

Upcoming Events:

Jubilee Parties:

Jan	21
Feb	18
Mar	18



jacob'sWELL

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Do you dream of getting published?

The Jacob's Well newsletter is now taking submissions for the next edition. Please send article, photos, poems, artwork etc. to jane@jacobswell.ca.

Thanks

What Good Is it?

By David Haines

I found myself recently hovering over the book of Galatians. I ended up stuck on the verse where Paul is trying to encourage the Galatian folk not to give up being and doing good. He claims that they will eventually see the fruit from it. Unfortunately, lately I've found myself on the other side of the fence, in a swell of despair over how little good it seems to do any good at all. Really, what difference do I see the good I do (should I be able to do any good at all?) making in anyone's life - my own at the very least? Lately I feel overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the problems here in the downtown east-side, in my country, and in the world. I feel like it's one act of good to a billion acts of evil. It seems that the little bit of light that finally makes its way in gets swallowed up, lost, and forgotten in the massive cloud of darkness.

But does it? A few days ago I went to Community Kitchen after being away for a few weeks. Community Kitchen, for those who aren't familiar with it, is basically a meal we share with our friends who live in the Jubilee Hotel. One of those friends is someone I've been able to build a decent friendship with over the last number of months. He'd been through a tough time recently in his battle against the addictions that have been enslaving him for a good part of his life, and I seriously wondered whether we'd see him come out of it. Then I wondered why I was wondering that in the first place. Suddenly I wasn't sure that I believed that God would choose to make any real difference in my friend's life and in the lives of the many people like him - people exiled to



The Front Room at Christmas Time

Answer to a Question Never Asked

by Stephen Hitchcock

If you could move unnoticed, would you
fall asleep anywhere?—in rain?

Some men I know who haunt the rain
like factory lights, spit food—they say
Yes so astonishingly fast.

Yes to a question never asked.

And now I know I'll never ask them.

*We've lived here longest—though abandoned—
and we are free, they continue;
our views are like these pigeons' views:*

*they eat all things, they find a place
to perch and—though the earth is laced
with metal—will rebury themselves
each night above the ground. And hell-*

*if-we-know how you move, and hell-
if-we-care how or where you sleep.*

What Good Is it? cont.

Then I continued my thought process. What am I really expecting that God will do? What do I expect the kingdom of God to look like in the DTES? You know something? I can't come up with a good answer to that question. I've discovered in my short time on earth that God's kingdom usually ends up looking completely different than what I was expecting. I'm not sure that the changes that I think should happen in this area will ever happen - or *should* ever happen! I am finding that in order to have faith at all I have to stop trying to cram God into a box and let His kingdom come His way.

My friend, for instance, told me this past week that he's really working hard to fight his addictions and go through the detoxification process. I'm infinitely proud of him because of his commitment and determination. You may never guess what has brought him to this point in his life (unless you picked up on the foreshadowing in the introduction). He points to the commitment I (and others at Jacob's Well) have had to loving him even when he's pushed us away and shown contempt for our efforts. That is to say, the good that we've done for a long time is starting to show its fruit. It's not the way I would have pictured it but that's not really surprising anymore. I realize now that I don't think I have the faith for God to completely reform the entire downtown eastside, (at least not the way I picture it), but I think I can have the faith that God will change the lives of at least one, maybe two people here and there. And maybe that's enough for me right now. Perhaps the point to this little blurb is that I'm discovering my "kingdom of God" looks quite a bit different than God's "kingdom of God". I really hope, for the sake of my friend and everyone else, that *his* kingdom comes.

God Uses Red Sox Shirts

by Grant Vander Hoek

I gave away my old Red Sox shirt the other day, and what I got in return was much better.

I went to Boston a month ago, and as luck would have it, I went during the World Series. Boston won. While I was there I bought a Red Sox shirt. I felt a little guilty about it, cause I already had one, but I bought it anyway. At the next Community Kitchen at Jacob's Well I wore my new shirt and boasted that I had been in bean-town for the World Series. I sat beside Bob for dinner that night. We got to talking; he loves the Red Sox, has loved them longer than I've been breathing; he loved my shirt too. I told him that I had another one and that I didn't need two. His eyes lit up. I told him I would wash it and bring it that Friday. Bob was pumped. I kept my word, and when Friday rolled around I waited for Bob to come by. He did. He told me that he didn't sleep for two days, and that he'd wear it for a week. He did, and when next Tuesday came around he still had it on. This is when my eyes lit up. God uses Red Sox shirts and logos, and other vain things and I thank him for it, because in this case I got a friend, and I'll take a friend for a Red Sox shirt any day.

My Brother John Delong

by Dawn Humphreys

What does family mean to you? Have you ever pondered that question?

Does it mean irritating phone conversations, too many demands, or not enough phone calls? Does it mean love, trust and friendship? What kind of family do you have?

John will tell you that Jacob's Well is one of the best things that has ever happened to him (kind of like the creation of "sliced bread"). We are his family, and he is our brother. Incidentally, John is a great brother to have around. He's very helpful and practical and can often be found fixing or repairing things that are broken. A few months ago we were given an old photocopier that was ready to be dumped. It needed a special card and a bunch of codes in order to work. We tried to obtain the card and codes but just couldn't track them down. John decided to see what he could do (he has a knack for fixing things that verges on the miraculous) and he managed to make it work!!

John has also helped me when I have had car trouble by repairing the problem or giving me advice on what to do. He is like a walking encyclopedia of information, as he loves to study words. A great source of encouragement to many of us, John is often insightful and discerning and we have fun visiting some of our other friends as a team.

John struggles like we all do with not feeling very useful, he's sometimes lonely and often fighting depression which is linked to mental illness that he has had for many years. In our family at Jacob's Well much of our life is about sharing. We talk about our needs and struggles and pray for each other. We help out where we can practically with one another. We share meals and stories and our lives are enriched by what we learn from one another - God is building a new family.

You don't need to be part of Jacob's Well to find family--Who are you spending Christmas with this year? Who can you invite to be part of your family--family is much more than blood--really family is chosen, loved and shared.



And here is our brother John cutting onions at the Gleaning trip in July.

Photo by Dawn Humphreys



News...

We now have FOUR interns from Regent College. All four have been part of our volunteer team over the last year. Here are some intern fun facts:

Sara Bywaters loves to paint.

Frank Schimunek loves to ride bikes.

Helen Channer loves to make scones.

Grant VanderHoek loves grilled cheese and tomato soup.

The 4H Club (aka Jacob's Well staff):

Joyce Heron
Dawn Humphreys
Jane Halton
Stephen Hitchcock

Beauty

By Sara Bywaters

Today, I sat with my friend Maureen and read out loud parts of C.S. Lewis' book of essays entitled, *The Weight of Glory*. Lewis was a man gifted with the ability to not only see the human condition with its motivations and longings, but was enabled as well to voice what is often unspeakable. For instance, he spoke of beauty. We all try to describe beautiful things: places, music, nature, memories, people... moments that allow credibility for the things we long for the most. Among other words, he said we have people, places and moments to remind us of the magnificence of the kingdom as it is revealed to us more and more; the hope of more fulfilled longing than we could contain at this point in time. Though this isn't meant to be a plug for C.S Lewis... he's right. We all have the capacity to hold pieces of that, which is too beautiful to contain for too long, but it is a reminder and a fragrance of what we were made to experience forever. And it's good. It's so good. My friend Dawn reminds me that this is the kingdom and when you've recognized it you're hooked. And that's what's on my mind these days; affection for the beauty of God and the kingdom he preserves. That sweet preserve that we taste in our obedience to him. Obedience to praise him when nothing feels good, obedience to keep going when we can't see the way, obedience to do good to others when it is in our power to do so... and something happens. His kingdom grows inside of us and lightens our weight. We are elevated and lifted up... just high enough to catch our breath and see above the crowd, to see our Savior coming.

This is truly significant because of the cross. Lewis said, "the cross before the crown and tomorrow's another Monday." What a tension! We are familiar with some of the sufferings Christ took on himself and the many ways he still suffers with us today. While the pain is real, we know that fragrance comes from crushing. This has been embodied for me during the past year through my 37 year-old friend Maureen with stage IV breast/bone cancer. Today was our last day for a while of sitting through seven-hour chemotherapy days. We like to read out loud together. She, among many other friends, reminds me that the affection of God for us exceeds the costs of giving him all we have. There are things that medicine cannot solve, legal institutions cannot prevent, and human love can't protect but there is a God who loves us more than we can love each other. And in the midst of walking behind him in the cleft of his rock, a path we may not have chosen for ourselves, we experience the capacity to know and worship him in ways we never thought possible. His hope. His glory. Christ in us.



Our Alley