

# The Dutch Connection

Amsterdam, the jewel-box city of Europe and the largest city in Holland; known to our generation as one of the drug centers of the world, if not the drug capital of the world. In a recent report in Time Magazine, September 2nd issue; Amsterdam had become a sort of enduring Woodstock for thousands of young Europeans and North Americans, who have clustered together ever since the mid-1960's. Time reports that in the past eighteen months Amsterdam has evolved from "merely a drug using city to the chief distribution point in Europe." In early August two Canadian students were arrested in Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport as they were about to board a plane for Vancouver. In a false-bottom suitcase they had hid 6 1/2 pounds of heroin worth \$400,000. On Saturday a state-run radio station broadcasts the current street price for various hard drugs, a service appreciated by the 2,000 young people sleeping in Vondel Park on any given summer night. The Netherlands maximum term for drug charges is four years, however, judges usually hand down sentences of only a year or so.

Amsterdam is known not only for its huge drug traffic--it has a local population of at least 5,000 heroin addicts--but is also known for the Rosse Buurt, a fourteen square block, red-light district. A district so degenerated, it is hard to believe it exists even after having seen it. Consisting of block after block of little narrow streets between the canals, most of the streets are six to eight feet wide. Lining the streets are four-foot square picture windows, conveniently placed at eye level. Sitting in each window is a half-naked or naked prostitute. Sometimes the windows are spaced by the appearance of porno shops, which display every type of sadistically depraved literature and implements. Live sex shows are the common attraction to the thousands of tourists and local Dutch residents, who roam the entire area until the wee hours of the morning. With an open display of sensuality; the prostitutes, many of whom are very young and some exceptionally attractive, sit attracting their customers. The rooms are small, about 8' by 8' with the furniture consisting of the chair in the window, a single bed in one corner, and a lavatory. The rooms are rented either by the prostitute or the pimp, who owns her, for \$75 a day and up. For

on the streets, many of them American as well as European.

In addition to witnessing during the day, we had a vice squad in full swing every night, consisting of forty brothers and sisters. They were concentrating on the Rosse-Buurt "red-light" district. The first two weeks went without incident except for many jeers, vulgar language, and verbal abuse, however, by the third week we were there, things began to get rather intense. Sara and myself, Barbara and Basil Hairgrove, and Jamon Tipton were witnessing Monday, August 26th about 1 a.m. on one of the small alley-like streets. As I witnessed to a young man and his wife inside a little french fry joint, Barb and Basil and the others were standing within the alley--it was an open front building. The man I was witnessing to was very open, but was trying to convince me that there was nothing wrong with prostitution and it was just a business which was respected by Dutch society. I questioned him as to whether he would have approved if his wife had engaged in such activities before their marriage. He immediately told me that she was a whore herself and it was just a job. Just when I heard a little commotion outside the street, Barb had witnessed to a prostitute, down the street and two pimps had begun to shove her around. Basil and Jamon tried to calm the situation down, but the whole thing exploded. Basil was hit by one pimp, resulting in a gashed cheek and blood running profusely down his face. The other man moved to kick Jamon in the groin. As Jamon tried to protect himself, he was hit from behind and was knocked to the pavement. As he lay there, this huge man reared back and kicked Jamon with all his might in the face. It happened so fast that I only had time to run out and while ignoring his assailant, I got on my knees beside Jamon and laid hands on him, praying that the Lord would heal him. As I began to pray, the pimp jumped back. For all I knew the man might jump me from behind also, and I half-way expected him to do so. The others prayed also, praying for those who had abused us and for Jamon's physical condition. Blood was running from his mouth and I thought he must surely be near death. Finally as we continued in prayer, Jamon was able to get to his feet--obviously the Lord had touched him. We

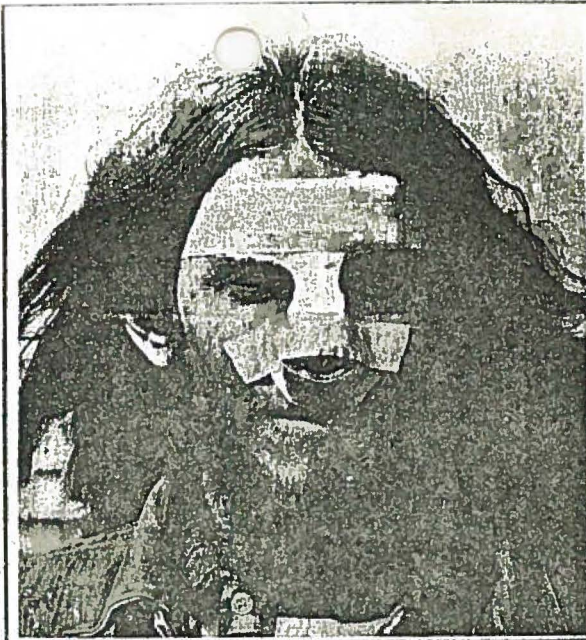
street. We had decided to carry the cross up and down these alleys with Brother Mitch Kropp elected for the job. About 12 o'clock, several of the pimps came out of a tavern and warned Mike and the others in Dead Man's Alley to leave within fifteen minutes. If the brothers didn't leave, they were coming back to really work them over and throw them into the canal. Exactly fifteen minutes later Brother Mitch, unsuspecting and unknowing of the threats, came out of the alley. Brother Mike tried to shout out a warning, but it was too late. The pimps and thugs were already upon Brother Mitch. They proceeded to beat him; threw the cross and him into the canal, attracting a crowd of several hundred people. Many of the prostitutes came out of their cubicles to watch the event. Several of the whores had religious backgrounds and became very upset, when they saw the cross thrown in the water. They began to rail on the pimps for throwing the cross into the water, because they felt it was sacred. A local Christian businessman witnessed the scene and told me later that it was one of the most moving experiences that he had ever had. As he looked down into the canal, he saw the cross floating, Mitch trying to swim, and right beside the cross was Mitch's Bible opened and floating on top of the water. A great conviction came over the whole crowd and the disciples witnessed boldly to everyone.

Wednesday night saw much of the same kind of action. Two men approached David Nowak. While one kept his attention with threats, the other man hit him a powerful blow in the nose. His nose was split open and looked like a piece of hamburger. He was rushed to the hospital and had a cast put on it. It was really unbelievable. The devil was really mad! Darkness hates the light! What really freaked everybody out was when they saw Dave back down in the same area the next day witnessing, testifying. The police from the beginning had been totally indifferent, witnessing some of the beatings and walking away; not even trying to intervene. We phoned the team in Washington, D.C. and contacted some friends we had made in government. This action resulted in a telegram that was sent to the American Consulate in Amsterdam. They immediately applied some pressure to the police

little more than slaves under the power and control of the pimps. Many that have tried to escape the environment have met with either death or violence, often scarred and maimed for life.

August the 18th saw eight of the team with Sara and myself headed once again for Europe. Even though this was my fifteenth trip across the Atlantic, we felt a sense of excitement and expectancy as we sped to be with the European team for a two-week stay. The eight brothers and sisters with us would remain in Europe and on our return, we would bring back ten Europeans for at least a six-month stay in the States. The European team had already grown from the fifty disciples from the States in May, to 120 acquired during our absence after the crusade in Göteborg, Sweden in June. The team, tent, etc., had moved to Helsinki, Finland for two weeks of meetings and then on to Imatra, Finland. The reports we received from there were overwhelming. The 3,000 seat tent had been packed to capacity almost every night, hundreds being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Now we were returning to catch up with the team in Amsterdam. Our trip from Finland to the Netherlands had been rather uneventful and the Joyful Noise (our Jesus band in Europe) had stopped off in Sweden to cut the album (to be released soon). They were to have completed the album. We were expecting them to get us at the airport in Copenhagen with the bus. Together we would travel to Amsterdam, where the team had already arrived, had the tent erected, and the meetings underway.

A little more than half an hour after our plane landed in Copenhagen; we had retrieved our baggage, cleared customs, and greeted and hugged Brother Joe Grier. We met the other members of the Joyful Noise, who were already on the bus. We then headed for Amsterdam. On the morning of August 21st, we arrived in Amsterdam. I preached that Wednesday night, my first sermon under the tent in Holland. Crowds the first nights were rather sparse, so it was with even more determination that we felt compelled to take our message to the streets of Amsterdam. Certainly the last place in the world a sinner would want to go to is a tent meeting. As in the States, our emphasis in Europe is on the street ministry. Witnessing was good during the day with street meetings. Around Dame Square the meetings were exceptionally received with normally 200 people gathering to hear the singing and testifying. Fifteen to twenty souls came to Christ daily.



Tuesday night found the vice-squad out on the streets again with things intensified even more. The pimps were really angry. A couple days later the police chief told me that in the short time we had been in the area, we had destroyed 70% of their business. Surprising what a little light will do in a place of intense darkness. That Tuesday night over half a dozen brothers and sisters were beat severely, some used like rags to mop the streets with. A brother from England, who had just been saved a few days before, was out witnessing with us for the first time. The pimps, taking him to be one of our regulars, grabbed and beat him, knocked his head against the cement block, and then beat it against a car. One of the little sisters in the ministry, Linda Mason, showed some gallantry; as she charged into the middle of the confrontation rebuking Satan in the Name of Jesus. Her action could very well have saved this brother's life. Several others were beaten and thrown into the canal, which is Amsterdam's sewer system. Most of the disciples felt that this was much worse than the beatings.

One street seemed to stand out of the whole area as the center of the action. The street was eventually named Dead Man's Alley by the disciples. It was here that Mike Maddox, Doug Layton, and a couple of the brothers zeroed in on witnessing at both ends of the

was that we were trouble-maker and really deserved to be beaten for annoying these people by telling them about Jesus. The police chief said, "Don't you know these men will kill you, aren't you afraid of them?" I replied to the chief, "Of course, we're afraid of them, but we are more afraid of God." Jesus said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28)

By Thursday the pimps had united and over a hundred of them had vowed to come and burn the tent down to the ground. We were beginning to know the reality of I Corinthians 1:8-9. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth from the dead." By this time national television had picked up on the story. We had front page news coverage in every paper. Later we found out the report of this opposition to the Gospel had been spread all over Europe through the media. Friday night was the last meeting in Amsterdam. Although we had applied for a week's extension of our permit, police department heads did not approve it, because we were creating problems. What an apathetic world! How indifferent can people become. In the Word we are told that in the last days men would call darkness light and light darkness, evil good and good evil. Crowds picked up considerably. Even a group of pastors met with us and after deciding we weren't trying to sensationalize Jesus, dedicated themselves or at least their youth groups to carrying on the work that we had started in that area.

Well, I am running out of space and there is so much more to tell. I guess I will have to continue this until next month's issue. There is so much more to share on how the European team went on to DeVenter, Holland, our safe trip back to Washington, D.C. and our subsequent move to Decatur, Illinois; where as I write this tonight, over forty of our brothers and sisters are sitting in the local county jail, having been charged with criminal trespassing at local shopping centers for sharing their faith.

"All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Tim. 3:12

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