



Volume XIV

A Quarterly Newsletter of Shalom Mission communities

Number 3

www.shalomconnections.org

Septembers 2010: Is Financial Sharing Sustainable?

Is it Sustainable?

By Virgil Vogt

Can intentional Christian communities choose to follow the radical economic teachings of Jesus and sustain this way of life over the years?

The answer is, "Yes, of course!"

In fact, Jesus taught that the conventional way of handling finances is not sustainable. The forces of nature and the greed of other human beings are sure to diminish or destroy accumulated wealth (Matt. 6:19). So if you want to be sure that your treasures are secure for the future you should switch to Kingdom of God economics and store your treasures in heaven.

The way you move assets from earth to heaven is explained by Jesus in Luke 18:22: "Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me."

Did Jesus intend for us to really do this?

The answer is, "Yes, of course!"

And what will happen to the people who do this?



Virgil preaching at Reba during the 1980s.

Jesus promised that there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God who will not get back very much more in this age and in eternal life (Lk 18:29,30).

Jesus told us not to worry about finances if we are truly seeking to express the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. God will supply "these things." He knows that we need these material necessities and will arrange for us to receive them (Matt. 6:33).

This is just the beginning. Jesus had other closely related instructions. You should lend

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expecting nothing in return (Lk 6:35). This goes way beyond no interest loans, suggesting that we should make the loan without expecting to recover the principal. Give to everyone who begs from you and if anyone takes away your goods do not ask for them back (Lk 6:30). Jesus taught that we should be extremely generous and use this generosity to cultivate relationships (Lk 16:9). He commended the poor widow who put all of her money into the offering box and indicated that her contribution was more than all of the others who had contributed out of their abundance.

Can people do all of these things and still survive? Is it sustainable?

The answer is, "Yes, of course."

For many years I have looked upon Reba Place Fellowship as a research project to see if these instructions and promises work. Can people live this way and survive?

More than fifty years ago a small group of us decided to form a common treasury which would seek to operate according to these teachings of Jesus. We agreed to share all of our financial resources and distribute to all members equally. We agreed to trust God to take care of our finances without the benefit of insurance policies and savings plans. Our focus shifted to participating in the Kingdom of God. The findings so far: it works!

God has been so faithful in upholding His end of the deal. In spite of our imperfections and small faith, God has generously supplied our need every step of the way. His providence, protection and guidance are awesome.

Trusting God and sharing with one another is a plan that works.



Common work day at Reba.

From the very beginning of Reba Place Fellowship, "seeking first the Kingdom of God," a phrase from the Sermon on the Mount, has often been used to describe our vision.

One application of this vision is that we felt our first allegiance to the Kingdom of God should determine where we live, especially within a large city. We thought living close to one another would greatly enhance the community life. In the beginning this meant that everyone involved in Reba Place Fellowship lived in one large house at 727 Reba Place. As numbers increased it became clear that a second house was needed, and a search for the second house began. There did not seem to be anything

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Shalom Connections

Shalom Connections seeks to glorify God and provide a means of fellowship and inspiration among sisters and brothers of the member churches of Shalom Missions Communities and the wider network of intentional Christian Communities. *Shalom Connections* is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Subscriptions are free. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official position of *Shalom Connections*, Shalom Mission Communities, or its member churches.

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suitable in the immediate neighborhood, so the search reached out to other surrounding neighborhoods. Had a house suitable for RPF purposes been found I think we would have purchased it even though the location was a number of blocks away from the original house. We would have regarded this as the best we could do, and the nature of this intentional Christian community would have been significantly diminished.

Instead, God intervened. One evening a young boy was at the front door. He said, "My dad wants to know if you would like to buy our house." Their house was just across the street at 714 Reba Place. So that is how God supplied the need for more housing in a way that was consistent with our original vision.

There were numerous miracles like this over the years. Let me recount another one. In the early years Sunday morning worship was conducted on the first floor of the house at 727 Reba Place. As numbers increased, walls were torn down to make more of the first floor available as an open space for Sunday gatherings.

When this process reached its limit we secured a small commercial building about two blocks away. This was renovated and served to house a nursery school program during the week, and on Sundays it was re-arranged to become the worship space for Reba Place Fellowship.

Soon this was no longer big enough. Nearly every Sunday, a row of people stood behind the chairs that encircled the whole space. We knew something needed to be done.

We began looking around for another building. We were astonished to find that a larger commercial building across the corner from our present location had just been put on the market. It was an old auto garage building which was so mundane that none of us had noticed it as a building that could serve our purposes. The location was excellent, just like the house at 714 Reba Place. Once it came to our attention, it was obvious that it held some good possibilities for us as a worship space.

In a common treasury community all the members get involved in major decisions like this. Sometimes the greatest miracle is to bring all the members together in a unified decision. The proposed purchase of

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this building was a major decision. While we were still talking about the purchase some other company bought the building. We were disappointed.

About a year later, the company that owned the building was having financial problems, so it was on the market once again. This time we were able to move quickly to purchase it. At about this same time, one of the members of Reba Place Fellowship received money from an inheritance. He was happy to invest in this building purchase and we were able to purchase it without a mortgage or loan.

That was only the first step. A great deal of work was required to convert the building for our purposes. The providence of God was awesome in that we were able to mobilize and support a team of 6 or 8 workers who labored on this project for more than a



Valle Nuevo meeting over the land legalization process.

year. We were also able to purchase all of the materials without borrowing any money. The cost of renovating the building was much more than the original purchase. God sent us everything needed to complete this project in a good way. It has served us well for many years. What we noticed in this situation happened on numerous occasions: when we had an exceptional need, there was an exceptional supply of funds at the same time.

What have we learned through these experiences?

We have learned to place our trust in Jesus, not in an

organizational system. The common treasury is an organization which God uses, but our confidence is in God, not the common treasury. Our confidence is in God, not in the people who participate in this common treasury.

This is important for the sustainability of the community. From time to time we must make changes in the organization. This is greatly hindered if we have put too much confidence in the system. Sometimes the organization fails, sometimes the people in the organization fail. Jesus never fails.

Jesus once explained that dealing properly with our finances is actually something very little in the Kingdom of God (Lk 16:10). Understanding this and having a more comprehensive vision for Christian community life is important for sustainability. We are living in a culture which values economic gain and material benefits much more highly than it should. People in our society are so busy working to advance in their vocations and to earn more in their professions that the time and energy devoted to family →→→



Hope Fellowship celebrating Aranza's baptism.

life and church life is inadequate.

Making economic considerations secondary enhances our family life and our Christian community life. Everything godly becomes more sustainable.

Finding a corporate plan for supporting Kingdom of God economics is important. The society in which we live has a complex, highly developed social system in which financial considerations have a strong controlling influence.

Without community support, individuals who seek an alternative approach to these financial policies and assumptions are seldom able to sustain the effort.

The Kingdom of God is a vibrant and powerful social system which is more than a match for the powers of this world.

The Kingdom of God is a vibrant and powerful social system which is more than a

match for the powers of this world. This Kingdom of God reality needs to be structured in a way that allows ordinary believers direct access so that their personal finances can be conducted in the context of the Kingdom of God.

Is the kind of extreme generosity which we see in the early Jerusalem church an example that should be replicated in every church through out the world?

The answer is, "Yes, of course!" ☐

Remembering Richard Friesen

By Rich Foss

Sarah and I cried when we received an e-mail from Argentina—Richard Friesen had died the night before.

Richard and his wife Ruth Anne, members of Plow Creek since 1997, have served as Mennonite Mission Network missionaries in Argentina for nearly six years.

Richard had been hospitalized for a couple of weeks with a heart condition and then pneumonia. We knew he was in critical condition but we had been praying and hoping for a miracle.

Wonderful memories of Richard have been flooding back to us at Plow Creek. I remember sitting at a picnic table on the Plow Creek meadow in the summer of

2004 talking to Richard before they left for Argentina.

He had grown up in India in a Mennonite missionary family. He loved languages and knew half a dozen of them. In 2004 the Mennonite Mission Network was looking for someone to work with three members of the Toba tribe in a project to revise the Toba New Testament which had first been translated in the 1950's. The project would be undertaken together with the Argentine Bible Society.

Richard and Ruth Anne, an adventuresome couple, worked and lived in Brownsville, TX for ten years in the 80s. They worked for the Over-ground Railroad, an organization that helped people who had fled the civil war in El Salvador

and were being detained by U.S. immigration officials.

At the time the USA was not accepting immigrants from El

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Richard Friesen

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Salvador but Canada was. Once immigrants who were detained in the USA were accepted by Canada, there was a several-month waiting period before they could enter Canada.

For ten years, Richard and Ruth Anne worked with USA immigration officials who would release the immigrants accepted by Canada to the Overground Railroad who in turn would find churches to host them until they could enter Canada. Plow Creek hosted several people from El Salvador during the 1980's through the program.

When they finished their work with Overground Railroad, they spent several years working for the Mennonite Central Committee in Guatemala and then moved to Plow Creek in 1997.

While at Plow Creek they worked on the farm and also

worked as English as a Second Language aides at the DePue School.

In 2004, as they approached their 60's, they were still adventuresome. As Richard and I sat visiting at

the picnic table he said, "This will probably be the last significant thing I do for the Lord."

That conversation flashed back to me after his death. He and the Toba translators finished revising the Toba New Testament in 2009 and this spring they finished work on a commentary as a companion to the newly revised Toba New Testament.

The Lord made it possible for Richard to do one last significant thing before his death—the revision of the Toba New Testament.



Richard and Ruth Anne Friesen

More than one person at Plow Creek remembers the twinkle that Richard often had in his eye. Richard played violin in the Plow Creek worship music group. A fellow musician said, "Richard would often get a twinkle in his eye when he was playing, especially when he would play a new song."

We are very sad to lose Richard. Still we think he may be playing violin in a heavenly orchestra and we're sure that if he is, he has a twinkle in his eye. □

The Challenge of Art

Gish

By Dale Gish

[Dale gave the following speech at his father's memorial.]

Most of us in this room have been challenged by my dad, Art Gish. You could say that he was a challenging person. So it seemed appropriate for us to receive a final challenge from my dad.

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Art Gish blocking an Israeli tank in Hebron.

I've heard a lot of people talking about what an amazing person my Dad was. He was a champion and tireless worker for peace and justice. He lived a life of self sacrifice for others. He lived very simply and challenged our use of energy and natural resources. He was a nonviolence trainer and activist. He was trying to bring Christians, Muslims and Jews together. He cared about the environment. He was a leader in the Christian community movement. He was an organic farmer. He was someone who reached out to so many and across so many cultural differences.



Art Gish: 1939-2010

Don't put my dad on a pedestal, he wouldn't want that. Instead go and do something to honor him, keep what my dad was about, alive in your life. You can carry on his work, you can be like him in some way

And so I ask you today, how did Art inspire or challenge you?

If you want to honor Art, choose a way that he challenged or inspired you, and do something about it.

- If he challenged or inspired you in activism, honor him by becoming more of an activist.
- If he challenged or inspired you in selflessness, start living your life for others
- If he challenged or inspired you in simple living, live more simply.

- If he challenged or inspired you in peacemaking, become more of a peacemaker.
- If he challenged or inspired you in interfaith dialogue, carry on his work.
- If he inspired you in organic farming, grow food.

And now to my last thought. If you talked very much with my dad, you know that ultimately in every area of his life, he did what he did because he was trying to follow Jesus. His activism, his selflessness, his simple life,

TO THE EXTENT WE SURROUND OURSELVES WITH OUTWARD SECURITIES AND REFUSE TO TRUST GOD, WE ARE NOT PREPARED FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD. OUR NATURAL TENDENCY IS TO CARE FIRST FOR OUR OWN NEEDS AND THEN SHOW CONCERN FOR OTHERS. BUT JESUS CALLS FOR JUST THE OPPOSITE. WE ARE FIRST OF ALL TO LOVE OUR GOD, SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM, AND CARE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

THOSE WHO TRUST GOD CAN VENTURE OUT, KNOWING THAT GOD WILL BE THERE IN THE FUTURE ALSO. 'SEEK FIRST GOD'S KINGDOM...AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE YOURS AS WELL. THAT WAS A PROMISE!'

-BEYOND THE RAT RACE BY ART GISH (1972)

his peacemaking, his interfaith dialogue, his farming, his reaching out to so many people, all of it came down to following God, trying to live like Jesus. His faith was the foundation and motivator of all the amazing things that he did in his life.

- If he challenged or inspired you in reaching across cultural barriers, start reaching out to others.

Look around, there are hundreds of Art Gishes in this room. Carry on his work!

And so I leave you with a final challenge from Art. Take a step forward in learning about, knowing, and following Jesus. That's what my Dad's life was all about. That's what made him who he was. □

Is Financial Sharing Sustainable?

News from Reba Place By Heather Clark

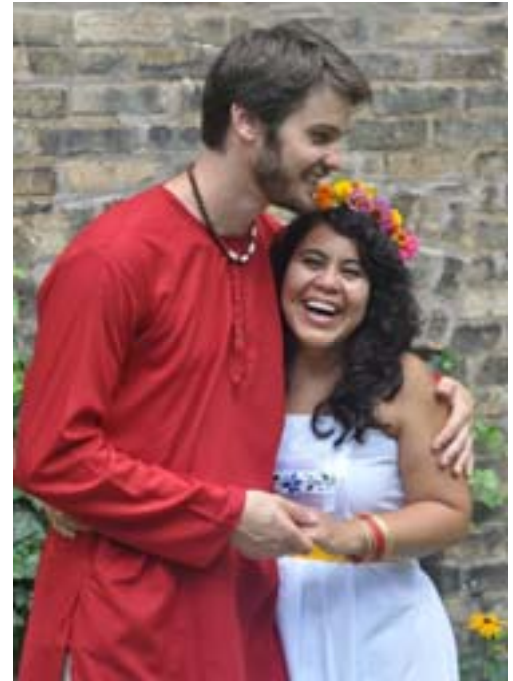
It seems odd, given the theme of this issue, to report that Reba Place Fellowship is currently in the red. At our most recent members' meeting, we agreed to a ten percent allowance cut for the next three months, affirming this as a corporate way to share the burden, grow in faith, and identify with neighbors who are also (and perhaps perpetually) struggling financially. We are reviewing our spending habits carefully, looking for ways to increase income and reduce expenses.

Thankfully, our bank balance is not the bottom line. At a recent gathering where we swapped stories of God's provision and prayed for His continued care, Joan Vogt led us in that beloved old hymn

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." Later, a quick check of the dictionary revealed that the Latin verb *sustinere* (translated *sustain*) denotes "holding from underneath."

So we give thanks for our sustenance, the many ways in which we are being upheld, and the incredible richness of our life together. We praise God for:

- the ongoing witness of Art Gish and Richard Friesen, now in Jesus' presence, awaiting resurrection!
- the return of Eric and Katie Dahlaw (with kids Del and Soren) after a two-year sojourn in Bloomington for Eric to finish school. Join us in praying for employment for them.
- some timely administrative re-structuring to increase the efficiency of our business and member finance operations
- new jobs for Ronn Frantz, Anne Gavitt, and Doug Selph
- the safe return of David Hovde from two months in Iraq with CPT and of Carol Youngquist from Valle Nuevo
- the joyous July 10 celebration of Peter Velthuizen and Celina Varela's wedding
- babies on the way for Andy and Kristin Ross and Adam and Stephanie Vaughan (and big-brother-to-be Seth)
- summer travel and re-connection with family and friends; times of refreshment and group retreats at our lovely



Peter and Celina Varela enjoying their wedding celebrations.

Emmanuel Lodge

- practicing and novice members who allow us the privilege of walking alongside them, listening for God's voice
- venues for ongoing study and learning (e.g., Allan Howe's seminar on the theological contributions of John Howard Yoder, Andy Ross' training sessions in Immanuel healing prayer, Ric Hudgens' upcoming seminar on the work of Ched Myers, who will speak here in October)
- garden produce in Evanston, Rogers Park, and Ford Heights; the weekly arrival of CSA boxes from Plow Creek
- opportunities to nurture other communities, including an upcoming gathering of representatives from various younger communities for the purpose of networking and thinking together about what's needed for communities to thrive
- shared work projects (outdoor power-washing and painting, earth-moving and landscaping at Camp Lake)

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Jedidiah in Fort Red. (Original photo by Ransom Clark)

- consultations with several architects (one of them Josh McCallister's dad, Chris) to explore housing options for eldercare in community

Just as our little ones clamber trustingly into a new tree fort nestled against stately elms in the backyard of 710 Monroe Street, so we can use this time to draw closer in to the one whose everlasting limbs uphold and enfold us all. □



Celebrating new life at Reba: Julie, Kristin, Erin, Stephanie, and Heather.

News from Sojourners

By Renata Browne

Peace Study

Our latest teaching series focused on peace and non-violence. We as a church affirmed a position of peace, looking to the cross as the Christian's appropriate response to violence in our world and in ourselves. We look to Jesus and his self-sacrificing enemy-love for our inspiration, creativity, strength, and courage to take up our own crosses.

SMC Youth Week & Kids Week

Continuing the theme of



Sojo kids enjoying Kids Week 2010.

peace, Kid's week this year was also focused on peace-making. Kids Week and SMC Youth Week actually occurred at the same time this year. It was interesting that these two things coincided, as it allowed for the groups to intermingle some.

Youth toured Sojourners as well as various parts of San Francisco. Youth helped out by weatherproofing a play structure and serving in a soup

kitchen. Kids and Youth together spent an afternoon with Claire, who is part of InnerCHANGE, learning about homelessness in Golden Gate Park. They did a scavenger hunt involving interacting with



SMC youth hanging out at Golden Gate Park.

some homeless people and learning about what it might feel like to be homeless themselves (i.e. learning where they would have to get water and food, etc).

During the reflection time afterwards, the kids and youth had great practical ideas of how to apply what they learned. The kids took part in a peace demonstration holding signs in front of the Federal Building. Youth joined various Sojourner households for dinners. Kids swam, biked, went water sliding, camped,

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studied scripture and had lots of fun. The week culminated with a kid-run worship time, complete with stories of peace-making saints, scripture readings, special music, and a mac 'n cheese dinner.

Two New Additions

Speaking of children, two new healthy baby boys have been born! Miles Clist Wynant was born on May 26th to Adam and Amanda, and Ezekiel Rea Creeger was born on June 1st to Matt & Krista.

A Wedding

Tessa Richardson married Tim Fortescue on July 3rd. Several Sojourners attended their wedding in Wisconsin, and Dale helped perform the ceremony. A good time was had by all.

Moves and Goodbyes

During the Apprentice celebration, Nate stepped up to the keyboard and turned into "Nate W. Pequette" and sang "Friends are Friends



New Sojo additions: Ezekiel Creeger and Miles Wynant.

Forever" while Dawn, Jon, and IvaJo provided hilarious hand motions that went with the words. It helped to soften the sadness of the many goodbyes with some hysterical laughter. Apprentices Adam & Amanda as well as their kids Lily Ann and Miles moved back to Las Vegas, where they have a church community and a job transfer for Adam. Apprentices Robert and Levi are moving to British Columbia to spend a year with a newly forming church community. Matt, Krista, and

Ezekiel moved to Denver and will enjoy being near the Zazvorkas. Annie moved to Atlanta to join the Open Door Community. They will be missed! We've been blessed to have them among us!

Prayer Requests

- The Gish family grieves the loss of Art Gish
- Christi continues to battle cancer
- Dale is looking for a job
- Two new apprentices have arrived
- We are starting our Sabbath year, focusing on relationships with God and one another ☐



Nate Pequette sings "Friends are Friends Forever" while Dawn, Jon, and IvaJo dance.



Hope Fellowship News By Gabriela Gatlin

With all the comings and goings this summer, I had to add a special section called "trips away" to the weekly bulletin that I send out so that we could keep track of ourselves. In addition to many personal vacations, several people within the church made various community-oriented trips.

In June, Teresa Mullet, Joel Scott and Nancy and Joe Gatlin participated in the annual SMC delegation to Valle Nuevo. Joel contributed greatly to the digital collection of oral histories told by many residents of Valle Nuevo. We now have more than 20 hours of recorded stories and a great opportunity for someone to refine their skills at Spanish transcription! It was an especially meaningful trip for Teresa who had never visited El Salvador although her parents are both Salvadoran.

Throughout the spring, Barbara Bridgewater worked



SMC youth in the Mission District of San Francisco with youth leaders Hannah Zazvorka and DeShauna Hollie.

with the youth to fundraise for their trip to Church of the Sojourners. The youth washed cars, cleaned houses, babysat, and baked breads and cookies and pies in many Hope Fellowship kitchens. In a slightly more untraditional youth fundraiser, they helped Justin Clark trim hooves, de-worm and castrate his goats. By July all the money was raised (or most of it!), and

DeShauna accompanied Ellie, Hannah and Jason to the SMC youth gathering at Church of the Sojourners where they reveled in a week of getting to know new friends and a new community under the very generous care of Hannah Zazvorka.

In July, Neil and Jesse Rowe-Miller went to Haiti and visited many dear friends as well as World Hunger Relief projects.



Gwendolyn and Paloma enjoying their summer in Oaxaca.

Luis Matias-Cruz, Gerson, Paloma and Gwendolyn spent the summer in Oaxaca, and Luis spent much of that time preparing for a conference that he hosted with friends. The conference was titled Primer Encuentro Fe y Conflicto, and it was a gathering of evangelical and Catholic leaders to discuss what the Christian teachings of nonviolence mean for our faith communities.

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Barbara and Hannah Bridgewater as well as Carrie and Fernando Arroyo and Jonas and Ezekiel arrived in Oaxaca in time to attend the conference, lead workshops and help out behind the scenes. In addition to future plans for hosting workshops and conferences, Luis and family have considered building a small language immersion school. Hannah Bridgewater initiated that dream by serving as their first student, and she passed with flying colors! Shortly after the Fe y Conflicto conference, James and Suzanne White and Hannah and Joel arrived to spend their first international experience with the Matias family!

In August, DeShauna Hollie and Keyshaun took the trip fad to an extreme and moved to Boston. Everyone at Hope Fellowship is sad to see them go, but we are excited for the new opportunities that DeShauna and Keyshaun will have and for a new vacation destination next summer!



Ellie and Nancy walk into the lake during Ellie's baptism celebration.

This was also a summer of two baptisms. Aranza Torres was baptized at the lake on Pentecost Sunday, and unbeknownst to anyone but Justin, Susana Clark participated in all baptism festivities while having contractions. In true Hope Fellowship style, we followed a full morning of worship and fellowship at the lake with an afternoon membership meeting. At the meeting we discussed an official statement about the church's relationship with the neighborhood of the Meeting House, as the recent SMC visitation had suggested we

do. Shortly after the meeting began, Christy Rowe-Miller left to deliver Elijah Clark. We now have two baby boy prophets (Ezekiel and Elijah) from 2010, and we are eagerly awaiting the revelation of the name Bethany and J.B. Smith

will give their son who is due in November.

Ellie Alexander was baptized at the lake in July in the company of many family and friends. J.B. Smith wrote a special song for Ellie, Hannah and Paloma sent a letter of blessing from Oaxaca, and Ellie felt very loved. After the baptism, we enjoyed a brunch on the beach and swimming in the lake.

We would covet your prayers as many people in our community continue to seek employment. Almost everywhere it's a tight job market and especially in a city as small as Waco. However, we can give thanks that Kirk Allen is now working as assistant farm manager at the World Hunger Relief farm. And through a communal and possibly supernatural effort, Cristina Dominguez was finally able to obtain full time status with benefits at her job.

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Barbara and Hannah enjoying their visit to Oaxaca.

Last summer we began a series of study and reflection on immigration. We reflected on our spiritual, historical and personal histories of migration, and we studied the clear teachings in the scripture to extend hospitality and remember our immigrant past. We culminated the study by brainstorming actions that we could take in our local community to extend this hospitality to undocumented immigrants and promote a deeper and more

truthful understanding of immigration among those who may have forgotten their own past.

This summer we finally organized ourselves to act on our ideas about immigration. We are pursuing issues regarding identification that is required for access to utilities and public school campuses. We are writing a parable and open letter to publish in the local newspaper, and we are planning an open forum for October. We are also

considering ways to support local youth who are organizing around the DREAM Act, and we may facilitate some workshops for documented people using an MCC curriculum titled Vecina, Vecino = Neighbor.

Again, we ask for your prayers, that we might be good neighbors both within and without our community and that we be watchful for the ways in which God is calling us to practice hospitality. □

News from Third Way Community

By Natalie Potts

[Third Way Community is a young Christian community in Minneapolis, MN that is exploring a more intentional relationship with SMC.]

Psychology shows us that a child's brain is the most absorbent during her first six years of life. Each day she discovers more about her environment, learns new skills, masters activities, and learns language and

coordinated movement. In the Third Way community, we have been in a similar sensitive and adaptable stage of development. The Lord continues to correct and encourage, straightening the path before us and making sure we stay on it!

Third Way started off the summer with a visit from David Janzen, Sally Youngquist and Allan Howe of Reba Place Fellowship, as part of the SMC Nurturing Communities Project. They came alongside us for a weekend hearing from folks how things in the community are going, sharing meals with us, and participating in our Sunday worship gathering. What a blessing to have the presence and experience of older



Third Way potluck.

people who have been engaged in intentional community for decades! The team's visit was encouraging to us. It showed us that this way of life can be lasting, and that the challenges we have encountered in our pursuit of it are not necessarily unique to our community. Our struggles are common! The team left us with a list of affirmations, concerns, and recommendations. These were part of the Lord's encouragement and correction to us, showing us that there are certainly areas

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Terrie Arama and Natalie Potts striking a pose.

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where we can grow, but also that we are not wildly off the right track.

One of the visitation team's suggestions that has generated much conversation was this: "We heard concerns about social action and lifestyle change issues straining the fabric of community among you. Be deliberate and attentive about how much you try to take on. Build a strong community of love and grace-giving among yourselves. Take time to cultivate your life with the Lord so you are giving out of fullness."

Early in July, one of our friends, Kevin Callaghan, from Woodland Hills came to teach at our Sunday meeting. In his preparations to share with us, he looked over the list of affirmations and concerns that the folks from Reba shared with us, and the above recommendation stood out to him as well. He had a message to share with us about the partnership between mission and formation in the life of a

community. We are learning that mission, our peace and justice work within our neighborhood and city, and formation, the work of being formed in the character of Christ and in our identity as God's Beloved children, must go hand in hand, so that our service work flows out of the fullness of life and love that comes from knowing the Lord.

Some news items: Starting this fall, we hope to have sufficient financial support to free up two of our community members to serve within our community. Seth McCoy will serve as the community leader and pastor. Natalie Potts will serve as hospitality coordinator and financial administrator.

We have been meeting in homes for about a year and a half now. We hope to begin renting a space this fall to be



Kevin Kneisl, Anna Buck, and Sarah Winger being silly.

used for our Sunday meetings, and available for neighborhood events during the week.

In July, we celebrated the 1st anniversary of our Covenant. We ate food, played "bean bag toss" (or "bags" depending on where you come from!) on Tim and Alisha Gilbert's front lawn, and shared a time of prayer and remembering the past year together. We also talked about a few new committees that will be forming in the Fall. We hope the committees will continue fueling our life together and help us care for areas of our common life that need tending.

We have several small groups that continue to meet on weekly and bi-weekly bases. Some are exploring books and scripture together, some meet together for meal sharing and relational connecting.

Several members of the Third Way community are involved in a ministry called SALT, which provides free English classes and tutoring for adult Somali Immigrants in our neighborhood.

With others from →→→



Solomon, Jason, and Joshua relaxing at Third Way.

SALT, several members of our community are taking the month of Ramadan (a month of fasting for Muslims) to fast and pray that our Somali Muslim neighbors would come to know the Lord.

Ricky Hampton, a member of one of our households, has recently started a conversation with friends who have experience as leaders in a city-wide youth outreach program that aims to help high school age

students establish a relationship with Christ. Ricky's desire is to start something new: a young adults' group with the purpose of creating a supportive spiritual family for urban young adults as they walk with Christ.

Please keep us in your prayers! At a recent Sunday meeting, we read through Ephesians chapter 6, where Paul writes, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that

when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." We want to stand our ground against the schemes of the enemy. We want to be of one heart, unified in the Lord and presenting a full picture of the body of Christ, so that we actually can be a blessing to one another and to the neighborhood around us. Grace and peace to you all. □

Appalachian Hillside
By Katie Piché

*I've come to your mountains
Hoping to learn, hoping to hear
So I'll lay aside my urban jungle eyes
For a pair of pinewood ears*

*I hear the mountains cry
For the lost child lives
When hungry miners could not provide
I hear the cries of grief, the pleas for relief
From your Appalachian Hillside*

*Traveling blue ridges
Twilight straight ahead
The fog lays low, one headlight comes and goes*
These mountains they know you
In comfort they will hold you
Your Appalachian Hillside*

*Hidden in your hollows
Are the ghosts of all your pain
The seeds of all your courage, and your family names
I hear the rhythm pound
As your feet dance o'er the ground
On this Appalachian Hillside*

**many vehicles in eastern Kentucky have only one functioning headlight*



Katie and Dan Piché spent the summer in Letcher County, Kentucky working with Jaime and Marvin Zazvorka-Trapnell and the rest of the Mennonite Central Committee team on the Serving With Appalachian People (SWAP) project.

Valle Nuevo

The nine people on the annual SMC delegation to our sister community in Valle Nuevo, El Salvador, returned to the States with full and grateful hearts. Highlights of the week were: meeting with the Deputy Consul General concerning the denial of visas for our brothers and sisters from Valle Nuevo, a dinner and conversation with Santa Marta/VN university students and meeting Fernando Llorca (world renowned artist) and family.

In Valle Nuevo the delegation was able to have a productive and hopeful meeting with the engineer, lawyer, Habitat representative, and the VN governing board concerning the land legalization process. Throughout the visit the group conducted many interviews towards a possible book about the experiences in Valle Nuevo.



L to R: Joel Scott (Hope Fellowship), Carol Youngquist (Reba), Gretchen Metzler (Church of the Servant King), Naomi Metzler (COSK), Tessa Forsythe (COSK), Fernando Llorca, Nancy Gatlin (HF), Joe Gatlin (HF), Teresa Mullet (HF), and Dawn Langston (Sojourners)

The delegation returned inspired by the strong sense of God's enduring presence with our brothers and sisters through tragedy, injustice, and now rebuilding.

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