

Dear Friends in the Nurturing Communities Project:

In the month of September I've focused on plans for the October 11-14 NCP Gathering that will be hosted by the Platte Clove Bruderhof. About fifty persons have registered for the event.

Preparations for the October 11-14 NCP Gathering at Platte Clove:



On September 20, I was able to make a quick trip to visit the Platte Clove Community and see for myself the gorgeous Catskill gorges (I wonder what etymology connects those two words) and mountains as Charles Moore drove me to my destination in the fading sunlight. I was supposed to talk with the community that evening following their communal dinner, to share about the Nurturing Communities history and network. But AMTRAK vetoed that plan by delaying my arrival four hours. The following morning I was able to meet with about forty sisters and brothers during their morning work break to answer questions about communities their guests would represent. I observed that the Bruderhof meetings generally started on time, and I wondered aloud what might happen if they ran AMTRAK.

The Platte Clove community appointed a local arrangements committee (Mish and Alicia Harrison with Peter and Clara Maas) to coordinate the NCP Gathering hospitality. We reviewed and revised the schedule. I can assure you who are coming, that the community is eager to meet you, and has made careful plans for childcare, meals, and common activities that will bless us all. The trip to New York State was fortuitous for our family, since it also allowed me to return to Evanston with grandson Derrick Janzen, who has recently turned eighteen and graduated from high school.



A Three-day Sidewalk Building Blitz at Plow Creek Fellowship:

Derrick and our son James joined me and five other Reba men for a three-day sidewalk building blitz (September 26-28) at Plow Creek Fellowship, about two hours west of Chicago. The Reba crew worked with Plow Creek men, tractors, and lots of valiant snack-making and meal-providing women. At one point on the last afternoon, I had to give my

aching back a rest and sat down in the blessed body-contoured sun-shaded yard swing. Louise Stahnke came over to sit beside me and chat about the significance of this convergence of effort and funding between the Shalom Communities Mission Communities.

Plow Creek Fellowship has been visibly declining in recent years -- some members have left, while others have become increasingly dependent on wheel chairs, canes and special care. Plow Creek asked Shalom Mission Communities for help to build 818 feet of all-weather handicapped-accessible sidewalk linking up the three houses and the Common Building around the central meadow / soccer field. Our work team pushed each other hard for three days to plow up the sod for a sidewalk trench, excavate the dirt, pack down a gravel base-fill, and build lots of 2x4 sidewalk forms. That's as far as we got in three days. Finishing the forms, pouring and troweling concrete is what remains to complete the job, probably on the first weekend of November.



We were tired but rejoicing. As Louise observed, these common work days have produced some visible and hugely encouraging signs that God has a future for Plow Creek Fellowship and for the farm. Other recent signs of hope would include



--A reformulation of the Plow Creek covenant that a younger generation has had a hand in shaping and now wants to join.

--Younger couples from Reba and elsewhere looking at Plow Creek with a hope to join the community and the farm, where they've already learned the ropes as summer volunteers.

--And a prosperous year with U-pick berries, lots of produce for farmers-markets, and the Plow Creek bakery that is gradually expanding its sales reach. All of these are providing common work for members, seasonal employees and summer farm interns.

As a token of love for us city-slickers, we were sent home with all the end-of-the-season tomatoes, potatoes, watermelons, and raspberries we could pack in our trunks.

A (Paper) Encounter with the Arumdaun Maul Community in South Korea.

In recent weeks I've "translated" a 10,000-word community foundations document at the request of the Arumdaun Maul Community in South Korea. Well, I don't actually read Korean. I was wrestling with a rough Google-translate type document to create a more literary English version. In the process I have come to learn a lot about the vigorous intentional Christian community movement in Korea with which we've had exchanges of guests over the years.

I find the social and spiritual analysis by the Arumdaun Maul Community of the contradictions of their civilization (and ours) both revolutionary and refreshing. Most inspiring is their zeal to embody an alternative to the competitive, exploitative and enemy-making idolatries of our day based on Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God and the Jubilee tradition. I wonder if a visit to Korea might be ahead of me in 2014.

Meanwhile, Brian Walsh and friends in the Jeremiah Community have invited me to meet with the Christian intentional communities network in Toronto for a week in early January.



Jesus People USA: Probable Site for the 2014 NCP Gathering.

God's grace keeps opening new doors. Last week Neil Taylor and Tom Cameron at JPUSA, here in Chicago, gave me a tour of their newly renovated three-story Wilson Abbey building. It makes beautiful space for a coffee shop, a small theater, an artists' studio, a recording studio and other businesses, worship space for their church,

and a school for the children of this 500-person community. My immediate reason for the visit was to confirm that JPUSA is hopeful that they can host the 2014 Nurturing Communities Gathering about a year from now, with the help of some other Chicago area communities.

Courage and Peace in Jesus,

David Janzen

