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LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF

BY AMANDA MOORE



“LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.” If you’ve seen the “Cotton Patch Gospel” musical, you’ll remember the tune. It makes several appearances, becoming a mantra of sorts. You could say it’s the theme of the musical. I would suggest, even, that it’s the theme of all the Gospels, perhaps the entirety of the Christian story.

This seems like a simple command, right? Love God foremost. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Straightforward. Yet it seems to me we don’t get it. Now, we can love God easily enough. God is the creator of the universe, after all, and gives us life each day. Anything you ask in the name of God will be heard. God’s mercy is larger than any ocean we could ever imagine, and stretches to the tallest mountain peak and down into the deepest caverns. Yes, it’s easy to love God. It’s the people part we seem to struggle with. We may ask, “Who exactly is my neighbor? Is it the couple next door, those who live on my block, my co-workers and church members, or is it all people all over the world?”

Well, the short answer is, “Yes.”

I would suggest the reason we struggle with the later part of this scripture is all wrapped up in the last two words - “love yourself.” We don’t understand the concept of loving our self. Oh, we can definitely get wrapped up in ourselves, become self-centered, or

even LIKE ourselves too much. But it’s a different thing altogether to acknowledge that our self, created in the image and likeness of God, is loveable. See, that’s other-centered. I am worthy of another person’s love. I am capable of receiving it. In the same manner, others are worthy of and capable of receiving that same love. Not love of my own strength, but love of God’s. We are like the moon, reflecting the gracious love we are given. The more we bask in the love of God, the more love we have to reflect onto others. It’s an overflowing love, one that can’t be contained or restricted, and spills over into even the darkest of places in our lives.

Living in community provides a plethora of opportunities to give and receive love. Love as a way of life shapes a spirit to find opportunities to love. Our community certainly finds a multitude of opportunities to share the love of God. We’ve dedicated this edition of “Koinonia Farm Chronicle” to some of these opportunities we find to reflect God’s love.

Many of these articles are written by our interns. At the heart of our formational intern program is a focus on relationship-building. We stress the importance of relationship-based service, and strive to demonstrate that in our life together. We hope you enjoy this glimpse into our life of loving God, loving self, and loving neighbor.



WHEN DR. VINCENT HARDING led a democratic conversation at the first Clarence Jordan Symposium in 2012, he recalled his first visit to Koinonia Farm in the late 1950s. After meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. at his home in Montgomery, Harding and a few other friends drove east to Georgia, staying the night at Koinonia Farm. He recalled seeing bullet holes above his bed and noting the stacks of wood outside the houses. The Civil Rights Movement had come to

BUILDING UP A NEW WORLD

BY JONATHAN WILSON-HARTGROVE

Georgia by that time, and the local Klan was alerted to the radicals who had been in their midst for some time at Koinonia.

Dr. Harding went on to work with Dr. King and others through the 1960s, serving the Movement as an historian, as an encourager, and as a human being. For him and others, like Charles Sherrod and Andrew Young, Koinonia was a safe haven in a world gone mad. A little space in the South where interracialism was normal, Koinonia served as a demonstration plot for the South they believed could be.

Toward the end of the 1960s, Dr. Harding and others began singing a new freedom song to the tune of “We Are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder”:

We are building up a new world.
We are building up a new world.
We are building up a new world.
Builders must be strong.

As we prepare for another Clarence Jordan Symposium in 2017, we’ve chosen “We Are Building Up A New World” as our theme. Clarence Jordan knew as a farmer that you can’t teach people a new way of being without showing them a demonstration plot. Koinonia was always meant to be a place where people could see on a small scale what God makes possible in a new world on the large scale.

As we’ve looked at Koinonia’s legacy in light of the challenges we face in today’s world, we’ve identified four tracks for reflection:

- Building Up New Communities
- Building Up Racial Justice
- Building Up a Nonviolent Army
- Building Up Good Food Systems

At the farm, on Thursday, March 16,



See “NEW WORLD”
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BUT WHAT DO YOU DO?

BY BREN DUBAY

IT'S A FAMILIAR QUESTION OUR SOCIETY ASKS - What do you do? It is common to ask this of an individual or organization before asking anything else. So we are devoting most of this edition of the "Koinonia Farm Chronicle" to answering that question. We do many things, and are happy to share news of the many projects with you. But we want our readers to know that at Koinonia, the first question we ask of ourselves is not what do we do, but rather who are we? Our mission statement begins with the answer to this question. "We are Christians called to live together in intentional community sharing a life of prayer, work, study, service and fellowship."

In an interview near the end of his life, a reporter asked Clarence Jordan, one of the co-founders of our community, "What sort of advice do you have for people ... what is the best thing we can do to help the world be a better place in which to live?" Clarence responded, "Before we can do anything, we have to be something. Our actions have to spring from our inner character." We do a great deal of work on

our inner character here at the farm. And throughout the day, week after week, year after year, we build time into our life to stop and intentionally invite God to form us. It is that rhythm of our common life — the prayer, the work, the study, the service and the fellowship — that continually molds our inner character.

What we do is born out of this inner character. Or at least that is our intention. And what we do is guided by the second sentence of our mission statement — "We seek to embody peacemaking, sustainability and radical sharing."

We've greatly benefited from learning Holistic Management (HM). It is a system that helps us to address the social, environmental and economic issues of our community. HM asks, in this order, — What do you want to be? What do you have to do to be what you want to be? What do you have to have in order to do what you want to do, so that you are what you want to be? (For a longer definition and many more details see HMI's Web site www.holisticmanagement.org.)

We are an intentional Christian

community striving to be a demonstration plot for the kingdom of God. If we are what we want to be, then what do we want to do, or, more accurately, what has our discernment led us to believe God is

"Before we can do anything, we have to be something. Our actions have to spring from our inner character."

- Clarence Jordan

calling us to do? What is being born out of the life we live? The list is long, but at the heart of it, as our mission statement indicates, are peacemaking, sustainability and radical sharing. Peacebuilders Camp (see page 4) is one tangible example of what Koinonia is doing to demonstrate the Kingdom of God. Our work with soil management (see page 7) is a part of our efforts in the area of sustainability. Sharing our life with the many guests and interns who come to the farm is one way we feed folks spiritually (see pages 4-6). Growing and distributing healthy food is a way to

feed folks physically (see page 7). We hope you enjoy reading about these and many other projects that fill our lives.

The third and final line of our mission statement is "while honoring people of all backgrounds and faiths, we strive to demonstrate the way of Jesus as an alternative to materialism, militarism, and racism." The articles

that follow show how we are both living and doing this truth.

What do we have to have in order to do these acts of service? They require resources. Your generosity has made and makes them possible. This issue of our newspaper is a thank you to you, our supporters. Whether you support us financially, with prayers, good wishes, or time and energy, your support makes and has made a difference in the lives of many — to the people who come to the farm, to the people we leave the farm to serve and to us. Yes, indeed, thank you.

GREAT NEWS! THE CLARENCE JORDAN SYMPOSIUM BOOKS WILL ARRIVE IN JUNE. "Roots in the Cotton Patch — The Clarence Jordan Symposium Volume I" and "Fruits of the Cotton Patch — The Clarence Jordan Symposium Volume II" feature seminar papers and keynote addresses by a notable list of authors, scholars, artists and activists who made the Symposium a spectacular event. Edited by Kirk and Cori Lyman-Barner and published by Wipf & Stock Publishers, the volumes include a foreword by Tony Campolo, a preface by Lenny Jordan, an introduction by Kirk, who also served as chair of the Symposium, and the remarks made by President Jimmy Carter at the opening night ceremonies at Rylander Theatre.

If you couldn't attend, these books are an opportunity for you to experience the excellent work presented at the Symposium. If you did attend, this is the perfect way for you to read the seminars you missed and to read papers from the ones you did attend to glean even more insight.

Thank you to those who have already ordered your books. For those who have not, please order your copies today.

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 16-18, 2017

Mark your calendars now for the second Clarence Jordan Symposium on March 16, 17 and 18, 2017 on the occasion of the community's 75th Anniversary. Celebrated spiritual writer, speaker and leader in the New Monastic Movement Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove serves as Chair of the 2017 Symposium.

Bulletin Board

* You can put it on your calendar ... almost. Barring no further weather delays, we feel confident that the construction of the Partnership House will be complete by May and the Jordan House by late summer. We plan a dedication ceremony in the fall and will be sure to communicate this date through our various publications as soon as it is set. Thanks to the generosity of many and the loan of two friends, we have the funding to finish the projects. Y'all come celebrate with us!

* We'd love to send you our monthly e-mail updates. Send an e-mail to newsletter@koinoniafarm.org or visit www.koinoniapartners.org.

* Do you have old records of Clarence Jordan talks? Any notes or printed material from Koinonia's early days?

* Are you our friend? Even if you aren't an avid social media fan, you can access photos and videos at our facebook page, www.facebook.com/koinoniafarm.

RECEIVING A GRACIOUS WELCOME

BY AMANDA MOORE

HOW DID YOU HEAR OF KOINONIA? If you're like most people, you heard of our community from a friend or family member. But perhaps, if you're lucky, you heard Clarence Jordan speak during his lifetime. Clarence's extensive travels helped create a support network that helped the community survive the turbulent time in the 50s and become who we are today.

Thousands have come to Koinonia through the years simply because they heard Clarence speak, and their lives were changed. Others found courage from learning the story of Koinonia's faithful witness to God's kingdom.

One of the many ways we seek to feed people spiritually is to share the Koinonia story - of our past, present, and future. Another way of life is possible—one with God's kingdom at its center. We share our story many times a day with visitors here, but we also recognize the need to go out and tell the story to those who have never heard of Koinonia, who have never tasted our pecans or chocolate, have never read from the Cotton Patch version.

In the last year, I've traveled over 30,000 miles to 26 states around the country. From speaking engagements to conference workshops, sermons, and tables, Koinonia was represented at over 30 events.

Each time I share the Koinonia story, I see hope well up in the eyes of those listening,

and that in turn fills me with hope. When I share about the biblical hospitality that bonds our lives together, I see the lonely find comfort, the abandoned find a place of belonging, and the disenfranchised find a sense of dignity.

When I share about our "beyond organic" farming methods and our hopes for changing the conventional farming system, I see those who are cynical of "big ag" begin to see new possibilities. When I share of our formational intern program, I see those who feel lost in the search for life's meaning begin to see that they don't have to search alone.

My prayer is that those listening find the inspiration to strengthen their own spirit, that they may better convey the love of God to those around them, in whatever way their gifts allow.

When we see that another way is indeed possible, we begin to explore new thoughts, new ideas, and become aware of the current movings of the Holy Spirit.

I recently preached at a Disciples of Christ women's gathering in Macon, Georgia. The theme of the conference was Hospitality, something in which our community is well-versed. At that conference, we learned of the importance



See "WELCOME"
Page 8

THE PRACTICE OF PRESENCE

BY AMANDA MOORE

*"I SEE YOU AND AM SEEN
BY YOU."*

IT'S A DISTINCT FEELING TO KNOW YOU HAVE A PERSON'S FULL ATTENTION. In a world where instant gratification is the norm, where human presence competes with texting, games, facebook, music, tv, etc., it's rare to receive the gift of a person's complete presence. Even in community, it's easy to become distracted and suddenly find that you've stopped listening to the person sitting right in front of you.

I think of presence as a spiritual practice, similar to mindfulness. Jesus must have been a master at this spiritual practice, to be aware enough to speak directly to the heart of a person's spirit. It's this same presence that we deeply yearn for today.

To be fully present to another conveys the deepest sense of love possible.

To welcome another into your inner space requires a level of trust, both in yourself and in the other person. It's this depth of love that God asks us to lavish on those around us, particularly on the outcast, the marginalized, the prisoner, the sick, the hungry, the stranger.

In a world of brokenness and pain, it's comforting to know the practice of presence really does have the power to heal wounds and to create a better world. It's impossible to see into the spirit of another and not care for their needs, whether they be physical, spiritual, or otherwise.

One of my favorite hymns is "Return to God." These lyrics come directly from Isaiah 58:

*"If you break the chains of oppression,
If you set the prisoner free;
If you share your bread with the hungry,
Give protection to the lost;
Give shelter to the homeless,
Clothe the naked in your midst,
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn."*

Perhaps the simplest way to summarize is to say, "LISTEN!" Open the ears of your mind, your heart, and your spirit.

At a recent conference, I was inspired by a fellow speaker who said, "When people tell us a painful story, we respond by saying, 'I know what you mean - here's my story of pain.'"

Then we proceed with our painful story, moving entirely away from what they shared. Instead, why don't we just ask them questions that help them tell their story?"

When we become fully present to another human, they, in turn, are more able to be fully present to us and to others around them. Through the love and concern we share for one another, we bring God's kingdom into the here and now. If we who strive to be God's people will live more fully God's kingdom here and now, others will see it and experience the love of God perhaps for the first time.

That is what we the church are called to do and to be in this world - messengers of God's love and presence.

"In a world of brokenness and pain, it's comforting to know the practice of presence really does have the power to heal wounds..."

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND

BY CLARENCE JORDAN

WHEN JUDAS GETS THERE IN THE GARDEN, he goes up and says, "Hello...hello, Rabbi. Hello." And he goes up to Jesus and puts his arm around him and starts to give him the little quick kiss and he can't! His arms freeze around the neck of his Lord. He can't tear them loose.

And he suddenly uses his other word for "kiss," which doesn't appear very often in the Scriptures. It's used only in times of great emotion. It is the kind of kiss you give a man who is closer to you than your own heart. [...] And

then Jesus says something very significant. It's translated, "Friend, why are you here?" But the word in Greek—again they have various words. One word for "friend" comes from this unemotional word for "kiss." It means a friend in the rather abstract. But here was another Greek word for "friend" that is real close. When you use it in the feminine sense it means a girlfriend—one with whom you are deeply in love. When you use it in the masculine sense it's about the equivalent of the word "buddy."

And Jesus, when Judas is there hugging him and kissing him and crying, says to Judas, "Oh, my buddy, my buddy. Has it come to this? I've just been praying hours through

the night for you, old boy. I know the torment of your soul. I know the pressure that this Caiaphas can put on a man. I know the pressure of childhood rearing, and tradition. I know, Judas, and I've been praying...I've been praying—oh, God, I've been praying—that you could come through this. Has it come to this, my buddy? My buddy." Now this

"Oh, my buddy, my buddy. Has it come to this? I've just been praying hours through the night for you. I know the torment of your soul."

was not sarcasm. This was no "Friend, why are you here?" spoken in a nasty voice. Here were two men who deeply, sincerely, and honestly loved one another.

But what will happen now? [...] He goes back and he finds the high priest and he flings the money down and he says, "Take your rotten money. I have betrayed innocent blood. I should never have let you put me up to this!" And he says, "Take it back!" And old Caiaphas mockingly says, "Well, you see we got our man."

A Brief Reflection

Planting Seeds

by Bren Dubay



OSCAR ROMERO IS ONE OF MY HEROES, an inspiration. He was assassinated in El Salvador while saying Mass on March 24, 1980. His crime? He advocated for the poor. He believed in God's preferential option for them, spoke tirelessly against oppression, called human rights abuses by name, and advocated for nonviolence as a way to bring about change.

The rooms in our guesthouse are named for members of that great cloud of witnesses to which he belongs. It is a way we have chosen to honor those who have, in some special or distinguished way, served God and neighbor. There is a brightly painted wooden sign above each door bearing such names as Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rachel Corrie, Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King, Jr. and so forth. A framed biography about the person hangs on the wall next to the door. We're currently working on naming rooms in Jubilee House, another guest residence here. Among the names going up in Jubilee House is Archbishop Oscar Romero.

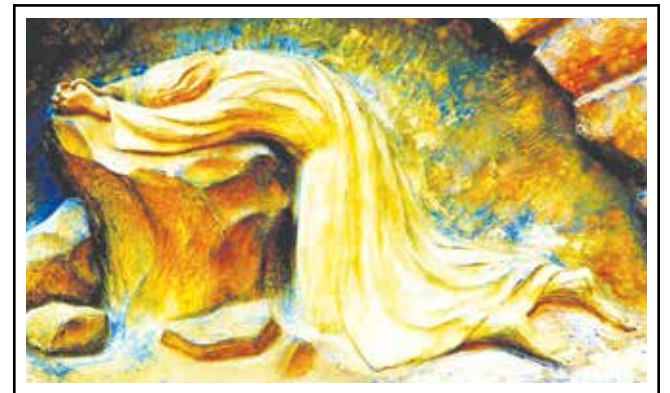
His words guide and inspire me and seem so fitting in an issue of the newspaper dedicated to sharing about what we do.

"We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and do it very, very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the Master Builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future that is not our own."

This is a quote I frequently find myself meditating upon. For, I confess, I far too often fret, "We aren't doing enough. What more should we be doing?" When I remember that our life here, our being here, our gently, methodically doing what we can do is creating time and time again opportunities for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest, I find peace. It is with this inner peace that I can open my eyes and see all the goodness about me.

Archbishop Romero also said, "This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that affects far beyond our capabilities."

I read it and I think of Koinonia. I see what God is doing. And I can better be and live into the vision we hold at Koinonia Farm — Love through service to others. Joy through generous hospitality. Peace through reconciliation.



Stone carving in Garden of Gethsemane, Palestine
Photo by Amanda Moore

burst asunder.

I don't want to read too much into this, but I wonder if in this last agonizing moment Judas' body didn't symbolize his soul. Just as his body was the victim of the tension of two opposing forces—the upward pull of the rope and the downward pull of gravity—so it seems to me that this man's soul had been the victim of two opposing forces—the cold, priestly, professional ecclesiasticism of his day, gone to seed, still maintaining the fires on an altar to a God whom they had forgotten, and this Lord whom he loved better than life itself. This is not the tragedy of a neutral man. This is the tragedy of a man who tried to take two sides. And the result was the same as it always is: death for him, and death for the man he loved.



PEACEBUILDERS CAMP AT KOINONIA FARM

BY ERICA SCHOON

During the last day of 2013 camp, we discussed campers' talents, gifts, and interests and how each person can work for justice in a different way. We then asked campers to think of a specific action they could take in the next six months to make their world more just, using their gifts and interests and applying what they'd learned at camp. At the closing ceremony, each camper committed to a goal in front of their fellow graduates. Below are a few examples of commitments:

- I will set up a booth at my community's First Friday Festival to bring awareness to fair trade.
- I will write letters to five people who are being deported.
- I will do a Powerpoint presentation on poverty to raise awareness in my community.
- I will invite two friends to my mosque so they can understand more things about my religion.
- I will help my mom by cleaning the house once a week so she can rest.
- I will write a song to educate others about peace and sign up to sing it at a talent show.
- I will plant two trees in my backyard.
- I will teach kids how to play basketball two days a week.

IN JUNE 2013, A DOZEN MIDDLE SCHOOLERS from around the Southeast descended on Koinonia for a week, making life around the farm a little louder and a bit livelier. And for the first time, a dozen more arrived the next week, and the same thing was repeated over again.

In 2013, Peacebuilders Camp doubled in size—expanding to two sessions of camp. The change allowed us to hold one session for 11-12 year olds and one session for 13-14 year olds. But that expansion was not the only first. City kids met farm animals for the first time, refugee youth new to the United States tasted their first s'mores, and campers local to Americus were introduced to places in their own community they'd never visited before, like Cafe Campesino and Habitat for Humanity's Global Village.

In its third summer, Peacebuilders Camp welcomed a diverse group of youth to Koinonia's campus. Campers experienced a taste of farm life, went on field trips around south Georgia, played soccer and basketball, cooled off with water balloons, gathered around the campfire, made crafts, picked blueberries, and heard stories of peacebuilders past and present. This year campers got to spend more time with community members by sharing

in communal meals, and Koinonia welcomed campers during lunch devotions by featuring prayers for peace from different faith traditions each day.

Peacebuilders Camp is structured around the UN Declaration for Human Rights, and each day is focused on a different human right—housing, healthcare, religion and conscience, fair wage, etc. We explore current issues through a human rights lens with an emphasis on helping campers discover how their own gifts can be a part of the struggle for the realization of these human rights.

Throughout the week, campers meet Georgians innovating to make a change in their own communities.

The adventure continues as we prepare for Summer 2014. Right now we are

adding new activities to the schedule, booking exciting field trips, hiring camp counselors, recruiting campers and counselors-in-training, and fundraising so that we can continue to run Peacebuilders Camp on a sliding scale—never turning away a family for lack of funds. Already we have campers signed up for Summer 2014 from many places—as close as Sumter County and as far as Pennsylvania. We can't wait to meet them! Follow our journey on www.peacebuilderscamp.org.

“We explore current issues through a human rights lens with an emphasis on helping campers discover how their own gifts can be a part of the struggle for the realization of these human rights.”



LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE

BY TRACY NEWTON

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE MY NEIGHBOR? My journey to Koinonia stemmed from my recent experience with Mission Year (www.missionyear.org) in Houston, TX, where our focus was to learn better how to “Love God, Love People.” I am thankful for the new opportunities I have as a community intern at Koinonia to continue exploring what this means.

While in Houston, I learned just how much I enjoy interacting with Hispanic families. Here in Americus I have the chance to get to know Hispanic families by taking part in a weekly tutoring program at a nearby trailer park. This program was organized by members of the local Mennonite church to tutor the kids and teach English. I believe the chief purpose, however, is to build relationships.

As a Koinonia intern, I meet a lot of people by simply living on the farm. Inviting people in is a key component of the community's vision for “Joy through generous hospitality.” In the same way, the vision of “Love through service to others” is lived out in part by intentionally reaching out to the people in the greater community.

My personal role as an English tutor to Hispanic mothers offers a unique glimpse into the lives of those who are struggling to adjust to life in the United States. Teaching English is no simple task. I can only imagine how difficult it is to learn.

Some nights I feel like I've helped a lot. Some nights it seems like I've barely made a dent. But regardless of measurable progress, in all that we do, are not relationships the real heart of the matter? When I visit someone at Stewart Detention Center, I am not releasing them from that physical space, but I am deliberately seeking contact with that person, which is hopefully freeing for them on a deeper level. It is a joy to make that effort, however small. Similarly, it is encouraging to see how my language skills can help someone else to grow. But more so, it is a consolation to walk alongside my neighbor and learn from her, and also to see the church walking alongside the community together.

STEWART DETENTION CENTER

BY ANDREW REESE

PART OF THE SERVICE COMPONENT OF THE COMMUNITY INTERNSHIP is a monthly visit to Stewart Detention Center, a for-profit \$45 million facility in Lumpkin, Ga, that detains male immigrants who lack proper paperwork, or otherwise find themselves facing deportation. This detention center is one of many run by Corrections Corporation of America, a prison giant that believes its next major market is immigrant detentions, and improves profits at the expense of the detainees' quality of life.

I have had several opportunities to visit with men at Stewart, and to serve at El

Refugio, a hospitality house managed by Alterra community, that welcomes families visiting those detained at Stewart.

From the outside, you would have trouble distinguishing this detention center from a prison. Once in the waiting room, you fill out paperwork and wait for the detainees to arrive in the visitation room. You take off shoes, belts, watches, and anything else that may set off the detector.

My first visit was nerve racking. I had no idea what I could possibly say to the person

on the other side of the glass to make them feel any better about their situation. By the grace of God, that feeling went away after the first 10 minutes of conversation. The man I visited was in an exceptionally good mood. I later found that most of the men inside Stewart were very happy just to have a person on the outside of those walls to speak to them - a person they could talk to about life.

I have been amazed every time that although these men speak of injustices and inhumane treatment, they are optimistic. They speak about hope, hope for the future. Being locked up like that really leaves time for self-reflection.

Unfortunately, I know that not all of the men stay optimistic, and many of them reach their breaking point and want to give up. I can only pray that those men I spoke to can shine some light for the other men, allowing for rainbows to pierce through those concrete walls and cells.

After my internship ends, I will continue visiting the people detained at Stewart and continue praying that I can be someone to vent to, laugh with, cry with, simply talk with, and fellowship with.

“I can only pray that those men I spoke to can shine some light for the other men, allowing for rainbows to pierce through those concrete walls and cells.”

COMMUNITY SERVICES MINISTRY

BY SUSIE STEPP

ONE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES we have as community interns is helping out at Community Services Ministry (CSM), a service offered by Sumter Area Ministerial Association (SAMA). One of my fellow interns who has served at CSM for awhile went with me to show me what to do. CSM helps low-income households pay bills, so they can either avoid having their utility services turned off, or to enable them to get these vital amenities turned back on. CSM offers more than just money. People receive counseling regarding how to manage their finances. They can also get professional attire to wear to job interviews.

CSM and Faith Health Clinic (FHC)

share space provided by First Presbyterian Church. CSM and FHC operate during different hours so it is an excellent use of the facilities. It's convenient for both of these programs and for the people seeking help that these free services are concentrated in one place.

My job at CSM was to take calls and let people know the requirements before they took the time and used the gasoline it would take to come in to the office. If they were eligible for aid, I would make

an appointment for them. I also greeted the people as they arrived, prepared their files, and recorded the information that

“CSM helps low-income households pay bills, so they can either avoid having their utility services turned off...”

the interviewer and the pastor needed to make a decision. CSM is a great service for the community of Sumter County, and it is nice to feel

like I can do a small part to assist people. Many were coming for the first time and just needed some temporary help.

I am glad there is a program such as CSM available to them.

FRIENDS OF PRISON FAMILIES:

IN MEMORY OF BROTHER JAMES LACKEY

BY ELIZABETH DEDE

FRIENDS OF PRISON FAMILIES was founded in 1995 to provide support for families and friends of people in prison in the state of Georgia. For the first six years, it was directed by Don Wester. When he moved away, Brother James Lackey, a pastor in the Church of God in Christ, took over leadership of this important ministry.

Friends of Prison Families has for those nearly 20 years provided transportation to four prisons in the state of Georgia for residents of Atlanta who otherwise would have no way to get to distant prisons. Without reliable vehicles, or the funds to make a two-hour trip one way from Atlanta, most of these people would be unable to visit their loved ones. The trip takes place once each month.

From its beginning, Koinonia has offered hospitality, providing a meal and a warm welcome to families and friends who have made the long trip and need a rest before the two-hour visit at the prison.

Brother James Lackey was a faithful, great man of God. He devoted his life to prison ministry, traveling throughout each month to many prisons as a chaplain and friend to hundreds of

prisoners. It is safe to say that he touched the lives of hundreds of people outside the prison walls, too, through counseling, leadership of the trips, and friendships that lasted throughout the years.

On Valentine's Day of 2014, Brother Lackey passed away suddenly—a great loss to me and to all of his friends and family.

As this news sunk in, I worried if these trips to the Macon State Prison in Oglethorpe, Georgia, just north of Americus, would continue. It would certainly create a vast emptiness for all of our friends who make the trip each month, for the churches in Atlanta who provide vans and drivers, for the churches in South Georgia who provide hospitality and a meal, and for Koinonia, which has so long supported this ministry.

So I am deeply grateful to God to learn that Brother Lackey's daughter Kristin will continue to coordinate the trip, contacting families and friends for reservations on the trip, organizing churches and drivers from Atlanta, and keeping in touch with Koinonia to coordinate the South Georgia end of the trip.

That this trip will continue is a fitting tribute to the life and memory of Brother James Lackey.



FEED THE HUNGRY: GUESTS FIRST

BY HANNAH BLATTERT

IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN TO LUNCH at Koinonia, you've probably heard us say: "Our tradition is that guests go first." This is not only true at the lunch table. Offering hospitality to people from down the street and around the world is one of the biggest parts of what we do and has always been a big part of a Christian lifestyle. There are many examples in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament of the importance of hospitality.

In the early days of Koinonia, neighbors were scandalized by Clarence and Martin sitting down to a meal with a black farmer. Hospitality, especially table fellowship, shatters social boundaries and makes reconciliation possible. Just think of the motley crowds Jesus used to gather around the table.

Feeding the hungry at Koinonia has many different dimensions; one of the most tangible is sitting down to meals together. Feeding our spiritual and physical hunger

is a theme of our Gathered Worship each Sunday. We are fed by communion, the sharing of bread and wine; then we are fed by the fellowship with one another around the table, and then we are fed by the Word of God. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2) Not only do we feed our visitors, they feed our hunger for new ideas, stories, and fresh enthusiasm. Visitors bring their stories and ideas along with them and

broaden our outlook on things. During harvest season, when I was gleaning pecans with one of our visitors, I wound up learning about Will Campbell, the Civil Rights movement in general, and St. Theresa of Avila. Sometimes people share their music with us. Recently, a French family taught us a dance. These moments of experiencing the joy that comes along with generous hospitality show us most clearly that we truly have met Christ in the stranger.

Join the Koinonia rhythm, find FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL

Prayer bells - pause three times daily for silent prayer, centering, or just to be still.

Devotions - find material that feeds your spirit and give yourself to it twice per day.

Psalms - read one psalm each evening with dinner.

Shared meals - find friends and neighbors to sit with at table.

Hospitality - true hospitality, invite people not just into your home, but into your life. Offer a safe space to learn, explore, and grow into a deep abiding companionship.

Examen - give yourself to this spiritual practice by St. Ignatius, acknowledging consolations - those moments and situations that you feel completely connected with God and others, and desolations - those moments you feel completely disconnected or cut off.

Spiritual Rule - consider creating a more defined rhythm for your life that serves as a guide for you on this spiritual journey, look to St. Benedict's rule as an example.

Curious about community?



Consider an internship!

(877) 738.1741. Ask for Bren. Tell her I sent you. moooo.

DO YOU LIKE WHAT YOU'RE READING? DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PROJECT AMONG THEM? TO SUPPORT THESE PROJECTS, KOINONIA SET A GOAL TO RAISE \$125,000 THIS YEAR (OUR YEAR IS JULY 1 TO JUNE 30). WE HAVEN'T WAITED TO BEGIN THESE MINISTRIES UNTIL ALL THE MONEY WAS RAISED. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING AND SERVING. AS OF THE DATE THE NEWSPAPER PRINTING, WE ARE \$40,000 SHORT OF THE FINANCIAL GOAL. YOUR DONATION MATTERS. PLEASE MAKE A SECURE CONTRIBUTION ONLINE AT OUR WEB SITE WWW.KOINONIAPARTNERS.ORG, PHONE IN YOUR DONATION AT 229 924-0391, OR MAIL YOUR CHECK TO KOINONIA FARM, 1324 GA HWY 49 SOUTH, AMERICUS, GA 31719.

REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE ONLY UNTIL JUNE 30, 2014 TO MEET THE GOAL!

DRINKING AT THE WELL: A LOOK AT THE INTERNSHIP

BY BREN DUBAY

IN THE 1960S, SCORES OF CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS CAME TO KOINONIA TO FIND RESPITE. Refreshed, they would then return to the field. People still come today to drink of the waters and find refreshment here. It is a mystery to me, but God seems to have designated Koinonia as one of God's wells.

At the heart of our life are three main services—hospitality, the internship program, and healthy food. As director, I am involved, at least partially, with all three. But one of the greatest blessings for me is the opportunity to facilitate the internship program.

We accept people of all ages and from varying backgrounds. The internship is a spiritual formation program. Interns pray, work, study, serve and fellowship with us. They participate in study sessions, group discussions, and a spiritual practice called Examen.

Breaking bread together fills our life. Interns work in a variety of jobs and take their turn cleaning, cooking, doing dishes, and all the tasks it takes to keep hearth and home together. They serve both on and off the farm—as you can see from the articles in this edition.

The internship is now a year-long August to August or January to January program, though we will likely keep a shorter summer session. I get to walk with these people, watch them grow, search, and question, and then let them go. Our interns go on to make a difference whatever they do.

Koinonia is a quiet, steady place. We have become a place where the workers come to rest their heads for awhile. It wasn't a plan we made or a cause we committed to, but rather a blessing God put upon us. Come and see. Come and drink of the water. Whether as a guest or as an intern, you are welcome.

BY MICHAEL NEEVEL

I came to Koinonia seeking a way of life different than the one I had been exposed to growing up. I felt that I was, and would continue to be, missing out on so much of the fullness of God's love and life in general by continuing to go the way society seemed to be leading me. I'm fairly introverted, and often crave an amount of solitude that is unhealthy for me. I am constantly trying to find a healthy balance between community and solitude. Finding our personal healthy balance is so important to getting the ultimate benefit from every aspect of our lives. From the nutrients in the soil that grow our food, to our own eating habits, to our social lives, balance yields great benefit. My hope for the rest of my time here is that I will continue to grow and to find a better balance for my life.

BY HANNAH BLATTERT

I had always liked going to school, but getting out of high school made me deliriously happy. I felt that it was time to be far away from Stuttgart (my hometown in Germany) for a while and take some time to grow up. An "experiment in Christian living" sounded like the perfect place to be. I've learned a thing or two about myself and other people here, about how to be alone and how to be together; how to get on each other's nerves and how to hug each other. I've learned how to do laundry, how to clean, and how to answer the phone in English. I've read a random collection of books. I'm figuring out how to go about life in a joyful way, and that sometimes along that way, suddenly there is God, in the faces of these crazy, wonderful people that I live with.



Spring 2014 Interns L-R: Katie & Wyatt, Melissa, Abby, Tim, & Ben

BY MELISSA DANIEL

I grew up in a secular family. We never went to church, I don't know any scripture, and I always felt uncomfortable talking about Christianity. When I came to Koinonia I experienced something I never knew: complete acceptance. Now I feel invited to discuss my opinions and find that I agree with many Christian values I never knew before. I feel more comfortable at Koinonia than I have in a long time. I've learned more about teamwork and discipline. I've started thinking about others more, what's best for them, and how I can help them. I've learned how to reflect inwardly and grow from what I see.

BY TIM HONCHEL

New interns at Koinonia go through a practice called spiritual sharing. We listen to members share from their life's journey and we also explain what experiences have shaped our formation and walk with God. This act of sharing was for me a time of great liberation. It was the first place where I felt the ability to be honest and authentic about the struggles, questions, and convictions I've been dealing with the past four years. In sharing my story and listening to others, I felt genuine love and acceptance. I feel I may have experienced God's presence in the acceptance, love, and vulnerability of spiritual sharing.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

BY AMANDA MOORE

The Circle of Friends ministry keeps Koinonia member Kathleen Monts on the go. This fellowship and service support group is made up of local senior citizens, Koinonia members and interns, and any guests who come. The Circle has participated in many Community on the Move projects this Fall. They've donated can goods to the local Harvest of Hope Food Bank, volunteered service hours at local ministries, collected socks for senior citizens in nursing homes, and helped serve Thanksgiving meals.

In between all of these projects, they've attended a variety of festivals and educational events. Throughout the year, they've attended the Annual Watermelon Festival, Calloway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga., Annual Council on Aging's Senior Citizens Picnic, Flint River Aquarium, and shared in fellowship and work with our community several times.

One of our Circle members Mrs. Lillian Pickett spoke for the whole group when she said, "We are always excited about coming to the Circle of Friends for fellowship and meeting new people. We look forward to it and to getting out of the house and staying active. We invite others to join us as well. We do many things such as games, singing, dancing, exercising, visiting nursing homes, field trips, and picnics."



Kathleen Monts at Calloway Gardens with interns Katherine Manning & Wayne DeBack.

Making a Gift to Koinonia - Reply Form

☐ I would like to subscribe to the bi-annual newspaper, \$10 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):

☐ Feeding the Hungry

☐ Jordan House (Meeting House)

☐ Biological Pecan Management

☐ Peacebuilders Camp

☐ Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Country: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

Number: _____ Expiration date: _____

TREE OF LIFE

BY AMANDA MOORE

spread, olive oil soap, We partner with a fair-trade company, Canaan, which uses farming practices aligned with our values.

We continue to host classes and workshops to share the story of the apartheid and its affect on the "living stones of the Holy Land," as Abuna Elias Chacour refers to the Jews and Arabs living in Israel and Palestine today.

We had the great privilege of hosting our first Tree of Life conference last fall, welcoming speakers and musicians to share their stories of struggling under oppression and apartheid. We would love to help Tree of Life conference make it around the country. If you're interested in learning more, contact Amanda at amanda@koinoniafarm.org or visit www.tolef.org.

KOINONIA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH TREE OF LIFE began in the early 2000s. Since then, our community has sent four members on an educational journey into the Holy Land. Each trip has strengthened our partnership with Palestinian and Israeli brothers and sisters who are working together for peace.

In the last year, we have expanded our selection of Palestinian goods sold through our mail-order business. We now sell olive oil, Za'atar (thyme), olive honey



DEMONSTRATING LARGE-SCALE CREATION CARE BY BRENDAN PRENDERGAST & TIM HONCHEL

AT KOINONIA, WE'VE BEEN GROWING PECANS SINCE THE 50'S. Many of our readers know that our pecan business began as a way to support ourselves in the midst of a violent boycott and to raise awareness of the racial unrest in the South. As times have changed, so have the goals for our pecan operation. More than ever, we strive to be ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible as we produce high-quality, nutrient-dense pecans.

We are partnering with God to recreate an ecosystem and are working to enhance life on all levels, a commitment that led us to prayerfully and completely change our pecan management from one of synthetic chemicals to one based on diversity and life. We are now entering our third year of this transition to Biological Management.

We continue to benefit from the soil biology training of Betsy Ross as we apply compost teas, soil amendments, and bio-

stimulants throughout the winter in an effort to jump-start the life in the soil. We spray effective microbes, which includes beneficial nematodes, bacteria, fungi, and amoebas. Paired with compost tea, molasses, and gypsum (calcium supply), life is infused into the soil, setting the table for diversity of life to thrive.

We've learned that the soil is our bank account: the more we save today the better chance future generations will have of weathering the storms that are sure to come.

Through careful monitoring, we make sure the soil has the right balance of nutrients so the pecan trees can transfer those nutrients into the nuts we grow. And the cows, pigs, and chickens can enjoy the nutrition in the grasses and plants in the pastures and orchards where they graze, which means we don't have to feed them supplements.

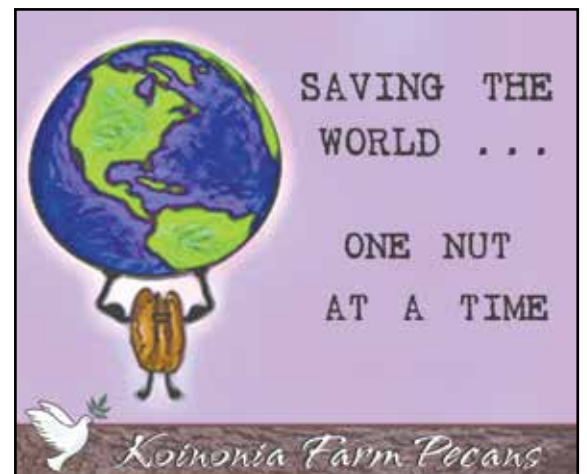
One of the quickest ways to breathe life back to the soil is through the high-density pulsed grazing of our cattle. The tall forage pastures and fenced orchards offer habitat for many beneficial insects and birds while buffering the effects of extreme weather. The forage roots penetrate deep into compacted soil, sequester large amounts of carbon, and help build soil structure when grazed. Whatever is left is trampled and mixed with manure that is quickly assimilated into the soil by microbes, fungi, and dung beetles.

Our chickens also give us much more than Sumter County's healthiest eggs. They work from sunup to sundown sanitizing the orchard floor by eating crop residue, scratching soil surface to expose weevil larvae and other pests and shredding leaves that contain pathogens such as scab.

We're also continuing to learn the principles of Holistic

Management, a tool that will help us understand and meet the needs of our local community and ecosystem. It is designed to help farmers improve the health of their land to create a sustainable future for generations to come. These are but a few of the steps we are taking to demonstrate our love for God's creation and our commitment to care for His earth and His people. Each year brings new challenges and excitement to our long journey.

"We are partnering with God to recreate an ecosystem and are working to enhance life on all levels."



STILL SHIPPING THE NUTS OUT OF GEORGIA

BY SARAH PRENDERGAST

SINCE 1942, KOINONIA FARM HAS PROVIDED CUSTOMERS with delicious, high-quality foods that have been a tradition at family gatherings and household staples for many decades. In the past few years, we have begun to re-envision the focus of our business, with a desire to feed the hungry in body and in spirit.

We have adjusted our farming practices, ensuring that all products grown here at the farm are raised in a manner that is healthy for the planet and its people.

Our locally available foods, including grass-fed beef and pastured pork and eggs, will reach a wider market this year, as we were recently approved to accept EBT/SNAP benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps) at our on-site store. This means that we can provide fresh, nutrient-dense foods to even more of our friends and neighbors.

Around the country, our customers enjoy sweet bakery goods or healthful pecans, nut butters and granolas throughout the year. Our pecan pie, made without high fructose corn syrup, is a favorite at Thanksgiving and Christmas. And our oil-free Oat Nut Granola is a staple on many breakfast tables.

We're paying attention to our global impact as well. Wherever possible, we are embracing fair trade goods. In 2014, for the first time, all Koinonia chocolate products will be made from fair trade cocoa. Fair trade means small farmers around the world receive a guaranteed minimum price on their goods no matter the current market

value, which means they have a stable

income to care for their family needs. We hope you can taste the difference, knowing the love and care that goes into the making of fair trade goods!

In addition to our own line of Chocolate Barks, we also carry fair trade goods from several other organizations. For the past decade, we have sold freshly-roasted coffee from Cafe Campesino. We are glad to support fair trade farmer cooperatives in Ghana through sales of Divine Chocolate bars. Last year we were overwhelmed with the positive response to our addition of Palestinian olive products from Canaan Fair Trade. And this Fall we will add a line of fair trade certified teas from Equal Exchange, the only company whose tea leaves are sourced directly from small farmers.

Underlying the need for physical nourishment there seems to be a deep spiritual hunger, which we seek to fill by sharing the story behind all our products. The history of Koinonia, the witness of our early members, and the legacy they have inspired are all available through the line of books and media that we sell. But you can do more than just read and be inspired...you can come and see for yourself why we choose to call this place our home and these people our family. And you can go home well-fed in body and in spirit.

Enjoy a 10% discount when you use the code "Spring14" by August 1, 2014.



Read more.

Articles, photos, and more available on our facebook page.



Join the Conversation



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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 work is to FEED THE HUNGRY, both spiritually and physically. We internship program, educational offerings and, as always, welcoming people to walk with us on this journey.

Come join our story!

Koinonia Farm Chronicle

Editor in Chief:

Amanda Moore

Contributing Editor:

Bren Dubay

Contributing Writers:

Hannah Blattert, Melissa Daniel, Elizabeth Dede, Tim Honchel, Michael Neevel, Tracy Newton, Brendan & Sarah Prendergast, Andrew Reese, Erica Schoon, Susie Stepp, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Photographers:

Amanda Moore

Web site: www.koinoniapartners.org
(soon to be www.koinoniafarm.org)

E-mail: info@koinoniafarm.org

Ph: 229.924.0391

Fax: 229.924.6504

1324 GA Hwy 49 S

Americus, GA 31719

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GRACIOUS WELCOME, cont'd from page 2

of hospitality of mind and spirit. Welcoming another to enter our inner space and help shape our thoughts and expectations is perhaps the deepest sense of biblical hospitality.

It is indeed a gift to witness this act of renewal and awareness, and not one that I take lightly. As an individual, it seems impossible to represent and convey on my own the depth and richness of our community life. I can tell stories, show photos and videos, but nothing takes the place of presence in the community. Likewise, it's difficult to convey to my fellow community members the encouragement I receive from these trips I make. To be warmly welcomed, cared for, and cherished — even if just for a short while — definitely does wonders for a weary traveler. It's the greatest privilege of my life thus far to witness the ways in which God's people around the world are bonded together in a kingdom that will one day be fully present for all the people of the world to see.

If you would like to add to my greatest privilege, you are most certainly welcome to do so. Do you have a church group, civic group, class, or community that would like to host a Friends of Koinonia event? Would you like to invite Koinonia to your conference or invite us to speak at your event? We welcome the opportunity. Contact me at amanda@koinoniafarm.org or 229-924-0391.



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 internship program lasts one year, introducing the individual to the prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship of the community. Those who are interested in membership come through this program.

By invitation and affirmation of the community, an intern becomes a discerning member, or first-year novice. This discerning step 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 first year novice, a person may be invited to the next step in the process, becoming a provisional member, still called a novice. This time of provisional membership is a final period of time to discern full



Prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship guide our life together.

membership.

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 more focused on the work of the farm.

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.

Friends of Koinonia

Would you like to share the Koinonia story with your local congregation, school group, Habitat conference, or other group? We'd love to come offer a showing of “Briars in the Cotton Patch,” set up a table at your conference, or speak about our community and work today. These events provide an opportunity for Koinonia's friends to connect with others in their area, learn more about Koinonia, and help new people learn about the community. We'd love to take our community “on tour” to all 50 states!

If you're interested in hosting a Friends of Koinonia event in your area, contact Amanda Moore at amanda@koinoniafarm.org.

NEW WORLD, cont'd from page 1

we'll have day-long seminars on each of these tracks. Practitioners in each of these fields will have a chance to share experiences via education in the round, reflecting with a facilitator on the wisdom Koinonia's experience might offer each conversation. On Friday and Saturday, we'll continue to hold these themes together, hearing from some of the best teachers, preachers and story-tellers in the country, even as we continue to sing, share, and fellowship together.

Why are we taking so much time to plan this gathering? Because if we've learned anything from Koinonia's experience, we've learned that the God Movement grows slowly, like a weed taking over a garden. It doesn't happen all at once, but once it gets its roots in good, nothing will drive it out. Indeed, God is building up a new world, and we get to be part of it. What a gift to have spaces to pause and encourage one another in this work.

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.