

News and Current Events :: Minister Uses Tattoos to Talk About Jesus**Minister Uses Tattoos to Talk About Jesus - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/3/24 19:17**

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A Michigan minister is using his 150 hours' worth of body art to make a statement of faith. Known as "Pastor Freak," Steve Bensinger, 44, senior pastor of Come As You Are Church (CAYAC) in Kalamazoo, said the tattoos, which all have biblical themes, have helped him reach more than 2,000 people with the gospel since 1997 when he founded CAYAC. He also believes they have helped make Christianity more accessible to nonbelievers.

"We accept people for who they are and get to know them," Bensinger, who pastors the church with his wife of 22 years, Betty, told "Charisma" magazine in the April issue, out now. The full article on Pastor Freak can be found in the magazine.

"Telling and showing them a positive side of who God is based on the Word of God. Then when we say we love them, we really mean it," he added.

At 6 feet, 1 inch and 290 pounds, Bensinger is formidable even without his Mohawk, facial piercings and tattoos, which he sports on his arms, back, neck, feet and legs.

On his forearm is an image of Jesus on the cross along with John 3:16, and on his leg is a graveyard scene with Bible verses on the tombstones. Each of the tattoos could have cost Bensinger \$100 to \$200 an hour, but the pastor gets deep discounts.

"Every day people ask me about or comment on my tattoos in admiration or wonder," he said. "That gives me the opportunity to talk about my tattoos, which are all biblical and talk about Jesus, His love, grace and power."