d. Afternoon on the quad
 - i. Field notes
 1. crowd dynamics
 - a. verbal
 - b. spatial
 2. impromptu interviews
 - a. distinguish between 'impromptu' and 'formal' interviews

III. Research Design

- a. Forming a research question
 - i. "iterative-inductive" research (O'Reilly 2005)
 1. Ideas from interviews
 - a. Campus forums for discussion (Tom)
 - b. Past experiences with religion and how it effects the students' reactions at the encounter
 - c. Impact of 'encounter' on social networks
 2. Problems
 - a. variation in student stories
 - b. time constraints
 - c. not an ongoing event
 - d. limited student recollection
 - e. feeling lack of direction
 - ii. field notes
 1. crowd dynamics
 - a. verbal
 - b. spatial

- 2. problems
- iii. formal interviews
 - 1. Tom
 - 2. Sam
 - 3. Vittoria
 - 4. Tita
 - 5. Lou
- iv. audio/visual data
 - 1. photographs from ‘encounter’ (Nick Duncan)
 - 2. audio recording (Tom)
 - 3. relevance of these data
 - 4. problems

IV. Discussion

- a. Confronting ‘confrontational evangelism’ - students’ reactions to Brother Jed
 - i. “entertainment”
 - 1. sexual humor
 - 2. comments from the crowd
 - 3. signs
 - ii. religious discourse
 - 1. Christian students confronting Brother Jed
 - a. Personal stories/perceptions of Christianity
 - b. ‘Prayer group’
 - c. “Open Rebuke” vs. “The Law of Love”
 - i. “warn them of God’s wrath and judgement”
 - ii. Bible verses
 - d. Sam
 - i. “defaming Christianity”
 - ii. “false profit”
 - e. Tita—exposure to ‘extremism’
 - 2. What do Christian students say about themselves? (Sedig 2005)
 - iii. Clothing
 - 1. Kipas
 - 2. Guy in drag
 - iv. Freedom of Speech
- b. Forum for open discussion
 - i. Tom- “a lot of people said things that they probably wouldn’t have said anywhere else”
 - ii. ‘War in Iraq’
 - 1. Sam
 - iii. Racial issues
 - 1. Lou
 - iv. Homosexuality
 - v. Gender roles
 - 1. ‘Virgins?’
- c. Issues stemming from data
 - i. Religious discourse and conflict of ideologies

- ii. Voicing opinions and beliefs at the university—availability of forums for open discussions

V. Continuing research

- a. What would I do differently?
 - i. Record interviews
 - ii. Creative use of visual data (O'Reilly 2005)
 - iii. Follow Brother Jed to different campuses and collect data from those students
- b. Religious discourse in the university
 - i. How do students' experiences at the university affect their perceptions of religion and faith?

VI. Conclusion

- a. What I learned
 - i. Field-experience
 - ii. Various data collecting techniques
- b. “iterative-inductive” approach
 - i. Lengthy process
 - ii. ‘lack’ of direction
 - iii. Allows issues that are relevant to research be revealed somewhat objectively

VII. Bibliography

VIII. Appendixes

- a. Photos
- b. Audio recording

-Abstract-

‘Is He Crazy?’ Students ‘encounter’ confrontational evangelism at ISU

Joe Marino

Illinois State University

In this paper I will explore and discuss an ‘encounter’ with the ‘confrontational evangelist’ Brother Jed on the quad at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Brother George E. (Jed) Smock is Founder and President of Campus Ministry USA, an evangelical Christian organization out of Columbia, Missouri. Brother Jed travels around to college campuses all over the country “preaching the bible” using a method he calls “confrontational evangelism.” According to his book, Brother Jed believes that students have turned a deaf ear to the “message of love” preached by other ‘Christians’, so it is his duty to “warn them that they are going to get God’s wrath and judgment.” (Smock 1999: 71) In so doing, Brother Jed calls students such names as ‘homos, whores, and wusses’, and charges them to renounce their sin or suffer the consequences of hell. This is a rare event on a campus that is regarded by some as being non-diverse and having “virtually no activism”. (Tom) I attended both days of which Brother Jed ‘preached’ on the quad where I took field notes of the spatial and verbal crowd dynamics while engaging students in impromptu interviews. I will describe and discuss this social event—which I call the ‘encounter’—using ethnographic data collected from interviews, field notes,

photographs, and audio recordings. I will also refer to Brother Jed's book *Who Will Rise Up?*, as well as past 'Ethnography of the University' student projects, and class readings to further explore the 'encounter' and the impact it had on students here at Illinois State University.