

Green Light on Vulcan

November 1994

One of Birmingham's prominent features is the statue of Vulcan atop Red Mountain. Vulcan is a sentinel of life and death; the torch in his right hand glows green when no lives have been lost in traffic accidents but shines red when death has come to the streets of Birmingham.

Our children immediately became intrigued by this, and they look for Vulcan every time we pass the downtown area. They are so concerned about the color of the torch and are always relieved when they see that green light high on the mountain.

Sometimes the simplest things can make the biggest impression. It is easy to ignore statistics, forget graphic pictures and silence our own conscience in becoming callused to the dangers of driving. But seeing that simple beacon always reminds me to take a little extra care.

But Vulcan's light got me to thinking about my lack of awareness in other areas. For example, so many people die every day in an unsaved condition that it is easy to take this fact for granted. What if Hueytown had a light which indicated every such death?

The Imperial War Museum in London, England has such a reminder. A digital counter was set a number of years ago which adds one number per second, each number representing a death from World Wars I and II. The counter is already into the millions and will continue to add one "death" per second until the year 2000, finally accounting for all the lives lost in those wars.

It is not pleasant to walk through that museum and be reminded of death and destruction. But refusing to think of the horrors of war leads to complacency and false optimism that leads nations right back into war.

Likewise, we must cultivate a constant awareness that people around us, people with whom we have contact, are dying outside of Christ every day. It is this awareness, growing out of an appreciation for the value of a soul, that will encourage us to reach out to them with an opportunity to study the Bible or attend worship with us.

Can you think of just one person you can invite to study or worship in the coming week?