



JACOB'S WELL

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2003

Upcoming Events:

- Jubilee Parties:
 - October 24
 - November 28
 - December 19
- Workshops Oct 31- Nov 2 @
 - Merge Conference
 - www.historymaker.hm
- Team Meeting November 8

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SUSTENANCE AND CELEBRATION

by Andrew Shaver

I love food. I love the fragrance of garlic and basil. I love the texture of olive oil and the crunch of carrots. I love what good food does to my body. God was certainly generous and wise in His creative way of enabling human sustenance. But isn't food so much more than sustenance? I have a sneaking suspicion that God knew all along that we would enjoy eating so much that we would make it an event - a celebration of life and love. We need not look very far in scriptures to see that certain meals together became a symbolic forum for acknowledging the power and love of our God, a ritual marking significant events and beckoning the fulfillment of promise. Today, religious and agnostic alike join together for holidays that find their climax in the carving of a turkey. Indeed, any meal is potentially a community experience of sustenance *and* celebration. It is this potential that we at Jacob's Well are embracing with our friends in the downtown eastside of Vancouver. Let me explain.



Horace Settee enjoys a bit of coffee

(continued on page 3)

TRUE RICHES

by Jami Adrian

What is Jacob's Well? And Where? I used to think it was a place my friend went and "did something" for the poor. Then I went one Monday night. Many Monday nights I can feel the pull to go back despite my fatigue and the endless jobs that call me at home. There is something there that blesses me in an amazing way. And that is our friend Jesus. We sing songs together, sit with the Lord and pray for one another. Afterwards we laugh together, listen to each other's stories and then say goodbye for another week. At times I find myself at the moment of departure, looking for something to "give". In my humanness I want to give but when I open my box of worldly treasures and attempt to pick something out, I can't find anything. In that place we get to sit with Jesus and worldly goods pale in comparison. I remember walking out the first night almost in bewilderment (continued on page 3)

FOR ME.



Corner of Main & Hastings

*"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...whatever you did for the least of these you did for me."
(Matthew 25:35, 36, 40)*

Some of the hardest questions I am ever asked are, "What exactly is Jacob's Well?" and "What do you *do* there?" I've been here for nearly two and a half years and I'm still not sure how to respond. Essentially Jacob's Well is all about building relationships with people in this neighbourhood and then doing life together. The way this gets worked out is generally not through any "program" we run, or "event" that we host, but simply through lots of hanging out with folks. We're not really a drop in

centre either. Every week we try to go out of here and find our friends in the neighbourhood. We may take a friend out for coffee, go for a walk, watch TV with them in their room, visit someone in hospital, or have a meal together. We choose to have a different ethos around here for a reason. We believe that the one thing that people need more than anything else is loving relationships. That's not something that is readily experienced in the downtown eastside of Vancouver, let alone in the

By Joyce Heron

neighbourhood you may live in. We believe that hungry people should be fed, the thirsty given a drink, the naked should be clothed, the sick and the prisoner visited, but that all these things are only truly meaningful when they are done in the context of friendship. For us it's not about mass production, line-ups of needs, or fixing. It's about people. People we love. People we know. People who embody Jesus...and we meet Him every day.

MONDAY MEETING

by Dawn Humphreys



Our great friend, Sean.

Many of you know that our Monday meeting happens every week - rain or shine. It is a time when a few of us hang out at Jacob's Well and worship together, share something from the Bible and pray for one another. We have a few regulars and some friends that only drop by for prayer now and again. But often people we have never met before drop by and just need a friend. Let me tell you about George....

George came in on a recent Monday night; it was the first time we'd met him. He is a first Nations man, about 30 years old. He told us about his girlfriend who is dying of Aids and spoke of how much he loved her. At one point as we were worshipping George knelt down and it reminded me of the parable that Jesus told about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18. All the Tax Collector could do was beat his breast and ask God to have mercy on

him for being a Sinner. Jesus said at the end of the parable, that the tax collector went home justified by God because he humbled himself. George reminded me of the Tax collector in the Parable - his life was a mess but I think with the sincerity of heart he knelt before God. Again and again I am reminded that it's not what we can do for God or how well we can do it, but it is the attitude of our HEART God is most concerned about.

SUSTENANCE AND CELEBRATION (cont.)

by Andrew Shaver

Every Tuesday night a team of folks from Jacob's Well join with tenants from the Jubilee Hotel (a low-income residence primarily for persons with mental illness) for a *Community Kitchen*. The basic idea is for us to spend time together creating a tasty, healthy meal for everyone in the Jubilee hotel. We usually have about 10 people doing dinner prep (everything from cutting carrots to setting a table for 22) and as many as fifty for mealtime. We've created everything from coconut curry to Italian lasagna, and by the time plates are served our table is so full that folks

are playing musical chairs in any extra room we've got.

Sure, I'd like to think that it's the best free meal in town, but it's really an opportunity to find deeper community through the sustenance and celebration. And for many participants it may be the first invitation to any intimate community- ever! Many have never known what "family" really means. These have been too lonely too long to reach out for relationship, but on Tuesday nights they are feeling safer to try. Some are desperate to share thoughts and feelings with a listening ear, and they are finding one

while they peel potatoes or make meatballs. Many are simply blessed because their dignity is affirmed with an

opportunity to serve and to just "be" in a setting that feels a bit like home. Ultimately I think people are simply experiencing the presence of Jesus and the hospitable space that *He* is creating.

Of course, we're still learning how to receive one another and Jesus, but we have time... Jubilee Community Kitchen is a ritual of sustenance and celebration worth keeping.



Produce at our local market.

"Ultimately I think people are simply experiencing the presence of Jesus and the hospitable space that He is creating."



Frank & Donny chilling.

TRUE RICHES (cont.)

by Jami Adrian

at what had just happened. I didn't go to the downtown eastside of coffee, snacks and a new coat, or to a ministry trying to prop up the poor and tell them "about" God's love. Instead I came to a palace in the city because the

Lord came to shower His love on us and lift our souls. The blessing fell upon me as I realized my poverty and my incredible need for God. How rich I felt to see people touched by our friend Jesus, the greatest and most costly

gift we can receive here on earth. At Jesus' feet, He washes ours. How great is our God who can transcend our barriers and make level ground.

(Jami is a mother of five children. She's been a part of Jacob's Well now for more than a year.)



Larry with his necklace.

Jacob's Well is an evangelical, ecumenical, nonprofit organization, devoted to sharing the message of Jesus in word and action with socially marginalized people who live in the downtown eastside (DTES) of Vancouver.

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Joyce and Horace hanging out in the front room.

IN GOD'S IMAGE...

by Joyce Heron

We have a friend named Gustave. He's 83 years old, and last week he made us a pancake with a mix he found on the window ledge in the hallway of his building. That's where people put things they don't need. It's a way of "sharing all things in common" that folks with very little have invented. Gustave has lived there 18 years, in a tiny little space...so small that his table is wedged against his stove. He says it does-

n't matter though. He only uses the stove top, not the oven. He doesn't complain although he has nothing and is often unwell. In hanging out with Gustave I have seen the image of God in his cramped and stuffy little space. Many years ago he hung a large rectangle of reflective paper on his wall. It now looks a bit ragged, kind of like a grandmother's plastic table cover that has become scabby, and has

hardly any wipeable bits left. There really is little reflective matter still there, but smack dab in the middle of this "tin-foil-esque" frame he's hung a small plaque that reads "God is light". At some point Gustave sought to capture the little bit of sunlight that reflected into his room and magnify it...and in doing so he recognized the sunlight as a picture of God.