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JUSTICE TOWARD OUR PLANET: FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

by Amanda Moore and
Sarah Prendergast



We're working hard to build a better world for 6-year-old Ida and 5-year-old Trinity, and others to come after us.

Founding member Clarence Jordan arrived on this plot of land in 1942 with a degree in agriculture, but very little practical farming experience. When the farm was purchased, Clarence described it as "slightly eroded and virtually treeless." He began as any good farmer does, with observation.

He quickly became good friends with the sharecropping neighbors, combining his academic ideas with their traditional knowledge, building strong friendships and creating innovative business ventures, all the while nurturing the over-worked soil back to health.

During the height of the violence in 1957, local KKK members came to the farm with an offer for Koinonians to sell them the land and move away. Koinonians refused the offer. Clarence reflected on their decision in this moving 1958 sermon:

Fifteen years ago we went there and we bought that old, run-down eroded piece of land. It was sick. There were gashes in it. It was sore

and bleeding. I don't know whether you've ever walked over a piece of ground that could almost cry out to you and say, 'Heal me, heal me!' I don't know whether you feel the closeness to the soil that I do.

But when you fill in those old gullies and terrace the fields and you begin to feel the springiness of the sod beneath your feet and you see that old land come to life, and

when you walk through a little old pine forest that you set out in little seedlings and now you see them reaching for the sky and hear the wind through them;

when you walk a little further over a bit of ground where your child is buried, and you go on over to a hill where your children and all the many visitors have held picnics. When you walk across a creek where you've bathed in the heat of the summer. Men say to you "Why don't you sell it and move away?" They might as well ask you, "Why don't you sell your mother?" Somehow

God has made us out of this old soil and we go back to it and we never lose its claim on us. It isn't a simple matter to leave it.

As we enter our 68th year of farming this sacred space, we are aware of the tremendous responsibility we have to steward and care for the Earth. Like the Koinonians before us, we deeply desire to improve this plot of land for those who are coming after us. We find ourselves echoing Eb Makarios, farm co-coordinator in the mid 1970s. He wrote, "We at Koinonia have set out over the past two years to see if there is an alternative. Is it possible to build the land, to leave it a little better every year? And at the same time to raise nutritious food, to reduce our dependence on harsh poisons and "hot" fertilizers, and yet to maintain good yields and still be a viable business operation?"

We believe the answer to these questions is yes! We're still working hard to figure out how.

In the last issue, we shared some details of our comprehensive Farm Plan. We're well underway



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Koinonia Farm
1324 GA Hwy 49 South
Americus, GA 31719



Help Us Feed the Hungry

by Bren Dubay

Many years ago, when we felt the greatest need and challenge was affordable housing, Koinonia launched the partnership housing movement. It eventually grew into Habitat for Humanity and The Fuller Center for Housing.

Today we feel the greatest need and challenge for the time is hunger, both physical and spiritual hunger. So Koinonia is working to feed the hungry. For several years now we've worked to increase and diversify our food production. At the same time, we've seen this hunger grow deeper and more substantial. Inadequate access to healthy, locally grown foods has contributed to a growing list of major illnesses and other health concerns.



With your help, we can provide access to healthy foods for those in need.

for sustenance, and we must respond with true nourishment, not just something that fills up our bellies. With your help, we can provide healthy food for our neighbors and the other good folk around us and continue providing spiritual nourishment around the globe, too.

Recent estimates say 59% of Georgia adults are overweight or obese and 1 in every 10 American adults has diabetes. By 2050, that number is expected to triple! Our bodies hunger

Our friend Millard Fuller often said, "I've tried asking and I've tried not asking. Asking works better." So we ask our readers, "Will you purchase from Koinonia? Will you donate to Koinonia?" Our budget comes from the sale of products and from donations. It's that simple.

We will use money from sales and donations to:

- grow and share and sell affordable naturally grown food: vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, grapes, chickens, cows, turkeys, geese, rabbit, etc.
- disseminate books and recordings by Clarence Jordan as well as other educational materials
- offer hospitality both here at the farm and when we're on the road giving a talk, visiting, teaching a workshop
- respond to the needs and challenges facing our neighbors, helping in any way we are able

Like many others, we've trimmed our budget in these tough economic times. But we continue doing the work God asks of us, trusting that our needs will be met. We thank you for your help.



After a wonderful picnic together, we were patient enough to pose for an updated community photo.

Membership Update

This past April we welcomed Elizabeth Dede as a covenanted member, or a steward, of the community, making a total of 6 covenanted members. Other stewards are Bren Dubay, Norris Harris, Kathleen Monts, and Brendan and Sarah Prendergast. Craig Martindale was welcomed as a Novice, and Amanda Moore chose to remain an Apprentice for this year.

We welcomed three new Partners this summer, Rob Castle and Kat and Kevin Mournighan. They join with our other five Partners Sally Ann Brown, Geneva Brown, Gloria

Hurley, Adam Gullledge, and Sandy Thornburgh to help support our community life as they are able.

We're thankful for our many interns who spend varying lengths of time with us, especially Brandon Goober, who's just about to complete his 15-month internship, and for Nathen Berger, Janiece Brown, and Emily Murphy, who recently finished a 7-month internship.

Please join with us as we pray for God to call more people into this way of life, and for those who move on from here, that they will spread the spirit of Koinonia wherever their journey takes them.

Two years ago, we placed a marker for David Castle on Picnic Hill in anticipation of laying his ashes to rest there. He donated his body to Emory University for research purposes, but wanted to return to Koinonia once this final act of service was complete. Perfect timing allowed us to bury his ashes on the 41st anniversary of Clarence Jordan's death, October 29, 2010. We had a good crowd present for the brief ceremony; the Board of Directors were on campus for their fall meeting and several friends had just returned to help with the harvest. The cool morning kept the gnats away during our picnic. As we sang hymns and enjoyed each other's company, we were blessed to have the spirit of God and such a great cloud of witnesses present among us. Pictured, Ellie Castle stands next to the hand-made pecan box that contains David's ashes as we prepare for the ceremony.



Are you weary?

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A Brief Reflection

by Bren Dubay

“If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality.” — Henri Nouwen

I live where hospitality is more than a concept. It is our heartbeat. From the beginning, no matter the ups and downs, Koinonia has been a place of welcome. No matter your race or level of education, whether you possess one penny or a trillion, no matter your faith or lack of faith, no matter, you are welcome to come, share a meal and share in our life. Few are called here for life, but all who come are met with a welcome.

But hospitality is not only about giving, it's about receiving as well. If Koinonia only gives, it may be a successful member of the hospitality industry, but it's not living the depth of hospitality. We receive from guests as much as we give to them, whether they help to wash dishes, repair a leaky faucet, or offer insight during a Scripture study.

We receive when we're away from the farm as well.

In early October, I flew with long-time Koinonia friend Alma Jackson to San Diego to attend the opening of “The Glory Man,” written by our friend Dennis Hassell.

We thought we'd slip in and out, quietly offering our support, but on opening night, we found ourselves posing for the cameras and accepting pens to sign our names on the playbills—as if we were the stars. I wanted to shy away, but living at Koinonia has taught me to receive graciously.

Two weeks later, Kat Mournighan and



I were off to the Habitat for Humanity Affiliates in Motion Conference in Saginaw, Michigan where we were showered with welcome, warmth, assistance and respect.

These experiences remind me Koinonia is as blessed by the receiving of hospitality as it is by the giving of it. But is this giving and receiving what Nouwen means when he refers to restoring hospitality's “original depth and evocative potential?”

On Wednesday mornings, Amanda Moore and I facilitate a Faith Studies class for our 12 to 15 year olds. Week after week these young people welcome us, make us feel a special part of their lives, open up their hearts and talk to us about “the deep” as one of them calls it. Being with them has taught me something about the deeper meaning of hospitality.

To restore hospitality to its original depth and evocative potential we must practice it as a way of life. Those who live together must work to offer hospitality and grace to each other as well as to our guests. As members, we know each other's flaws and idiosyncrasies all too well. Are we willing to offer grace and courtesy to one another through it all? Am I willing to put my relationship with another ahead of my certainty that I am right?

Seems to me welcoming and accepting welcome from the stranger, neighbor, friend or foe and the willingness to offer and accept welcome from those we live with begins to take hospitality to its original depth and evocative potential.

Lessons in Cake Baking

by Amanda Moore

Whenever we host workshops or give a panel discussion, I always get the question about dealing with the limitations of living in community. Maybe it's because I'm a 25-year-old single woman and seemingly have no limits on my life besides this community.

Depending on the group and how feisty I'm feeling, I might first respond with a smart-aleck “How do you deal with the limits placed on you by your marriage or your kids, your church, your career, your mortgage and car payments, your parents, your cable provider, and your insurance salesman?”

If I'm feeling particularly charitable, though, I might skip the attitude and explain that the “independent life” is actually more limited than we may think. And community is often more freeing than we realize. Here's a true-life example I give interns when they arrive fresh from “the real world.”

Growing up, I lived in a neighborhood where we all had very limited resources. So if a neighbor wanted to bake a cake for her son's birthday, the whole community would need to pitch in. One neighbor might have cake flour and sugar; another might have some milk; another might have the money to buy some frosting; another would offer to drive to the grocery store.

Now let's say I have half a dozen of eggs in my ‘fridge that could go toward making a cake, but I was hoping to enjoy a nice helping of scrambled eggs the next morning. I have a choice to make. If I want to help make the cake and celebrate with my friends, I have to give up my idea of the scrambled eggs feast and offer at least a few eggs to the group. It's only when we combine all our ingredients together that we can enjoy and celebrate this beautiful creation.

This seems to be true in other areas of life, too. Parenthood, marriage, career—these are all good things we choose to offer ourselves to, but it means we chose not to connect to and participate in something else. We've limited our future options simply by choosing a path.

Just as any relationship, intentional community does bring certain limits. But the shared discernment, constant intercession, and agape love of community have opened doors that I could never have opened on my own, doors to personal growth and to outward service. In the last three years, I've learned to adjust my expectations when necessary, and my listening skills have been stretched far beyond what I thought possible. In Christian community, I am coming to understand that I am free to learn from my mistakes instead of being held captive by them, and thus, I'm learning the tangibility of God's grace. I've also discovered a tremendous passion for those who come through our internship, seeking direction and guidance in their journey.

Perhaps one of the most exciting opportunities for me thus far will happen next spring as I travel with a Tree of Life interfaith delegation to Israel and Palestine. I'm eager to see where this opportunity will lead me and Koinonia.

Koinonia has offered me a safe space to freely explore my own life—my skills, resources, pains, and needs—and how I can best use them to serve God's kingdom. And because I don't have to compete for success, I am free to focus on people rather than things or myself.

When we pool our talents, resources, and ideas, and we work together with an energized passion to love as God loves, the opportunities truly seem limitless.

Distributing Kingdom Resources

by Clarence Jordan § “Sermon on the Mount”

“Now if God so dresses up the wild flowers which are blooming one day and thrown into the fire the next, will he not do much more for you, O you who trust too little? So stop worrying and raising the questions, ‘What will we eat?’ and ‘What will we drink?’ and ‘What will we wear?’ for all these are the things that pagans go in for. Your spiritual Father knows that you need all these things. But you make the kingdom and its righteousness your chief concern, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, don't worry over tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry over itself. One day's evil is sufficient.” Matthew 6:25-34

Now let's get one thing straight. This isn't a pious, mushy pat on the back, telling

people not to worry any more, that if they'll let go and let God, he'll fix everything up for them slick as a whistle.

A true friend of the burdened, oppressed, laboring people, as Jesus was, wouldn't feed them “pie in the sky in the sweet bye and bye.” He knew how bread came, for he himself had sweated for it. [...]

It is perfectly obvious that Jesus could have addressed his remarks only to those who “make the kingdom and its righteousness their chief concern.” He told his disciples—kingdom citizens—to look at the birds in the sky and to consider the lilies of the fields. They were nourished and cared for because they were in the environment and plan and purpose which the Father intended for them.

They must stay within that plan if they are to claim the Father's care.

Suppose they had the power of free will,

as human beings do, and the bird chose to live under the water and the lily decided to live on concrete? Would the Father feed and clothe them? He might wish to, but he could not.

He would be thwarted in his purposes by their wills.

He can care for people only on his terms. The environment

God intends for all people is the kingdom. It is the summation of all his plans and purposes. It is the framework of his will. People in it are like birds in the sky and lilies of the field—they are living in harmony with God's design.

And being of more value than either,

human beings have a perfectly natural right to expect more from the Father's bounty. Then why should they worry? If the Father knows their needs, as he obviously does,

and has promised to meet them, why not trust him completely?

But how does God “add all these things” to kingdom citizens? Does he rain them from the skies or provide

them miraculously merely “in answer to prayer”? Certainly not. That isn't the way he does it for the birds and lilies. They are nourished from the system to which they have committed themselves. The needs of kingdom citizens are supplied through the kingdom. It is God's distributing agency.

“The needs of kingdom citizens are supplied through the kingdom. It is God's distributing agency.”

Come and See

By Sarah Prendergast

“So, what exactly do you do?” The question comes just about every time I tell someone I live at Koinonia. It's not easy to define for someone the experience of living in intentional Christian community. Lengthy explanations can't capture what it means to stroll over to the chapel for morning devotions before the dew is off the ground, or the lull that comes just after the bell rings midway through lunchtime as we prepare to offer our daily prayer for peace. And so I always issue an invitation, borrowed from Mother Teresa: “Come and see.”

Five years ago my husband Brendan, daughter Ida and I packed up our car and did just that. We weren't sure what to expect, and as we laughed off our friends' warnings not to drink any blue koolaid, we headed south with butterflies of excitement fluttering in our hearts.

Nothing outwardly spectacular happened during our visit. But in the quiet of the country, among the gentle welcome of the community members, we found a sense of belonging. We attended chapel each morning, helped out in the bakery and with some home repairs, ate community meals, went for walks in the woods. Something in the simplicity of the life here grabbed hold of us.

But more than that, our experience was different than any other church we'd ever been to: nobody preached at us. In her book, “Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition,” Chritine Pohs writes, “There is probably no better context for sharing the gospel than in a setting of warm welcome, and people will come in increasing numbers to a church that takes hospitality seriously.” It was the simple invitation and welcome we received that had such a profound impact on our lives.

God uses the seemingly mundane events of our lives—mealtime prayers, coffee breaks, daily chores, weekly meetings—to transform those who come to be among us.

As we pray, work, study, serve and fellowship together, the guise of the stranger softens and we find that we have much in common. And so we invite you to come and see, to join us whether for an afternoon or an overnight, whether you come alone or with friends. Come experience the God Movement, and see for yourself what all the excitement is about.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

By Elizabeth Dede

There are many definitions for the Kingdom of God. Jesus says, “The Kingdom of God is within you.” In Taizé worship, we often sing, “The Kingdom of God is justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Clarence Jordan said that Koinonia is a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God. Matthew referred to the Kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 19: 14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” Whatever our definition, the Kingdom is certain to have children present.

This year at the Koinonia Educational Cooperative, we have a little taste of the Kingdom with five children ages 3 to 6. So what's the Kingdom like?

Three-year-olds learn the difference between biggest and smallest, and everything in between. They work on puzzles with shapes and learn to name even pentagons and polygons and hexagons and parallelograms. They learn colors. They learn the alphabet and how to count all the way up to 100. They start learning how to write.

By the time you're six years old, you've learned all those things, and you love to teach them to three-year-olds. You start reading all by yourself. You learn to spell and have fun with word games. You start to write sentences and make up stories. You start to figure out how to get all the way up to 100 by addition and multiplication. You also figure out how to get back down to zero.

Our little children try to start each morning with the quiet game: one minute of silence to listen to the sounds around them. When the minute is up, they have a turn to

say what they heard. Sometimes the only sound is giggling or squirming.

Our little children are sometimes whiny and complaining. But there's room in the Kingdom for that behavior. It was the moaning of the Hebrew children that got God's attention. God heard the complaining of the Hebrew slaves and set them free from their bondage. We'll set the children free yet! And we'll be set free along the way.

Our children are silly. They laugh at the most outrageous things: a dog that eats crayons. It could be upsetting to have your crayons chewed up; instead it's funny. There must be room in the Kingdom for humor, otherwise how could God have put up with us humans for so long?

Our children are forgiving. When the teacher spells a word wrong, or mixes up a b with a d, they laugh about the mistake or say, “Nuh-uh!” And if a

behavior modification game just isn't working, they don't hold it against the teacher. Our children are persistent: they keep on working till they figure it out. The Kingdom is full of persistence. God is always working to forgive us and call us home.

Our children are clumsy and rambunctious. They're in a hurry to get there. The Kingdom is an exciting place.

Jesus had it right. Let the little children come. We have much to learn from them.



3-year-old Kellan Prendergast enjoys a good laugh with a mouthful of food.

Blast From the Past

Excerpts from
1976 Newsletters

“Jesus didn't just talk about love—he demonstrated it in his every action. Not only in the more spectacular miracles and healings, but in his daily dealings with people. “Signs and wonders” tend to dazzle and distract us (as they apparently did the writers of the Gospels) so much that we often forget that Jesus also instructed his followers time and again to perform the simpler acts of loving service to their neighbors and to each other.

“The chief purpose of Koinonia has always been seeking and living the values of the kingdom of God. But we discover our limitations in one situation after another: a young visitor comes with a mind crippled by drugs and we can't help her, a feud rages between neighboring families and our presence seems only to increase the tensions, an indigent family is given friendship and emergency shelter and responds by stealing money from a dozen places around the farm The list is endless.

“But we must be cautious about judging 'successes' and 'failures.' In our preoccupation with the spectacular, we usually overlook the beauty of daily miracles. A drink of cool water given in love to a thirsty child is also made of the stuff of miracles. We are gripped by a feeling of helplessness as we look at a picture of a dead child, starved, in his mother's arms in Bangladesh; shouldn't we praise God that we can provide the food to save some of his brothers and sisters?”

“But down here in southwest Georgia, we at Koinonia want to make it clear that we see plenty of reason for hope. We believe that much of the despair in today's world is the direct result of a growing alienation between people and God. Furthermore, as Clarence Jordan wrote while working to establish Koinonia, ‘as people have lost identity with God they have also lost it with their fellow human beings.’ It is precisely the desire to overcome that feeling of aloneness, to regain a sense of community that has brought a continuous flow of people through the gates of Koinonia in the last few years.

“When they get here they find no saints, no easy solutions, no spectacular successes. They are more likely to find some spectacular failures. And yet a great majority of those who come do go away encouraged, reassured that there is good reason for hope whenever even the most ordinary people set out together to find and to follow God's will. They go away reassured that what Jesus taught twenty centuries ago is indeed very relevant and ‘practical’ in this time of crisis.”



FUTURE GENERATIONS continued from page 1

with implementing several of the elements, and just this year we started working on a few of the more long-term projects, including an improved woodlot with Oak and Hickory Savannah in portions of our 250 acres of woodlands, and establishing areas for intensive cattle-grazing.

We have begun preparing to transition our more remote woodlot from Slash and Loblolly Pine to a Longleaf Pine and native grass ecosystem. Before the English settlers arrived, Longleaf Pine covered 2/3 of the Southeast. Now close to 97% of its ecosystem has been destroyed. We want to regenerate this endangered ecosystem, which provides habitat for numerous endangered plants and

animals. Longleaf pine takes 100 to 150 years to grow to its full size of 115 ft and can live up to 500 years, thus storing carbon for longer periods of time. For every acre we clear in our woodlands, we will replant twice that amount in other parts of our property. The most significant planting will be in an 80-acre pasture we took out of conventional row-cropping several years ago.

Also as part of our regeneration and conservation efforts, we're building a herd of an endangered heritage stock, called Pineywoods. The pineywoods cattle are native to our bioregion, but with the

introduction of European breeds and excessive crossbreeding, there are only 1500-2000 pineywoods cattle alive today. Our hope is that the re-introduction

of pineywoods will help to create a stable ecosystem for other endangered species that were once native to this area.

These dreams and goals will take years to realize, but we know they are worth the patient effort.

We want to follow in the footsteps of those who came before us, to build the land and leave it a little better every year.

As we look around now, it's hard to imagine that this farm with towering trees shading each house, 90 acres of stately pecan orchards, and 250 acres of pine and hardwood forests was a virtually

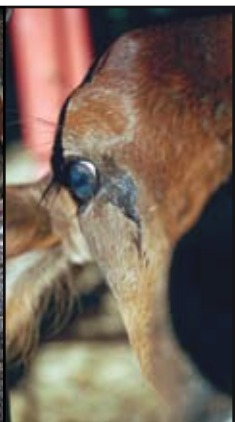


We recently recommissioned one of Clarence's old "chicken mobiles." It's on wood slabs, easily moved, and makes for some happy roaming chickens. We're continually benefiting from Clarence's early insight to sustainable farming. Pictured, Brendan Prendergast makes his daily trip to visit the hens.



Welcome, Twigs – our first Pineywoods bull

treeless plot of land merely 70 years ago. Just as we benefit from Clarence's hard work and the hard work of countless others throughout the years at Koinonia, it is our prayer that those who come after us will be inspired and grateful for the ways in which we stewarded this land.



The Solution Is All Around Us

By Sarah Prendergast

IN OUR LIFE TOGETHER, WE seek to live in such a way that inspires all kinds of people to action, to go out and try it themselves. This is especially true in our practice of farming.

One of the permaculture principles we like best is, "Seek small and slow solutions." In other words, you don't have to start by digging up all the grass in your yard in the suburbs to make way for gardens.

Maybe you begin with a fruit tree or two. Or you could try building a beautiful, aromatic herb spiral, an extremely useful addition to any landscape. (There's nothing like harvesting fresh herbs right outside the kitchen just minutes before adding them to the pot.)

Even if you live in a city and your rental apartment is surrounded by pavement, you probably don't need to go too far from home to find people who are seeking to live closer to the land.

Here are a few of the movements that exist all over the United States, and throughout the world:

Community Supported Agriculture: For a seasonal subscription fee, CSA members receive boxes of freshly harvested, locally grown produce on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Visit <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> for a complete listing of hundreds of CSAs throughout the United States.

Crop Mob: Landless, wannabe farmers come together with

experienced farmers and gardeners to freely share skills and resources while completing community-based projects. Visit <http://cropmob.org/> to get involved in this seedling movement.

Guerilla Gardening: People of all ages turn abandoned lots and tiny patches of dirt between city sidewalks into productive and beautiful garden spaces using stealth techniques like "seed-bombing" and late-night planting. Visit <http://www.guerrillagardening.org> to get inspired, find a group in your area, or to start your own.

Transition Towns: Dedicated people all over the world are coming together to seek ways that their communities can

provide alternatives as we face the challenges of climate change and peak oil. Members work at a policy level to begin implementing positive changes in their cities well in advance of potential crisis. Their actions improve community connections, while reducing carbon emissions and improving quality of life. To find a Transition Initiative where you live, visit <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>.

If you're looking for ways to learn more about permaculture, you're always welcome to come and see what we're doing. We're happy to share what we've learned, and invite you as a student in a future design course. Together, let's work to build a better soil.

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE CHOCOLATE ROOM

By Adam Gulledge

I’m not much of a writer, so instead of an article telling you all the reasons you would enjoy our tasty pecans or delicious chocolate, you’ll have to settle for three insights into what it is like to make Koinonia products:

One of our signature products is Chocolate Pecan Bark. Every year Geneva Brown, our baker, is assigned someone new to help with pouring chocolate. Two years ago, I was that person. The process seems simple enough: Open the spout, let melted chocolate fall into a pot, mix in pecans, and pour it onto the table while Geneva spreads the chocolate to the desired thickness. Inevitably, after your first pour, you look around and there is chocolate everywhere. Chocolate splattered on the floor, chocolate wiped on your nose, latex gloves covered in chocolate. You could write a Dr. Seuss book of all the places chocolate ends up. All you can do is laugh and hope it gets better (FYI, it does).

For the past two years I’ve been responsible for monitoring the pecan smoker during the night. The smoker requires the fire to be tended almost every hour for sixteen hours. By the time the pecans are put on trays and we get the fire going it’s usually about noon, which means I can count on being up till four in the morning. By the time midnight rolls around just about everyone has gone to bed and I am left by myself, a rarity in intentional community. The hours that follow almost always bring me peace while reconnecting with nature. The stars shine brightly, the wind blows softly, and the birds chirp surprisingly loudly late at night in South Georgia. The little things are easier to appreciate alone at night and that’s why I look forward to smoking pecans.

Last year was my first year as products coordinator. I was ill prepared for the holiday rush. At the age of 23, I had not learned the valuable lesson of asking for help when you need it. We got behind in production and my reaction was just to work more and more. I entered orders, I shipped, and I worked in the bakery. When I was awake I was either working or eating, literally. Eventually there was no way to avoid the realization that I needed help and lots of it. So interns stayed late shipping, community members came in after their work day had ended to enter orders and work in the bakery, and we even had others who live in Americus excited to come out to the farm to volunteer at night. Through my imperfection there was perfect community, perfect selflessness and I learned an important life lesson to boot.



Counter-clockwise: Julie, Luke, Christian, Sol, and Grace take a break from their Tuesday apprenticeship to "strike a deep thinking pose."

STILL GROWING

• Our Educational Cooperative continues to get stronger! We added 6 new kids this year, for a total of 17 students. Since restarting the homeschool again a few years ago, we’ve been able to include children both from within Koinonia and from the surrounding community. Our students range in age from 3 to 15. Here are a few highlights of this semester:

Elizabeth Dede and the 3-6 year olds have set up school in Wellspring House. It’s the perfect place for the youngsters, right next to the playground! And it’s not too far from the gardens and chicken yard. The kids are learning so much with Elizabeth. See “Let the Little Children Come” on page 6 to read about their day.

Local college student Hannah Mercer is teaching a hands-on art history class for our 7-11 year-old students. They began by making mosaics out of construction paper. They’ve made their own paper out of recycled materials, and studied Picasso’s work as well as Japanese ink drawings.

Science and Literature have crossed paths in the 7-11 year-old class this year. Students first read “Sarah, Plain and Tall” and studied the prairie ecosystem. Their concluding project for the book, after studying soil samples and rates of water absorption, was “piecing” a quilt using geometric shapes of construction paper. “Blue Willow” introduced the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, adobe construction (students made their own bricks!) and the migrant worker ballads of Woody Guthrie. Then they explored weather patterns with “Night of the Twisters” and looked at footage of the tornado that struck Americus in March 2007. The kids put together a disaster plan for our building and will be “drilling” the older students periodically.

The 12-15 year olds have begun full-day apprenticeships on the farm. They’re learning so many practical skills through gardening, maintenance and construction. And it’s wonderful to have an entire day to interact with them and strengthen our friendships. They also started a “Faith Studies” class this year with Bren Dubay and Amanda Moore, which gives space for them to discuss “the deep,” as Christian Daniels calls it. These young adults never cease to amaze us with their quick insight and their tremendous compassion. We’re truly blessed to be learning with them.

Making a Gift to Koinonia - Reply Form

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☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$ _____ to be used where most needed.
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Credit card information, if applicable: check one ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard
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Curious about community?

Consider an internship!

(877) 738.1741. Ask for Amanda. Tell her Moosey sent you. MOOOO

FROM THE MOUTHS OF YOUTH: On two recent occasions, Koinonia's been blessed by the writing of our young people. 9-year-old Heather let her mom read this special story at morning chapel. Sandy's other daughter Mary graduated from Koinonia's educational cooperative last May and delivered this beautiful piece of writing at the commencement ceremony. We are very proud of Heather and Mary and thank them for allowing us to share their writing talents with you.

When I was 3 years old, I remember thinking that 10 years old was really old. I thought that if I were 10, I'd have a boyfriend, and I'd know how to cook, and I would even be able to go on walks by myself. I wanted to be 10. I would tell people I was. And when they asked what grade I was in, I would say, "Thud." I really thought I was in third grade, I was three.



I didn't want to be ignorant in any way, but I really wished that I didn't have to think so much about everything. It made life too confusing. It made it hard to breathe. I felt depressed. And I was starting to think that there was no powerful god-like being that would make everything okay. It was a really hard time, and there were days when I didn't think I would make it past that sadness.

Ironically, it was in the same place that I went to be alone in my grief that I was overcome by joy and beauty. Sometimes when I'm really sad or upset, I will go to the forest. One day I went for a walk by a creek, and for some reason I decided not to think

about sadness.

The sun was shining through the trees and down onto the water making it shimmer and dance. The birds were singing, thoroughly in love with life. I sat down on a fallen tree that was stretched out across the creek, and instead of listening to my thoughts I listened to nature. I started to cry and I felt this enveloping peace come over me. It felt warm and heavy, yet I was weightless. I was no more significant than the pollen that hung in the air, and I didn't mind this.

Everything around me was exactly where it was supposed to be. There was so much life and beauty in this one moment that lasted for as long as I cried. It was full like a bloated water balloon about to burst and quench my soul, and I think that moment was what I had been waiting for.

Was it God? It sure wasn't the God who I heard was scornful and all-powerful, and whom I should fear. If it was God, then I say that God is a soft, nurturing Mother, a graceful and loving Father. And I was wrapped in comforting arms, with the wind in my ear as a whisper that I'd be okay and that I could be stronger than the forces of this world that would try to bury me in sorrow.

To this day I'm not absolutely certain what happened at the creek. But why should I toil away precious seconds trying to understand what is impossible for any human being to comprehend. YHWH is too magnificent. YHWH is more intricate than a passion flower, and simpler than a blade of grass.

I'll never have all the answers, and that will bug me till the day I die. But it suffices just to know that. And that is the most important thing that I learned in the era of high school, and it didn't even come from a text book. It came from the love of whatever lifted my sorrows that day by the creek. It came from the inspiring words of my best friends. It came from within me.

The past four years have been like steps. I fell down a lot, but there were people who loved me. And there was The YHWH I had been looking for, above all things. Together they showed me a kind of life I did not know was possible.

The arms of love continue to catch me with every misstep as they reach out to help me up the steps ahead. It's been an adventure, but it's not over yet. Good thing I'm the adventurous type.

Lizzy and Her Farm by Heather Thornburgh

One day there lived a girl named Lizzy, and one day she was swinging on a swing at school. She was also wondering what it would be like if she lived on a farm with cows, pigs, roosters, chickens, turkeys and her cat. And we could eat food that grew on our own farm. Also, we wouldn't get hurt by eating a cow or something that had a sickness. We would be very healthy.

Later that day she came back from school. As soon as she came home she said, "Mom, can we move?"

"Honey, I thought you loved where you are."

"No, I'm not. If we lived on a farm then we would be much healthier."

"What? Talk with your father about it."

"But mom, it would be nice to finally have kale, salad and good meat!"

"I don't know honey, talk with your dad about it."

"Why, mom, why?"

"Let me think about it." ... "Okay, honey, we're going to a farm called Koinonia for a year and see if we like it or not, so pack your bags!"

"Yay!" Lizzy said.

When we got there we got to eat lunch in this dining hall. It was under where I stayed. Then we got to take a tour. They also had bunnies! Then we had to unpack. The place that we stayed at was awesome!

One day Lizzy asked the boss of the garden if she could work at the garden. "Sure," he said, "but you're not getting paid."

"Who cares about that?" Lizzy said.

Later that fall Lizzy asked if she could be the boss.

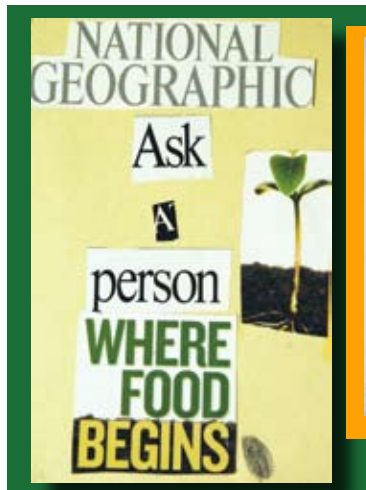
"Of course, finally. I need a break from this!" he said. "Are you sure you don't want to get paid?" he asked.

"No, for the last time!"

After the year they decided it was fun. So they sold their old house and lived happily ever after.

The end

By
Leila
age 10



By Kellan, age 3



By Ian, age 9



By Ida, age 5



IN A NUTSHELL THE STORY OF KOINONIA

Koinonia, Greek for loving community, was founded in 1942 to be a “demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God,” sharing resources, work, and prayer much like the early Christian example found in the Book of Acts.

Our most deeply held beliefs are drawn from Jesus' teachings—peacemaking, radical sharing, and brother/sisterhood among people. In the 1950s and 60s, Koinonia was fiercely reviled by many for these beliefs. Enduring violence and rejection even from local churches, Koinonia survived only by God's faithful protection. Our mail-order pecan business brought us through years of local boycott, and it remains our main source of earned income.

Koinonia is also a haven of down-to-earth theology. Founding member Clarence Jordan was a farmer and a Greek scholar. He penned the “Cotton Patch Version” into South Georgia vernacular, seeking to place the New Testament scripture in the 'here and now' of his day. His books and lively sermons are still beloved today, and his version of Matthew continues to be produced on stage as the “Cotton Patch Gospel” Musical.

Our life of service has taken various forms through the years. In the early days, we extended friendship to our neighbors, mostly Black sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Partnership Housing, which later became Habitat for Humanity, was born here to help neighbors afford decent, simple homes. Our current works include sustainable gardening and ecology, local ministries, internship program, educational offerings and, as always, welcoming people to walk with us on this journey. Come join our story!

Koinonia Farm Chronicle

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Last January we announced the opening of Dennis Hassell's “The Glory Man,” a play about the story of Koinonia, our co-founders Clarence and Florence Jordan, and Clarence's ground-breaking approach to Christian service.

This year, we were thrilled to learn of its professional premiere at Lamb's Players Theatre, one of the top 50 theatres in the nation, according to Theatre Communications Group! This theatre is no stranger to Koinonia; it has produced the “Cotton Patch Gospel” several times over the last few decades.

Alma Jackson was able to make the trip to San Diego along with Bren Dubay for “The Glory Man” opening night in October. Alma lived and worked at Koinonia when the violence and boycott began in the 1950s. Once the boycott gripped the farm, Alma chose to give up his paycheck, since he knew the farm couldn't afford it, and he sought to join the community.

Alma is still a good friend today and comes to visit us when he can. We're blessed to have friends like Alma who remain faithful through the years, and friends like Dennis who seek to spread the spirit of Koinonia in such beautiful ways. We're excited to see where “The Glory Man” will go next!

Pictured l-r, Bryan Barbarin, Dennis Hassell, Alma Jackson, and Antonio “T.J.” Johnson. Bryan and T.J. play the character Rupp, based on the real life events in Alma Jackson's life.



Review of “Faith Beyond Borders: Doing Justice in a Dangerous World”

By Bren Dubay

Ronnie McBrayer writes, “Clarence [Jordan] understood that those who chose this radical path [living a common, shared life in intentional community] would be few, but he was okay with that. He often described such people as dynamite in a coil or gasoline compressed by a piston. These [are] small constrictive spaces, but it [is] actually in their smallness that explosive power ignites. Koinonia [is] a place like that. It [has never been] very large ... but it [is] explosive in its influence and power.”

Jubilee Partners, Koinonia's daughter community, is one of the “firebrands that came bursting out of our little slice of the kingdom of God” here in southwest Georgia. During one of those rare times in our 68-year history when we did grow large, three families were sent

forth to form a new koinonia in another little slice of the kingdom. Carolyn and Don Mosley, Ed and Mary Ruth Weir, and Karen and Ryan Karis served as the pioneers in this adventure. They settled in the small town of Comer, Georgia, about a hundred miles east of Atlanta.

In his new book “Faith Beyond Borders: Doing Justice in a Dangerous World,” Don continues to chronicle the remarkable work of Jubilee Partners.

Whether in Africa where Don helped Millard and Linda Fuller morph Koinonia's Partnership Housing into a world-wide movement that came to be known as Habitat for Humanity, at home in Comer where Jubilee welcomes refugees from around the world housing and teaching them English for a time, or the latest project working with the Fuller Center for

Housing to build 50 homes in North Korea, Don's storytelling ability will keep you turning the pages.

You'll clearly see that at the heart of Jubilee's work, is the belief that “sites of enmity can be transformed into communities of reconciliation by love put into action.”

“Faith Beyond Borders” and Don's first book “With Our Own Eyes” should be added to everyone's reading list. More than added, I encourage you to sit down and read them from cover to cover as soon as possible. You'll be inspired. You can order both books from Koinonia online at www.koinoniapartners.org or give us a call at 229-924-0391. We are proud to offer these works about our daughter community and the incredible work she has done for God and His people.



Come Walk with Us

There are two ways to come and walk with us for a while: As a visitor, or a seasonal intern. The seasonal internship program lasts roughly three months, introducing the individual to the prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship of the community. It is also the first step in our process to membership.

Seasonal interns who desire a longer period of time to serve and learn in community living may petition to become a community intern. This internship is usually one year.

By invitation and affirmation of the community, a community intern becomes an apprentice, or exploring member. The apprenticeship lasts for a minimum of one year and is for those who desire to discern whether they are

being called long-term to this way of life in the koinonia.

After completing the apprenticeship, a person may be invited to the next step in the process, becoming a provisional member, called a novice. The novitiate is a final period of time to discern full membership in the koinonia.

When ready, the person may be invited to pass from provisional membership to full membership, becoming a steward. A steward enters into a covenant that promises a life-long commitment.

There are also non-communal members called partners. Partners support and actively participate in Koinonia's mission and vision in a role focused primarily on the work of the farm that they help with.

Vision Statement

Love through service to others
Joy through generous hospitality
Peace through reconciliation

Mission Statement

We are Christians called to live together in intentional community, sharing a life of prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship. We seek to embody peacemaking, sustainability, and radical sharing. While honoring people of all backgrounds and faiths, we strive to demonstrate the way of Jesus as an alternative to materialism, militarism, and racism.