

Invading the Heart of Darkness

One evangelist from New Zealand is taking the gospel right into Goth clubs.

As a Christian musician and evangelist, David Pierce, is more than “outside the box”—he’s literally “outside the coffin.” His exit from one of these postmortem props is the climax of an avant-garde rock opera he performs in Gothic clubs with his evangelistic band No Longer Music (NLM).

Pierce is the executive director of Steiger International, a ministry he founded in Amsterdam in the 1980s to reach the city’s punk and anarchist subculture for Jesus. The Minneapolis native now lives in New Zealand, and Steiger has expanded its ministry boundaries to include the United States and other countries. It continues to focus on taking the gospel to youth countercultures wherever they may be found.

NLM puts on an extreme theater performance set to Gothic-punk music. The drama’s grand finale is Jesus’ death and resurrection communicated in modern motifs. To symbolize the crown of thorns, cross, dark clouds and tomb, the band uses a torture helmet, knife, fire, flashing lights and smoke-filled coffin. “Jesus”—Pierce’s character—is knifed to death, placed in a coffin and resurrected by the power of God.

“We try to show the horror of the cross in order to break the cliché that the cross has become,” Pierce says.

On a recent tour of hardcore Goth clubs in South America, NLM led Goths to faith in Jesus inside bars where they performed. Club managers allowed the band to play in the occultic venues only because they liked NLM's act.

One site was a three-story facility that included a bar where books on Satan worship, sadism, sexual depravity and torture were sold. Elsewhere, in a district of discos, gay bars and what Pierce calls "sleazy mafia clubs," NLM played a venue where occultic symbols covered the walls, patrons dressed like witches or vampires, and the manager called himself "The Devil."

The owners of another site practiced witchcraft and voodoo and had attended an international vampire convention in New Orleans. During the evening, Pierce says, chimes were rung at the club to welcome demonic spirits.

During one performance the crowd grew increasingly hostile as NLM acted out Jesus' execution. By the time the other band members placed Pierce in the coffin, he feared for the group's safety.

"As I lay in that coffin it felt like I was in hell. It was like hearing the cries of demons all around me. People were manifesting [demons] and screaming foul, obscene things about Jesus," he says. The crowd—not realizing a resurrection was part of the drama—grew quiet when he burst out of the coffin, he says. In the lingering quiet caused by the impact of the scene he preached the gospel.

NLM concluded another performance by singing a worship song, which stunned that crowd as well. Again, Pierce says, he took

advantage of the moment and led some 80 people to a room where he and NLM members told them about Jesus. About 15 Goths prayed for salvation while the rest yelled obscenities.

"It is extremely taxing going to these clubs," Pierce told Charisma.

NLM has performed in satanist bars and anarchist clubs in Europe and Asia, hardcore heavy-metal festivals in Siberia, and a host of similar venues where they have been threatened, spat upon, jeered and cursed for preaching Jesus. Still, they prefer playing in demonic strongholds to "preaching to the choir."

"The way to reach Goths is with the cross, not by being subtle with the gospel," Pierce says. "The cross is the power of God for salvation. There is power when you lift up Christ and Him crucified." *

For more information about Steiger International, log on at .