

August 15, 2013

Dear friends in the Nurturing Communities Project,

September 1 deadline: Here's one more reminder that September 1 is the registration deadline for the October 11-14 NCP Gathering. A lot of you have said you are coming, are working on filling up a van or organizing a caravan – and for that I'm excited. But until I see the actual completed registration worksheet with your names. . . . Platte Clove Community is saving space for 80 adult visitors. I hope you can be among them.

July 25 to 29 Cleveland Catholic Worker visit: Since the last report I traveled to Cleveland for the National Senior Games Association (Senior Olympics) to play on the Illinois 65 + basketball team. My teammates stayed at the Marriott Hotel while I lodged with the Catholic Worker hosted by Mike and Maryellen Fiala. It was a wonderful time of touring, visiting, catching up on the community's history as a center of hospitality for homeless folks and a provocative witness for justice and peace in the tradition of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. They had a block party while I was there, protesting the plans of McDonalds to put a double-driveway fast-food outlet next to their residential neighborhood. I had a good evening of conversation at a table-full of Christian anarchist types who talked about their community and listened to news about the Nurturing Communities Project. I sold a few books and traded one for a copy of Catholic Worker writer and activist, Jeff Dietrich's, *Broken and Shared: Food, Dignity, and the Poor on Los Angeles' Skid Row*, which I recommend.



So, how did our basketball team make out? We did much better than two years ago in Houston where we almost won one game! This year we won 4 and lost 4, coming home with a silver medal in the consolation bracket. We made friends with lots of old codgers like us whose teams are probably sponsored by Ibuprofen and Ace Bandages. But we are grateful to enjoy a sport that keeps us fit and energized, more than any other physical activity we've found.

Shalom Mission Communities

Reunion: Back from Cleveland, the next thing at Reba was hosting the Shalom Mission Communities Reunion on "Community and the Arts." One highlight was engaging for several days with our guest, Fernando Llort, El Salvador's most beloved artist. He represents a profound Christian witness of respect for the poor and for indigenous culture blended in bold



colors with Biblical images. Fernando has not only shared his art freely, but he has trained hundreds of artisans to produce his iconic art style sold around the world in fair-trade shops like Ten Thousand Villages. "Why," we asked, "Did you give your art away like this?" His simple answer was, "God told me to."

The second highlight of the weekend was welcoming Thirdway (St. Paul MN) into the family of Shalom Mission Communities. We also enjoyed the company of all the Lotus House members from St. Louis, who are exploring SMC membership in the coming year.

Wild Goose Festival (August 8-11): The Wild Goose Festival advertises itself as a camp meeting "at the intersection of art, justice and spirituality." As a speaker at the Festival, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove had a few tickets to share with friends and this allowed me to register late in the summer for free. So I drove 625 miles each way



listening to some really good audio books -- Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan Illich" and Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying." I got to the camp meeting and put up my tent before it started to rain. It rained several times each day or night, so we all found out how well our tents worked.

Mine did fine except when I forgot to zip up the window flap. Oh, did I mention, it rained enough to make some great mud pies.

I had a great time meeting about a dozen old friends from various communities -- making the trip worthwhile. I feel momentarily caught up on happenings at Church of

the Sojourners (Tim Otto), Jubilee Partners (Brad Smith), Koinonia Farm (Amanda Moore), and Communality (Stephen Pavey), just to name a few.



Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove shared the stage with his mentor, William Barber, head of the NAACP in North Carolina. Barber is the inspiration behind “Moral Mondays,” a movement that is bringing thousands of blacks and whites together across North Carolina in marches and mass gatherings, uniting forces for racial reconciliation, inclusion, and proclamation of a Gospel that defends the poor.

At the various stages around the campground we had a choice of speakers and music groups to attend. Most inspirational for me was to hear Krista Tippet (NPR – “On Being”) interview Phyllis Tickle and Vincent Harding two mornings at the Main Stage. I first heard Vincent Harding when I was in high school and he was in his 20's, a charismatic speaker for civil rights and the non-violent way of Jesus. Later, he was a co-worker and sometimes speech writer for Martin Luther King Jr.

In the 1970's Vincent and Rosemary Harding spent an extended time of retreat at Reba Place Fellowship and made some long-standing friendships here. In recent decades, Vincent has been a historian and commentator on race relations in America and a mentor of younger non-violent activists for justice and peace. When Vincent is asked a



question, he takes an uncomfortably long fifteen seconds of silence before he speaks, and then the words that come forth sound like someone who has been consulting all night with God about the topic.

I enjoyed a conversation at Wild Goose with Vincent about mentoring since his main mission these days seems to be encouraging younger prophets to carry on the torch. He also introduced me to his "fiancé" whose name I can't remember. Rosemary died in 2004, and now, in his 80's, Vincent seems ready to make another go at life.

One section of the Wild Goose had a line of booths I called "seminary row," recruiting stations eager to talk with potential students. I had a good time going down the row and asking if their seminary had folks interested in intentional Christian community. This question seemed to hit pay dirt as many divinity students are interested in communal living and some staff members are eager to provide such discipleship experiences. They were generally eager to learn about and buy some copies of the *Intentional Christian Community Handbook*. One recruiter happened to be reading the book at the time and was eager to talk about her own (and her husband's) leading to explore and begin rural Missouri Anabaptist community in the coming years.



Reba friend, Ric Hudgens, and Stephen Pavey from Communality in Lexington KY.

I was also delighted that Stephen Pavey tracked me down for 90 minutes of intense conversation. Stephen is a member of Communality in Lexington KY, a community where Laura Lahr and I conducted a visitation about three years ago. It was a great opportunity to hear in depth what has happened to their group since that community review. Leadership in the group has passed on to a new

generation which is finding peace and purpose in God's leading, a transition they plan to mark with a new name, soon to be announced.

Well, so much for now. I look forward to seeing many of you October 11-14 at Platte Clove. Your servant in the work of Jesus,

David Janzen