



Light Reading

Volume 2, Issue 3

August 15, 2004

Special Points of Interest

- Virginia Beach Friends of IANDS moves back to the Central Library
- September Meeting: Bill VandenBush
- Special Meeting time for September: 9:00am
- Help make the 2005 National Conference the best yet

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A Cry From the Heart

By Ronnie Kaye and Cheryl Birch, based upon his lecture and book, *My Descent into Death and the Message of Love Which Brought Me Back*

For years Howard Storm lived the American dream. He had a fine home, a family, and a successful career as an art professor and painter. He was also a confirmed atheist who looked upon organized religions and the individuals who practiced those religions with utter disdain. So entrenched was he in his convictions, that it would have been hard to imagine that anything could sway him. He had no way of anticipating the life-altering experience he would have in 1985.



Howard Storm speaks to the Virginia Beach FOI group May 1

That summer, Storm and his wife, Beverly, took a group of his art students on a tour of Paris. The day before they were scheduled to return to the United States, Howard and Beverly spent the morning together visiting a mu-

seum. They had just returned to the hotel, when, suddenly, Howard found himself in excruciating pain. He was rushed to the hospital by ambulance. Even though he was in terrible pain, he expected to be treated promptly, and he had

We've Been Chosen!

Virginia Beach will be hosting the 2005 North American IANDS Conference on September 8-10, 2005. Join the effort—share the fun. From hospitality to public-

ity, from graphic design to setup—whatever your talents, we have a place for you! Committees are now forming. We need your help to make this

the best conference ever. For rewarding volunteer opportunities, call Rev. Richard Dinges at 757-481-0061 or RichardADinges@aol.com. Ω

A Cry from the Heart (continued from page 1)

no doubts that he would completely recover.

As it turned out, the diagnosis was very serious—a rupture of the duodenum (upper portion of the small intestine), which was allowing stomach acid to leak into his abdominal cavity. What he didn't know was that the estimated survival time without surgical intervention was five hours.

He was transferred immediately to the surgical hospital for treatment. Much to their dismay, he and his wife discovered that the hospital was understaffed, and the nurses had no authority to prescribe medication. The morphine, which had been administered by the ambulance attendant, had already worn off. The pain was unendurable.

Howard wondered how he could be in this much pain and still be conscious. After several hours, a nurse informed them that the only surgeon on duty had gone home for the evening. The surgery would have to wait until the following morning. By now, over 10 hours had elapsed, and it was clear to Howard that he would not survive. He turned to Beverly, who had been crying for hours. He told her that he loved her very much and that his life was over. They embraced tenderly and said their good-byes.

Then Howard closed his eyes and slipped into unconsciousness.

Suddenly, he found himself standing upright in his hospital room. He could see Beverly in her chair crying, and he was

aware of a body in his bed. He did not realize that the body was his own. He heard voices outside the room, urging him to come quickly, and promising him help. He moved into the hallway and saw people. They appeared indistinct—as though he were seeing them through a fog. They made it clear that he was to follow



them if he wanted to get better. He tried to ask questions. The people ignored his questions and insisted that he hurry to keep up. They walked... and walked... and walked... It felt to Howard as though they had gone hundreds of miles. Finally, he refused to take another step, and they turned on him. He was attacked viciously—both physically and emotionally—by these beings, who seemed to delight in his suffering. The more pain he experienced, the more pleasure they derived. He fought long and hard. Eventually, he became too badly torn up and too broken to resist. In that wretched state he lay in the darkness, utterly hopeless.

All at once, he distinctly heard a voice, coming from his heart, instructing him to pray. His logical mind responded, “I don’t pray.” The voice per-

sisted. Ultimately, he tried to think of something “churchy,” and stumbled upon the phrase “God Bless America.” As he spoke the phrase out loud, the mention of God was like pouring hot oil on the tormentors, and they receded into the distance. In that state of aloneness, he began to contemplate the terrifying possibility that he might indeed become one of those tormentors for all eternity.

Then, a very old tune from childhood started going through his head. It was his own voice, as a little boy, singing “Jesus Loves Me.” A ray of hope began to dawn for him. For the first time in his adult life, he wanted it to be true that there really was something greater out there. With the last of his strength, from the very core of his being, he yelled out into the darkness, “Jesus, save me.” Instantly, he became aware of a pinpoint of light in the distance rushing toward him, growing bigger and brighter. As it approached, he realized it was a being of light, whom he understood to be Jesus Christ. Christ swept away his pain, healed his wounds, replaced despair and pain with love, and lifted him out of the darkness.

As they moved out of the darkness, Howard thought, *This is a mistake; I don't deserve to be lifted up. Put me back.* Christ responded, “We don’t make mistakes.” They were joined by other beings, who took Howard through his life review. To his surprise,

A Cry from the Heart (continued from page 2)

they breezed past what he considered to be his many accomplishments, but rejoiced in his small acts of kindness.

After the review, they asked if he had any questions for them. Without hesitation, a stream of profound questions poured from Howard: What is reality? What happens when we die? Where did the creation come from? What is the goal of life's evolution? ...and many, many more. When he asked, What is the best religion? They answered, "The religion that brings you closest to God."

When he asked about war, he was told, "God hates war. God has no desire for you to use violence and destructive means to assert your will over one another.... Every war is a lesson that war is undesirable and you need to learn better ways of achieving harmony with one another."

He was shown the possibilities of how the future could unfold—a magnificent future in

which people live in simplicity and harmony. There was no want; everyone was happy. There was no conflict. It was made clear that this was the future God wants for humanity.

He was told that the U.S. has been given the opportunity to



be the teacher for the world, but much is expected of those to whom much has been given. If the U.S. uses its gifts for the good, we open the possibility for a very bright future.

Howard was stunned to learn that he would have to return to his body and to his life. He begged to stay. It was only when he was assured that the beings of light who partici-

pated in his life review would be with him always, that he acquiesced.

Since his remarkable journey, his life has never been the same. Howard resigned his post at the University, attended divinity school, and became a minister. He currently ministers to a congregation in one of the toughest neighborhoods in Cincinnati. In addition, he leads quarterly mission trips to the impoverished Corozal district of Belize, where he has built a school, a church, a number of houses, and two computer labs, in addition to treating thousands of people through his medical mission.

A promise was made to Howard Storm that he would never be alone. While he is the first to acknowledge that life is difficult, he will also attest to the constant presence of the divine in his life. The promise has been fulfilled. Ω

Calling All Artists and Graphic Designers!

We are looking for artwork that captures the magic of Virginia Beach and the theme of the 2005 North American IANDES Conference, "Message and Meaning: The NDE as a Tool for Living."

Entries for the logo and the cover design of the conference program are now being ac-



cepted. Deadline for submission is December 1, 2004. For further information, contact

Cheryl Birch at 757-496-0653 or VABeachIANDES@aol.com. Ω

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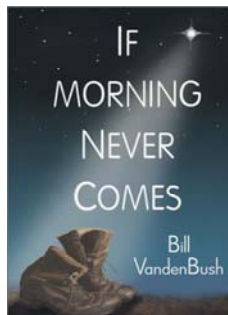
Sharing a willingness to explore

Bill VandenBush to speak at September 4 Meeting: Central Library 9:00a.m.

At the age of 18, Bill Vanden-Bush volunteered to fight in our nation's most unpopular war. On the front line in Viet Nam, his unit was under attack by the Viet Cong. Tragic miscalculations turned their call for air cover into a nightmare. They became the victims of friendly fire.

Gravely wounded, Bill had a remarkable NDE. He was sent back to his body in the midst of a raging battle, only to have one of his men die in his arms.

His wounds were so severe that he should have been unable to seek help, yet, in an



altered state, he managed to find his way to the medics. Assessed as terminal, Bill was repeatedly left unattended. Miraculously, he survived.

Not only did he have a lengthy and arduous recovery, he also struggled to find direction in life. Today he says that guidance was always available, but he wasn't always open to it. Bill eventually healed, and found himself drawn to helping

others. Ultimately, he was able to work successfully with veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

Come to our September meeting, where Bill will share with us his experiences and his insights.

Meeting Date: September 4

SPECIAL TIME: 9:00 a.m.

**Meeting Place: Virginia
Beach Central Library**

4100 Virginia Beach Blvd.

(Between Rosemont & Independence)