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God is God, Hallelujah!

A Sermon by Renata Browne

Can you say with confidence in every fiber of your being, “God is God so it is well and it will be well with my soul and with the world?” This is what all of Scripture, and a multitude of witnesses attest to. It is no small assertion that God is God. Familiarity with this concept has dulled its awesomeness for us, but the truth is that our ability to see and continually be conscious of the fact that God is God changes absolutely everything about our lives. Our consciousness of God can become for us a wellspring of joy and sustenance if we let it. Each of us struggles at one time or another to hang onto the joy of the reality that God is God, so that’s why I’m focusing on this theme in Exodus.

There are so many references to the fact that God is God in Exodus, and so many times that



Hope Fellowship kids at Hope’s annual Easter Retreat

God says, in one way or another, “I am the Lord.” It is easy to skip over these references because they are so familiar but I want us to look at them as cause for rejoicing, rather than just another “thank you captain obvious”

moment. As I think of you, my sisters and brothers, I long for your joy and confidence in God to be full. I am not interested in taking you through mental gymnastics to try to stir up warm

Continued next page...

fuzzy feelings; I am after something more solid. I want to encourage us to re-center in God, to strengthen our connection with the true wellspring of life, to re-align our consciousness with the greatness of reality. This is not just an academic or emotional exercise, but a relational move of connecting with and trusting God. So to encourage this relational activity I am going to take you through Exodus with an eye toward our perception of reality: how the perceptions of the Egyptians and Israelites were wrong and how God mercifully and lovingly corrected their vision. God give us new eyes.

I think it is fairly safe to guess that consciousness of God was pretty low in Egypt before the plagues began. Maybe the memory of God's presence among his people had been almost forgotten as the mind-dulling, backbreaking work of brick after brick wore it away over 430 years. All the Israelites could see was Pharaoh reigning over everything, their whole world seemingly obedient to his commands, and the perpetual burden of slavery. But then God bursts on the scene, saying to Moses, "I am who I am." When God says this, part of what he is saying is that he is free from any human system of order or power or authority.

Walter Brueggemann says, "Moses discloses Yahweh the sovereign one who acts in his lordly freedom, is extrapolated from no social reality, and is captive to no social perception but acts from his own person and toward his own purposes." And I'd like to add that, miracle of miracles, we see that



Plow Creek kids with a Sunday School project: a dandelion sun

time and again, the center of God's person and the purpose towards which he works is love. As John the beloved disciple bears witness to, God is love. It is out of his love that God is intent on delivering the Israelites by dismantling the Pharaoh-sanctioned version of reality. This deliverance was a far bigger deliverance than from the physical suffering of their slavery. God was intent on renewing their minds, and is still intent on renewing our minds today.

The artificial "order" that Pharaoh religiously maintained was so powerful that Egyptians and Israelites alike were not aware that it was a fabrication. They assumed that his ordering of society was "just the way things were." Brueggemann says, "The gods of Egypt are the immovable lords of order. They call for, sanction, and legitimate a society of order, which is precisely what Egypt had...naturally this was the order of Pharaoh. Thus the religion of the static gods is not and never could be disinterested, but inevitably it served the interests of the people in charge, presiding over the order and benefiting from the order. And the functioning of that society testified to the rightness of the religion because kings did prosper and bricks did get made."

So what about us? What is the "order" that is falsely set up as reality here and now? What in the way our current society functions testifies to the rightness of this rival religion? Everywhere there are reminders in our society that CEOs do prosper,

Continued next page...

Table of Contents / June 2011

God is God, Hallelujah! 1
Note from the Editor 5
Plow Creek News 6
Hope Fellowship News 8
News from Reba 10
News from Sojourners 12
Third Way News 13
Songs of Hope 14
The Legend of Mando Simons 15

Shalom Connections

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and shiny mountains of junk do in fact get made. It is easy to get sucked into believing that there is nothing that can stop the irresistible power of “The Market,” that this is just the way things are and that there is nothing powerful enough to change it. It is a compelling and powerful order we live in. And it is horrifying to think that we are not the slaves on whose backs this order rests; rather, we are among the people who benefit from this ordering of things. We are like the wealthy Egyptians who had a stake in the order of Pharaoh, who probably saw him as fairly benevolent: his society paid for their houses and stocked them well with many comforts. Woe to us if we relax into the idolatrous order of our world today, for I believe the God who delivered the children of Israel from Egypt is the same God who challenges idolatrous empires today.

Here at Sojourners, we have just finished looking at the plagues. Through the plagues, God dismantles this false order, showing it to be a fabrication and a façade. God is God, and Pharaoh is not, Hallelujah! And through the plagues God begins the process that he will continue throughout the book of Exodus of instilling in his people an alternative consciousness: an entirely new way of thinking, a new set of eyes to see the world. Over and over again God gives the reason for the plagues, “So that they will know that I am the Lord.”

Read these verses with your heart, not just your mind and see in them how God is nurturing an alternative consciousness to that of Pharaoh’s Egypt:

Exodus 6:1-2 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh: indeed, by a mighty hand he will let them go; by a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land. God also spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am the Lord.”

Exodus 6:5-8 I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the Israelites, “I am the Lord, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.”

The Egyptians and the Israelites alike needed a lot of re-schooling, as you can see from these passages and in later chapters as their re-schooling process continues. As we read through Exodus, we should have mercy on the Israelites .and refrain from the temptation to judge their lack

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of faith in God, because we can find some camaraderie with them in our own need to be re-schooled by God, and we will hopefully have a greater openness to how God wants to teach us and deliver us. We have been entrenched in our modern mindset for much more than 430 years. It is probably an attitude that goes as far back as the Fall, for there we see that humans have always been lured by a temptation to become gods. And caving into this temptation leads to the construction of all kinds of false orders, big and little kingdoms that defy God and foster a dominating consciousness that becomes horribly destructive. We are people who need our minds renewed.

Colossians 2:6-10 says, “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that



Abby at Borealis Yarns (the owner of a yarn store in the Third Way neighborhood that offers knitting classes and knitting groups)

no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and

authority.”

And Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern (or we could probably say order) of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Mmmm... good, pleasing and perfect—I’ll take it! So let us submit ourselves with eagerness to God’s mind-renewing school. God’s will is in fact good, pleasing and perfect.

So back to God’s efforts in Exodus to dismantle the dominant consciousness and create a new consciousness in his people. I would like to submit to you that by far the most important lesson God is teaching in his re-schooling efforts is a simple lesson, easily articulated by any 5 year old, though profound in its implications: God is God. This **IS** the new consciousness that God is



Joanne Janzen at Reba Place Fellowship

Continued next page...

instilling in his people: God is God, and that is a very, very good thing. God is God, Hallelujah!

Today it is really hard to see the pharaohs who promote a false view of reality. The real pharaohs are far more hidden and more evil than even the most ruthless dictators or the wealthiest of CEO's of today. I think the dominant consciousness that oppresses and enslaves people today is consumerism. And that is hard to see because it is a highly decentralized power. Yet it has captured the hearts and minds of humanity, making slaves of even those of us who so stubbornly assert that we are free.

Consumerism teaches us to think that our needs and wants are of supreme importance. We're trained not to worry so much about the source of the things we consume, or even about the value of those things, only about the desire to consume. The mantra of consumerism is, "I want it so I must have it," whether the thing desired is a bag of chips or a spouse. And our focus is on neither the object of desire nor its source but on the act of consumption itself. The self is the center: or as Philippians 3:19 says more graphically, "...their god is their stomach." An idol is made of the human will, the desire center of the brain. However you choose to describe it, the self is the center. At Sojourners, Tim Otto did a beautiful job recently of describing the costs of this kind of lifestyle. He reminded us that

empires are always asking us to sacrifice our children, our friendships, and our marriages in the pursuit of what we think we want.

Rodney Clapp says in *Families at the Crossroads*: "Consumers are autonomous, isolated and self-interested. They must be free to pursue whatever goods or products they desire. In fact, this is how goods are defined: goods are merely whatever people want. There is no common good, a good all should pursue together, nor is there any need to try to determine a common good. Instead, we need only allow individuals to associate—to work, play or live together—when the association will serve each individual's self-interest. It is fine and right that an individual will associate with another individual only as long as self-interest is served." And he goes on to describe the destruction that occurs when we approach relationships as contractual and temporary commodities only designed to serve our desires. Both we and those with whom we relate are destroyed. Consumption for consumption's sake empties us of the love we so dearly long for and fills us with everything but love.

But we have been given another chance. The One who is truly God has called to us in our slavery, our endless labor of consumption. He has heard the

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From the Editor

Shalom Connections is entering a new season, but I, as your new editor, know something about changing seasons. In the past four years, I have transitioned from being a single full-time grad student far from my family in New York to being a wife (to my wonderful husband J.B.), mother, and part-time professor of English, with a church family at Hope Fellowship. It has been a joy and a challenge this year shifting my priorities to caring for our son Benjamin, but it has also been satisfying to find new ways to serve Hope--and now the larger SMC body--as a new mother. I am excited to be contributing to

this newsletter in a more significant way now that the previous editor, Anali Gatlin, is transitioning to life as a full-time law student. I hope this newsletter will continue to be community-building and spiritually insightful, and that you will continue to look forward to finding it in your mailbox every few months. As Anali and I have sat at my dining room table working on the editorial transition over the last six months, our friendship has grown and we have experienced on a small scale the community enrichment that I hope this newsletter fosters for all of its readers. Please feel free to write to me with your comments, questions, or suggestions any time: Bethany_J_Smith@baylor.edu.



anguished cries of our souls that say, “Things are not all right!” He has heard us in our groaning and promised to release us from our burdens if we will let him. We are here because God has in one way or another interrupted the path of our lives and invited us to be converted from our inverted state. God invites us to have not the self as our center, but the Source. Instead of grasping for all that we think we need, we may relax, firmly planted in God, the source of all good things, trusting in his provision for us. Relax, rejoice, return to the wellspring of life! We do not have to reach for all the things that we want; we need only to plug into the Source. God is God, and we are not, Hallelujah! Why go back to a worrisome slavery to our own desires, the constant search for things that have such limited capacity to satisfy us, things that

are always running out, going sour, or falling apart? Why not confess that we don’t really know what will satisfy us anyway, and that only God can be entrusted with our proper care? Why not allow God to constantly renew our minds?

We need to change our basic orientation from grasping to receiving. God is truly good. And we cannot possibly fill ourselves. We are designed to be connected to the Source. We need to check our center constantly to make sure that it is God, to make sure that we haven’t been seduced by the dominant consciousness of our day that tells us to make the self and its desires the center. God is a much better center. Only in God will our souls be at rest.

We also need to learn to trust God’s loving correction, because we are going to need it a lot. We need a long haul commitment to

being re-schooled by God. If it took the Israelites 40 years in the desert to be re-schooled, we would be foolish to think it would take us any shorter for we who are living in what amounts to a land flowing with milk and honey. We should expect that the re-schooling process will last our whole lives. So let us be quick to accept God’s correction. Let us be quick to confess. Let us receive the renewing of our minds with great thanksgiving, willingly letting go of every false mindset that holds us captive. God is still our liberator today.

God give us new eyes. Eyes to see people as agents of God in our lives, not as commodities to be consumed. Eyes to see creation as the loving provision of God, not a scarce resource to be hoarded and exploited. Eyes to see the goodness and the joy that God is God. Hallelujah! ✨

Plow Creek News in Photos

Compiled by Heather Munn



Some of the Farm Team this year: Emily Adama, Matthew Peterson, Jonathan K., Randy Hermanson, Meg & Jim Foxvog. (Emily, Jonathan and Randy are interns this year.)



Jim Foxvog and Alex Rodriguez work together on building a new privy/outhouse for the strawberry field



Jim Foxvog and Emily Adama work together on building the privy



The goose girl! Emily Adama with the baby geese. When they grow up they will eat weeds for us in the strawberry field.



Farm scheduling meeting Matthew Peterson, Jim Foxvog, Randy Hermanson, Emily Adama.

Hope Fellowship News



Philip, Kelly, and Joel at the Hope Easter Retreat: Jesus and travelers on the road to Emmaus

By Gabriela Gatlin

After several more meetings (minus the lasagna), we have reached no consensus on how to respond to our growth in numbers. We have, though, taken some steps forward in clarifying the church's vision and articulating our values. The Council and pastoral team are reframing the issues and designing the next steps in our process as we continue to pray, listen and talk with each other about how to faithfully respond to the good gifts that God is giving us.

Although we await decisions on how to move forward, life in Hope Fellowship steadily hums along. We joyfully welcomed Becky and Joel Scott into the membership of Hope Fellowship. The Lawsons moved to Waco last summer to join life in the church, and they lived with the Bridgewaters for a time. This

spring they bought a house just a few blocks away. More than a year ago, Neil Rowe-Miller organized several folks within the church to compile the first Hope Fellowship songbook. Neil and others wanted to collect the body

of music that has grown with us over more than a decade and a half. This spring we gathered one night to finally bind our songbooks and screen-print the covers. Now we can sing from a book that holds the diverse songs that have served as mile markers in our journey together.

In keeping with our theme this year on investing in God's great economy, on the Friday nights of Lent Fernando and Carrie hosted a film and discussion series titled Popcorn and Economic Practices by the Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries. Inspired by conversations about Sabbath economics during the film series, some folks are now working on creating a timebank as a way to share skills and resources, and others are considering how to build a revolving loan fund.

Aranza Torres and Emanuel Dominguez both graduate from high school in June. Aranza will



"Flute Salad" at the Easter Retreat: Sarabeth, Rebecca, Michelle, and Clare



Hope Fellowship Easter Retreat



Hope Fellowship clowns at Gabriela's birthday party

begin her studies at Goshen College in the fall, and Emanuel will begin studies at Baylor University. Suzanne White graduated with her masters in social work. Analí Gatlin will begin Baylor Law School in the fall. She hopes to practice in immigration law one day soon.

We celebrated Easter with our traditional weekend retreat in the hill country. Our lives are so full of activity, and it was a blessing to give ourselves a weekend to rest with each other. The retreat began on Friday evening with a meditative art walk through the stations of the cross created by James White, Karen and Nathan Alleman and other artists within our congregation. Each station included scripture, a reflection to meditate on, a work of related art, and a guided prayer. The stations were multi-sensory involving symbolic acts in which the viewers could participate to find themselves in the scene.

Those of us who had not helped to create the stations of the cross art walk received this gift of beauty from our brothers

and sisters and were amazed by their creativity. We spent the rest of the weekend playing, cooking, visiting, laughing and eating together.

Birthday celebrations this spring have developed along a Cameron park theater trend. We indulged Analí Gatlin's love of espionage with a surprise spy party along the Brazos River,

everyone dressed as clowns and played near the fountain of Anniversary Park for Gabriela Gatlin's birthday, and we surprised Matt Porter with an AS Roma soccer game starring Matt Porter in the Pecan Bottoms. In all probability, we will continue to party throughout the summer. ☞



Aranza, Allison, and Christy on Easter Morning at the Hope Fellowship Easter Retreat

News From Reba Place Fellowship

by Hope Lane

Spring has been playing hard-to-get here on the western edge of Lake Michigan, but it takes a lot to hold back the great power of growing things and we now are finally seeing promising sprouts, seedlings, and flowers emerging from garden plots and yards.

In April, the number of covenant members swelled again with the addition of Josh and Candace McCallister and their children Jedidiah (4) and Lilia (2). The McCallisters moved to Evanston from Clovis, New Mexico in the fall of 2008 seeking formation in an established Christian community with a sense that they might be called to begin a new community in the future. Josh is an artist who



A few issues ago, Shalom Connections printed a picture of these women from Reba Place Church each in the later stages of pregnancy. Now here they are with their babies!

has been selling furniture at Plain and Simple since their arrival here. Candace is trained as a

counselor and has been serving on the RPF Leadership Team, helping to establish The Village Co-op Pre-school, and caring for her children. The McCallisters also host a Saturday morning Oatmeal Group for young families at their home. During their membership celebration, the McCallisters along with others from their small group did a Maypole dance. Each person held the end of a ribbon and walked in opposing directions, stepping over and under each others' ribbons around the pole (a fallen tree limb) while a song was played. This was a symbol of lives being woven together in community.



New RPF covenant members: Candace and Josh McCallister with their children Lilia and Jedidiah

Also this spring, a significant change took place in the Clearing household. After many decades of service, the original household leadership trio comprised of Hilda Carper, Peggy Belser, and Julius Belser turned over their responsibilities to a new generation of leaders: David Hovde, Joseph Marshak, and Char Oda. The group recognized the value of making this transition while the previous leaders (all in their eighties!) were still in good enough health to take part. The three newly appointed were affirmed in their gifts by the household.

Near the end of May, RPF took its annual all-fellowship retreat. This was the third year the retreat was held “at home” which has proven effective in terms of facilitating older and less-mobile members’ participation, saving money, and teaching us how to step back from daily activities and rest in our own homes. Despite remaining in the city, a group was able to go canoeing at the nearby Skokie Lagoons. This year the retreat followed an “ashram” model with plenty of space allotted to prayer and contemplation. It helped us appreciate our need for less agenda-driven time together. We were also blessed to experience leadership from different individuals than we have typically seen in such roles. ❧



Worship painting at Reba Place Church



The maypole dance at the McCallister’s covenant member joining ceremony

News From Sojourners

by Katie Piche

This edition of the Sojourner news is sponsored by Bicycles and other B words. Please allow me to explain:

Bicycles bring us together. A small bunch of sojourners (Jon, IvaJo, and Renata) has been frequenting the Bike Kitchen. It is a mechanical culinary wonderland where volunteers teach those in need of bike repair and maintenance to do it on their own. There is a buffet of recycled parts and the likes. The sojourner bunch has then been spreading their repair knowledge through out the rest of Sojo land.

Bicycles mean the Jody Beavers can play bike polo every week and in the occasional bike polo tournament.

Bicycles can lead to bicycle accidents. One minute Renata Browne is on her bike on her way to work, at a stoplight on Market street. Next thing she knows, she is waking up in an ambulance on her way to the hospital. Since Renata blacked out before, during, and after the accident it is hard to say exactly what happened. But bystanders told the EMTs, who told the nurses, who told Renata that she had some type of altercation with train tracks that landed her on her head. Her brain hit the side of her skull becoming bruised, leaving her with a concussion. She is fine now and describes the whole experience as entertaining. In all seriousness though: She could have died were she not wearing a helmet, and it made the rest of us so grateful that she is alive and full of life. It makes me wear my helmet every time I get on a bike, and as Jody says, "If you love anyone, you will wear a helmet."

John-David and Rebecca have learned to ride their bikes without training wheels. Jon takes Rubén and Mateo out for a bike ride after school. Dawn rode her bike on Bike to Work Day and got a special "Bike to Work Day" bag. Gigi and Alexina ride their bikes to school.

Book writing and book reading: Tim Otto continues to work on his book about homosexuality and the church. In addition to that he has been leading some of us in a study of a book called *Friendship and the Moral Life* by Paul J Wadell. Mattoney also led some of us in a book study of *Jayber Crow* by Wendell Berry.

On most days one can find a band of sojourner kids bouncing on the trampoline. Other sojourners have bounced on the trampoline in efforts to churn butter. We called it "The Butter Bounce."

Ruben, Mateo, and Leo could recently be found singing in the San Francisco Symphony Hall with a group from school. Ruben sang a solo, and Leo was there as a 10 year old! We celebrated Leo's Decade Birthday with a backyard bash.

Our resident two-year-old boy, Caedmon, is beginning to speak. His mouth is like a fountain, and Sojourner names burst forth from his lips at all times. In addition to name speaking, Caedmon is also becoming a skilled lego technician.

Allan Chan went to visit Taize in France. He returned to us renewed.

Debbie Gish made a guest appearance on a Spanish morning news program, Univision, to talk about open adoption and adoption stigmas in Latin America. Her talk was well received.

Mary Toney, her household shopper, has been shopping on her daily run with Caedmon. She runs with Caedmon in the stroller around the city and stops in to the store on her way home.

Christi has come through her third debulking surgery for the cancer in her throat. After being without a voice for some time she is able to speak again.

As is customary in our communal rhythm, we are preparing for more comings and goings and many changes. Renata is now a novice member, and Katie and Christi will be covenanting in the summer. ✨

Third Way News

by Natalie Potts

A Wednesday Night Bible Study began in mid-April. This has been part of fulfilling the community's desire for more connection points during the week, and for environments that deepen relationship and personal sharing between us.

The study group is currently looking at the Beatitudes. Our hope is that more groups like this will pop up on various weeknights. There is already a Tuesday prayer group. We want to facilitate folks' needs for learning and growth!

Seth and Jen travelled to Iowa at the end of April for the Central Plains Church Planter's Conference. Seth spent some time teaching and sharing about church planting with the conference attendees.

Rudy Arnold finished his senior thesis, graduated from the College of Visual Arts, and had a gallery opening in Downtown St Paul at the beginning of May. His senior thesis project was



A volunteer at Grand Paws pet grooming shop

documentaries online at www.rudyarnold.com. He interviewed 5 local business owners in the Midway neighborhood, spent time at their shops for several months, and created a still-photo (with audio) documentary on each business. You can watch the

documentaries online at www.rudyarnold.com.

The Wards (a family who recently moved to join the community) bought a house at the beginning of May. They plan to move in during the month of June. We're celebrating with them!

Groundswell Coffee (the community-owned coffeehouse) has hosted a music night each month, for the past several months. This has built community, inspired celebration, and spread the word about the coffeehouse, as well as increased the shop's revenue.

Also in May, our Sunday Meeting time changed to 5pm. We share a weekly potluck and worship together. This has been helpful by offering a time for regular social connection for our community, as well as offering the opportunity to sample different folks' cooking, so that we can make an informed decision about whose house we ought to invite ourselves to for dinner each week! ☺



Jeremy, the manager of Groundswell Coffee

Songs of Hope

Cantos de Esperanza

Members of Hope Fellowship have worked for the last few years to construct a songbook out of the collection of songs and readings we have accumulated over the years, and we are proud to present the final product! We pray that our songbook will help us continue to grow toward greater unity as we worship together. The following (in italics) is the introduction printed in the first edition of *Cantos de Esperanza* or *Songs of Hope*.

Just as a song is more than the sum of its notes and words, a songbook like this one is more than the sum of its songs. This body of songs has grown over a decade and a half of life together at Hope Fellowship and will continue to grow with us.

The Hebrews had their book of Psalms to help them



Christy, Justin, and Isabel screen-printing the cover of our songbook



Anali and Benjamin drying paint on the songbook covers

remember who they were. Over millennia it helped them preserve their deepest sorrows and most ecstatic joys, their personal meditations and public proclamations, their marvel at the created world and at their own creation as a people on the shores of the Red Sea.

Like the Psalms, these are songs of a particular community, mile markers of our journey together. They come from many traditions: Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Mennonite. They are ancient hymns and modern choruses, black spirituals and Appalachian airs, folk songs of places we have lived or loved:

Mexico, South America, El Salvador, Haiti and Africa.

The committee that put this first edition together tried to capture our congregation's diversity in this book, while leaving room to grow.

We hope this will be a book to use for small group worship, family singalongs and retreats as well as Sunday services.



The Legend of Mando Simons

In recognition of his work organizing the completion of the songbook project at Hope Fellowship, J.B. Smith bestowed upon Neil Miller a t-shirt with a picture of “Mando Simons,” whose story is given in the following few paragraphs (not written by J.B.). Mando Simons brings together two of Neil’s prominent characteristics: his mennonite heritage and his facility with a mandolin. Who knew that Neil’s dual interests had such a long and venerable history?

Martin “Mando” Simons, little known twin brother to Menno Simons was, like his brother, a priest in the Catholic Church in the 1520’s. Early on, Mando was recognized as a gifted baritone in the cathedral choir. He became disillusioned, however, with church sanctioned music, especially when his original compositions were not considered sacred enough to be performed by the choir for what he felt was largely political reasons. Perhaps that was all for the best as Mando’s real love was the folk music of the commoner. Later he would admit that partially as an act of defiance he secretly learned to play mandolin by practicing late at night in the hayloft of a barn. This is of course how he acquired his nickname. When it was discovered by church authorities that Mando was engaged in playing secular style music—considered vulgar by the church—he was banished from the choir and warned not to play uncouth handheld instruments again.



Instead, Mando left the priesthood, set out on his own and started a movement known as the Anabaratists—literally “baritone again”. The name Anabaratist referred to his using his singing voice once more and composing the folk music he loved. As others joined him, Anabaratist came to mean anyone who would read and interpret the bible on their own (not allowed by the church at that time), play folk instruments, and create their own music.

Rehearsals and stringed instrument worship services were held in secret—in barns or in the woods. To avoid drawing attention, Anabaratist musicians and congregants played and sang with as little movement and enthusiasm as possible. This trait can still be seen in related groups, such as the Mennonites, today.

Mando ended up being on the run much of his life and several of his best instruments were martyred. ↪

All of the photos from Third Way Community this quarter are from community member Rudy Arnold's senior thesis project. His just graduated with a degree in teaching photography. His senior thesis was called "Small Business as Community Catalyst." He documented 5 small businesses in our neighborhood, focusing on the ways that they promote community in the neighborhood.



Gene, the owner/operator of a shoe repair store in the Third Way neighborhood, working on a shoe

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