

The following is a view of Jacob's Ladder seen through the eyes of its pastor and our dear brother, Doug. Kuhl. He is not the only one working there but it is good, nevertheless, to see it at least as he sees it.

Pray for our brothers and sisters as they seek to communicate the 'glorious Good News' of Jesus to people whom many Christians would never see, let alone talk to! They said of Jesus, "Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"

It bugs me to have to write about a thing called 'Jacob's Ladder.' I would rather preach a thousand words on John 3:16 than write 10 words on the 'Jakes' concern situated at 102 Gawler Place, Adelaide.

It is Jesus whom we all need to hear — His voice, His works, His Life, His love.

I've heard of Christians glorifying their own particular institutions, their own particular clan and its glorious past record to the point that whenever I hear more of this sort of thing, I just want to throw up.

I'm bearing scars of a whole lot of internal denominational fighting and I guess I'm ultra sensitive to a few attitudes, and blowing one's own trumpet about one's 'only true' Christian position and work, is one of these attitudes.

So it is with some reluctance for fear of being misunderstood that I share the 'details' of the work which the Lord has been performing among and through the Community at Jacob's Ladder. Therefore please think kindly toward us, brothers and sisters, as you read the following account of the work at Jakes.

# JACOB'S LADDER

On the morning of my arrival in Adelaide (29th December, 1973) the management of Jacob's Ladder Coffee Lounge, as it was then known, was offered the entire second floor of the building at 102 Gawler Place. The offer was accepted and the whole second floor was occupied for a monthly rent of \$260.

With the expansion of floor space came an expansion of the vision of the work to be attempted through Jacob's Ladder. Thus in addition to the running of a coffee house twice a week the team of Jacob's Ladder envisaged setting up a counselling service, street evangelism, media workshop (Christian arts, crafts, music, drama), resource centre (files, magazines, books, tapes, films for street level ministry), and a Christian training centre (training for street level outreach). At that time, I considered that the implementation of this vision would take some considerable time to develop. Little could I foresee what lay ahead. As I arrived one of the most urgent needs of the work at Jacob's Ladder was the intensification of training and nurture programs for the workers of the coffee house. This task was tackled immediately. Training nights were established on each Monday night and Bible Study on each Tuesday night.

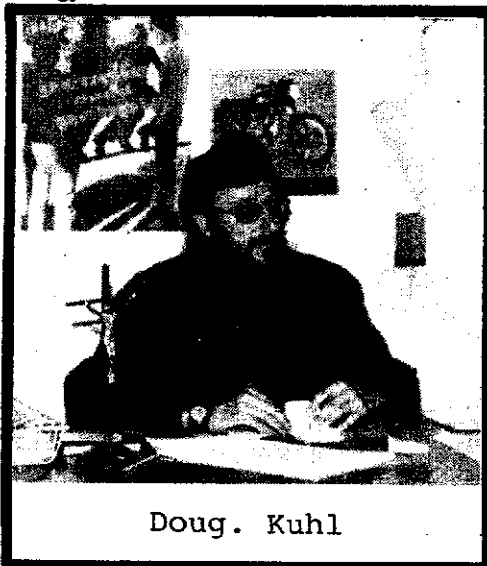
In addition to this, an extensive redecorating plan was set in motion, lasting some four weeks. We found ourselves standing on the doorstep of the month of March. March opened the door to the task of sponsoring an Australian wide Jesus people happening, Kairos '74. Jacob's Ladder became the headquarters. This event proved to be an incredible transforming influence upon the whole work of Jacob's Ladder. Our number of contacts increased by a few score people. The knowledge of Jacob's Ladder's ministry spread out along the street further than ever before. Despite the enlarged coffee house area (1/3 larger) our house was packed each night.

This produced great problems:

- (1) The team found it impossible to handle 150-200 people at a time in the coffee house.
- (2) Greater numbers of street gangs began to frequent the place, creating gigantic discipline/control problems.
- (3) The total concept of the ministry needed to be expanded further in order to handle this greater variety of counselling situations, dropout people, and pressures on the team members.

(4) Situations were constantly occurring which we had never encountered before. Some situations seriously affected the health and welfare of our workers. These situations needed a great deal of discussion and our attempts at handling them needed constant evaluation and renewal.

(5) We needed to set up and cement close ties of "community" among our workers so that we could help each other survive under these pressures. The establishment of "community" requires a huge amount of time and energy.



Doug. Kuhl

(6) New converts into the Christian faith were not able to be nurtured adequately due to a lack of time and opportunity. Social pressure from the street pulled many away.

The situation at Jacob's Ladder now is as follows:

Weekly program:

Monday: Arrive at the Centre 9.00 a.m.

Centre open to the public 1.00-5.30 p.m.

Team training 7.30-10.45 p.m.

Tuesday: Arrive at the Centre 9.00 a.m.

Centre open to the public 1.00-5.30 p.m.

Cell Groups for Christians 8.15-9.30 p.m.

Wednesday: Street Theatre, Art and Craft Workshop 8.00 p.m.

Bike meeting every second week. 8.00 p.m.

Thursday: Arrive at the Centre 6.45 a.m. Prayer breakfast.

Centre open to the public 1.00-5.30 p.m.

Bible Study and prayer 7.30-10.00 p.m.

Friday: Arrive at Centre 9.00 a.m.

Centre open to public 1.00-5.30 p.m.

Coffee House 7.00 p.m.-12.30 p.m.

Saturday: Centre open to public 10.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.

Coffee House 7.00 p.m.-12.30 p.m.

Sunday: Jesus celebration 3.00-5.00 p.m.

In addition to the work done at the Centre, i.e., devotion, study, administration, counselling, welfare assistance; we are, attempting each day to conduct street evangelism, attending court house sessions where needed, visiting gaols and families and to liaise with the other welfare centres on certain cases.

Over and beyond this work we have agreed to a permanent chaplaincy at McNally Rehabilitation Centre, and Vaughan House, two juvenile prison centres, various speaking engagements all over the state, High School Religious Education seminars at two High Schools (Jamestown and Nuriootpa). That which is difficult to place on paper is the constant stream of telephone calls per day and night which are all time and energy consuming. The situation with the telephone at my home is so bad that we are contemplating arranging a secret number in order to win some privacy and peace.

My working day begins at 8.00 a.m. and invariably does not finish until 2 a.m.

This is no exaggeration, but represents an attempt to communicate the pace of the work at Jacob's Ladder.

The immediate future contains many exciting challenges. Immediately before us is the formation of a Christian bike group, Kerux (proclaimer.) We have been in communication with God's Squad, Melbourne, and it seems likely at this stage that a chapter of God's Squad will be established in Adelaide under the ministry of Jacob's Ladder. This may not sound significant, but a ministry to the bike culture in addition to that which we already have, will have wide and extensive implications to our general outreach activities.

Next, we feel great pressure upon us to found a rehabilitation centre for so called dropouts, drug addicts, criminals, and general social misfits. To attempt to push these people out



Kerygma playing at 'JAKES' Coffee House.

into society, the society which they have already proved that they can't handle by virtue of their misfit behaviour, is frankly being quite unrealistic. We desperately need places to bed people down, Spiritual elders to nurture these people, workshop facilities to engage these dropouts in creative activities.

Next, we need to redouble our efforts at street evangelism and visitations to the gaols. For our effectiveness and penetration at this level is determinative of our effectiveness at the coffee house.

Finally this work is one to one. The time required to help one person amounts to hours a day initially, and continues at hours each week. In order to handle the volume we need more full time workers. This is the next point to our future vision. I can see (not idealistically) but a real need for 3 full time workers in addition to myself. Ian Wade has been appointed as the first of these.

The total scope of our work is as follows:

Administration of the Centre.

Counselling service to people in trouble, dealing with:

- Drugs
- Home, family problems
- Sexual hang-ups
- Drop out mentality
- Criminal behaviour
- Occultism
- Out of work
- Depression etc. etc.

Welfare Assistance

In the past we have needed to be able to assist contacts with temporary assistance by way of organising somewhere to sleep for a night or two, meals occasionally, work, clothing and medical assistance.

Court Sessions.

There has been a constant need to attend court sessions of our many contacts, to talk with the person in trouble and to provide background information to the court and sometimes to give to the court the assurance of support for the prisoner when he or she is released. We usually attend one court session per week.

Gaols.

We try to visit prisoners who are our contacts and keep in touch with them throughout their gaol sentence. At present we have 5 prisoners who are our contacts in gaol.

Families.

We visit families of young people who have come to us with personal and family problems, and attempt to counsel the situation.

Liaison with other Welfare Agencies.

We constantly liaise with many of the welfare agencies handling drop outs, drugs, accommodation and legal aid.

McNally Centre and Vaughan House.

I have been appointed as the Lutheran chaplain to McNally Training Centre. In addition to this work is commencing with Vaughan House. In both places we visit inmates, write letters and arrange for Jesus rock groups to come and play music.

Christian Motorbike group.

We are in the throes of establishing such a bike group called "Kerux" which will primarily work among bike gangs.

So far our work has been most encouraging. Our contacts with "outlaw bikies" has been positive.

Some of the kids at morning Bible Study and prayer.



Rehabilitation of Drop-outs.

We have houses at Richmond, Unley, Klemzig, which serve as crash pads and nurture centres.

We desperately need more such houses — in fact a whole community of them.

Workshop.

We are currently planning and collecting resource material together for an art and crafts workshop. This will be part of our rehabilitation work as well. It will include: Pottery, Leatherwork, Enamelling, Painting. All sorts of craft work. Music will be taught and developed, as well as Street Theatre.

Finally we have commenced a resource centre with our offices, catering for the training of other young people in this work. We have already conducted two training courses, attracting about 60 people to each course.

During the internal development of the community over the past 6 months, a number of scriptural certainties have been placed upon us by the Lord.

1) That we must minister from, by, and through a "community" which must be "church" in the full New Testament sense of the word. All outreach, nurture, growth, teaching, discipline, takes place in this context, according to the New Testament.

2) The community must be charismatic firstly and organisational secondly. The first requirement is that Christ is acknowledged as Lord and Master in our midst. Our whole structure must be subservient to this rather than Christ's Lordship having to have to fit in with whatever structures we set up first and then telling God that He must use and bless it because that's the way we've decided it's going to be.

3) The community is being led into an alternative life style in Jesus. This is involving various decisions for our workers like — communal living for some

- living on the bread line for some
- renouncing family expectations toward fulfilling materialistic values for others
- an all out trust and obedience in the clear words of Jesus' teaching concerning life and discipleship for all

Loads of "establishment christians" are getting super uptight over the way in which we feel led of the Lord in these matters. However God's blessings have flowed toward us in incredible measure.