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LIFE IN THE KOINONIA FAMILY: WHO SPILLED THE MILK

by Amanda Moore

I'm going to eat up all my family by the chin of my chinnie chin chin," Kellan said just after I brushed her hair. We finished our bedtime routine and I was about to turn out the lights when she said again, "I'm going to eat up all of my family by the chin of my chinnie chin chin." "Am I part of your family, Kellan?" I asked. "Yes," she immediately replied. She thought about it some more as she lay in bed. "I have a really big family," she said. Then her eyes lit up and got real big as if she had just discovered some great secret. She exclaimed, "And you have a really big family, too!"

At the age of 3, Kellan Prendergast understands the concept of family better than many adults I know. Family extends beyond blood relations. Jesus once asked a very hard, but important question, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Then, pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Now this verse isn't giving us permission to abandon our biological families, but it does challenge our notion of family allegiance, and

exactly who is our family. I'm often asked what it's like living in community. The assumption is that it must be overwhelming and difficult dealing with so many people and their needs. I usually respond that life in community is like living with one big family—it has its ups and downs. But if it's a healthy family, the joys from the shared fellowship far outweigh the frustrations and pains.

When we light our peace candle each day just after lunch, we often read something from a book Dave and Ellie Castle left with us, "Practicing Peace: A devotional walk through Quaker tradition."

This quote articulates well the life of community: "Where two or three are gathered, someone spills the milk. ... A family that can live with each other's idiosyncrasies can discover joy, one of the main ingredients in communion with God and each other."

If I'm truthful, though, life at Koinonia isn't exactly like life in any other family. It's a bit more purposed, or directioned. If we're intentionally seeking to live as God's people—God's family, then our actions seem to weigh just a bit heavier, and our spirits just a bit

more focused and attentive. Yes, we have the common fights of every family—from who gets the first shower to who gets the last of the milk, from why we can't have our favorite meals everyday to arguments over shopping and overspending. But we are intentional about working through these disagreements, about seeking reconciliation, about living in a right relationship with one another. This is the family we have chosen to be a part of, and it's a choice we live out every day. A primary focus of this edition is to share specific ways our family builds stronger relationships with each other and with our creator. We hope you can be encouraged by some of our activities and incorporate them in your family and community.

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.



Koinonia: An INTENTIONAL Christian Community

by Bren Dubay

April has a special place in the life of Koinonia—when we celebrate our Covenant Worship Service. This year brought a clear, beautiful morning. There was an air of peace and yet I could feel the excitement and anticipation. Even the colors of the flowers seemed particularly vibrant as I stood outside with three of our interns, the apprentices, novices, partners, and my fellow stewards. Across the street I could see people gathering at the chapel, waiting and praying for us.

As we walked toward the chapel, some of us went to renew our promises, to enter into the promises, or to publicly deepen our commitment. All of us went in support of one another. The spiritual life is a journey and on this day we were demonstrating this in a very tangible way.

I couldn't help but continually glance over at Emily, Janiece and Nathen, our newest community interns. Trying to get their attention, I smiled at Elizabeth and nodded at Craig. I made a funny face at Amanda because I knew I could get her to laugh outloud. There was

Elizabeth crossing the road, a friend of Koinonia since the 1980s. Could she have guessed back then that one April day in 2010 she'd become a steward in this community? What about Craig who first came to escape the cold winters of New York? Did he know while lending a helping hand that his heart would be captured and this place would lay claim on him? Two years ago he became an apprentice and on this day he was about to become a novice.

Learning to be a community takes time and presence. A key word for us at Koinonia is "intentional." We are intentional about learning how to be interdependent, to live cooperatively, and to share a common life. Without a commitment to being intentional, this way of life does not take root. American culture takes over. Work, material possessions, superficial relations, individualism, compartmentalizing work and play all become our gods.

To discern if you're called to community, you must be willing to show up, and to show up regularly, to be formed by the rhythm of the shared

Steward Covenants

- We are Christians in that we strive to follow Jesus' teachings and example and live a shared life with one another inspired by the description of the early Church found in the Acts of the Apostles.
- Because we believe God has called us to Koinonia, our commitment is long-term.
- We pray together.
- We work the number of hours and days necessary to support ourselves economically and to build a way of life together.
- We study together.
- Together and individually we serve our neighbors.
- We seek opportunities for fellowship with one another.
- We participate in community and team meetings and serve as coordinators, team leaders or members of the board of directors if called upon or elected.
- We agree to engage with fellow community members in a spirit of reconciliation avoiding gossip within and without the community at every turn.

life and be open to it forming you. These six people showed up — for worship, meals, study sessions, their assigned work on the farm. They showed up for washing dishes, even when it wasn't their turn. They cooked. They cleaned. They pruned grapevines and weeded the blueberries. Most importantly, they showed up for others in the koinonia and wider community, willing to listen, forgive, play, and serve in whatever ways needed.

And because they did, they heard a call to remain longer. Elizabeth felt called to promise to serve God and this community for life. Will God call the other five to live in an intentional community for life? None of us knows the answer to that. We know that they have been faithful to the community's request that they live intentionally and because they have we will be blessed by

their presence awhile longer.

I'm reminded of a story — A young family moved to become members of a house church that "took community seriously." After awhile, the husband went to the pastor and expressed that community wasn't really working for him. The pastor asked how long had he and his family been there. He replied that it had been about a year. "Then I guess you've got about a year's worth of community," his pastor said matter-of-factly. "Stay another year and you'll have two years' worth. Stay thirty and you might find some of what you're looking for."

Spiritual formation is ongoing and life long. It's aided by the rhythm of a common life. I'm grateful for all those who join with us in that rhythm whether it be for three months, an additional year, or for a lifetime.

WE ARE FORMED BY THE RHYTHM OF OUR COMMON LIFE TOGETHER. THE GRACE NOTES OF THIS LIFE ARE:

PRAYER— Our morning begins with a prayer and chapel service. We gather for meals, devotions, and prayer daily. At 10:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. a bell is rung and we pause in whatever we're doing to pray.

WORK— There's much to do to keep the farm going. We're hard at it from dawn to dusk, but we remember what a beloved community used to say: "Work is just another excuse for us to be together."

STUDY— Though private study is ongoing, we intentionally study together several times a year, whether it's Scripture, farming, or living in community.

SERVICE— Our mission is to be a part of the Body of Christ rooting ourselves in the Gospel. Water these roots and they yield service to others.

FELLOWSHIP— We love to eat and we love to play. We're also blessed to be a house of hospitality welcoming thousands of visitors each year.

IN THE NICK OF TIME

by Bren Dubay

In 1966, according to our friend Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Clarence Jordan wrote in a letter to one of his children, "This is what always baffles me. Koinonia is forever dying and forever living. We should have conked out long ago, but somehow others came in the nick of time. This half-born condition is agonizing, and I could wish it otherwise, but there it is."

I wish it otherwise, too, but I'm thankful for all the "in the nick of time" folks. Late spring/early summer is always the financial "in the nick of time" final push to meet the budgetary goals set for the current fiscal year. If the books were closed today, we'd be looking at a shortfall of about \$100,000. If everyone receiving this newspaper buys Koinonia products or makes a donation by June 30, 2010, the goal will be met hands down and in the nick of time.

So, all of you in the nick of time folks, thank you for sending in your contributions and making your purchases.

And thank you for the donations and purchases that will help us meet the modest goals of the 2010-2011 fiscal year. At the same time we're making the final push, we're also finalizing the budget for the year that begins on July 1. We take a long look at the current year's income vs. expense, then set goals for the next. We are both frugal and generous.

Koinonia didn't "conk out" in Clarence's day and Koinonia won't "conk out" now.

Because of the folks God calls to live in community here and because of folks like you who have always come through in the nick of time, Koinonia will live another 68 years and more.



Unlimited Love: Impractical or Way to Life?

by Clarence Jordan § "Sermon on the Mount"

To be sure, love, even though limited to one's own circle, is far superior to retaliation, whether limited or unlimited. But Jesus didn't feel that even this brought the law to its final goal, or fulfillment. It was making progress, but would not be complete until it arrived at unlimited love. "But I'm telling you, love the outsiders and pray for those who try to do you in, so that you might be sons of your spiritual Father. For he lets his sun rise on both sinners and saints, and he sends rain on both good people and bad. Listen, here, if you love only those who love you, what is your advantage? Don't even scalawags do that much? And if you speak to no one but your friends, how are you any different? Do not the non-Christians do as much? Now you, you all must be mature, as your spiritual Father is mature" (Matthew 3:44-48, Cotton Patch Version).

Here Jesus is simply saying that, for kingdom citizens, love must be the basis of all relationships and that it must be applied universally, both to one's race and nation and to those of other races and nations. There must be no double-dealing, no two-facedness, no partiality. Hate has the same effect upon the personality whether its object is friend or foe. Spiritual traffic cannot be halted at the artificial borders of caste or nation.

Some people rise up to say that this just isn't practical. It might be all right to turn the other cheek to a little baby enemy that can't hit very hard anyway, but it just won't work with a big, bad, grown-up enemy who might knock the daylights out of you. Force is the only language some people can understand (and the only language some people can speak!) so you might as well be realistic about the matter. Suppose

you try to be nice to everybody and give to those who ask of you and lend to those who borrow and let the guy who takes the shirt off your back have your undershirt, too, and then they take advantage of you. With human nature being what it is, can you go in for this until everybody is willing to live that way?

Then there are people who say that this attitude is very practical and will work if given a chance. They believe that even in the most cruel person there's a tender spot that will respond to a continuous bombardment of love and goodwill. Citing many examples from history, they can present a strong case for the effectiveness of nonretaliation and active love. Many of them are willing to back up their belief

in this idea with their lives, which within itself is a strong argument.

The truth might be that in its initial stages unlimited love is very impractical. Folks who are determined enough to hold on to it usually wind up on a cross, like Jesus. Their goods get plundered and they get slandered. Persecution is their lot. Surely nobody would be inclined to call this practical.

Yet in its final stages, unlimited love seems to be the only thing that can possibly make any sense. Crucifixions have a way of being followed by resurrections. The end of love seems to be its beginning. Only one who is foolish enough to lose one's life finds it. It's the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies that lives.

"Spiritual traffic cannot be halted at the artificial borders of caste or nation."

Called to be Ministers

by Amanda Moore

In our formational intern program, we have many seekers, searching for answers to spiritual questions and asking how and where they might fit into this seemingly misshapen Body of Christ. They pour over quests of calling and vocation, trying to find the shoe that fits them best, where they expect to serve God for the rest of their lives. And if they choose the wrong one, they fear, they're forever doomed to this ill-fitted shoe, for better or for worse.

Compounded with pressure from society and family to get on with "real life," this fear is paralyzing, and can cause us to forget what we're called to in the first place.

It seems to me that the goal of life isn't about career, salary, potential, or success. Yes, as Americans, life often includes these things, but, ultimately—for Christians—life is about being ministers of God's love, mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation, in whatever means we can.

Frederick Buechner writes in *Wishful Thinking*: A

Theological ABC, "The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and

"The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

When thinking of calling in Christian terms, a number of commands from our Holy Scriptures come to mind. But do you recall the one Jesus named the first and greatest commandment?

As Matthew records, Christ calls us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind ... and your neighbor as yourself." Christ calls us to be a representation of God's love.

So what does this have to do with vocation? God doesn't call us to a vocation; God calls us into a vocation—

He calls us to be ministers. Literally, minister can mean a person acting as the agent or instrument of another. If we are called to be instruments of God, might that mean that in every area of our life, we are to be instruments of God—not just our career?

This is helpful for me to remember as I continue looking for places where my deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. "My calling" isn't just one crossing where these two meet and then depart. Perhaps they need to be tightly coiled together, intersecting at several places, in several areas of my life.

In each of the jobs I have taken on (including that of student), I have tried to be a minister of God's love. Whenever I think of myself as an instrument of God, I become more intentional about the words I say, the attitude I foster, the actions I take.

I challenge you to continue searching for places where your greatest joy meets

the world's greatest hunger. Don't just look at things you are good at

or enjoy, but consider things you would like to be good at or would like to enjoy. We are a fluid people. What we like today might not be what we like tomorrow, especially if we allow ourselves to be shaped by God's spirit.

The important thing is that in everything we do, we remember that we are instruments of God's work, reconciling all of creation to itself and to God. If we do remember this, it will shape how we live, how we work and how we love. It might even affect where we live, work and love.

A Brief Reflection

by Bren Dubay



In his newest book, "The Wisdom of Stability," Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove shares a story about Abba Antony, a monk who went to live in the desert to practice a life of prayer. Assailed by all sorts of thoughts that kept him from praying, he cried out, "Lord, I want to be saved but these thoughts do not leave me alone. What shall I do in my affliction? How can I be saved?" Outside his cell, Antony saw a monk making rope, getting up to pray, sitting down to work again, then getting up again to pray. When he heard the Lord speak to him, Antony understood that he had been watching an angel, sent in answer to his prayer. "Do this and you will be saved," the angel said to Antony.

April has been an exhausting month—a Friends of Koinonia event in Illinois, Tennessee, then California, two visits to Texas, Holy Week, and a New Monasticism workshop at the farm squeezed between two of the trips.

Even in the midst of exhaustion, I feel centered. In the past, I'm sure I wouldn't be so calm. Despair would be claiming easy victory over me. What's different?

At Koinonia, we have our equivalent of "making rope" that's for sure. But we are called to pray throughout the day also. The rhythm of our life together has taken deep root in me. This way of life is so much a part of me now that I find myself following its rhythm whether at the farm or not.

Prayer and work rhythm sustains and centers me.

With this centeredness comes the openness to loving people. Our friend Jonathan told another story during his recent visit to the farm. An intentional Christian community like ours was having difficulties. An Oxford educated fellow had come to help them out. He asked them if they counted in Scripture how many times we're instructed to love God and how many time we're instructed to love people, which one would win. They offered their guesses then he said, "Well, I went through the whole book with a highlighter and found that the number of verses about God loving people far outnumbers the other two."

This way of life at Koinonia has helped me come to believe that about God loving people. Maybe not in my head, on days when it is tough going, but deep in the center of me where I'm calm, at peace and despair holds no claim on me. Believing it has helped me become much better at loving others and at loving God.

We make rope (chocolate), we pray, make rope (help our neighbors), we pray, make rope (accept help from our neighbors), we pray, make rope (tend the blueberries, grapes, pecans, gardens and animals), we pray, make rope (repair what's broken, construct something new) and we pray. We do this day in and day out. "Do this and you will be saved," the angel said to Antony.

Space to Seek, Listen: A Look at Koinonia Internships

By Amanda Moore



One of the chores I'm charged with is walking alongside our seasonal and community interns, guiding and serving them as they immerse themselves in our life of prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship. The purpose of the internship program is to offer a safe space for those interested to embark on or deepen their spiritual journey. Often those who come through are what I call seekers; they're searching for answers to major life questions. Some have tried the church as America offers it and found it lacking. They yearn for something deeper. Others who come through aren't really sure why they're here. They find themselves fumbling through life with no real direction or plan, and somehow end up at Koinonia for a three-month seasonal internship. Still others come for the fun experience of working on a farm.

Interns fully participate in all aspects of our life. Through living the daily rhythm of our community, it's our hope that interns can learn more fully who they are—their talents, strengths, and weaknesses—and how to most fully usher in God's kingdom through their lives.

Seasonal interns gather twice weekly at my home for breakfast. Preparing and sharing meals in this intimate setting allows us to begin to form a common identity. We have a study session once per week, giving us a common language and understanding of Christian community and life. The other breakfast is followed by the seasonal intern community meeting. We begin the meeting by practicing Examen, sharing our consolations and desolations from the week. This form of reflection was gifted to us by St. Ignatius hundreds of years ago, and helps us grow in knowledge of ourselves and others by asking two simple questions: What most gives us life and what most takes life from us. The Examen can be shared by any group of people, but requires trust and honesty to be most fruitful. This isn't something that happens overnight—it takes work to be open and vulnerable with one another in this way.

The interns also participate in group service, both on the farm and in the wider community. Often life in community can significantly change or expand one's perspective of service. I've noticed this over and over again through our interns. It's easy to identify service when it's physical—build homes, prepare meals, provide shelter. But living in community makes us keenly aware of a deeper, more abiding form of service—listening to the broken-hearted, holding the crying child, encouraging the doubtful, visiting the lonely, giving parents a quick breather, offering grace and mercy at every turn, and being willing to receive grace for yourself.

Some desire this type of experience just for a brief time. Others desire a longer experience in this community, and ask to become Community Interns, following a similar program for up to a year. Still others know immediately they are called to this way of life. Regardless what answers they're seeking, we strive to provide the space for our interns to listen to God's voice. We are always grateful for and blessed by those who chose to spend time walking with us in this journey of life.

Our Corner of the Kingdom

by Sarah Prendergast

The sun streams across the grass, and daffodils in full bloom turn their faces to the golden light. But here in southern Georgia daffodils bloom early, and so this is not necessarily the first sign of spring at Koinonia.

We know springtime is here in full force when groups of college and high school students begin to arrive en masse. This year has been no exception.

We welcomed students from Guilford College, from Dresden, Germany with the Beyond Borders Program at Florida State University, and from Trinity College.

We stepped out of our comfort zone and hosted a larger than usual group — 47 juniors from St. Thomas Aquinas High School. These energetic young folks proved that many hands make light work. They helped dig two ponds and install garden beds that double as erosion control. They also did the age-old jobs of picking up sticks in the pecan orchards and weeding briars out of the blueberry patch. While in Americus, they also helped at the local Americus-Sumter Fuller Center for Housing build site.

We're always grateful for the opportunity

to welcome guests and are pleased to offer them the opportunity to work with their hands while at the same time encouraging their spirit with Koinonia fellowship. Spring visitors will stay busy helping us prepare the gardens for spring planting. Summer months will bring plenty of volunteer opportunities around the farm. During June and July we will need many hands to help with the blueberry harvest. In August the Muscadine and Scuppernong grapes will weigh down the vines and bring us plenty of opportunities for fellowship as we harvest that fine fruit.

And as is usually true with old farms, we're always in need of help with our ongoing maintenance construction and upkeep projects.

If you're able to spend some time with us and help meet these needs we have, please e-mail hospitality@koinoniapartners.org to schedule your visit. We look forward to hosting you! And if you are in the area, call ahead to schedule a tour of the farm and join us for lunch or dinner. We'd love to count you among the thousands of friends who have come to see what's new in our little corner of God's kingdom on Earth.

Training the Ears of THE HEART

By Amanda Moore

Every week we meet with our Spiritual Companion, someone who walks with us in this journey. The meeting is a time to intentionally listen to one another. We listen not only with our ears, but with the ears of our hearts. Listening with one's heart goes deeper. It's not about gathering information or half-heartedly trying to catch the words someone speaks. It's about listening to one another's spirit—what brings us joy, what pains us, what is forming and shaping us on this spiritual path. When we learn each other's spirits better and what is affecting us, we begin to understand how to most fully live this demonstration plot together.

We've tried this companionship a number of ways. We met one-on-one for a number of years. Then we met in small groups for nearly a year. Now we're meeting one-on-one again. Flexibility is key when trying to foster deep and abiding relationships with one another. We change companions every three weeks, so we can share this intimate time with everyone.

Typically, spiritual companions have dinner together on Monday evenings. During our time together, we practice Examen—sharing consolations and desolations. We share how we're doing, what's good about our life, what needs a bit more tweaking. We don't try to problem-solve or point blame at people. We simply speak from the heart and listen with the heart.

Now as you can imagine, it's not always as pristine as described here. It takes time and energy to delve this deeply into ourselves and into one another. It's hard to be vulnerable and honest in this way. Too often we can end up complaining about what's wrong with each other, the waiter, the salad, our community, this country, and our world.

But there's something to this training the ears of our heart. With the ears of the heart more attuned, perhaps we're better able to recognize the voice of God, calling us to hope, calling us to trust, and calling us together to live into God's kingdom.

*Need space to discern
God's voice?*

Consider a retreat at Koinonia

877-738-1741



Georgia Dreamin'

By Bren Dubay

IT'S A COOL SPRING MORNING at the farm. It's break time, and many of us head to the Coffee House for a quick cup and a few minutes of fellowship. There's usually chocolate to share.

"If more of the world knew about this chocolate, we'd be rich," someone inevitably quips. "We don't want to be rich, but it'd sure be nice to have more to share with others," comes the retort. Such conversation always sets us to dreamin'.

We have many good friends who purchase our products or share their resources with us. And we're grateful for these friendships. We have a modest budget and yet we're still able to serve many people. When these moments of dreamin' come up,

we take time to think about some of what we'd do if we had more of these friendships. Here are some of the projects we'd like to do were we able to increase income –

Purchase a backhoe to build ponds on the farm to serve not only the animals and crops, but to create places of beauty and fun for our neighbors and friends.

Complete the Meeting House so we can welcome more guests and host more educational events.

Build the Intern House; the internship ministry is thriving and we need space for more interns to participate.

Continue renovation of the Welcome Center building, transferring and updating the museum, and rearranging offices and shipping; this building is

the least "green" of all of our buildings so it needs major attention.

Begin construction on the Permaculture Village, which will double as living spaces and also as an education site for building sustainably.

There's a theme running through these dreams – capital improvements. And capital improvements require a significant outlay of capital. Here you have the place that launched the partnership housing that grew into Habitat for Humanity and the Fuller Center for Housing and yet we haven't been able to afford construction of a new building at Koinonia since the early '70s. Most were built in the '40s and '50s and are sorely in need of "in the nick of time" repair.

So, we continue to work hard and hope for more modest gifts for the day-to-day costs, more sizeable gifts

to do capital improvements, and more customers to buy Koinonia products.

If a sizeable gift isn't possible at this time, please consider a bequest or a Charitable Gift Annuity. Koinonia has been remembered in a number of wills and has been the beneficiary of several life insurance policies. We work with the Mennonite Foundation, and a staff member from there would be happy to discuss with you remembering Koinonia in one of these ways.

Another effective way you can help these dreams come true is to share our products with your friends. Koinonia depends on word of mouth to sell products. Increasing our customer base even by a small percentage would make some of those dreams possible.

Thank you for your faithful support and friendship, and for giving us these opportunities to do some Georgia dreamin'.

SPRINGTIME ON THE FARM

By Emily Murphy and Amanda Moore

SPRING IS ALWAYS A FUN TIME to live on a farm. Trees and flowers begin returning to life after the long winter. Sunshine brings warmer days, but not yet the gnats and mosquitoes. Ponds fill with water from the rainy season. Even the animals pick up on the energy in the air.

We're getting the all-natural gardens ready for spring by digging out beds and pathways, and weeding around the strawberries and garlic growing in the beds. We recently finished pruning the grape vine orchards, after several months of hard work.

We're still working at weeding out the blueberries, pulling up blackberry plants and other stray vines. We've planted several of our seedlings and transplants from the greenhouse. Figs and blueberries are the main transplants.

We're also planting plum and pear trees throughout the farm.

With the help of a visiting high school group, we built a terraced planter by the side of the dining hall, using broken concrete for the edging and sheet mulching for the beds. In the planters, we have onions, greens, strawberries, flowers, and some fruit trees.

After blessing the pasture last fall, we've worked hard to improve its quality. We've rotated our grass-fed cattle through the field, providing fertilization for the pasture. Our Great Pyreneese dog named Martin, the goats and the sheep are happy to call the pasture home, where they have nearly 80 acres to roam.

We've added several animals to the farm in the past few months. We have baby pigs, several lambs, ducks, chickens,

rabbits, and a bull calf. One of the baby pigs was injured shortly after she was born. Our Permibus friends Stan, Delyla, and Megan were still with us then, and performed surgery on her and then named her Ellie Mae. During her recovery, Ellie Mae lived with the dog on the Permibus, so now she thinks she's a puppie. And if you scratch between her ears, she even rolls over to let you rub her belly! We're blessed to be surrounded by so many animals, even if they don't know what kind of animal they are.

We have yet another ambitious season ahead of us. We're thankful for willing helpers. Please pray for a fruitful season, so that we may continue supplying produce for our community's kitchen and have enough left from our abundance to share with neighbors and friends.



Photos by Janiece Black, Amanda Moore & Emily Murphy



CALLING ALL TUTORS

by Cori Lyman-Barner

Our Koinonia-based school is gearing up for next year already! In addition to looking at a full slate of academic and life-skills classes, we're anticipating our little group will grow by a few students in the fall. To accommodate this growth and to continue providing students and parents with a 1:6 tutor/student ratio, we are looking for additional volunteer tutors for the year. The tutors live and participate in the common life with the community and demonstrate the values of peace, reconciliation, and Christian love as embraced by the community.

Since starting up the homeschool again a few years ago, we've been able to include children both from within the community and children from the surrounding community of Americus.

Providing full-time tutors and curriculum allows more families to participate in a natural learning environment like homeschooling without the need to have a parent at home full-time.

Families can trust that their children are receiving top-quality academic instruction by tutors who motivate them to love each other and to love

life-long learning.

Our students range in age from 3 to 16 - quite a spread! This requires several tutors to maintain our healthy ratio. The tutors provide student-directed learning opportunities in the required core courses and also in electives.

They work with a coordinator to choose materials for each group, plan daily schedules, evaluate student progress and work intimately with students to build healthy, respectful relationships with the tutors, fellow students, the Koinonia community, and all of Creation.

Ideally, we'd like our tutors to have backgrounds in natural learning environments, whether as home schoolers themselves or with experience in the Montessori, Waldorf, or similar methods of education. But the most important quality for tutors is to love working with children and to desire to be role models for them.

If you are interested in spending a year with these remarkable students and the Koinonia community, please e-mail khscinfo@gmail.com for a complete job description and an application.

Bulletin Board

- The goal for product sales this fiscal year is \$355,000. Please help us meet that goal by purchasing your favorite Koinonia food item, coffee, book, CD/DVD or craft item today! Better yet, join the Nut of the Month Club and choose which item you'd like delivered to your home each month. For more information, call 877-738-1741 or e-mail products@koinoniapartners.org.
- Many of you know that our director Bren Dubay is also a playwright. We were thrilled last fall when Georgia Southwestern University's Theatre Department in Americus produced her play "Dancing With the Dead." She was also one of six writers invited to participate in a prestigious Writer's Lab with Art Within, a Georgia-based theatre and film production company. She spent two weeks working with the artistic staff to develop five ideas for film scripts. Doing more writing is one way Bren hopes to serve the God Movement and Koinonia. We look forward to reading those five screen-plays when you're finished with them, Bren!

Principled Ethics: Whole Farm Planning

by Sarah Prendergast

■ February's Permaculture Design Course brought many benefits and challenging new ideas. Perhaps the most significant outcome was the first phase of a whole farm plan.

Since I was a student in the course this time around, I'd like to share some of my education with you as I introduce a few elements of our plan.

Our design process begins with the ethics of permaculture: Care for the earth, Care for people, Share the surplus.

Designing with the Earth in mind, we recognize that we must find new ways to cooperate with the ecosystems around us. After we get our priorities straight, care for people will flow naturally out of our care for the living world around us. Once humans and nature are brought back into balance, there will be plenty of food and other resources to share.

Since permaculture is a system of design rather than a specific set of techniques, it is guided by basic principles that can easily adapt to a broad range of climates and applications. Here are just a few of the principles, with descriptions of how we're incorporating them into our farm plan.

Design from patterns to details, Observe and replicate natural patterns

The area surrounding the creek that runs through our property is a natural through-way for the abundant wildlife that inhabit our land. We plan to maintain a wide strip of uncultivated land on either side of the creek, providing a wildlife corridor, as well as protecting our waterways from erosion.

Use small and slow solutions

We have desired for some time to begin transitioning our pecans to organic production. Since pecan production provides over half of our income, this is not the area for drastic, sweeping change. We will begin with a high-input orchard, and gradually experiment with techniques and practices that will reduce and eventually eliminate our use of chemicals.

Each element performs multiple functions

Integration of livestock rotation not only offers meat and egg production, it helps to improve soil quality and reduce damage from pests. The animals happily eat the weeds and insects, and with more productive gardens and orchards, we will have a wider range of high-quality products to share.

Use and value renewable resources

We will incorporate water collection in pasture and gravity-fed irrigation systems. Harvesting rain water on the highest spot on the property will help to control erosion in the pecan groves and using gravity will eliminate the use of electric pumps for irrigation of the pasture.

We hope this small sampling of our plan elements encourages you to learn more about what we're doing with this plot of land we've been given to steward and how you can better steward the plot of land you've been gifted.

If you are interested in learning more, sign up for our September Permaculture Design Course or come spend some time with us at the farm. We'd love to show you what we're learning.

Buy more Beef



Add a bovine to our herd for \$1,500; adopt a bovine for \$360 a year. Mooooo gifts of any amount are very appreciated. To learn more about our Beef Cattle Project, e-mail info@koinoniapartners.org or call Brendan Prendergast at 877-738-1741.

Making a Gift to Koinonia - Reply Form

☐ I would like to subscribe to the bi-annual newspaper, \$5 a year.

☐ I would like to receive: (monthly e-mail updates, annual catalog.)

☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$ _____ to be used where most needed.

☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$ _____ that I would like to be directed specifically to (name project or fund):

☐ Castle Building Fund

☐ Meeting House

☐ Adopt a Tree, orchard upkeep

☐ Beef Cattle Project

☐ Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Country: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Credit card information, if applicable: check one: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Number: _____ Expiration date: _____





By Grace, age 8

My School Day

By Luke Lyman-Barner, age 14

Six-thirty is not the greatest time to wake up every morning. These are the words of a lifelong homeschooler – I suppose I'm probably waking up later than most. We're out the door by 7:30 to carpool with another family to Koinonia for 8 a.m. chapel.

This is how my school day begins.

After a few moments of silence, and a thought-provoking brief devotion from various community members, we students pile into available cars and head up the street ½ a mile to Koinonia Community Outreach Center, where the home school is held. Morning classes are mostly academics—the usual math, language arts, social studies, etc. During the week, a parent from town Marisol Pomeroy comes to teach a Spanish class and a yoga class. After two classes per morning, we head to campus for lunch at the dining hall, usually walking if it's nice outside.

The afternoons consist of a wide array of classes and educational activities. On Mondays we have a debate class, (my favorite – yay arguing!) and on Tuesdays we have apprenticeships with community members. Wednesdays we have an hour of physical education and then various electives, like camping, archery, and fundraising. On Thursday afternoons we have Science class. Fridays are our off-campus service project days. We've done things like help at the Fuller Center for Housing build, and visit the Sumter Humane Society to walk and bathe animals.

In our free time between classes, we have a handful of favorite games. Some of them, like the basketball game "Knockout" or "Lightning," are old favorites recycled from last year's homeschool group, while others are new from this year's group.

The interaction between students is not without some conflict – but we're a pretty close-knit group. Occasionally, an argument arises out of disagreement over some rule in some game or another, but for the most part, we get along and enjoy each other's company.

Well, that's my school day. At the end of it, I always tend to find myself feeling like in some way, even if sometimes I don't like it, I've learned something. I'm sure I speak for all of the students when I say the homeschool group is a place of growth and education, and I'm glad to take part in it.

JUMPING TO THE SURFACE

By Ryan Mournighan, age 10

Jake Bruised lives in an exotic city filled with tiny huts. His hut was very withered and twisted. This city is not like any city because it is under Death Valley. It is very exotic because the buildings are made of sand and charcoal! Every living thing down there looks like a freak. They are snake-faced, tailed things and they have dragon breath.

Jake was 19 when he went underground. His disappearance was all over the news. This year he is going to the surface for the first time in 20 years. He's heading to the cliff to get to the surface. It looks like a 5,000-mile drop.

He says, "Let's see. Parachute. Check. Shock absorbing shoes. Check. Ok ... time to jump. It feels like forever until I get to the surface."

To be continued ...



By Ida, age 5



By Leila, age 9



By Kellan, age 3

KOINONIA FARM

PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE

with Wayne Weiseman, Bill Wilson & Bob Burns

September 18-30, 2010

Early Bird \$850*

(After Aug. 1st 2010 tuition is \$900)

Registration includes all fundamental elements of Permaculture Design plus hands-on projects, instruction, materials, dorm-style rooms & meals.

*\$50 Discount available when you bring a 2nd person, *\$50 discount for camping. Work exchange available on a limited basis.

Class will be held at Koinonia Farm, an intentional Christian community whose mission includes "embody(ing) peacemaking, sustainability, and radical sharing." Located in peaceful rural Americus, Georgia

For more information contact:

Sarah Prendergast 229.924.0391, sarah@koinoniapartners.org

IN A NUTSHELL THE STORY OF KOINONIA

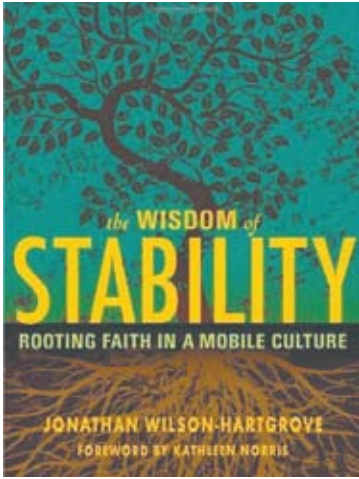
Koinonia, Greek for loving community, was founded in 1942 to be a "demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God," sharing resources, work, and prayer much like the early Christian example found in the Book of Acts.

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!



“IN WHATEVER PLACE YOU FIND yourself, do not easily leave it. If a trial comes upon you in the place where you live, do not leave that place when the trial comes. Wherever you go, you will find what you are running from is ahead of you.”

— Abba Antony

In his book, “The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture,” Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove makes a compelling case for a life intentionally “lived in community with other people.” Instead of moving from one place to another seeking enlightenment or success as our American culture teaches us, he writes that the “most important thing that most of us can do is to stay in the place where we are.” Instead of going life alone or in the conventional nuclear family, he offers a persuasive argument

Review of “The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture”

By Bren Dubay

for “promis[ing] ourselves to a specific community of people for life.”

Using Scripture, writings from both ancient and contemporary monastic traditions and his own experience, Wilson-Hartgrove’s book is provocative. The author is not a cockeyed optimist about living in community.

He writes, “When we opt for stability we face a cosmic struggle.” He challenges that a commitment to stability is a commitment to a people as they are. With examples from his own life, he shows that living a life with “people as they are” guarantees rocky times. It’s admirable that, despite rocky times, he still trusts “we are able to best discern the call of God in the company of friends when we are rooted in the life-giving wisdom of stability.”

Hartgrove-Wilson admits that he has written this book to persuade. It will be no easy task to persuade people immersed in a mobile culture where staying is not the norm. In fact, from birth we live in a culture where “success means moving up and out.”

He may also come under criticism because he himself traveled the world

before coming home to put down roots in his native North Carolina. He takes up his own defense when he says, “I am not advocating a stubborn provincialism or harking back to a time before the Internet and the automobile when ‘things were simpler’ and ‘life was easier’... But I am convinced that both our use of new technologies and our faithful response to God’s call depend on something more fundamental—a rootedness that most of us sense we are missing in our hurry to keep up amid constant change. I believe we need to recover the wisdom of stability.”

The author is not telling the reader not to go exploring, but he is advocating there comes a time that to find what you’re looking for you need to stop roaming and instead commit and grow roots.

I highly recommend this book whether you have the slightest interest in living in community or not. As the author shares, “the heart’s true home is a life rooted in the love of God.” Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove shows something of how to take root no matter the community in which you live.



We announced last fall that the Mayor and City Council voted unanimously to place Clarence Jordan’s name on the Walk of Fame in downtown Americus. The reason, they noted, was “his outstanding contributions to civil rights and the founding of Koinonia Farms.” We had a great ceremony, and two of the Jordan children and their spouses were able to join us for the celebration! It was great to see Jan and husband Ferrel and Lenny and wife Jean. Historian Alan Anderson shared with the audience a little about Clarence’s place in local history and national history, including the start of Habitat for Humanity. We’re grateful to see his legacy honored in this way. Thanks to all of our friends who were able to join us! When you visit Americus, be sure to look for Clarence’s “step.”

Koinonia Farm Chronicle

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Come Walk with Us

There are three ways to come and walk with us for a while: As a neighbor, a visitor, or a seasonal intern. The seasonal intern program lasts roughly three months, introducing the individual to the prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship of the community.

Seasonal interns who desire a longer period of time to serve and learn more about community living may petition to become a community intern. Individuals may be invited for a specified length of time, usually one year, to serve in this capacity.

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 if one is being called to full membership in the koinonia.

When ready, the person may be invited to pass from provisional membership to full membership, becoming a steward.



Prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship guide our life together. Photo by Amanda Moore

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 they perform.