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Praise for Hazleton

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"What's Your Name?" shakes hands with audience members in Hazleton as he makes his way to the podium to preach in 2000.

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The subject of a documentary film who gained national celebrity during a visit to Hazleton is now preaching in Alabama.

Hazleton area folks became acquainted with Carl James Joseph, who preferred to be called "What's Your Name?" at the time, during two visits to the area in 1999-2000 and 2003.

Joseph, who is now using his Baptismal/Confirmation name of James, said he was pleasantly surprised to hear from someone from Hazleton when a reporter called him last week.

"Hazleton was a tremendous relationship. ... I would like to express my deep love for everyone in the area

there,” Joseph said from the home of a couple in Cullman, Ala.

Joseph is still long-haired, bearded and barefoot and wearing a white robe when he preaches. But “one tremendous change in my life and ministry is that I developed severe knee problems,” he said.

Joseph said the ailment has given him a chance to focus on interacting with people more directly, more personally ... and to work from a more stable environment” because his ability to stand and walk is limited.

From Hazleton, Joseph traveled to Philadelphia, South Jersey, Washington, D.C., Florida, and Atlanta.

Now in the Birmingham, Ala., area, Joseph is pleased that he can meet people who travel from around the world to visit the Eternal Word Television Network based there. He’s also delighted to find that many public school officials in the South are more “open-minded” and invited him to speak in some classes.

Joseph was not pleased to find division among different denominations of Christian churches in the South, with particular prejudice against the Catholic Church.

He wants “to work towards unity and recognition that the root of Christianity is in Catholicism. There was just one universal Catholic Church for 1,500 years. There is more that unites us than divides us,” Joseph said.

He also found segregation of blacks and prejudice against Hispanics.

“A Sunday morning is the most segregated time of all, with black churches and white churches. I was surprised by that when I came down,” he said.

Joseph described Hispanics as “humble and hard-working people” who brought “a very strong faith and ... family values with them into this country.”

He said he was disheartened to learn of the division in Hazleton that arose with the Illegal Immigration Relief Act.

The law, recently struck down as unconstitutional, would have fined landlords and suspended licenses of businesses that rented to or hired illegal immigrants.

“There’s such an inequality between the way of life in Mexico and here, with no work or educational opportunities. We need to recognize that if we were in their shoes, we would probably do the same thing,” said Joseph, referring to immigrants crossing the border illegally.

He hopes to someday return to the Hazleton area “if it’s God’s will.”


“Hazleton was a tremendous relationship. ... I would like to express my deep love for everyone in the area there.”

Carl James Joseph

Now preaching in Alabama after spending time in Hazleton several years ago

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