

Shalom Connections

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Sabbath

Good News Even When We Fail

Lauren Barron
Hope Fellowship

“...What underlay the theology of the Sabbath was the radical notion that human beings have worth even when they are not working or otherwise productive.”—from Jewish Wisdom by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

Sabbath is a spiritual practice that has fascinated me for several years now. It is because I need it so much. I never really understood the beauty of Sabbath until we studied it at Hope Fellowship several years ago. Since that time I have encouraged our family in many of the practices that we discussed together. If I had to put the most important concepts I have learned in just a few sentences, it would be these:

The ultimate purpose of creation.

It was the culmination of the creation story and what the Kingdom of Heaven is and will be about when we cross over to eternity: music, art, feasting, worship, beauty, fellowship, communion, celebration. This is the stuff of Sabbath and it is a representation, an enactment of the Kingdom of God on earth—a way of living the prayer “thy kingdom come.” With this in mind, Sabbath should be more about the wonderful things we *can*



› **Sabbath** cont on p.15

New Monasticism Now

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove
Rutba House

Those of you who've been around the Rutba House have no doubt heard us mention the "new monasticism." (One friend wondered whether Leah and I had taken vows of celibacy. For the record, we haven't.) We think it's probably time for us to explain—or to begin to figure out—what we mean by the phrase. So first of all a confession: it's not our phrase. We stole it from Leah's dad, Jonathan Wilson who first used it in his book, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World*.

This is a book about the church and how the church offers a different way of life in the midst of the world. But it's also a book about how difficult it is for the church to be a contrast society in the midst of a culture so fragmented that hardly anyone can remember why we do half the things we've always done. Jonathan concludes his book by calling for disciplined communities of discipleship in which the whole people of God can rediscover the practices that make for faithful Christian living. What is more, he calls for communities in which those practices would make sense. Such communities, he says, would constitute a "new monasticism."

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Despite his absence in mainstream media, God has not removed himself from the world stage.

The Rutba House is an experiment in the new monasticism—one of many that are being conducted in towns and cities across the country. Some of these we knew about before coming to Durham. Many we didn't. But we are excited to learn more all the time of ways in which the Spirit is moving to address the social crisis we feel when we talk to our neighbors or read the morning paper. We are encouraged by the Catholic Worker Movement, the Bruderhof communities, Shalom Mission Communities network, Word and World Alternative Seminary, the Ekklesia Project, and the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), among so many others.

Despite his absence in mainstream media, God has not removed himself from the world stage. He is alive and active, moving among his people to produce creative new forms of resistance against the powers of evil. At the same time, he is himself creating new communities that, though imperfect, give us a glimpse of the kingdom that is to come, "on earth as it is in heaven."

It is an exciting thing to see.

Because we are eager to know what the Spirit is doing in our land, the Rutba House is hosting a gathering in Durham this June to discuss the new monasticism. We are inviting preachers and academics, activists and community members from different states, denominations, ethnic and social backgrounds to tell stories about what they have seen and heard. Together we are going to pray and discern what a rule for living might look like in the new monasticism. (We're even going to try to write a book about it.) We'd appreciate it if you would pray with us.

If you have stories of the Spirit moving in your own community, we'd love to hear them (rutbahouse@aol.com). We're not sure just what will come out of this gathering. But we're excited to hear more from the God who called us to this place. And we're eager to learn where he wants to take us from here. As St. Catherine of Siena wrote, "All the way to heaven is heaven, because Jesus said, 'I am the way.'"

Peace to you,
Jonathan

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is a member of Rutba House in Durham, North Carolina. Reprinted from The Rutba House Newsletter, Winter 2004, with permission. ©

Shalom Connections

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Poetry

Wendell Berry

Two Sabbath Poems

I go among trees and sit still.
All my stirring becomes quiet
around me like circles on water.
My tasks lie in their places
where I left them, asleep like cattle.

Then what is afraid of me comes
and lives a while in my sight.
What it fears in me leaves me,
and the fear of me leaves it.
It sings, and I hear its song.

Then what I am afraid of comes.
I live for a while in its sight.
What I fear in it leaves it,
and the fear of it leaves me.
It sings, and I hear its song.

After days of labor,
mute in my consternations,
I hear my song at last,
and I sing it. As we sing,
the day turns, the trees move.



No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less you are
that possibility you were.
More and more you have become
those lives and deaths
that have belonged to you.
You have become a sort of grave
containing much that was
and is no more in time, beloved
then, now, and always.
And so you have become a sort of tree
standing over a grave.
Now more than ever you can be
generous toward each day
that comes, young, to disappear
forever, and yet remain
unaging in the mind.
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away.

from *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems, 1979-97*



©

The Value of a Dollar

A Short Story

Paul Rhode
Reba Place Fellowship

She glanced in the mirror. Not terrible. She looked older than she was, and her dress wasn't in the best shape, but she was still a young woman and with the hat you couldn't tell she needed a haircut. The neighbors had agreed to watch the kids for a couple hours tonight, if she watched their kids Saturday night. So she was ready to go. To church. She couldn't quite believe it, but there it was.

Her hand was on the doorknob when she remembered the collection. They take up a collection at church—how could she forget that? They always seemed to make such a big deal about it at the churches she went to growing up. Lots of lofty blessings on the cash. And one place even made a parade out of it. Everyone, even the kids, would get up and march single file up to the altar, which had a basket on it and one of the elders standing next to it. They would walk by and drop in their money—while the man watched and nodded solemnly—and then parade back to their seats. One Sunday, when she was a teenager, she had refused to join the parade. She just sat there with her arms crossed. Her mother had been so embarrassed that she slapped her when they got home. She never went to church again after that.

She looked in her wallet, though she knew what she'd find there. Just one dollar

and some change. Well, she wasn't going to put change in, that's for sure. The clink of the coins in the offering plate would be too embarrassing. *She* knew she was poor, but she didn't need them knowing it. So she grabbed the dollar and stuffed it in her pocket. A dollar wouldn't buy dinner for tomorrow night anyway—she still didn't know what she was going to do about that. She didn't get paid until Friday; maybe she could stretch the leftovers? And if they had to go hungry one night, that wasn't the end of the world—she'd done it enough times when she was a kid. She immediately hated herself for that thought, but that was the world she lived in.

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When she got to the church, Linda wasn't there. Of course. Linda had been bugging her about this for weeks, and now when she shows up, no Linda. But the people seemed nice enough, and she hadn't come for Linda, really, had she? She'd been shrugging off people like Linda for years, no problem. It was the bills she couldn't shrug off any more. And the rumors about layoffs. And the horror stories she heard about the welfare offices. That's what dragged her into a church again, not Linda.

It was a small church, and the service wasn't much, compared to what she'd seen before. Just a few in the choir and some simple songs, but the people sang like they meant it. She recognized one she had liked as a child:

Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto
you,
allelu, alleluia.

She liked the "allelu": al-layay-loo. She could remember her mother singing it that way.

Then the preacher got up there, but he

kept it pretty short and simple. And there was no collection right afterwards like she was expecting. At a lot of churches she'd been to, the preacher would shout and dance around and get everyone worked up, and then they would pass the plate right away. Like they were saying, "You got your show—wasn't that something? Now what was that worth to you?" Just like everywhere else: people always wanted something from you. But who was she to talk?

They prayed, sang some more, then a few announcements and that was it. And the announcements weren't what she was used to either. Usually pastors talked about all the great community services their church offered, or how they just bought new hymnals, or what they were doing to fix up the church. Which always sounded like they were trying to convince the people that their money was being put to good use. It reminded her of those road signs by the construction sites: "Your tax dollars at work." And the pastors always moved right on to "... but to keep up this great work, we need your full support." And everyone knew what that meant. Whether it was the pastors that said it or the politicians.

People were getting their coats on. She turned to the older lady next to her. "There's no collection tonight?"

"No, dear, we don't do that here. And somehow God finds a way to give us what we need anyway... not that we need much, you know." The lady smiled, and put out her hand. "I don't think we've met. I'm Betty. Do you live around here?" She told the lady her name and that she lived in the Monroe building. "Ah! So do I. You'll have to come over some time. I'm not going right home now, but how about tomorrow? For dinner maybe?" Betty didn't even mind that she had kids. "Please, bring 'em along! I could use a few little ones around my place again. Number 107. Six o'clock OK?"

She was stunned. She managed to nod, though, and smile a little, then watched as Betty walked slowly away. But she couldn't move. Something felt like it was coming loose inside of her, and she was afraid that if she moved she would fall apart. *"And somehow God finds a way to give us what we need anyway..."* She didn't know if she could believe that—but she wanted to. *Lord*, she wanted to...

She realized she was crying. But still she didn't move, letting the tears fall to the floor. When her nose started running she searched her pockets, but only found a crumpled... She laughed. And blew a dollar's worth. ☺



Art: Dennis

The First Easter, Again

Tim Winton

I can still remember the time my son had reached an age where he had a religious faith of his own, a vulnerable childlike faith. But I hadn't brought up the whole central part of the story with him, the part about the Crucifixion. It was just something I couldn't bring myself to introduce to him. It's a violent and distasteful thing. Besides, we were living in Ireland at the time and I was feeling uneasy about affiliating myself with any particular denomination in that environment. On the other hand, I was desperate for some kind of public expression of faith. I wanted to be in a church but was unable to go to one because they symbolized so much strife. It was an ugly time. It was Easter. So I thought I'd use this pent-up feeling to finally broach the topic of the Crucifixion.

I can remember vividly how cold we were in the place we were staying. We used to lie in bed to get warm. It was a windswept

lonely place. We had a tradition of telling a Jesus story and on Good Friday Jesse climbed up into his bunk and asked if we were going to have a story today. So I held my breath and launched into the Passion. Jesse couldn't believe that Jesus had come to this. I tried to describe the way they put the nails in the cross and the road to Golgotha and so on. I had absorbed all the details over the years by hearing it told so many—almost too many—times. So much so that it loses its power. But I was in a complete state of nakedness psychologically, telling the story to Jesse. I couldn't get through the description without being torn and budding tears. Nor could he.

Then I remembered that there was all this other stuff about the Resurrection.

Before I got to the end, he was there already. The very idea that his Jesus could have this happen to him was absolutely heartbreaking. So much so that I got caught up in it and completely overlooked the part about the Resurrection. We laid there on

this little narrow bed and howled for about twenty minutes, almost as if we had lived through it ourselves. As if we were people who ourselves had lost our only son. I had to then pick myself up. I thought: What can I do for this child? I've dashed the hopes and dreams of his infant faith. Then I remembered that there was all this other stuff about the Resurrection. He wasn't going to go to sleep. So we continued. We got through the tomb and the appearances and all that. The effect it had on him was almost beatific. I felt like he went to sleep in this swoon of happiness. Saved by the bell. I climbed down from that ladder a completely renewed person.

I now see that as one of the most critical religious experiences of my life. The power of the story itself was so raw and bloody I felt like I'd rediscovered something. I realized what had sustained my faith as a child, apart from all the institutional frustrations, was the purity and power of all the stories which add up to the big story—which I claim I know now as my story. I felt better about myself as a writer as a result. I felt I was doing something that was more than superfluous. ©

(from A Conversation with Tim Winton in Image Journal #10, Summer 1995)

“We think that God intends the church to be an ongoing human experiment—infused with grace and Spirit—in the world, a continuous trial-and-error of fellowship built on love, reconciliation and sacrifice. To do so, it must stay true to the Way of Jesus and others who set their hearts on the Kingdom of God before all else (Luke 12:21). To be that kind of church, it must be countercultural... an alternative community, in the midst of cultures and powers that operate on assumptions and priorities not centered on the Kingdom.”

Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow,
The Church as Counterculture, p. 7

Church News

News from San Francisco

Zoe Mullery
Church of the Sojourners

This news is being written on the eve of Lent and we prepare to remember the suffering of Christ, and to turn our hearts toward God as we are called to repent and proclaim the coming Kingdom. We enter the season with an Ash Wednesday service. Our traditions for completing this season include a Good Friday service, often with a drama; a Holy Saturday “stations of the cross” in which we transform our worship room through artwork and other means into a place to meditate on the fearful moment between death and resurrection; and a sunrise service Easter morning on a rocky San

Francisco hilltop, which has often been blessed with the thrill of the actual sunrise bursting forth at the moment we sing *He is risen...*

Since the last newsletter, Dan Zazvorka accepted a call to pastor Lamoille Presbyterian Church in Lamoille, Nevada (near Elko) and once the decision was made, it all happened very quickly. Dan and Kelly drove off on the night of February 19th amidst many tears and blessings. Though we had known for awhile that they would be leaving, that knowledge did not diminish the pain of separation. We have been struggling to process as a congregation the whys and hows of the Zazvorka departure, as well as trying to share with each other the continuing sense of loss and grieving we have experienced as a congregation, amidst the numerous deaths and farewells. Though we still have much to understand and untangle, at the same time we are unified in our desire to bless Dan and Kelly and to see them and their new church thrive. They are both extravagantly gifted and dedicated to serving God’s kingdom

and as our hearts ache for their absence, we know that the church in Lamoille will be richly blessed.

Dale and Debbie Gish just went on another E-ticket ride in their adoption adventure. A woman about to give birth in Los Angeles, along with the birth father, had decided to place their baby for adoption. Dale and Debbie drove to L.A. and spent several high-drama days there, during which the baby was born. After the birth, the couple decided to keep the baby, then reconsidered, then decided again to keep him. It was clear to me, as Dale and Debbie told the story, that they were able to be agents of God’s grace and encouragement to the couple during the whole ordeal; still, it is a very rough road for them to travel emotionally and it is hard to see, at times, what God is up to in bringing them into such a painful situation again—they went through a similar experience just a few months ago. Their determination to see God’s goodness is strong and they (and we) continue to pray that God will bring them a child. They have an adoption website—please pass it along to anyone you can think of who might be helpful. <http://home.earthlink.net/~daledebgish/index.htm>

Tim Otto and Jeff Hare attended the SMC conference in January, and both returned refreshed and inspired by the presence and encouragement of older, faithful believers who have been through many hard times and continue to persevere. Judy Alexander visited for a couple of weeks, spending a lot of time being Grandma (or *Ita*, as little bilingual Alexina calls her, short for *Abuelita*), and bringing good news of the work God is doing through her in Taiwan. Jenny and Tim Lockie are doing a husband-wife job-share with Tim’s job at Innerchange (a Christian ministry among the poor), with Jenny taking eight hours, taking a bit of pressure off Tim; Jenny is also now leading bilingual playgroups with moms and little ones. Edith Bernard is helping make this possible by doing some cleaning and babysitting for Jenny. It sounds complicated, but it all seems to work. Sweet Alexina just turned 2 with much bilingual fanfare. Tim continues his sabbatical, making time to read, think, pray, and blog (for our non-techie readers, a blog is an online journal). Check out his thoughts and reflections at <http://homepage.mac.com/timlockie2000/iblog>.

By the time this newsletter is out, our long-lost Steven Braney will have returned from his year in Guatemala, and will be enthusiastically re-entering life at Sojourners



Gallarus Oratory, 7th century Irish chapel.

(I know it will be enthusiastically because he doesn't do anything any other way). Mike Creeger is starting a men's group with the book *The Sacred Romance* as a central resource. Teri Creeger is starting a women's Bible study. Matt and Ian Creeger, as well as Anne-Marie Saxton and Kevin Casey, will fly out to Waco for Dan Piché and Katie Smith's wedding in April. Tessa Richardson just completed a grueling training in her job as a social worker in the San Francisco jails. We had an enjoyable visit from Craig Litorja's multi-talented sister Cory. Lily got a raise at her job at Thrift Town! Christen Mattix is beginning to find her rhythm in the quirky world of the San Francisco Art Institute. Matt Toney and his girlfriend Kim hit the neighborhood one night with colored chalk, graffiti-ing numerous sidewalks with such things as "Don't be satisfied with superficial pleasure—go for Deep Joy!" and "Got Gozo?" The Guatemala family returned safely from a long trip to El Salvador and Guatemala which Antonia told me was "so so so so so beautiful." Laura Hare has been doing a "Tuesday School" (instead of Sunday school) time of teaching the kids about God. Rick DiMicco has been encouraged lately by new insight into scripture. IvaJo Otto is in her last days at UC Berkeley, after which she will fall off a precipice into the next chapter of her life, which no one knows what it is yet.

Louise Harris has had a bit of a setback in the extraordinary healing she had been experiencing since her back surgery in the fall. It has been discouraging, as she's had to return to wearing the brace again and struggle with not knowing exactly what her body is up to. Please keep her in your prayers.

We enjoyed a wonderful visit from Laura, James and Margot Strzelec in January, during which they seemed intently focused on reminding us of God's presence in our midst. Visits like this are especially sweet after so many goodbyes. Their next miracle baby is due in April.

We're test-driving a new meeting format called "Family Meetings." Every six weeks or so we want to get together as an entire congregation (new folks and old folks alike) and have a time of prayer, worship and sharing—kind of a connecting and checking-in time of encouragement, fairly agenda-free. Our first one was quite intense and seemed to confirm that something like this could be a way forward in finding new ways of being family.

A study of the book of 1 John is next for us; we are considering using it as a main

text in our next Nature and Purpose seminar rather than our usual study of Ephesians.

We look forward to Easter and the certainty of Jesus' resurrection: "Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." Hosea 6:3



News from Waco

Hannah Zazvorka
Hope Fellowship

Well, we've had a good winter here at Hope Fellowship. Not much winter weather in warm Waco (although we did get one snow day!), but winter nonetheless. We entered the new year of 2004 with a new focus and reflection for this year. September will mark 10 years of God's faithfulness to Hope Fellowship. As we look back on the last decade as a family and church we praise God for all the people he has brought into our midst and for the ones he has yet to bring. God is good and faithful and he continues to be to this body and to the many who worship him around the world.

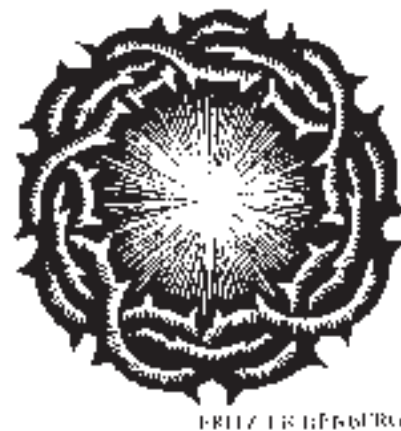
These past couple months have been full and exciting ones. The men of the church went on a retreat from Jan. 9th to Jan. 11th and came back with a report of a restful and enjoyable time together. We've had several birthdays recently with Phillip Bridgewater turning 40 on New Years Eve along with Ellie turning 8 on the same day. JB Smith (33) and John Alexander (40) also celebrated their birthdays in January and in February we celebrated the birthdays of Lauren, Ria, Gerson, Barbara, Javier, and Clare. Ria Snyder lost her father earlier in January and returned to Puerto Rico to be with her family. Gabriela Gatlin and Hannah Zazvorka received news that they will both be filling positions with the year long SALT program through the

Mennonite Central Committee—Gabriela will be serving in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and Hannah in Cuernavaca, Mexico beginning this August.

We've enjoyed visits from several relatives of people in Hope Fellowship and close friends visiting over the holidays. And several of us have been doing some traveling and visiting too in the last month or so. We look forward to our annual Easter Retreat coming up soon. We are also very excited about the big SMC gathering here in Waco coming up in October and have begun preparations for that event.

We would appreciate your prayers as we enter a new year with children going back to school, people looking for work and continuing in their present jobs, the hiring of a few new people at Habitat for Humanity, and many exciting changes for the World Hunger Relief Farm, with Neil Miller as the new director and Barbara Bridgewater as President of the Board.

We keep you all in our prayers as well as you enter into the new year and we rejoice along with you in Christ who unites us all.



Good News and Bad News from Evanston, Rogers Park

David Janzen
Reba Place Fellowship

Since the New Year we have had an unusually beautiful winter. With snowfall several times a week, our Evanston world looks pristine, and the "snowmama" built by Jaden and her grandpa, stands in patient

› *Church News* cont on p.10

The Good Life

When Sabbath Hallows the Whole Week:

An Editorial by David Janzen
Reba Place Fellowship

“Polish your good shoes, do your Sunday school lesson, and take a bath.” Those were the Saturday evening instructions that began the Sabbath in the German-Mennonite Kansas subculture where I grew up. On Sundays it was allowable to do daily farm chores like feeding cattle, milking cows, and gathering eggs, but fieldwork was forbidden even at harvest time—something only “Yankees” would do. Going to church every Sunday morning and on Sunday evenings had no exceptions unless there was a blizzard that closed the roads. Generous hospitality also marked our Sabbath as my mother gladly set the table for any friends or church guests we chose to invite.

Sunday afternoons, however, were culturally-contested territory. My exhausted parents looked forward to one afternoon nap a week, leaving us young people free to

arrange our own activities with whomever we could recruit. Our parents’ happiness to see us go off with our friends caused us to wonder if this was the time of the week when Mom and Dad might... no, they wouldn’t, would they? But mostly we thought about finding a key to some gym to play basketball in the winter, to go swimming or play baseball—both barebacked activities—in the summer. Our Grandma Janzen was scandalized to hear that we took our shirts off in public on Sunday. “What would Jesus say?” We shrugged our shoulders and figured if he showed up, we’d invite him to play ball, and he probably would, leaving his holy robes on a pile with our T-shirts somewhere outside the base paths.

The Sabbath hallows the whole week, and the whole week hallows the Sabbath, when we live it from the Father’s heart.

Now, looking back, I’m grateful for a counter-culture that took Sabbath serious enough to have Orthodox-Jewish style dis-

cussions about law and freedom, and about the importance of arriving at shared faith commitments that defined a community able to sometimes stand against the pressures of “the World” in living a more sane and holy life.

What about Sabbath keeping in our generation?

A few weekends ago Shalom Mission Community leaders gathered in a retreat at Plow Creek to plan events for the coming year and to reflect on our chosen theme, “Keeping the Sabbath.” As Christian intentional communities we are afforded some support to resist the dominant culture. Nevertheless, we also feel the anxious pressures to compete, to survive economically, to produce and consume like everyone else. We feel “behind,” as if we never have enough time for our schedules. And this oppression of time sometimes expresses itself in a compulsive search for entertainment and distraction. Our Sabbaths, especially for those with worship responsibilities, can leave us exhausted. We identify with the airline pilot who announced to his passengers, “We have no idea where we are, but we are making great time.”

Among Shalom friends, I found it



Reba Conlin



encouraging, even inspiring to share about Sabbath disciplines that we find life-giving. Church of the Sojourners folks practice three hours of silence each Sunday morning, and then enjoy an afternoon time of rousing worship and feasting. At Plow Creek, Richard and Ruth Anne Friesen host a 9:00 am time of prayers for international peace. Hope Fellowship focused one year reflecting together on the practices of Sabbath. (See Lauren Barron's article as fruit of this Sabbath consciousness.) Reba has a tradition of great weekend potluck parties at the Clearing or Cana household.

What personal and communal Sabbath disciplines are you called to practice, and what have been their fruits?

This is a question that has opened some especially interesting conversations for me in recent weeks. I urge you to try that question on fellow disciples.

And, since you asked, here is how I might answer that question: God *finished* creating the world in six days so he could kick back and rest. For some reason I can't seem to finish my work in six days, so I arrive at the weekend with a sleep debt and a list of unfinished tasks that keep calling my

name. Nevertheless, God asks two things of me: One is to trust him and sleep as long as I want to at some point in the weekend. Another is to take an extended quiet time with my journal, listening, paying attention to whatever the Spirit wants to show me. If I do these faithfully, my spirit is restored.

But for icing on the cake, God has other Sabbath gifts. If we are in Evanston, we faithfully attend Reba Place Church worship with our four-year-old granddaughter, Jaden. Her enthusiasm for worship, dancing in the aisles, waving flags, and marching out with the Kingdom Kids renews us as much as the Spirit lifting our voices in praise with the body of Christ. Usually on Sunday evening Joanne and I sit at the piano where she plays and we both harmonize our way through the songs we don't yet know in the Mennonite Hymnal. Oh yes, somewhere in the weekend we try to get a long walk, light a candle, enjoy some relaxed time together, and chocolate.

Sabbath misuse and Sabbath discovery

In the parable of the Prodigal Son I find images both of Sabbath misuse and of Sabbath discovery. God has given us divinely ordained rhythms of weekdays for recreat-

ing the world in partnership with God, and Sabbath rest to recall how very good it is. We are given time for concentration and for reflection, toil and celebration, frugality and abundance.

Feasting every day, as the Prodigal Son found out, becomes meaningless consumption that needs to be ever more extravagant to distract us from our lost condition. Frugality without celebration, however, as the Prodigal's older brother lived it, also lacks meaningful solidarity. The good life is not some middle class individualistic average between the two brothers, the one living like a millionaire and the other like a slave. The good life is what the Father knows and wants to convey to us, his children: to know how to work faithfully and when to make a party, how to sacrifice for others and to set free those whom we love, how to bear grief without hardening our hearts, to know the moment for forgiveness and embrace, and to use the world's goods generously for community and the kingdom's sake.

We make a mistake in thinking that one day is holy and the others are not. Rather, the Sabbath hallows the whole week, and the whole week hallows the Sabbath, when we live it from the Father's heart. ²⁴

› Church News cont from p.7

fortitude, spruce-bough arms held wide, waiting for a hug.

The new snow, we've discovered, is good for lots of friction-free driving, including two-and-a-half Fellowship car accidents. After taking Reba's favorite van only half way to work, David Lukens allegedly called home to say, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that the air bags work." Ask Virgil and Ronn about the other mishaps. Even if two of these accidents were the other guy's fault, and no one got hurt, Bill Castle nevertheless is trying to find us some new used cars.

We had a great Reba Services Office party and dedication on January 25, with cider and finger food offered in the Fellowship gallery/conference room featuring paintings from Anne Gavitt, Julius Belsler, David Lukens, Chris and Carl Evans, and Hilda Carper. The gallery itself was artfully set up by Joanne and Virgil Vogt and Hilda Carper. Another much-appreciated element of the conference room is a power-napping couch for office staff.

Chris Evans went east with son Carl and a van-load of paintings for about ten days to set up an exhibit in a New York gallery. Back home, Chris and Carl have studios at 735 Reba Place Basement, next to the Fellowship office. Carl has gotten inspired by the Christmas gift of an airbrush and is decorating T-shirts, sneakers, and other items in demand from his high school friends.

The fourteen-week Monday evening series at Cana House is off to an exciting start. Ten North Park University students are taking the potluck and the seminar for credit in a home-made course on *Values and Practices of Christian Community*. Sally Schreiner, David Janzen, and Allan Howe are



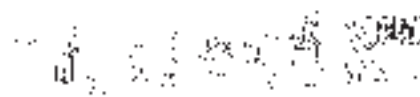
Allan Howe

David Janzen, Chris Evans and Hilda Carper (l to r) study one of Chris's paintings.

team-teaching the course along with the leader, Greg Clark. We are moved by the hunger for authentic community and Jesus-discipleship that is making a full house week after week.

The Fellowship purchase of the 1608 Pratt building in Rogers Park is now accomplished. Leasing arrangements are proceeding with the Living Water Community Church that hopes soon to build out worship and classroom space in about 60% of the building. Fund-raising has begun for this new church home. We are inspired to believe that God wants this building and this troubled city corner to become a place of praise and ministry in the neighborhood.

Finally, did you hear how Chicago got started? A bunch of people in New York said, "Gee, we like the crime and the poverty, but it's just not cold enough. Let's go west."



News from Tiskilwa

Ruth Anne Friesen
Plow Creek Fellowship

It was a good opportunity to host the SMC leader's retreat this January! That meant that we got to stay home and welcome others to the countryside. It is cold these days! But hopefully our meetings, worships, walks, and good fellowship warmed hearts and souls. We shared reflections about the Sabbath and took time to rest, as well. It is a good practice to learn to rest and be renewed as each new week starts.

Rich Foss is finding that developing Evergreen Leaders with a new three-month intern is taking unlimited time and energy. There are three workshops planned for this spring: March 5-6, April 2-3, and May 21-22. We pray that the Lord will bless the process and the encouragement that new leaders are given.

A new family of three arrived at Plow Creek on New Year's Eve. Kevin Berends and his wife Lori with their little daughter Kora have come and heartily joined in our activities. Kevin has joined Rich in the Evergreen Leaders office at Rich's house. There seems to be buzzing activity happening as the new organization takes off and learns to fly.

A new son has been born at Plow Creek.



Joanne Janzen

David and Jaden Janzen pose after creating the "snowmama."

Leonide and Pete Begly are the proud parents of Joseph Roy Dubuisson Begly who arrived on New Year's Day! We are all rejoicing over his safe arrival and joyously received him into our fellowship as he was passed from one pair of open arms to another when he showed up the last Sunday of January. We thank God for new life!

We celebrated Three King's Day by coming together and sharing gifts. It has been traditional to exchange names in December and to create gifts or invite people over or to prepare whatever small gifts seem appropriate. This year the drama "The Other Wise Man" had a central place in the festivities.

Jim Fitz returned from Colombia just before Christmas. It's always strange to change cultures, and it probably was especially so at Christmas time. Erin Kindy plans to leave Colombia on February 3 for a month of rest. It is good for us to keep in touch so personally with the Colombia scene. We feel privileged to have the opportunity!

Lyn Fitz had double knee replacement surgery on January 20. By God's grace she has been recuperating well and came home from the hospital the last day of January. We thank God for her new knees and for her courage to have two new knees at once!

Tim Gale has just accepted a new job as program director at Camp Menno Haven, only about five miles away. Already he has gotten his feet wet and likely frozen, too, as youth gathered there for a weekend retreat the third week of January and Junior Highers had their retreat the following weekend. We wish Tim and Carol well as they experience all the changes the new job means, like moving to the camp in May.

The High Five decision-making process has been recently reviewed and changed some. As a community and church we want to be sensitive and listening to one another in the decision-making process. At the end of a decision-making time, we indicate how we feel about the decision by putting up fingers to affirm the decision. The more fingers shown, the more affirmed the decision is. We needed to eliminate power words like "blocking" the decision, as we described the process in writing. We hope the process is adequately described and changed as we meet in February to finally affirm it.

We covet your prayers for the on-going transitions in the farming this spring and summer. We expect that Neil Horning will lead the farming venture. Pray that all involved will participate in good spirit and that the Lord will lead in the decisions that need to be made. (2)

Some Ideas for Sabbath-Keeping

Lauren Barron
Hope Fellowship

As Individuals

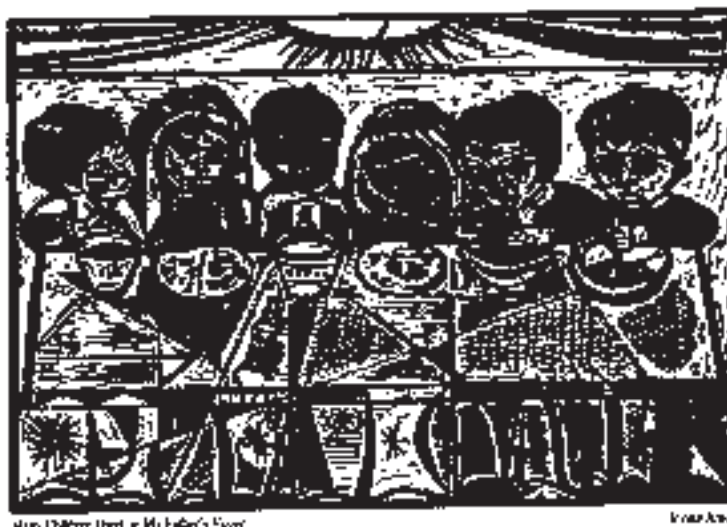
1. Recognize the importance of Sabbath, the call to obedience of this command, and the promise of blessing associated with it
2. Prepare for the Sabbath so as to allow for a sustained time to turn our focus away from work and toward the Lord and the things of the Kingdom.
3. Set aside time for individual mediation/reflection/prayer/spiritual reading
4. Abstain from work or chores on this day. Choose instead to enjoy the work that has already been done and completed.
5. Avoid commerce (buying/spending/shopping) on the Sabbath. Choose instead to enjoy the gifts we have been given and God's provision for us rather than trying to acquire more.
6. Consider special acts of mercy or service on this day

As Families

1. Set aside special time together as a family (games, walks, music, sharing family stories or reading aloud, looking at photo albums, etc.)
2. Consider having a regular, special meal together (special foods, dishes, flowers, table linens, candles, or blessings at the table are some ideas)
3. Consider prayer together or scripture reading together as a family
4. Consider fasting from media such as TV, newspaper, telephone, videos, computers, etc. on the Sabbath
5. Consider special acts of mercy or service as a family on this day

As Community

1. Agree on Sunday as a recognized Sabbath day for our community
2. Continue celebratory and participatory worship
3. Try to focus in worship on thanksgiving, celebration and recognition of what God has already done, instead of asking for more. Consider saving supplication and prayer requests for another day.
4. Continue our focus on Bible teaching and learning from scripture on Sabbath
5. Avoid scheduling of other activities to preserve as much of the day as possible
6. Continue to show hospitality to family, friends and strangers (2)



High Five (The Five Fingers of My Father's Hand)

Hope Fellowship

Small Korean Church Sends Deacon to Connect with North America Christian Communities

Heung Seung Cheon and David Janzen
South Korea and Evanston

Across the shaky bridge of his limited English vocabulary he struggled to communicate with me. And I had an even tougher time just pronouncing his name (Heung Seung Cheon). Forget about me trying to speak any Korean. We plunged ahead with the words and signs we had, and I gradually learned the nature of Cheon's plucky visit.

"My church helped me to make this trip to America, one hundred percent. I also give trip to God." His face beams broadly as he says what is already obvious, "I'm very happy." Cheon has arrived from Elkhart, Indiana, where he visited a leader of the Christian community movement in Korea.

His friend, Youn Seek Lee, is studying at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Cheon had hoped to visit Hutterite communities and other groups farther north, but a blizzard wiped out those plans, so he had a couple of extra days at Reba. I asked Cheon to tell his story, and he began with his spiritual journey.

"Eight years old, I went to church. First in our family. But I became a new Christian seven years ago. Pastor Han Young Soo teach me a wonderful gospel in Christ. All heaven's things are in Jesus Christ, God's example." With these words Cheon's face lit up with a huge smile when he sensed our connection in the Spirit. He continued with his testimony.

"For three years I studied with pastor Han. Then he sent me to teach other people. Five years I've been teaching—sister, wife, others. Bring to God. I confess same faith as pastor Han."

"Pastor Han doesn't like big events. Our church name is Jackeun Church. That means 'small church.' We go one people, one people," he motioned, bringing two hands together. "When one opens his mind we ask, 'Do you want Bible study?' Then we teach the Bible, one people to one people. Jesus came to teach patiently—the poor, blind, handicapped. We obey Jesus Christ in this way. Jesus Christ gave to all people. One person dies, all have resurrection. Jesus is our life." Cheon explained to me how every adult



Julie Lorenzen

in their small congregation is in a personal Bible study with Pastor Han or one of the ten persons in the leaders group. It is clear that this core of leaders has bonded together in a sacrificial life, intensively discipling many others beyond their small church circle.

"We want to build a community with the weak people," Cheon explains. "I read Henri Nouwen about Daybreak Community, and Jean Vanier. Our church is concerned with many things—weak persons, youth, natural environment, community, confessing our faith. We want to deal with all life..." Here Cheon pauses with puzzled brow and pokes his index finger at a Palm Pilot translator until his face lights up and he shows me the words, "INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC, UNIFIED."

"Korean young people grow up in a very bad environment, with a sick heart," he continues. "Our church is especially concerned about teenagers whose lives are bad. We work with an NGO, Moral Action Christian Citizenship. It is famous in Korea. Pastor Han is in this NGO's leaders group. With them we do many things to change the bad environment, teaching teenagers to avoid sex, fighting, drugs—to build good bodies and spirits.

"My wife did not have a Christian faith," Cheon confides. "She studied ten years with me and pastor Han. This last year she confesses faith to our family. We have four children. My wife thanks God and me. We come to faith in Jesus now. My wife went to church twenty-five years ago, but she has a Christian conviction now.

"I work writing insurance and financial planning. Our money goes to teach many people to confess their faith. God wants this—for us to go out into their troubles



Jackeun Presbyterian Church from Kyungnam, South Korea, sends greetings and their Christian community explorer, Heung Seung Cheon (back row, fifth person from left)

to help people to faith. Then we have done the act of God.

“In our church we ask God what we can do. We are Presbyterian church—meet in a nursery school. Every Sunday we worship God and eat together. Our prayer is to buy some land to build houses and guest rooms. Our hope. We want to live community, one life. Each one loves as I love and you love. Father and Son, you and me—one. Now we want to start when I get back.

“Korean society doesn’t like community,” Cheon acknowledged. “Korea is divided, North and South. North Korea is...” Here Cheon taps on his Palm Pilot and points to the word, “COERCED” and continues. “North Korea is coerced community. South Koreans dislike communism. But God gave the church a way to live freedom community. We will start. Something sacrificed for God. Some suffering comes to our church, OK. We want to go God’s way.”



Heung Seung Cheon and his wife Oh Bong Keum.

**We will start.
Something sacrificed
for God.
Some suffering
comes to our church,
OK. We want
to go God’s way.**

Now Cheon arrives at a request of us. “We like Reba, sharing finances and life. Our pastor wants Reba leaders to make a spiritual interchange. Our leaders and people come here. Could Reba Place people come to us? God wants us to be sharing.” I encourage Cheon to talk about this with Virgil Vogt whom he will meet later in the day. Some years ago Virgil was invited to speak to a number of Korean churches about Reba and about Christian community. Cheon remembers him.

With few words, many smiles and gracious head nodding to show he understands us, Cheon made a big impression on us all in a few days. He took videos of every aspect of Reba life—from washing machines to a white elephant gift exchange. (Is our life really that exciting to Korean Christians seeking community?) But we have to confess, we are excited, too, by Cheon’s courage to travel so far with so few English resources, to learn so eagerly from sisters and brothers to whom the Holy Spirit has guided him. And we wonder: what does God want to do next with this friendship just begun? ©



Family Shabbat Service

*Taken from the Celtic Daily Prayer Book
The Northumbria Community*

I. The Lighting of the Candles *(traditionally led only by women)*

Blessed are You, Lord, High King above all kings
Our Father for ever and ever.
Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

(Lighting candles individually or together)
Let Thy face, O Lord, shine forth upon us
And be Thou merciful unto us.

*(Individually or together moving hands over the candles, palms down,
with circular motion inwards towards the eyes, three times)*
The peace of God
And of Christ
And of the Holy Spirit
Be upon us and our children for ever more.

(Individually or together, covering eyes with hands)
I do not think that I shall fear Thee when I see Thee face to
face

(All together, removing hands from eyes, and looking at the candles)
Thou are our trust, O King of kings.

I pray that no envy or malice,
No hatred or fear, may smother the flame
I pray that indifference and apathy, contempt and pride
May not extinguish its light.

Be with us by day, be with us by night,
And as darkness covers the earth
Keep our lights shining brightly.
We are on a journey,
For our hearts have run before us
To your Kingdom;
Once far off, we have now been brought near.

See how good and joyful a thing it is
To dwell together in unity!

II. The Breaking of Bread *(traditionally led only by men)*

(Taking the bread)
Blessed are You, Lord
High King above all kings,
For through Your goodness we have this bread.
You have given us Your peace
And set a hunger in our hearts.
Restore our strength.
Give new energy to tired limbs,

New thought to weary minds.
(Share the bread)

(Taking the wine)
Blessed are You, Lord
High King above all kings,
For through your goodness we have this wine.
We thank You for Your lovingkindness
Which has filled our days
And brought us to this time and place.
May the wine restore our souls,
Giving new vision to dry spirits,
New warmth to cold hearts.
(Share the wine)

III. Thanksgiving Before Sharing the Meal

Bless, O Lord, this food we are about to eat
And we pray You, O God,
That it may be good for our body and soul,
And if there are any poor creatures
Hungry or thirsty, walking the road,
May God send them in to us
So that we can share the food with them,
Just as Christ shares His gifts with all of us.

Ⓣ



› Sabbath cont from p.1

do than about the things we *can't* or *shouldn't* do on that day.

I am so thankful for the very thought of Sabbath, for all it means. It is a reminder of joy when I am burdened by work, a reminder of rest and space when I am anxious and hurried, a reminder of eternity when I am preoccupied with time.

Sabbath as Queen

There is a synagogue near our home that I have occasionally attended on Friday nights. I am moved by the Jewish concept of Sabbath as Queen. What if a queen came to your home for the weekend? You would clean your house with care. You would put out flowers, your best table linens, your best dishes, your best candlesticks. Only the best wine and bread would do. You would probably prepare your very best and favorite recipes. You would be clean and dressed in your best clothes when she arrived.

I don't know how observant Jewish women do it! Sabbath takes a lot of preparation and thinking ahead. It doesn't just happen... but then again, it does, every week! I am in love with the idea that, in Hebrew, there is not a word for any day of the week except the Sabbath day. The days of the week are named like this: the first day toward Sabbath, the second day toward Sabbath, and so on. The ancient rabbis taught that the first half of the week is illuminated by the light of the Sabbath just passed and the second half of the week is illuminated by the light of the Sabbath to come.

Sabbath has been "good news" for me and my family. After studying Sabbath, I still have mixed feelings about which day of the week should be honored. I think there are plenty of arguments for and against either Saturday or Sunday. But I am convinced that it needs to be the whole day, and a regular day of the week, not just a few hours here

and there.

Sabbath breaks the power of this world over my family, if only for a day. In our family, we try to avoid anything that requires spending money on that day. For orthodox Jews, coins and bills are not even to be touched on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, we have the opportunity to enjoy God's creation, to revel in how beautiful and sufficient it is, not to try and acquire more.

**It is a reminder of joy
when I am
burdened by work,
a reminder of
rest and space
when I am anxious
and hurried,
a reminder of eternity
when I am preoccu-
pied with time.**

Our little children (Sam, age 2 and Luke, age 6) already know that we do not watch TV on that day. My mother came to visit one weekend and Luke told her, "We don't watch TV on Sundays, we just think about God" (which is a little extreme, I think). He even said to me last week when we were choosing a book to read: "Shouldn't we read the Bible or something since it is Sunday?"

Sabbath, a day of prayer and spiritual reading

Dale and I put aside the paper until sundown. For the boys, we have stocked a special shelf with Bible story books, books about other things like prayer, books like "The Giving Tree" and books about Sabbath (there are some wonderful books by Jewish presses)—these are the books we choose from on Sundays. I like to turn off the phone AND the answering machine (this is a debate

in our home—but I don't even want the *thought* of having to return a phone call to mar my day).

I like to use my grandmother's tablecloth and our good china and to invite others over for a meal after church. I want flowers and candles and wine on the table to make it special. We try to use a Family Shabbat prayer service that I learned in the home of some friends in England. It is a beautiful but simple service that sets the tone for Sabbath at the meal. Naps are a priority after lunch. There is a lady in the nursing home near our house that the boys and I often visit, in observation of the Sabbath as a day of special acts of mercy and service.

The promise of eternal Sabbath is enough

The things I have written so far are some of the things that *might* happen on a good day. But let me say right here that many Sundays are just downright disasters. We get home from church hungry and in a bad mood. I haven't planned the meal and am scrambling around in the fridge. The boys are bouncing off the walls and won't take their naps when we are desperate for ours. We can't stop worrying about work. We are grumpy and irritable with one another. We run out of milk. The weather is bad or we are bored or we wish the guests would leave already. All those chores and errands that didn't get done yesterday are nagging at us. And Sammy is wailing in the background "I want *Finding Nemo!* I want *Finding Nemo!*" In all this I am wondering, "God, where are you? I thought you would show up today."

On those days, it is the very idea of Sabbath—the promise of Sabbath—that has to be enough. We try to set that day aside to honor God. We fail. We keep trying. We get to try again every week. And one day, I'll wake up to an eternal Shabbat. With no stains on my tablecloth or dishes (for Dale) to clean up afterward. ©



Internship Opportunities This Summer

World Hunger Relief, Inc. was established in 1976 to address the needs of the hungry, both foreign and domestic, through training in sustainable methods of land use and food production. The farm, situated near Waco, Texas on 42 acres, has a dormitory with accommodations for 24 trainees, a Visitor Education Building, 2 acres of gardens; and a shed that houses the rabbits, machine shop, bicycle repair shop, and provides storage for farm equipment. WHRI is looking for both volunteers and interns. **Internships** are for fifteen months and are designed for Christians who are called into service in developing countries and realize the need for agricultural skills with intensive, sustainable farming. Following the year-long work at the farm, interns will participate in a three-month experience in Ferrier, Haiti. **Short- and long-term volunteers** are needed as well. Specific projects and activities will depend on the skills of the volunteers, but could include construction, maintenance, cooking, farm work, mechanics, etc.

The purpose of the hands-on internship is:

1. To introduce sustainable farming methods and other more sustainable lifestyle issues.
2. To be involved in daily physical farm labor and develop understanding of people who are diligent, intelligent and faithful and work very hard to meet their basic needs and yet often fall short.
3. To equip the intern to help people meet their basic needs and enjoy the fruit of their labor.
4. To share the love of Christ through these activities and follow His command to love our brothers and sisters.

For more information, contact the director, Neil Rowe Miller, WHRINeil@hotmail.com, 356 Spring Lake Rd, PO Box 639, Elm Mott, TX 76640, (254) 799-5611. <http://worldhungerrelief.org>

Church of the Sojourners is not hosting a Summer Sojourn this year. Check back with us next summer. If you're interested in visiting, you may contact us at any time: zoe@churchofthesojourners.org or call Debbie Gish at (415) 824-8931.

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