



In the early '70s life for many of us was in the process of change. Those old enough to remember those days will nod thoughtfully as their mind drifts back to remember the end of the Vietnam War protests, and the calming of the revolutionary drumbeat that had throbbed in our young veins. The paths set before us then were polarizing. Would we conform or continue to press on, trying to change the world? We were becoming oh-so-tired as change came hard. The drugs that had “enlightened” us were beginning to disappoint us, as the early excitement now headed toward various full-blown addictions. It had been heartbreaking to see friends “O.D.” into some distant “never-never land”, leaving us far behind. Would it all end this way?

So, out go the communes and in come the three-piece-business suits... Get ready for the technological rollercoaster ride of your life! The hippies are now becoming millionaires ... (the evolution of a “hippie-crit”, see www.hippiecrit.org)

But a few missed the train and decided to make the best of the “Peace, Love, and Happiness Movement”, starting a new way of life...

In the South, where cotton grows high and life is simple, The Yellow Deli started up about this time. It was to go on a course unimagined...

Chattanooga, Tennessee became the home of The Yellow Deli, opening its doors in May of 1973. Serving healthy food in the midst of a “fried-chicken-culture”, the deli was an immediate success. Finally, there was something different. We served luscious fruit salads, great sandwiches, fresh garden salads, and homemade desserts. Something about the warm, rustic atmosphere drew people like a magnet.

At the bottom of the hand-drawn menu was scribbled a sincere and provocative question: “We serve the fruit of the Spirit... Why not ask?” The term “fruit of the Spirit” comes from a Bible verse about love, and joy and peace, being the “fruit” which would be produced by the lives of those who knew God.

In the South, where “religion” was rigidly proclaimed but scarcely seen other than the mandatory Sunday morning meetings in various buildings, big and small, the Yellow Deli was something very new. The thought of encountering “faith” in a pretty café, where there were people whose beliefs made them happy and full of life as they served wholesome food, was quite a refreshing concept to the people of that region, so they say...

Somehow, something had been communicated to our hearts back then which made a paradigm shift in our lives. So, working together to serve the best food in the best atmosphere, with all of our hearts, seemed a normal response. That “fruit of the Spirit” seemed to be produced naturally from the good tree of happy believers working together. It was served at our Deli with “no pressure,” only an experience, and if a person wanted to “ask,” they were certainly free to do it. Ahhhhh, what a relief, no pressure!

That was the motive in the hearts of Gene and Marsha Spriggs, along with several other young people who had already joined their cause, when they opened the first Yellow Deli in May of 1973. They wanted to have a place where people from all walks of life could come and touch a living demonstration of God’s love. They had the hope that in the darkness of the troubled society all around them, they could be like a beacon light in the midst of a storm. It just made sense to us that a God, who is also called “LOVE,” would do that! (All God is is Love...)

We were young and small back then, and not so powerful, but our love and zeal for this new cause was strong. We wanted to share this love with everyone we saw. We were convinced that this love could change the world if people could just see it being lived out in reality on a daily

basis.

The strife and division many of us had seen among the Christian churches we grew up in had caused us to be disillusioned with the prospect of finding any kind of hope there. But as time went on we sensed that there was something holding people back within that system from having the same “sold-out” zeal we had now found. To us, there were obvious clues in the New Testament that people who love the pleasure of the world cannot be a hundred percent devoted to their cause... And without giving a hundred percent, no one can en



sure. “No one who is enlisted as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs of the world” (2 Timothy 2:4) We were not interested in maintaining that civilian life any longer...

So, from there a new “Movement” of sorts began. Outside the organized religion that had been seen before in that area, something new sprang up. To those who were fearful that anything new must have some evil motive behind it, our cause immediately became suspect. To “the-powers-that-be,” the use of the word “cult” seemed to be the perfect weapon to dismantle our Movement and send us back to the pews. That weapon did not work. The only ones stirred by the use of that term were the same uninformed masses that were responsible for such atrocities as the “Salem Witch Trials” (see Proverbs 17:4). Fortunately, in this day and age people are innocent until proven guilty, and eventually all the bad things people said about our Movement were proven untrue, and LIFE WENT ON... AND ON... AND ON...

Now, nearly forty years later, we find ourselves a much more substantial force. We live in 12 different geographical areas, spread over several different countries on this globe. We are now “[Twelve Tribes](#)”

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Yet, we are still small in comparison to the huge “Fatal Flaw” of human beings against which we

have set ourselves on the battlefield of life. Yes, it is against a “fatal” flaw, which has kept humans down, divided, and basically dead, throughout history.

That flaw is selfishness, and her many manifestations... Greed, jealousy, envy, strife, hostility, bloodshed, really all those things that keep humans from just being friends... Her ugly fingers stretch themselves into the smallest corners of our lives... Marriages, kindergartens, workplaces... and, of course, in the big picture cause world wars, atomic bombs, massive world pollution... Our little life of love is only a flicker in the face of such an enemy.

So, this story looks more like a “David and Goliath” kind of plot. But regardless, we, as a people, plan to continue on in this battle until our last dying breath... and we believe little David will win.

That is the story of the [Twelve Tribes](#) , and The Yellow Deli that started so long ago...

And for those whom we are meeting for the first time, we extend our heartfelt hand of friendship. We hope you enjoy a glimpse of the vision that has caused us to be a total co-operative society, running our Yellow Delis, and all our businesses together, without the hindrance of seeking for our own personal gain. All our businesses are owned together, with extreme care given to bookkeeping, for the government and all else to see that we sincerely live this life without any one person making more than his neighbor within our communities. We have actually dedicated ourselves to this cause.

Many have come and gone through the years. Many go on their way after they confront the difficult demands of enduring in such a selfless endeavor. Those of us who remain, plan on staying...

Love is our home... what is yours?