

Living together for Christ

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INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation represents an essential step in our understanding of God's love. God sacrificed his son to reconcile our sins. As believers of Jesus Christ, we must reconcile with other people groups to demonstrate God's love for them. The disabled represents the largest unreached people group in the world.¹

Eighty percent of the disabled population never hears this message of reconciliation. People with disabilities tend to stay away from church for several reasons. There exist at least six hundred million persons with disabilities around the world.² Nineteen million people with disabilities reside in United States.³ This statistic lacks people under five or institutionalized people.

It represents my heart passion to help these individuals realize reconciliation is a process God intended for them. The disabled typically feel rejected and underestimated. This adds another dimension to the process of helping them to understand God's love. It seems important to remember God loves us because of who He is and not because of anything we did or did not do.

I began this project with the desire to explore intentional communities. I wanted to research the history, evolution and current communities of Christians around the world. This

¹ Jack S. Oppenhuizen and Joni Eareckson Tada, *Ministry Among People With Disabilities*, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, 2005, <http://www.seektheson.org/files/Lausanne2005DisabilityWhitePaper.pdf> (access February 20, 2009)

² Ibid

³ 2000 United States census

research branched out to explore the different ways to live intentionally. This includes cohousing, ecovillages, communes, urban centers and hospitality homes. I surveyed many current established communities. I am thankful for the incredible insight on how this type of living arrangements will put into practice reconciliation in a real life context.

Intentional communities represent a fast growing phenomenon in the United States and around the world. It is defined as a group of people who choose to live in community to share resources and a common purpose. These communities range from urban dwellings, monasteries, farming villages or a cluster of homes in a neighborhood.⁴

Just as each person possesses their own individual traits; these communities each display their own identifying characteristics. The values sought in these communities also vary greatly.

This paper will define and evaluate types of communities such as cohousing, ecovillages, cooperatives and urban refuges. It will then highlight some communities in existence today. Some of these communities intentionally formed to help the needs of the disabled.

The main goal is to evaluate the usefulness of these social arrangements to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the disabled population. These needs also vary. It seems essential to understand the ways a community may strengthen a weakness for a disabled person. It seems equally important to emphasize the desperate desire of a person with a disability to help another person with their gifts. Many times the disabled are marginalized and their often overlooked to help in families, schools, churches or even in their own care. It is hoped an

⁴ Geoph Kozeny. *Intentional communities: Lifestyles based on ideals*. The Fellowship for Intentional Communities, (1995) <http://www.ic.org/pnp/cdir/1995/01kozeny.php>

intentional community may be formed to foster the strengths of a disabled person to help them realize they are loved by God. This love comes with responsibilities and they are capable of carrying out these responsibilities.

LIVING AS CHRIST

The gospel speaks of many ways Christ teaches us to live each day. Jesus traveled from town to town, during his ministry, to share these important truths. The footprints he left behind seem clear. Yet we stumble and struggle to keep our perspective. Living in America, 2010, fills us with several abnormalities such as fear of terrorism, consumerism, exploitation of the poor and affluenza.⁵

This term relates to the fact we strive for more and bigger and better. We tend to lose sight of the values of simplicity, peace, family and most of all love. God wants to show his love for us by providing us a way to come into His presence. This opportunity allows us to believe in Christ. We need to believe Christ was born by a virgin. He walked on this earth sinless. He died a cruel death. He rose again and took our sins as the sacrificial lamb.

This belief in Christ is taught over and over in churches. Sunday schools sing songs of Christ. Wednesday night programs invite families to believe in Jesus. The underlying question relates to whether we will go beyond this step of believing and start living as Christ.⁶

⁵ John D. Graaf. *Affluenza: The AI-consuming epidemic*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers; 2nd edition (2005) Pg. 5

⁶ Will Samson. *Enough*. David C. Cook. Colorado Springs, CO. (2009) Pg. 23

This step reminds us Jesus was homeless. Jesus had dirty feet.⁷ Jesus hung out with sinners including the lowly tax collectors. Jesus showed compassion to a woman with many husbands. Jesus asked us to follow in his ways and go from town to town. He told his disciples to not bring food or clothing. He realized the need to rely on one another. Jesus loved the marginalized. Seventy five percent of the people Jesus ministered to were the disabled. Jesus openly showed love to the biggest unreached people group today.

In every Gospel, Jesus makes it clear we need to believe in the tenants of his birth, death and resurrection. He then clearly spells out the need to take action and follow him. These action steps seem to be missing in many churches today.⁸ Sitting in church listening to a sermon is not following Jesus. Giving ten percent of your income to a local church doesn't mean following Jesus.

The two most important lessons in following Jesus relate to loving God with all our hearts, soul and mind and to love one another. This demonstration of love needs to happen in every day activity. Dorothy Day illustrated this principle over and over. She mentioned that if you had two coats...one of them belonged to someone else.⁹

It means reexamining social norms and allow for change to occur for positive outcomes. One example related to a catholic cathedral in the Kensington neighborhood in Philadelphia. This cathedral was abandoned and many homeless women and children lived on the streets

⁷ Don Everts. *Jesus with dirty feet*. InterVarsity Press Downers Grove, IL. (1999) Pg. 20

⁸ Jon Stock, Tim Otto & Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. *Inhabiting the church: Biblical wisdom for a new monasticism*. Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR. (2007) Pg. 36

⁹ Dorothy Day. *Loaves and Fishes*. Orbis Books (September (1997) Pg. 60

around it. A group of Jesus followers decided to move into the abandoned building and provide shelter, food and clothing to the homeless. It seemed like a natural fit, but it was a controversial move.¹⁰ For several weeks families occupied this cathedral until other shelter was found. This began the journey of Jesus radicals who now live in the “simple Way”.¹¹

Jesus taught us several key principles through the Sermon on the Mount. These Beatitudes often seem as perfect outcomes, but Jesus intended them to represent simple guidelines. We overcompensate for our lack of commitment to these standards by blaming society or the fact Jesus was teaching to another audience. God intends all of us to understand and live these truths as guideposts. We use them to anchor our faith. We need to resist the temptation to look at them as simply goals. Instead, we need to look at them as living principles with the eventual goal of fellowship with our God.

God wants us to avoid isolating ourselves into Christian bubbles.¹² It seems inevitable we need to re-evaluate our lifestyle as soon as we start feeling complacent and comfortable. Living intentionally as Christ involves sacrifice, pain, but reaps great rewards through love, a sense of community and knowing all your earthly needs will be met. The journey on earth is short. Our eventual home in heaven will be void of the sludge of our sin. Until we arrive at our eternal living place...let us run the race with perseverance and our eyes on Christ.

¹⁰ Shane Claiborne. *Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mi. (2006) (Audiobook) 1 hour 10 minutes

¹¹ <http://www.simpleway.org>

¹² David Wann, *Reinventing community: Stories from the walkways of cohousing*. Fulcrum Publishing, Golden, CO. (2005) pg. 22

(Hebrews 12:1-3) speaks of this race. It reminds us as long as we believe and participate we will obtain the goal. It will not matter how we get to the goal. Some of us may need to be carried. Others of us may need to use a walker. Some may crawl. Ultimately we will be with Jesus. As we run this race we need to acknowledge the requirements of the disabled population.

This group of people range from cognitive, physical and emotional special needs. Jesus reminds us God will be glorified through our weaknesses. People with disabilities may evoke different emotions for each of us. Some of these could include pity, uncomfortableness, frustration, hate. Others may feel positive emotions such as compassion, but still lack the ability to resemble Jesus with skin on. The disabled want the opportunity to follow Jesus. Churches represent the most discriminating institutions in our society today.¹³

Instead of discussing ways to improve churches...let us turn to ways of improving the lifestyles of people with disabilities. Let's work together to show Christ's love and allow them the opportunity to follow the mandates in the Gospel.

We all struggle with something in our life. The disabled have a label for this struggle. This label may provide some social services, but often it provides a ticket into oppression. Mother Theresa exemplified the way we need to treat a disabled person, by showing them even more love and patience.¹⁴ Mother Theresa made herself disabled through this attitude. She

¹³ Jack S. Oppenhuizen and Joni Eareckson Tada, *Ministry Among People With Disabilities*, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, 2005, <http://www.seektheson.org/files/Lausanne2005DisabilityWhitePaper.pdf> (access February 20, 2009) pg. 9

¹⁴ Mother Teresa. *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*. Image (2009) Pg. 205

handed out shoes for the people who needed them. She kept the worse pair of shoes for herself. This caused great paralysis and yet she never complained or changed her ways.¹⁵

(Matthew 10:39) tells us that whoever loses their life for Christ's sake will find it. This clearly illustrates the need for sacrifice. Along with this sacrifice, there exists an ongoing process of self discovery. This will help us to realize our authentic identity in Jesus. In the process of growing closer to Christ....we uncovers more and more about our own personal strengths and vices. This process serves as a way to grow closer to Jesus and to those around us. We need to realize the more we search and discover the light in our life...the more the darkness will become apparent. It represents a healthy step to sustain community with others involved in this process.¹⁶

It remains essential to realize the depth of God's love. Regardless of the self discovery or the intention to follow Christ; we need to acknowledge an actively embrace the idea of God's love as a presence. This presence is available to us and God desires to love us. We tend to put other worldly wants and needs in front of God. God alone may sustain us.

(Romans 8:3139) reminds us nothing exists to separate us from God. This love exists. We need to actively identify ourselves as loved by God.¹⁷ Often we introduce ourselves and then either speak of our vocation or a mutual acquaintance. We seem to identify with these worldly titles instead of just admitting we are a child of God.

¹⁵ Shane Claiborne. *Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mi. (2006) (Audiobook) 10 hours 8 minutes

¹⁶ David Benner, *The gift of being yourself: The sacred call of self discovery*. InterVarsity Press Downers Grove, IL. (2004) Pg. 14

¹⁷ Ibid Pg. 20

(John 5:36) shows us the contrast with Jesus and how he identifies with His Father. He acknowledges the love and the need for it. (John 14:11) clearly shows how comfortable Jesus is with this love. We need to strive towards this authentic engagement with Jesus to fully come into the presence of God.

(Colossians 1:15) shows how Christ acts as a filter for our understanding of God's presence and love. We grow closer to Jesus through self discovery and communion with fellow believers. We actively engage in spiritual transformation of daily prayer, meditation and following the convictions of the Gospel. This manifests itself in to a community of love and understanding. It gives each of us an identity of love through God. A disabled person will not identify themselves as a quadriplegic, but instead identify themselves as a follower of Christ. What an awesome equalizer in this world of categorizing.

Communion represents an ultimate picture of this self identity and the community of sharing. As children of God we each need to come to the communion table and talk to our Abba. We need to personalize the symbolism of the last supper. God gave us a means to remember his son, but also to partake in a community gathering to lift one another up. At the last supper Jesus went around to each one of his disciples and washed their feet. An excellent example of giving himself up to help the others understand their worth in God's eyes. Sharing communion reminds all of us that God chose us. That in one way or another we resemble a broken being. We also present ourselves as a living sacrifice and blessing to others. Finally, similar to Jesus, we need to be willing to lower ourselves for the betterment of someone else.

Living as Christ in community resembles an excellent opportunity for these Biblical principles to enter into our daily lives. They will not only be studied, prayerfully considered, but most importantly experienced on a day to day basis. This authentic engagement with each other will help us to realize our full potential as children of God. It will also serve to remind us of our shortcomings and the need for accountability in love.

(Matthew 25:31-40) clearly shouts of God's desire for us to take care of the physical needs of each other. He wants to give more to those who take care of the least among us. God wants us to live in community and work together to make a person feel whole in Him. Many times a disabled person is reminded of their inadequacies. The person with a disability becomes labeled for their deficit. For example I am often given the title of a deaf-blind woman when introduced in church. Other titles may include child of God, pastor, wife, mom, volunteer, yet the disability still seems to define my identity. Living in an intentional community will constantly remind persons with disabilities of what they mean to the Lord and to each other. The disabled will be accepted with open arms. Jesus wants us to wash their feet and preserve their dignity. This magnifies the dignity of our mighty father.

(Matthew 25:31-40) also expounds on the need for hospitality. Many people speak of hospitality as a gift. As children of God, we all need to open our homes to those in need. This may look different for each home, but it still needs to be expected and not just a kind gesture.

The disabled population often is rejected from a church. The church appears to actively discriminate against people with disabilities. Mainstream society accommodates and accepts the disabled much more willingly than the church. The Catholic Dioceses seeks to investigate this

problem.¹⁸ Developmentally disabled individuals are being excluded from sacramental access. It's ironic the Last Supper represents God's sacrifice for us and not our human capabilities. Instead it emphasizes our lack of ability to right our relationship with God without His divine intervention.

One Mom speaks of how her son prepared for confession. The priest knew of this child's developmental milestones and the first confession was happening at a older age. Despite this accommodation and the child's ability to express his sins....the priest refused to grant penance.¹⁹.

Seek the Son also deals with several incidences of discrimination. During my project "Thriving through ministry conflict", many participants shared their frustration and deep sorrow over the rejection they experienced in the church.

Mary talks of her discouragement during greeting time. NO matter how much she tries; people still refuse to touch her. She is unclear whether it has to do with her wheelchair or her disfigured hands.

Lisa talks of exclusion from the church choir. Her choir director feels Lisa's blindness will potentially cause harm to other choir members. In order to get to the choir loft several flights of stairs need to be traversed. Lisa competently takes stairs in many aspects of her life. The director still insists she cannot participate.

¹⁸ Jennie Weiss. Block, *Copious hosting: A theology of access for people with disabilities*. The Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, N.Y. (2002) pg. 25

¹⁹ Ibid Pg. 18

Roger, a father of a three year old boy with Autism, was asked to leave the worship service. His son makes noises during the music. The elders felt it was degrading to the service. Roger's son was also excluded from Sunday school. Parents expressed concern his son might teach their children these same vocalizations.²⁰

(Luke 14:16-31) highlights the "great banquet". This Passage shows us one of our biggest mistakes in the church and home setting. Often we open our churches and homes to those people we seem comfortable with. Instead God illustrates the need to go out and bring the lame, the homeless, the teenage parent, the drug dealer. Giving a place to sleep to someone we are comfortable with eliminates the blessing of the act.²¹

Several aspects of the early church made hospitality a more natural practice.²² For example the shared meals. These meals were often pierced with tension and inequality. Hospitality demanded respect and equality be shown to all. Another way related to the fact the news of the Gospel was spread through travelers. These travelers needed a place to stay. They then met for church type activities in each others' home. Looking forward, hundreds of years later...hospitality became commercialized and a separate commodity.

Hospitality towards the disabled, needs to avoid making that individual a spectacle.²³ Another's disability must never become a source of pity or sacrificial love. God expects us to

²⁰ These examples were gathered from the workshop "Thriving Through Ministry conflict" and names changed to protect the identity of the people and churches.

²¹ Christine D. Pohl, *Making room: recovering hospitality as a Christian tradition*. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI. (1999) Pg. 17

²²Ibid Pg. 28

²³ Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communities: A theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, MI. (2008) Pg. 19

share hospitality with all. The disabled need to feel valued, welcomed and loved as a child of God. It also seems necessary to remember that each of us is made in God's image...including a person with a physical, cognitive or emotional impairment.

Hospitality avoids self sufficient language. Instead it embraces vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities are viewed as a natural part of life. In order to experience a genuine sense of authenticity with another we need to sincerely include all vulnerabilities. These principles again are emphasized in the communion table. We all exist as broken, but yet chosen and love.²⁴ The elements personified in this symbolic act involve normalcy, embodiment, community and redemption.²⁵ Living in an intentional community will help fulfill these principles.

²⁴ Ibid Pg. 29

²⁵ Ibid Pg. 12

TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

Cohousing

Cohousing represents a type of community with its origins in Denmark. This model illustrates the best of two worlds. Participants still live in their own homes and yet share common buildings to foster community closeness.²⁶

Cohousing typically involves individuals purchasing part of the property and their own home. These participants also pay for general upkeep. Each cohousing community handles finances differently.

Typically cohousing models support three to eighty homes. The suggested number of homes range from twelve to thirty six.²⁷ The benefits of this range include enough people to financially support the community without a great burden on the residents. This number also gives security in case other members decide to leave. If the number gets larger; it becomes more difficult to facilitate community consensus.

²⁶ Kathryn M. [Mccamant](#), *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*. McCamant/Durett; 2 Sub edition (1994) pg. 11

²⁷ Chris Scott-Hanson, *The cohousing handbook: Building a place for community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2005) pg. 40

These homes typically share similar interior designs. This helps to minimize the cost of building the homes. The homes mainly focus on a sleeping area. Small kitchens are usually present.²⁸

Each home typically has a mutually shared back yard. The front of the house leads to connecting paths to common buildings. These homes typically have their bedrooms towards the back for more privacy.

The common buildings range depending on the specific interests of the cohousing community. Usually there is always a common kitchen and dining area. Recreational buildings also fall under common areas.²⁹ Many communities boast of a communal garden and farm. This helps to feed residents and sell produce and livestock to nearby towns. Community stores are also a huge financial assistance to the residents. Again each community looks different depending on their central focus.³⁰

Four crucial elements come together to exemplify the cohousing model. These four principles include Participation. Each member needs to participate in upkeep of the grounds, buildings or help in daycare, laundry or other assigned tasks. The participatory process represents a huge part of cohousing. It means a senior citizen will maintain their independence after a

²⁸ Kathryn M. [Mccamant](#), *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*. McCamant/Durett; 2 Sub edition (1994)pg. 52

²⁹ Chris Scott-Hanson,. *The cohousing handbook: Building a place for community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2005) pg. 73

³⁰ Ibid pg. 25

medical trauma or a spouse dies. It means a single parent will be able to share parenting responsibilities with others.³¹

The second principle represents an intentional community design.³² This design fosters key values of the community. For example, if children represent a strong theme, play areas will be centrally located. If the participants want to maintain privacy creating the community with houses a little further apart may occur. Each community needs to decide on the design of its property. It also needs to work with local zoning boards to help convince the benefits of this arrangement. It is becoming easier to establish cohousing villages.

The third element of the cohousing model represents extensive community facilities.³³ These facilities may house youth and children rooms, libraries, exercise equipment, craft and automobile tools. They range depending on the specific needs of the community. Many communities place bikes and scooters at central locations. These may be used by other members and left at designated areas.³⁴ Again, each community boasts of its own unique attributes.

The final element relates to complete resident management. This means the participants create their own management style and system. Often these participants set up specific rules of living in the community. These rules cover many topics including how to leave the community for good. This style of management is much different than other places. There is not one leader

³¹ Ibid Pg. 36

³² Ibid pg. 37

³³Chris Scott-Hanson, *The cohousing handbook: Building a place for community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2005) Pg. 39

³⁴ Kathryn M. [Mccamant](#), *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*. McCamant/Durett; 2 Sub edition (1994) Pg. 57

in charge. There is also not a sense that problems will be left to chance.³⁵ This management style helps to give everyone an equal voice without worrying about community politics.

Cohousing continues to appeal to many European and American people. It brings a sense of community back into the hearts of those frustrated by the isolation of suburban living.

Cohousing provides an alternative for many people to live without relying on strangers.

³⁵ Chris Scott-Hanson,. *The cohousing handbook: Building a place for community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2005) pg. 42

Ecovillages

Ecovillages represent communities established with an emphasis on environmentally sound practices. These practices range from using rain water effectively to heating the homes with solar panel or wind mills. These communities also look differently depending on the focus of the participants.³⁶ All ecovillages work towards preservation of natural resources and the teaching of these principles.

It appears common place in an ecovillage to use composting for almost any refuse....including composting toilets. There exists ways to clean both gray and black water produced by daily activities.³⁷

All food is either grown on the location or in a local setting. Many ecovillages also produce food for food shelters and other organizations to eliminate hunger. These practices require great work and commitment. Many residents of an ecovillage only hold part time work outside of the ecovillage.³⁸

Most ecovillage founders expound on fifteen key elements of fundamental tenants for sustainability. These include socio-economical and ecological factors. Let us examine five of these elements most commonly found.

³⁶ Judy and Michael Corbett,. *Designing sustainable communities: Learning from village homes*. Island Press, Washington, DC. (2000) pg. 22

³⁷ Ibid Pg. 40

³⁸ Ibid pg. 102

The first characteristic deals with the fact these communities start as grassroots movements. The ecovillages are not projects from the government. They are private citizens banding together to make an impact on the environment.³⁹

The second element seems obvious, but must be emphasized. Ecovillages value communal living. Unlike cohousing, these villages refrain from using private homes. Residents share farms or other buildings to help keep the buildings at a minimum.⁴⁰

A third essential element of these ecovillages relates to their lack of connection with the government. These villages not only started from grassroots, but they use as little assistance from the government as possible. They are willing to share their energy resources with the government to help others. For example, these communities do not use local water, electricity, gas or trash disposal. These utilities are naturally performed within the property.⁴¹

Another common theme relates to their willingness to share resources with other communities. They desire to make the earth a better and more stable place. These ecovillages will build wind mills that will help other land owners around them. They will cut enough wood to let locals come and buy it or if they cannot afford it....these citizens can help around the village and then receive the wood. Again, the ecovillages want to share their values with the people they live with in local areas.

³⁹ Diana.Christian. *Finding Community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2007) Pg. 33

⁴⁰ Ibid Pg. 33

⁴¹ Ibid Pg. 40

The fifth element relates to this previous fact. All ecovillages pride themselves as learning centers. Most of them host high school and college students in various programs. These programs help people to sustain our natural resources. They also allow their property to become experimental testing areas for students in new ways to save energy or the environment.⁴²

⁴² Diana.Christian. *Finding Community*. New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC. (2007) pg. 46

SURVEY OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES WITH CHRISTIAN EMPHASIS

There exist several communities. This paper focuses on three specific communities. A glimpse of the uniqueness of these communities is given. In order to discover an extensive list of intentional communities check out the Community of communities list on the internet.⁴³

Rutba House

Rutba house developed in 2003 after some friends traveled to Iraq. One of their fellow travelers was hurt by a bomb. Doctors in a nearby town treated their friend. These doctors had no home or facility left. The Americans bombed their town the day before. The friends felt so much compassion and gratitude towards these people who would still reach out to them. These friends asked how they could pay them back for saving their friend. The doctors told them just go out and tell people about Rutba.

This began a journey of establishing the Rutba house in Duram, North Carolina. It is located in Walltown north of Duke University. This area experiences poverty, violence and a sense of hopelessness.

Rutba started with just one house and people living intentionally to help each other and their neighborhood. This grew to purchasing another home. Rutba provides community meals

⁴³ <http://www.ic.org>

several times a week. They also fast from Wednesday evening to the supper meal on Thursday. They insist on peace, simple living and reaching out to those in need. Many people drop in during the day to get a ride, enjoy a meal or simply to talk.⁴⁴

Worship and song represents a huge emphasis of this community. They connect with other churches in the area to worship with fellow believers. They also carry on many ministry opportunities to the residents of Walltown.

Church Under The Bridge

Early on a Sunday morning, men and women carrying large bags meet under the I35 bridge between Fourth and Fifth Street. Just after nine in the morning others start to arrive. These worshipers include drug rehabilitation residents, prostitutes, homeless and other oppressed people. Church Under the Bridge in Wako Texas strives to help these people realize their full potential in Christ.

They set up chairs and worship right under the bridge. The pastor explains this setting feels safer to most than the glares felt in a church. Their services attract a racially diverse group of individuals.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Patrick.O’Niel, *The New Monasticism: In Durham’s walltown, a covenant community*. Divinity Online Edition, Fall 2005. Vol. 5 #1

⁴⁵ *Ordinary Radicals: A conspiracy of faith on the margin of empire. DVD*

This church began in 1994. It refrains from using a church building. It purchased another piece of land in case construction or other factors kicked them out of their current place. This Body of Christ provides relational love to those Jesus would point out are the least among us. This is viewed as an intentional community, because many of these homeless people take up residence in this area.

Biblical Justice represents an essential core value of this group. Their earthly journey may look disgraceful to many Americans, but these people realize Jesus loves them. They understand one day in heaven they will live with their king.

Anathoth Farm Community

This intentional community blends Catholic Worker principles and ecology together. It provides both spiritual blessings and a great role model on how to conserve the earth God made for us.

Among other ways, people at this community use composting toilets, solar energy, two acres of organic gardens and a four season greenhouse. In each of their private homes they use wood burning furnaces and hot water heaters. They also fully use gray water systems.⁴⁶

Anathoth represents a Biblical reference for refuge. This farm acts as such a refuge located in North Western Wisconsin. The homestead is over one hundred years old. This farm welcomes visitors to come and learn about their farming habits or their love for Jesus. This cozy farm is located among vacation cabins.

⁴⁶ <http://www.anathothcommunityfarm.org/>

The residents of Anathoth only work two to three days off of the property in mainstream work. The rest of the time...they are needed to help maintain the farm. They not only grow crops, but also harvest maple syrup. IN the spirit of the Catholic movement and ecovillages, they also work as a learning center. For example students from a university in Illinois were visiting to experience an alternative spring break.⁴⁷

The two acre organic garden represents the center of the community in terms of values. The residents eat and sell this produce. The residents also send this food to countries affected by war. It provides needed nutrition to several thousand people a year. This garden also posses raised beds to help people with mobility issues.

Mike Miles founded this community with the desire to make as little impact on the earth as possible. It seems Anathoth carries out this goal and an even stronger one of making a huge impact on people. They teach resistance to violence. They also teach strategies of de-escalation.

SURVEY OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Again three communities are highlighted. Fewer communities exist for the disabled, but it represented a fascinating journey to explore the established ones. It is my hope to eventually personally visit many other communities for the disabled.

⁴⁷ <http://www.anathothcommunityfarm.org/>

Rise Inc.

Rise Inc. offers multiple programs around Minnesota to meet the needs of the disabled. One such program represents an intentional community for mentally ill adults. I visited this community and shadowed a family. This family included a single Mom with depression and post traumatic stress syndrome, as the head of the household. She has four children. Her teens were held at knife point by their biological Dad. These teens struggle daily with this memory. She also has twins. Each nine-year-old exhibit energetic ways. Both possess cognitive and physical disabilities.

This community is located in Blaine, Minnesota. It is a thirty unit apartment building. All lease holders must possess a label of mental illness. Upon signing the lease the tenants give up their rights under Minnesota statues to protect renters. This model displayed some positive and negative areas to incorporate into our eventual plan for an intentional community.

One positive benefit represents a well kept apartment with all furnishings. The rent is based on income and thus affordable. All tenants are expected to participate in fifteen hours of outside activity to help promote self worth. The building also shares resources such as vacuums. This helps to promote a sense of community.

This community does not promote communal meals. Socializing between apartments is actually discouraged. This seemed confusing to me, but I never received a concrete answer on the philosophy behind this restriction.

Another observation relates to the unscheduled checks of apartments for cleanliness. Twice a week a worker appears without warning. The tenants are monitored very strictly on simple tasks such as clutter under the bed or dishes in the sink. It becomes a shaming experience.

Rise supervises the time people may visit this building. The curfew on week days is nine P.M. On The week-ends it is eleven PM. No other person may visit unless the tenant is present in the apartment. This poses a problem for this family. Mom works forty hours a week out of the home. After school her twins require special assistance. These twins qualify for personal care attendants. These attendants are not allowed to be in the apartment...without Mom. Yet rules of the state insist all personal care attendants must watch children in their homes. It sets up a conundrum.

Another factor relates to personal spending. The tenant gives their right up to cable, cell phones, or any other household bills. This is to help manage their finances. It seems an extreme measure to enforce on adults.

Each tenant signs addendums to specifically address their life circumstances. For example the father of the twins is not allowed on the premises. Dad has a restraining order against him from the family courts. Dad knows this rule and holds it over the Mom's head. She will face eviction with a twenty-four hour notice. It seems necessary to manage life goals, but in a reasonable way. This particular restriction brings more stress on to the family.

This community serves many hundreds of families a year. It helps to foster a more ealthy life style. The length of stay in this community is three years. It also requires for admission a family to be homeless.

I am grateful for the opportunity to experience this community. Each community will paint their own unique style of hospitality. Each community will focus on different goals and include different expectations.

Camphill Intentional Community

Camphill supports over one hundred communities around the world.⁴⁸ Each community strives to uphold the spiritual integrity of its residents. Its residents need assistance with daily living activities and their needs represent a way for others to serve. Camphill divided their communities up to meet the developmental needs of cognitively impaired people. These divisions range from preschool all the way to adults.

Specific therapy also plays a key role in this community. The therapy is geared to help meet the life goals of Camphill's residents. Art plays a major influence in these therapies. They also utilize holistic alternatives to medicine and nutritional substitutes to bring success to significantly cognitive impaired people.

Camphill was founded in Scotland in 1939 by a pediatrician.⁴⁹ This community evolved from helping children with developmental need to a full network of programs that meet the diverse needs of many levels of cognitive impairment.

⁴⁸ <http://www.camphill.org>

⁴⁹ <http://www.camphill.org>

It remains my desire to visit a Camphill community to learn more about its specific program, property format and their spiritual core beliefs.

Magic

Magic is an ecovillage formed in Stanford, California. This community began to overcome the harm affecting natural resources on a daily basis. The main goal of the ecovillage was not to meet the needs of the disabled.

One of their founding members became paralyzed. He required a wheelchair. Magic allowed the transcript to be released of the discussions needed to help meet the needs of this member. It proved a trying time, but these members stuck together to resolve a way to enable this fellow member.

This resident, Dan Bartsch, started losing abilities to walk and stand in his third decade of life.⁵⁰ Dan admits as he felt he was losing value in society's eyes....he was gaining more value within his community. He claims he has become "more worthy of the values underpinning Magic".⁵¹

The transcripts reveal real feelings and opinions openly shared in a loving, respectful manner. Dan's community mates preserve his dignity. They raise questions on how he will maintain the high expectations of work to the environment. They bring these concerns up in a way to brainstorm and Dan is an active participant in the decision making.

⁵⁰ Daniel Baartsch, *Enabled and Disabled in Community: Sharing Life's Physical Challenges*. <http://www.ic.org/pnp/cdir/1995/14bartsch.php> Fellowship for Intentional Community (1996)

⁵¹ *ibid*

Many times, the disabled find themselves at another person's mercy. They need an attendant to push their wheelchairs. The disabled person just lets the attendant place them where it is easier. Another example relates to some disabled people need help feeding themselves. They take food orally, but they have no use of their hands. Many times, the person assisting chooses how much to put on a utensil and what food is next. The disabled person feels a inferior person in the power balance. It is not intended, but it occurs.

Magic clearly demonstrates principles of embracing a disabled person on an individual level. They talk of Dan's abilities. This community also focuses on how to enable Dan in future situations with his deteriorating condition.

It also is my desire to visit this community and talk with Dan. I am curious about some of the ecological principles. I am especially curious about how they present such a welcoming attitude. This community was not created on spiritual convictions.

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