

# City of Refuge

A Voice from the Street

Fall 2006 • Vol. 5- Issue 3

## Go Where the People Are by Greg Paul



Since before the name Sanctuary first went on our old building, outreach has been a core activity. Red Rain had already been going out to bars, jails, coffeehouses and a variety of other places for years. (A new CD will be ready in time for Christmas! See pg.5) In those early days, I spent most of the rest of my time walking about the downtown core trying to connect with those shadowy people who lived their lives at the margins of society. Many of those folks became and still are good friends today. Thousands of others have come and gone – happily, enough have stayed that we are now a thriving community.

Our numbers and activities have grown substantially, but outreach remains as important as ever. It's the parable of the lost sheep, really – the ones who most need this community, this gospel, are so often the ones who are too 'lost' to find their way in under their own power.

A few years ago, a group of outreach staff and volunteers began meeting to talk about why we do what we do, and how we could do it better. This is what we concluded:

*"We go out to meet people on their own turf, both offering and seeking the welcome, dignity and healing inherent in the community of God's Kingdom."*

The statement is a little unwieldy, but every word has meaning for us. This is how we unpacked it:

### As outreach workers ...

- We *go out* because Jesus has sent us, and because we expect to see and hear him through the street community. If we want to meet him in this way, we have to "show up".
- We *meet people on their own turf* because we want to approach them as "servants", not as people of power.
- We go out *both offering* (to others) *and seeking* (for ourselves) because we know we are as needy as anybody, and we can only truly receive these things together. Offering is a way of seeking.
- We seek and offer *welcome* because the good news should go first to those who have been rejected.
- We seek and offer *dignity* because people need to know they're respected and valued for who they are right here, right now.
- We seek and offer *healing* because people don't have to stay in destructive situations or patterns – God's agenda is transformation.
- We are inviting people to journey with us (that is, *in community*) deeper into the Kingdom.

Our neighbourhood has changed some. Our homeless friends, while still numerous, are usually more hidden, harder to find. Many of our community members live in rooming houses, and can't afford both rent and food. Increasingly, we are finding our friends in prison or hospital, and outreach now means visiting them there as well as on the street.

One thing remains the same though: if you want to offer a welcome to a 'Kingdom community', you have to first go where the people are.

Check out this issue's 'View from Here' for a virtual street outreach experience.

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# A View From Here



**Greg Paul**

Doug had heard that the beautiful park that serves as the front yard of a large downtown church had lately become a favourite late night hangout for drug dealers. So, naturally, that's where we end up at about one in the morning after a couple of hours spent poking into some of the city's other dark corners. Sitting at a steel picnic table, right in the middle of the park, that looks like it had been air-lifted straight out of downtown Baghdad. Sodium lights lining the center walkway cut a murky orange swath through that peculiar permanent dusk of inner-city parks at night: islands and archipelagos of shadow with the pale wash of streetlights lapping weakly against their shores.

As we sit there talking quietly, the dealers swim in restless circles through the dark pools beneath the trees. Baring their teeth at each other, casting sideways glances at us from expressionless basalt eyes. Calling softly to the odd passerby who hesitates on the perimeter sidewalk peering uncertainly into the gloom.

And then the advent of an absurd vision: a petite hooded figure towing a large pink suitcase on wheels. She leaves the sidewalk at one corner of the park and drags her luggage diagonally across the grass through the deeper shadows. Dealers one after another peel away from her, evolutions of some strange minuet, their attentions drawn miraculously elsewhere for the few seconds it takes her to traverse each successive bit of turf. She makes straight for our bombed-out picnic table, parks her suitcase, pushes back her hood and wonders aloud if we can help her.

She arrived in Toronto at eight after hitchhiking from Sudbury, and has been walking ever since. She can't believe how big this place is, how many people and cars and buildings there are. She needs a place to stay – somebody sent her to a hostel of some kind, but they wanted twenty-seven dollars; she only has forty, and needs twenty of that for dope and the rest for fluid for her contacts and stuff like that. Do we know where she could get some dope? She really needs to get high, she's so stressed out. (A tiny little blond thing in stretchy pale pink pants and a brown hooded sweatshirt. Says she's seventeen, looks fourteen.) Do we know where she could stay for the night? And have we seen her sister? (She shows us a photograph.)

We tell her that, if she really wants dope, she's probably in the right place. No, we don't have any, but practically everybody else in the park does. She contemplates the dealers. Would we go with her to make a buy? Well, we're church outreach workers, so no, that would be awkward...

Having made a few calls, and finding that a local youth hostel would take her for the night, we tell her she'll have to decide between getting high and having a place to sleep – the shelter won't take her in stoned, and would expel her if they found she was carrying dope. We offer to walk her the half dozen blocks to the shelter, and she accepts. As we leave the park with the girl between us, the dealers crab-walk up to us muttering "You okay? You okay?" from the corners of their mouths. Dealer speak for "What can I sell you this evening?"

After a couple of blocks – she insists on hauling her own suitcase – she remarks brightly on how warm it is here, stops, and pulls off the sweatshirt. A tight tank top underneath, a lovely little figure, and I find myself thanking God that she left the hoody on until now, and that she hitchhiked into town instead of arriving at the bus depot where the recruiters hunt for fresh meat. "I need to give you some advice," I tell her as we start off again. I warn her against accepting an invitation to stay at some polite young stranger's place 'until she gets herself settled', and explain that, on average, a girl arriving in Toronto in her situation lasts about two weeks before getting drawn in to some form of prostitution. She looks at me out of the corner of her eye and mentions quietly that she already turned one guy down.

A little later, we tell her that, if it's safe for her to do so, the very best thing she could do would be to turn around and go home. Again the dip of the head, the careful look from shuttered eyes. She had been living with a boyfriend; he threw her out, and no, going home isn't really an option. She really wants to find her sister, who is on the methadone program, and ran from her boyfriend with her baby a couple of weeks ago...

When last we see her, it is through mullioned glass doors as she is pulling that pink suitcase down the long night-empty corridor of the youth hostel.

*...continued on page 6*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# Faces of Our Community

## - Doug Blake -

If you drop by Sanctuary nowadays on a Wednesday or Thursday around mealtime and pop your head into the kitchen, you're almost certain to see Doug with his sleeves rolled up hard at work getting the meal ready for our community here. Since Doug began hanging out with us a couple of years ago, he has become a great friend to many and an invaluable help particularly to Donald in the kitchen – even helping out with a few catering jobs which our kitchen team has taken on in recent months.

Doug was born in Toronto, raised in south Mississauga and eventually found his way to Eastern Ontario where he was in business for himself for more than 8 years, working in home renovations, property maintenance and general handyman work. Doug is a proud grandfather with two grandkids born to his son who works for IBM in Chicago. But we're glad to have Doug here in Toronto, working hard, always smiling and giving so much of himself to keep our kitchen running smoothly! Thanks, Doug!



Doug Blake

## - Church of the Resurrection -

Located a short drive from Sanctuary, the Church of the Resurrection (affectionately known to its members as "The Rez") is the supporting church of two of our staff: Keren and Alan. In 2000, The Rez was the beneficiary of a "reboot" in which 60 members of Little Trinity Anglican church joined the existing congregation (which had dwindled to about 60 from a peak of nearly 700 in the 40s and 50s). Together, since that time, the congregation has grown to more than 200 members with a burgeoning Sunday School of 50-plus children.

Folks at The Rez have a genuine heart for caring for the poor in our neighborhood and in our city. Along with supporting the work of Sanctuary financially, with regular collections of water, socks and other much-needed supplies, members of the congregation have participated enthusiastically in Operation Christmas Child, in the Toronto Star's Star Box campaign and in the Out of the Cold program at the neighbouring parish of St. Brigid's Catholic Church.



Church of the Resurrection

## Staff Update – Baby News!



Congratulations to **Lyf Stolte** and his wife, **Jenn**, on the birth of their first child, **Deyen** (pronounced Day-in) **Eric Stolte** on Friday, October 13th. Deyen weighed in at 7 lbs 8 oz.

Further congratulations to **Sharon Tiessen** and her husband, **Nevin**, on the arrival of their first child, **Jeremy Kenneth Bauman** who entered the world on Sunday, November 12th, weighing 7 lbs 6 oz.



Thanks for your prayers for both of these families as they have welcomed these new members into their family and make the necessary life adjustments.

Announcing the release of ...

## A Night at Grace's

Red Rain's second full-length CD

Featuring many favorite songs from the Sanctuary community including ...



*City of Refuge, Resurrection Parade, Water Into Wine, Calling Me Up, and Angel of Yonge Street.*

Join us at Sanctuary on **Friday, December 15th** between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. to celebrate the release of this great new collection of blues-based rock'n'soul from Red Rain.

To order your copy for Christmas for only \$20, please use the response form on this newsletter OR call us at **416-922-0628 ext.10** OR e-mail [info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca).

**redrain**

## CANADIAN TIRE MONEY



Help Sanctuary purchase building maintenance supplies and tools for the shop by collecting your Canadian Tire Money. Collect them through your church, study group, workplace, or as an individual.

**Mail them to:**

SANCTUARY MINISTRIES  
25 Charles St. E., Toronto, Ont.  
M4Y 1R9

**Any questions please call :**

Linda at 416-922-0628 ext.10  
lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca

## A House-Warming Party for Our Friends

*Aaahhhh...* there is nothing quite like the feeling of walking into your own place! Especially after months or maybe years of living in shelters or outside even in the harshest weather. That has been the experience of a number of our friends here at Sanctuary in recent months as housing workers have been able to help them find housing somewhere in the city.

### But what about, the house-warming party?

For most of our friends who are moving into a new apartment, their list of needs is extensive. We're not talking about "What do you give someone who already has everything?" Quite the opposite, in fact. In many cases, they need virtually everything that we often take for granted in our homes: sheets, bath towels, dishcloths, a toaster, lamps and so on. And getting any or all of these items provided for them makes the house feel so much more like home – and increases the likelihood that they will be able to stay there. We would love to help our friends settle into their new homes and are looking for partner churches or organizations to work with us to make this possible.

If you think you can organize a group to help in this way, contact Alan at alanb@sanctuaryministries.on.ca or 416-922-0628 ext.11 and we will add your name on our **HouseWarmers List**. When one of our friends gets housing, we will call one of our HouseWarmers with a list of needs and give you the opportunity to rally your friends, congregation or co-workers to help us offer him or her a house-warming party to be remembered!



**Melodie Ng**

## Expressing Ourselves

*Jesus is staring you in the face* by Melodie Ng

she has pink hair and is wearing a yellow t-shirt. her make-up's smudged.

a man sits on the sidewalk, bent over. a prophet in mourning, dust and ashes on his head. still as stone.

the girl doing her little dance, the addict's dance, she twirls -

a woman lost in her own mind, head bowed and stringy hair covering her face. a little hop-two-step, jumping over rocks only she can see.

they are all too skinny. the muscles seem tight and shrivelled.

too many scars, and scabs. a face peeling away.

scars don't stand out here: the self-inscribed tattoos – crosses carved on ankles, wrists, feet.

around her ankle, a neat row of dark circles – old cigarette burns. shackles.

'hey sweetie', a girl says to another. they take care of each other.

a short scuffle over change. 'spare a penny?'

slow moving cars at night as we walk near the railyard. all you see are headlights in the distance.

dead gulls, being picked over by ravens.

yet... there's art and poetry everywhere in the Downtown Eastside, on the walls, sidewalks, boarded up windows, and posts. graffiti, talismans, verses, rhymes – reflections of struggle and pain and joy and hope. the lost and the found.

it's scrawled along the alleys, scrawled across hard faces. young plants push up from the earth in abandoned-lot gardens. in the momentary recognition between two women, in an exchange of cigarettes, I feel a truth beating inside me, wrenching my insides:

Jesus is crazy about this place.

## Financial Update

We are thrilled to report that, as of the end of October, our revenue is running 11% ahead of budget and more than 20% ahead of where we were at this time last year! On top of this, we were bowled over by a gift of \$100,000 from a single donor towards reducing our mortgage at Sanctuary West. God has been good to us!

Apart from the \$100,000 mentioned above, however, most of this year's increase has come from a wide range of donors who have either come on board or increased their giving this year – and not from a few donors who have given large sums of money. We are deeply grateful to each individual who has contributed in some way to this turnaround!

Having said all of that, it should be said that this has been a year for “digging out of a hole” - and we have made a lot of progress to that end. But we are still carrying a significant mortgage at Sanctuary West and using our credit line more than we would like. So we continue to look to God expectantly to provide through friends like yourselves for our practical needs in the days ahead. Thanks for your ongoing prayerful support.

### DID YOU KNOW...??

As of May 1, 2006, if you donate publicly listed shares to a charity, the tax on the capital gain has been eliminated. You also receive a charitable donation receipt for the fair market value of the shares. If you are interested in donating shares to Sanctuary, please contact Erica at 416-922-0628 ext.10.

## Where does all the money go?

A snapshot of some of our consistent expenses and tangible ways that you could take on a project at Sanctuary:

### UNDERWEAR **\$1.50 / PAIR OR \$750 / MONTH**

*Now there's something we all take for granted!*

### SLEEPING BAGS **\$20 EACH**

*We will give out 100-150 sleeping bags this winter.*

### DROP-IN MEALS **\$250 / MEAL**

*To serve 100 to 180 of our friends every Wednesday and Thursday*

### OTHER MEALS **\$200 / MONTH**

*To provide nutritious lunches for participants in our Employment Training program.*

### BATH TOWELS **\$200 / MONTH**

*So that our friends can enjoy showers while here for a meal.*

### VITAMINS **\$250 / MONTH**

*To provide Vitamin B, C and Multi Vitamins to many of our friends.*

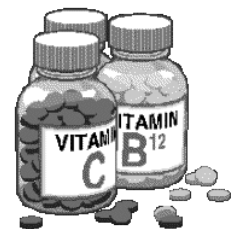
### NEWSLETTERS **\$2000 / NEWSLETTER**

*Between printing and mailing. The more we e-mail, the more we save!*

All figures given are estimates.

### STAFF SALARIES **...are our highest cost and likely our most important expense.**

If you would like to begin supporting one of our staff or to request more information about any of the above items, please contact: Linda at 416-922-0628 ext.10 or [lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca)



**PLEASE HELP US SAVE MONEY BY ... adding your name to the email list.**

Send an email to [info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:info@sanctuaryministries.on.ca) stating that you would like to receive our newsletter and any announcements by email. Thanks!

## Farewell to Ted and Mike

After 6 years each as members of our Board of Directors, we wish to honour **Ted Kay** and **Mike Clarke** as they step down from their roles on our Board. In fact, Ted and Mike were both members of our original Board of Trustees when it was formed shortly after Sanctuary was founded in the Spring of 1992. And they have been with us ever since.

They have attended countless meetings, taken pages of notes (in Ted's case), provided volumes of wisdom and journeyed alongside Greg and the whole staff through much growth and many transitions. Our sincerest gratitude to both of these men for their years of service to the Sanctuary community!  
*Thanks Ted and Mike!*

## A View from Here ...continued from page 2

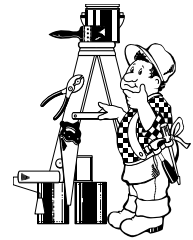
Outside on the sidewalk, Doug and I let go the long breaths it feels like we have been holding for an hour. And we pray.

I am not fooling myself: I know that we have likely only helped stave off deeper destruction in her life for one night. But I wonder about one impossibly naïve, vulnerable little girl navigating blindly for five hours through some of the sharpest shoals in this city, and coming to rest in front of our picnic table. I wonder about what further miracles of grace and protection, most of them utterly unnoticed, might attend her course.

And I wonder the same about myself: what unmarked dangers have I so narrowly missed? It's all too easy to mark the times and places that I've crashed. But what incognito angels and guardians have piloted me past hazards only dimly recognized, if that? And I give thanks, and pray.

*"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, you are there..."* Psalm 139: 7, 8

## Handy Helpers Needed



**Love to have paint in your hair?  
Patch walls?**

**Swing a hammer or feel the  
surge of a power drill?**

Whether you are available once a month or once a year, we would love to hear from you!

**PLEASE CONTACT LINDA AT:**

416-922-0628 ext.10

or [lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca](mailto:lindar@sanctuaryministries.on.ca)

and let us find a suitable job or two for you!

## Yes, I want to partner with you...

- I would like to order \_\_\_ copies of **"God in the Alley"** (Retail price \$15.00).  
I would like to order \_\_\_ copies of **"A Night at Grace's"** CD (Retail price \$20.00).  
Enclosed please find a cheque for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

- My **church/workplace** should hear about Sanctuary.  
 I would like to learn more about **volunteering**.  
 I commit to **pray** for the Sanctuary community.  
 I would like to support Sanctuary on a **monthly basis**.  
 I want to **financially support** your ministry:



- Staff Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Outreach       Meal Programs  
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 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATE BY CREDIT CARD at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)**



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Please make donations payable to: **Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto**. Tax receipts will be issued at year end. Designated funds will be applied as directed by the donor. Funds given in excess of an approved or discontinued program will be applied at the discretion of the Board.

**Charitable #89037 9340 RR 0001**

10-06

# SANCTUARY

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