



TESTIMONIES from RAW 2006

Four days of worship, teaching,
prayer and mission in
Vancouver's downtown eastside



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Sunday 18 — Wednesday 21 March

The Salvation Army CrossCulture Centre
Vancouver, BC

Spring Break is typically a time when many teens take heathen holidays to exotic locales in order to soak up sun, sin, and sexual experimentation. This Spring Break, a group of teens in BC took a 'Hero Holiday' to the worst postal code in North America to distribute soup, soap, and salvation.

It was called RAW, which stands for a ready and willing: ready and willing to put yourself on the line in order to live out the light of Christ in dark places.

Held at The Salvation Army's Cross Culture facility for youth and families in the downtown eastside of Vancouver, teens from all over BC and Washington came to be equipped and sent out in mission.

Powerful worship, potent teaching, and non-stop 24-7 prayer prepared us all to get out and get our hands dirty in mission. Then it was go-time. Groups of teens, alongside the 614 War College students, prayed and sang and witnessed in drug-infested parks, slum hotels, dark alleys, marijuana cafes, and in front of government-funded free heroin centres. They faced persecution, but they also discovered the Kingdom of God in unexpected places. They learned that the person shooting up behind the dumpster is not just a junkie: he or she is a valuable treasure for whom Christ died, and he or she is in desperate need of genuine love.

Mission is not a comfortable, safe thing. It requires us to lay our lives down for others. Some teens in the downtown eastside of Vancouver learned that they were ready and willing for such a sacrifice. Are you ready and willing?



RAW was presented by The Salvation Army 614 Vancouver
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0 - 24 hrs

What can a teenager do in 24hrs? Sleep, eat three meals, watch 1440 minutes of television? In the past 24 hrs the seventy teenagers and young adults attending R.A.W. Urban Mission Conference have worshipped with live art, music and multi-media. They have stretched the common definition of 'prayer' using scripture, practical resources in a continuous prayer room as well as prayer-walking the streets of the Downtown Eastside.

They have heard Danielle Strickland, Stephen Court and Aaron White preach on the character traits of the prophet and how to minister to the marginalized.

In the past 24 hrs, youth from all over B.C. have advanced into the poorest area in North America to minister with late night street evangelism and inner city 'children at risk' programs. They have also served hundreds of homeless and impoverished through the Harbour Light Corps food-line and cleaned up the in-

famous Needle Park.

In the past 24 hrs, R.A.W. Urban Mission Conference has generated an intoxicating atmosphere of Christian community and witnessed with practical faith. The name of Jesus has been lifted up, the homeless and addicted have heard the gospel in dark alleys and the Spirit of God has moved. It will be interesting to see how the next 48 hrs unfold...



Captivating Speakers, Danielle Strickland and Stephen Court cap off the week.

25 - 48 hrs

The last 24hrs of R.A.W. Urban Mission Conference has continued to challenge and inspire with more teaching and preaching, street ministry and a small taste of local advocacy. The last sessions have seen Jonathan Evans speak about prophetic activation and Andy Harrington explain our powerlessness in relation to God.

The practical fieldwork has also continued with youth involved in open-air evangelism throughout the Downtown Eastside and work at the 614 Corps drop-in centre. Others have been prayer-walking local high schools and building relationships in the neighborhood

through undercover special operations.

Recently, a number of local parents have been disturbed by the realistic appearance of toy guns sold in the area. In a neighborhood where police are frequently addressing dangerous situations, replica guns in the hands of children and youth could result in tragedy.

In response, many of our young urban missionaries wrote petitions and protest letters to the toy-store owners that stocks the guns, in the hope of having them removed from the shelves. The urban missionaries personally presented the letters to staff who were predictably irritated and anxious.

Our time together has also involved ministering to one another. A number of youth have made significant decisions to follow Jesus, both for the first time and in recommitment. These decisions will involve a great deal of spiritual warfare as strongholds of fear and depression are overthrown. Your cover in prayer is desperately needed as discipleship continues over the next two days.

Despite sleep deprivation and physical exhaustion, the kids are persevering and looking to the trials of the next 24 hours as they embark on their last day of urban mission.

"RAW has generated an intoxicating atmosphere of Christian community and witnessed with practical faith."

49 - 72 hrs

The final 24 hrs of RAW Urban Mission conference has seen seventy young urban missionaries persevere through exhaustion to engage more revolutionary teaching and worship. Michael Collins spoke on serving Jesus through serving the poor. This last session was witness to the presence of the Spirit as all were powerfully convicted and moved. As a result, many responded

and came forward for prayer and anointing to continue to preach the good news back in their hometowns.

The Church can often be guilty of either grand expectations or unfair criticisms regarding today's youth. This week, a small army of young people gave up a week of their spring-break to minister to the poor, the broken and the needy. They em-

barked on three long, twelve-hour days of service and evangelism in a dark mission-field of addiction, homelessness and destitution. Any criticisms or challenges were met by these seventy kids who proved with prayer, sweat and tears that they are indeed, ready and willing for Jesus.



Ashley Mayer, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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Think Big; Start Small; Dig Deep.

The most impacting part about RAW for me was the practicalness of it. It wasn't like we were asked to do anything impossible. We fed the hungry, we lived the Word, we prayed, we worshipped. I loved how none of these things are going to stay here at RAW. They're going home with us. I think it is pretty darn sweet that it was focused on love because nothing matters without love.

April Gray, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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My experience this year at RAW was a challenge because God really pushed me out of my comfort zone. He showed me things I never really opened my eyes to. I was challenged to do things I never saw myself doing like singing worship to God on the streets

What spoke to me the most was the whole opening of my eyes to really see what God wanted to show me. God wants me to focus more on him. To open my heart and see things around me from God [his perspective]. Everything He has created.

This year I really felt I had to speak out of my comfort zone and do things. Praise God for all that he has shown me, fun, opening my eyes to new things and experiences

Kyle Wheeler, Summerland Baptist Church

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These days at RAW have been a blessing. God just showed me how much I am loved, and that is the most important part when following Jesus. That is the most important part in a person's identity, Christian or not... to be loved by Jesus. I don't think enough people dwell on that truth enough. If you can take that truth down to Hastings, to anywhere there is hurt and suffering, you no longer see any people as nothing but loved by God.

Daniel Hutchings

This event was exactly what I needed. God showed me truths which I had forgotten, such as the joy of being free in prayer and worship. He spoke through the speakers into specific areas of my faith that I've been having struggles with. When we sang the Christmas Carol, God gave me a glimpse of how he hears us and I was blown away by the beauty of it. I believe the prayer coverage in the War Room is so crucial. God has shown me the importance of prayer. Praise God!

Randy Wheeler, Summerland Baptist Church

To be able to spend 3 days in such a prayer saturated atmosphere is a total gift. The times of intense worship and prayer followed by inspired teaching in the Word by people who are living the daily reality of service and life among the poor followed by immediately going out and applying what they learned on the streets, was an amazing, life altering experience for my youth and myself.

In over ten years at this [Youth Ministry] it is probably the best thing I have ever brought my kids to....
I am so blessed and grateful to have been here.

Daniel Long, Abbotsford Vineyard

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During RAW I experienced being exposed to things I haven't seen before. I think God wanted to show me his heart for these broken and lost people. And progressively during the week I began to see pictures in my mind from God. I definitely want to try and share with my friends back at home that need God. And I want to exercise and use my giftings more

Tyrone Viberg, Summerland Baptist Church

I've Found a passion in myself for the needy that is as strong as the mountains and as powerful as the winds. The Lord and I will walk the streets of compassion

Cory Fifield, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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RAW has been an amazing opportunity to get hands on experience in new and exciting ministries. It has been great to see my youth get excited about stepping out of their comfort zones. I have no doubt that this is just the beginning of exciting new ministry in New Westminster.

God is going to use the youth in New West to make a difference. Praise the Lord!!!

Drew Harris, Summerland Baptist Church

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My time spent at RAW changed my life even more than it did last year. After a year of maturing in the concepts I learned at the last RAW, I've found myself even more spiritually transformed. I've learned to see life from a street person's perspective and I can see that these people though homeless are spiritually starving for the fulfillment of Jesus.

I'm going to take these lessons I've learned back to my hometown and let God work through me. I've seen so much hurt, so much starvation, but at the same time, so much hope for a positive future.

Mike Forowald, Abbotsford Vineyard

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It was great as a leader to come and have the opportunity to join with the youth without having to plan everything. The teaching and equipping worked beautifully with all the mission outreach areas. The War College students were great examples both as students of the Word and doers of the Word.

RAW is a great place to step out and try something new.

Kaila Childley, Ocean Crest Community Church

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The beauty of Jesus' love for us is amazing, like tears flowing from heaven. From the rising of the sun till when it sets lets us speak of the greatness of His love. For HE has captured me and set me free. The love of Christ is alive and new at all times, for in Gods love there is no box, there is only where we are with Him.

This weekend the acts of prayer and worship not only came alive again for me. But exploded into the heart of God, that such things as sincere prayer and worship are to be experienced now in our lives and are really only between us and God. No one else should matter at that time.

I have come to experience, or at least recognize those quiet nudges God gives to us. To trust Him and what he asks us to do, even while we don't understand. To act in the Spirit and to follow Gods lead. To learn to more and more throw away the thought and constraint of the world and to follow God wholeheartedly. And to realise that it is a process of minute to minute

Brent White, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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RAW was supposed to open my eyes to the unseen and give me an intense attitude of willingness to serve more, but it was only until God opened my eyes that I truly realized RAW is a tool to teach you new ways to serve. Many questions I needed answered were answered.

Good leaders, good friends and people to fellowship with, but the best part was the good heart for God in everyone here. Ignite the fire in us Lord, breath on these dry bones in our world. 1 Peter 4:1-2

Jeremy Fast, Summerland Baptist Church

God's Word is easy to understand put in the right context. Without love, our attempts are nothing.



Stephanie Lines, Summerland Baptist

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I've struggled with depression for a large amount of my life. It's taken a hold of my life in ways I never thought it could. One of the things that hurt me the worst was how hard it was to meet with God in spirit and in truth. Worship is always a struggle, because there's always something in my head, keeping me away from God in guilt, despair and fear. But God has been working these things out of me, gradually, and showing me more TRUTH and more authority in Christ. I'm learning more about who my God is, how powerful He is and who the enemy is and how he is trying to work against me and God.

This weekend was a big break through as I found such freedom that I've never had before, worshipping in spirit and in truth, and meeting with God. I thank the Lord for his victory in me!

Ashley Gray, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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I really enjoyed myself and I learned lots. There was a time when Satan really hit me and was talking to me about lies. God gave me some words when I was in the prayer room and he told me to anoint myself and to clean up my body. He really spoke to me and I felt his presence in this place and in my heart.

I'm so coming back next year.

This week I came expecting to become filled with the Holy Spirit and be washed and I have been. But also I witnessed God's love for others. As I watched some of the people here I could see them dancing for the Lord, sing for the Lord and laugh for Him. I could really see him work through everyone. I met many people on the street who are not doing well but I know that on the inside they are like all of us. And God loves them just as much as me or you. And no matter what that will not change for God's love is unchanging.



Praise the Lord! Also I am thankful that I can be as blessed as I am to be able to come to God and worship Him. Not caring what somebody thinks about the way I may dance or sing for I'm dancing not for them, but for the oh-so-great Lord.

My favourite thing this week would have to be making the sandwiches for the homeless. Being able to share my love and our gracious Lord with them.

May the Lord bless everyone who came to RAW and allow them to spread His love.

Ashley West, Summerland Baptist Church

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"And I stand in awe of you." Wow, Jesus rocked me this week! I was never aware of the amount of compassion I had for the homeless. I felt just a glimpse of God's heartbreak for the lost and broken. I heard God's voice, saw God move, my life is changed.

Jon Schmidt, Abbotsford Vineyard

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I had never walked in the downtown eastside before and this totally opened my eyes. This experience changed me completely. What touched me the most was how everyone in the downtown eastside shares what little they have. IT is Jesus in disguise. What The Salvation Army is doing down here is amazing. When I get home I am going to be way more bold with my faith. Before I came here I wouldn't have shared my faith with anyone at all.

Veronica Crumback, Summerland Baptist Church

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This was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I'm excited to see how God will use this and me.

Tyler Richmond, Abbotsford Vineyard

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This week was an amazing eye opener for me. Coming here I thought I was going to be scared of the people, but after you talk to them you realize that they are normal people living in difficult situations that cause them to react in strange ways. I enjoyed street combat and the coffee shop, but I really liked serving people at Harbour light. It was amazing to see all the food that was served and all the people who needed it.

One thing I learned was that drugs lead you down a path that ends in death. The pain that is caused by addiction is so hard to take in. It hurt me to see prostitution with so many women. I felt that this was an awesome week and I believe everyone should do this.

MJ Grondines, The Salvation Army New Westminster

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My time at RAW was totally not what I expected. I found that I wasn't challenged in the way I thought I'd be. I found that God taught me a lot about Him being the only one to rely on. That through us would be the way He'd save the world. Seeing many people hurting, just gives me an urge to do something about it! Praise the Lord for showing me the truth!

Sierra Jensen

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The experiences that I have had here at RAW have led to a lot of spiritual growth. Spending time on the downtown eastside was very moving and forced me to step out of my comfort zone and encounter a completely different kind of spiritual battle than I have ever seen at home. That combined with incredible times of worship, prayer and listening to speakers has inspired me and given me ideas of how to be Ready and Willing in my community.

Christine Bacon, The Salvation Army New Westminster/ Cariboo

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This week was an eye opening experience. God pretty much shoved me full force out of my comfort zone and I am so glad he did. I am so tired of being a shy person who is too scared of what people think of me. God asked me to do things that were very uncomfortable: stuff like starting conversations with people, praying the Bible for the first time, prophesying to someone I barely know. But I am so glad God worked through me this week. It was truly life changing and I am so ready for what he's got in store for me in the future.

Rachel Bryce, Summerland Baptist Church

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I liked RAW a lot cuz it opened my eyes to the people of East Van.

Cody Greinen, Summerland Baptist Church

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So this weekend was really great, I have encountered God in some really strange and different ways. It was great to see how down to earth the people here are. They are willing to discuss the greatness of God. Being down on Hastings just really showed me how glad I am that I got off the road of drugs and drinking when I did because there is a definite possibility that I would have ended up kickin' around here. So it is easy for me to look at the stuff we did and saw and say, "Wow!" I am glad I was here to see it and just to see how God works in my life.



It's been a struggle to know what my spiritual gifts are. One session when we were discussing spiritual gifts, I asked to be prayed over to know my spiritual gifts. As soon as my group started praying over me, I felt overwhelming relief that I don't have to know what my gifts are yet. I can wait on God to reveal them.

Jonathan Evans, The Salvation Army 614 Vancouver

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RAW totally took youth ministry out of the box for me. It was great to see so many people worshipping God uninhibited. What was even better was that love of God was transmitted into loving one another. God created a cohesive atmosphere that spanned denominational borders.

And the love didn't stop there. We took it to the streets. We prayed through the downtown, gave people drinks and shared in their stories. Teens got saved, delivered and became passionate about prayer and serving the poor of our world.

The weekend highlight was the 24/7 prayer room. We all prayed for people we met, for each other and what was going on back at home. I felt connected with Him and when everyone went home, I had a huge resource of love for everyone I met up

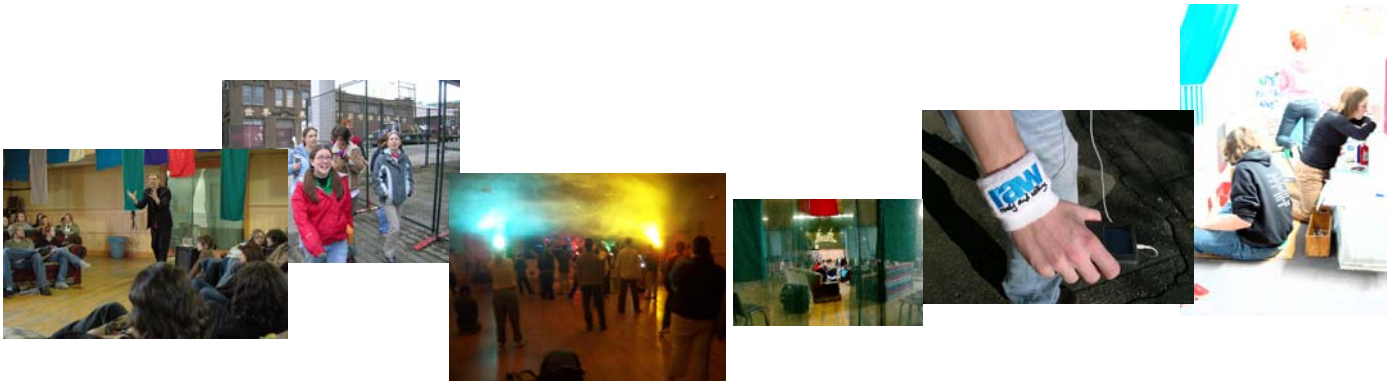
www.armybarmy.com



Come in 2007!

March 18-21

RAW
ready and willing.



Contact: Jonathan_Evans@armybarmy.com for details

Location: Vancouver, Canada
Salvation Army X-culture
2215 E Pender St

Date: March 18 - 21

Cost:

Registration: \$20 [early bird] \$30 [late]
Accommodations: \$10
Meals: TBD

Registration:

early bird: Jan 1/07 - Feb 15/07
Late: Feb 16/07 - Mar 18/07



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