

EP Journal

A newsletter of Ezekiel's Place Retreat Center



www.ezekielsplace.com

Fall, 2007

Issue No. 7

EP VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES:

Vision: The achievement of justice, peace, renewal and reconciliation for all.

Mission: Ezekiel's Place is a Christian retreat center with a mission to provide a serene environment and responsive programs promoting justice, peace, renewal and reconciliation to affirm ethnic, national, religious and economic diversity.

Core Values: Faith, Justice, Peace, Renewal, Reconciliation, Integrity, and Accountability

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Upcoming EP Events

(November, 2007 – June, 2008)

- Nov. 29 – Dec. 2: Israeli-Arab Peacebuilding Retreat (by Abraham's Vision)
- Nov. – June: JPA/Mission Action Group Meetings/activities
- February or March: Community Inter-faith Forum (on "Sharing Jerusalem")
- March: Forum on Africa: What are the Main Challenges and Hope?
- March – June: Several Retreat Groups
- April: 8th Global Jubilee Village Experience
- June: Youth Servant Leadership Workshop (4th year, Ages 12-17)
- June: Youth Creation Care Camp (6th year, ages 11-17)
- June – August: "Graduates" from Global Jubilee Village Experience perform summer volunteer work (being arranged in several countries with EP contacts, including: Nicaragua, Honduras, Philippines, Kenya, Botswana)

Dear Friends of Ezekiel's Place,

Stacey Morgan, Tominda Adkins, and Lindsey Warf traveled to the Philippines and Honduras this past summer and found there a greater sense of community than they have known at home in the USA. Please read their stories in this EP Journal.

Our world groans in pain; our earth's foundations are shaking from our heavy footprint upon it. We hear continuous messages of fear and violence penetrating our individual and community life. Millions of people around the world are dying from abject poverty, disease, oppression, conflict and lack of hope.

Can we, committed to a life in Jesus Christ, appropriate the power of God's Spirit, and build with others caring communities?

We trust your sense of community and hope will be renewed from these writings by participants of events organized by Ezekiel's Place during 2007. Most of the writers are university students who are searching for ways to participate in building true healing communities.

We wish for you a blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year. We welcome your experiencing the peace and tranquility at Ezekiel's Place during 2008.

In God's Love and Peace,

Barbara and Dick Anson, Co Directors of Ezekiel's Place

The community of believers was of one heart and one mind....they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need. (Acts 4:32-35)



University students at Ezekiel's Place 7th Global Jubilee Village Experience ---- a weekend of building global community.

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Highlights of Ezekiel's Place Events:**January to November, 2007:****various groups on retreat at EP, PLUS...**

January – November:

- Various retreat groups

January:

- 19-20: Forum on Transformative Leadership for Building Community

March:

- Abraham's Vision Retreat/Forum

April:

- 13-15: 6th Global Jubilee Village (GJV) Experience

May:

- 19: Community Forum/Dialogue on Israeli-Arab Conflict & Peacebuilding

June:

- 20-22: 3rd Annual Youth Servant Leadership Workshop
- 25-30: 5th Annual Youth Creation Care Camp

October:

- 5-7th: 7th GJV Experience
- 19-20: Sustainable Living Forum: Bridging our Faith & Lifestyle Choices

BUILDING COMMUNITY: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

(By Barbara Anson, Co-Director of Ezekiel's Place)

The community of believers was of one heart and one mind....they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need. (Acts 4:32-35)

Followers of the Way of Jesus saw the path Francis of Assisi was taking, in obedience to God's guidance in his life. They began to gather together with him, and communities formed. More and more believers were drawn together by the same Spirit who inspired Francis, and formed deeply committed communities with agreed principles to govern them. These included:

- Diverse people (socially and economically)
- Dedication to contemplation and action, especially reaching out to those in poverty
- "Taking people where they are" in their lives and calling them to an authentic living of the gospel

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BUILDING COMMUNITY: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

(By Barbara Anson, Co-Director of Ezekiel's Place)

Continued from previous column

- Leaders exercising their leadership as "a ministry to the collective" (Mark 10: 42-45), practicing exemplary love, gentleness and forgiveness, bearing one another's burdens and fearlessly speaking the truth to each other
- Seeking to mediate and be a healing presence, rather than engagement in violence (Matthew 26:52)
- Challenging the church, especially by example, in the simple, concrete living of Jesus' gospel, offering a prophetic voice while being faithful to the body of Christ.

In that day, as well as in our own time, not only were the poor oppressed. The wealthy were in bondage to their desires for more wealth and power, even among the "faithful". Jesus, a devout Jew, came to fulfill the Law, not to repeal it. "Yet his obedience to God's will and his announcement of the Reign of God proved an enormous threat to the socio-religious power structure of that day." (see John 11:45-48).

What are the instructive lessons from Jesus' life and the first Christian community (as recorded in Acts) for us today? Let's say we were to live as if the priorities of modern society did not hold sway over us, as if our total allegiance to Christ guided all our choices; surely we would be great witnesses on the path toward God's justice, peace, renewal and reconciliation for which we say we long. Do we have the courage to begin to live as Jesus did? Even at our own peril? Do we believe healing can and does happen today? Are we co-participants with God toward healing in our world? Toward confronting the powers of darkness? Toward giving up our lives so that others may be set free? Do we have the courage to live as Jesus did?

Moving, rebuilding the church today means that communities of faith would be committed to an ever deepening serious inward journey through prayer and study of the scriptures, worship and contemplation. It also would mean confronting society as a whole, like the prophets of old, and speaking the truth of God's Reign to temporal power. "The community is more than the sum of its parts when it feels itself truly in mission to a hurting world."

We in communities of faith are called to live out of knowing that "I" am not "Number One" to look out for, knowing that liberty, freedom and justice do matter, that all people matter in themselves, not for their social or economic status, or even their beliefs --- ALL people matter, that consumerism and materialism do not determine the meaning of life, that we need to seek to be a nation relating to other nations in true goodness, benevolence and non-violence, not seeking by force to

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BUILDING COMMUNITY: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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have our way, but by great acts of kindness to show the way of Jesus. Our so-called rugged individualism and our desires for our own comforts are fierce detriments to building community. Often we do not truly listen to God's word for us, or even truly listen to one another.

"However we look at it --- economically, socially, politically, ecologically, theologically, or educationally --- seeking to live more in common holds the promise of a more fully human life for ourselves and the world." Though building a nurturing, authentically caring community, sharing more in common, is a challenging journey, given the path our society and others are taking, this is a journey which should be seriously considered, even taken in small steps. Such communities, anchored in the gospel of Jesus, are witnesses of God to the world. Building community, in various forms, is an on-going task; with all its challenges, but one which the first Christians modeled (Acts 4:32-35), when the Holy Spirit came to dwell within them, giving to them power and courage to share the gospel message, changing the world!

Powerful governments, global business interests, and giant conglomerates, as well as the technology of our times, from cell phones to computers, cause us to be less connected with one another in meaningful ways, and certainly leave out those toward the bottom of the economic ladder.

God's mercy and grace offers to us yet another opportunity to live intentionally in more loving, caring, embracing communities, sharing more resources in common, impacting the earth in less destructive ways and following more fully the message and way of life Jesus lived and taught us to emulate. Can we in worshiping communities, who profess our deepest convictions about God, ourselves and life, pursue the formation of small diverse groups for a more intentional mission-oriented life together? The groups would gather for larger corporate worship and fellowship on the Sabbath, but throughout the week would be on a continuing inward and outward journey, intentionally sharing resources held in common, being more faithful stewards of the earth, able to release energy, time and money to pursue the things which bring justice, freedom and LIFE to a hurting world, to share the message of Jesus, and to bring more of God's kingdom on earth. Shalom!

Quotes and excerpts were taken from:

St. Francis and the Foolishness of God, by M. Dennis, J. Nangle, C. Moe-Labeda and S. Taylor (1993)

PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

(By Colleen Smith, Coordinator for Homeless Program, Telamon Corp. and Ezekiel's Place Board of Trustees Member)

In January members of the community, local and at large, attended a two day forum at Ezekiel's Place on "Transformative Leadership for Building Community".

Members of the community who work together on projects were encouraged to come together as teams to help formulate plans to revitalize the work they are doing in the community and to infuse new concepts and energy into what they do. Overall my impressions of what I came away with from the forum were:

- Leaders have styles of leadership that are shaped and molded by their life's experiences and thinking patterns that grow out of them.
- Bright energetic people can easily fall into the mechanism of systems and 'ways of doing things'. This can blind us to the truth, cause us to resist change and leave us feeling spent much sooner than we should.
- When God calls a leader He also equips the leader.
- If we are in relationship with Him the process is that power, grace, and mercy flow through the leader for the transformation of others.
- If we are merely practicing religion with its rigidity and rules, we only experience frustration as we try to work things out in our own power with our own limitations. This process has one end: burned-out frustration and resistance to any kind of change.
- Darkness is present only until light dispels it. We are called to be light to the world. (Matt. 5:14-16) Each leader is placed strategically to dispel the darkness in their area. Whether that darkness takes on the appearance of discrimination, being marginalized, poverty, lack of knowledge or lack of action it has the same effect~ elevating the few at the cost of the many.
- Transformative leadership takes the person in a leadership role from the position of having to 'have all the answers', to being the person who asks the right questions and allows those with the issues to be transformed by the working out of those issues. Everyone benefits, everyone has a stake in the process and everyone is on the same level playing field together. When a task is shared by many, the work is manageable and the burnout and frustration ceases to be a common occurrence.

As we allow God to guide and equip us, and as we live with a sense of thankfulness and humility, we can become transformed and transforming leaders, able and willing to listen, to serve and to work in true partnership with those whom we are called to lead.

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I Found it in Honduras!

(by Lindsay Warf, graduate from Shepherd University, and Summer Volunteer in Honduras, 2007)

It's said that you'll find what you are looking for when you are not actually searching for it. A friend and I went to Honduras through Ezekiel's Place for volunteer work (with World Vision, Honduras), and discovered that we weren't much help at all! The volunteer work we were providing—graphic design and teaching English—wasn't what the community needed most. But, the reason we were able to visit Honduras became much less important and the experience of being welcomed wholeheartedly into a healthy, happy family swept us off our feet.

I've never been so welcomed into a home before in my life! Every family member in the neighborhood was squished into the living room to meet us. They told us how important having a family community is for them. It was delightfully easy to fathom. There was no blaring television or video games to distract us from each other. There was no need to give us "our space". Most of the extended family and all of the immediate family, including children, lived in adjoining or nearby houses—only a yell away. Everything was shared and most of the time I couldn't tell whose children belonged to whom. Their warm energy made me feel completely comfortable, like I had always been a part of the family, and perhaps a long lost relative in for a visit.

That is the feeling difficult to find in America, especially with extended family. Have you ever been to a family reunion and felt like a complete stranger? Yup, we are urged to go out on our own and in the process leave family behind. Even further, we often times forget our roots and our history beyond moving from Elm Street to Maple Avenue. We are sniffing out success. We are trained to compete for it through television, sports, the classroom, and work. We are driven by an individualistic greed for it, for survival. It's the American Dream to make it to the top, but who is there when you get there? Who ever makes it there and are they really happy? I don't think it is possible to bring your community with you to the top. The Dream leaves out the support and companionship we crave as human beings. We are pushed out on our own to find this success and leave our best cheerleaders at home.

Being able to leave home without needing our families is a privilege my Honduran family did not have. It appeared they didn't need or want it, either.

The simplicity of their lives made *them* more important than their achievements and material possessions. They were taught to depend on and take care of one another instead of competing against each other. The children didn't ruthlessly fight over rules and points in games. In fact, they even helped little ones on the opposing team make points. They didn't have much in material wealth. Family riches were what counted.

I have to say that it was difficult for me to give up my independence and space. I found it difficult to come home from work and actually stay home instead of running off to my next job or meeting like I would at home. Patience was an important skill I had to hone in on. Independence was something I had to compromise. I couldn't go do whatever I wanted; there was only one car and one driver. We had to ask and plan activities together, which were more difficult, but more fun. If it took everyone talking and planning with at least 10 people over two weeks just to go to the movies, I think more people would be satisfied without the movie or not needing to fill up their time with other stuff. Too much stuff and not enough time is the constant complaint I hear and am guilty of exclaiming myself. Well, eliminate the stuff and then there will be more time.

Honduras taught me many lessons about community, family and what is really important in life. The people I met gave me hope that there are strong, healthy, happy communities in the world and that I can be a part of one. I can start this process by sharing my experiences and my time with my loved ones. So can you. Together we can weed out excesses, rebuild strong communities, and revive family importance. Let's get started!



Lindsay Warf shares with participants at GJV insights from her summer volunteer work with World Vision in Honduras.

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Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty Three Miles

(By Stacey Morgan, Junior and Nursing Student at Shepherd University, and Summer Volunteer in The Philippines, 2007)

This summer I took the excursion of a life time half way across the world. As my first experience out of the country and most certainly my first time off the East coast I traveled to the Philippines for a 6 week adventure that would ultimately change my life. For the past three years I have been toying with the idea of going overseas to do volunteer work. Since I was young I had always hoped to go into the Peace Corps. This seemed so far away to me and I hoped to be able to travel sooner. As a freshman in college in the fall of 2004 I met the Ansons at my first Global Jubilee Village experience (one of the programs provided by Ezekiel's Place). This experience opened my eyes even more to the world outside the United States. Not only was I able to gain a better understanding of impoverished countries, but also the feeling of poverty. Living on rationed food supplies for the weekend made the experience all the more real. Working for money to buy food to feed our family while feeling fatigued was a feeling that will never leave me and I can only imagine how hard it must be to live like that day to day. I took these feelings into my heart and I knew that this was my passion. I knew that I wanted things to be better.

This summer was my first adventure to try to make something better. In the Philippines I worked as a midwife in a birthing clinic especially for poor women. The clinic was run by people who have such a heart and love for the poor that they have made it their life work. Their caring and vision to empower the poor was an honor to be around. I am truly grateful for my experience. The ability to build relationships with the women having babies and give them power over the most amazing experience of their lives was a life changing experience for me. I never would have guessed that at 20 years old I would be 8,553 miles from home delivering babies in the dark(yes, we had a blackout delivery). This experience was the perfect stepping stone for my hopeful career as a nurse midwife working with the poor. I took so much from the experience but it certainly took my heart. I think about my experience everyday and I wish I could still be there.



Stacey Morgan shares with participants at GJV insights from her summer volunteer work with HELP International, in Manila, Philippines.

**“The Danger of Expectations
and Allowing God to do His Work”**
(By Elise Wolf, Junior at George Mason U.,
Ezekiel's Place Summer Intern)

They often say that when working with youth, one should have no expectations. Well I don't know who “they” are (does anyone really know?), but they have great advice. If you have expectations, especially with youth, you will always be wrong. I really expected everything to go just as I planned, that the Youth would respond as I expected them to, etc. I was in for a surprise.



Youth participants & resource persons for the 5th annual summer Creation Care Camp (CCC), at Ezekiel's Place

Obviously, my expectations were wrong. And I must admit it was very discouraging for me those first few days. All of us extensive planners get that way when things aren't perfect in our minds. But then with encouragement and advice from friends, I started to let go of those expectations. As I did that, my eyes were opened to the things that God was doing that I could not have anticipated.

The first bit of camp the youth all have walls up around themselves. No one wants to show the real them or step out of their comfort zone until they know it's safe. The resource team stressed the fact that this needs to be a safe place. We let the youth pick a word to say whenever someone said something unkind or hurtful. The students picked the word “bubbles” and you could hear them yell it to each other often. The students then started letting those walls come down. The ones who hid behind the stereotype of class clowns began to take things seriously. The ones who hid behind being the shy type started to speak up and in front of the group. Even the ones who were always so serious started cracking a few jokes. This process was particularly wonderful for me to see.

“The Danger of Expectations and Allowing God to do His Work”
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Being so close in age to the youth put me in a different place than any of the other resource persons. I was only two years older than the oldest student there. I expected to be treated by them as a leader and authority figure. Well that didn't happen either. I felt as if I wasn't getting the respect from them that I felt I rightly deserved. But then I realized that while I had been viewing the closeness in age as a disadvantage, it could be an advantage. I really was in the position to be a friend to them. I was the cool young leader. A few of them opened up to me and let me in more, allowing me to see the real them even more.

Finally, I expected to touch the youth's lives and drastically change them forever. I never anticipated how they would touch me, teach me, and change me. They taught me a great deal about myself and about others. So keep those expectations at bay because they can stop you from seeing what God is really doing. God will not be limited by what you want to happen. He'll do His work every single time. Just keep your hearts and minds open and He will let you see it. I'm so grateful that He showed me what He was doing and allowed me to be a part of it all.



Youth, together with CCC Co-Director Clark Dixon, experience “hands-on” learning about the variety and beauty of God's creation



Youth enjoy their own cooking at the campout held during CCC (Antietam Creek Campsite)



Youth learn to perform a water quality assessment at Back Creek (near Ezekiel's Place), guided by Sherry Evasic (President of Blue Heron Network)



Youth participants present to parents and friends at the camp feast some of the highlights of the servant leadership workshop and CCC.

What I Learned at Ezekiel's Place Youth Camps in 2007

(by Kenia Moreno, 9th Grade, South Middle School, Martinsburg)

The experience at Ezekiel's Place was unforgettable. You learn stuff about being a better person and being a better citizen so you can help protect the environment. The information you receive there is useful for the rest of your life.

I attended both camps at Ezekiel's Place. I was part of the Servant Leadership camp and also the Creation Care Camp. In both camps they teach you about being a good person and to be a good citizen. They taught us how they both tie in together. One of my favorite things to do at both camps was role-playing. We chose topics that were important to us and then performed skits for the rest of the group.

I loved these camps so much I told Elise, the intern now, that when I'm 18 I'm going to be an intern at Ezekiel's Place too. The camps are so great because you don't just make friends your own age you also make friends with the grown-ups. The best part about the Creation Care Camp was that most of our time was spent outside which was a definite plus for me.

If there is anything to say about Ezekiel's Place it's that it is an amazing place to spend your summer and make tons of friends. Everything I learned at both camps will be with me forever. I hope that with all this information not only one person can make a difference, but all of us.



Being better stewards of God's Creation:
Will we be a part of the problem or solution?

Sustainable Living: Lessening our Footprint

(By Katrina Alger and Sarah Bernier,
Seniors at Eastern Mennonite University)

What is sustainability? How do we understand the story of creation and our place within that story? What kind of implications does that understanding hold? How does nature feed us emotionally and spiritually? Where do we find hope in the enormous face of our environmental crisis? What does it mean to be a member of the community of all life? On October 19th and 20th we joined with a group of people from wonderfully diverse backgrounds and walks of life, to engage these questions and many more.

Our day on Friday began before the sun's, leaving Harrisonburg around 6:30am and driving steadily north. The world slowly began to lighten, and the emerging fall colors speckling the mountain ridges seemed subdued through the fog of the first rainfall we'd experienced in weeks. We had almost forgotten what the world looked like wet. Our destination was Ezekiel's Place, which was hosting the forum. There we would begin to explore and share, for two intensive days, the relationship between faith and sustainable living in our own lives.

The conference facilitators were Dr. Jim Hall and Cheryl Hellner, and Dr. Helen Smith and David Smith. Throughout the conference, these four energetic and visionary individuals helped us to develop a better understanding of our current environmental crisis and discern our role in the context of God's whole creation—both as the creatures most accountable for its destruction, and responsible for its restoration. Each couple provided a blend of scientific and spiritual perspective, inviting us to look at our current environmental crisis in a holistic way—rather than trying to create a false dichotomy between the two.

Our introductory session gave us a brief overview of the current data regarding global climate change and the effects that are already being seen as well as the not-so-metaphorical dark clouds gathering on the horizon. The information did not paint a very promising picture. However, rather than rush past our feelings of fear, anger and despair, we were reminded that the doorway to genuine hope can only be discovered through the struggle with those feelings. Jim encouraged us to hold the full depth of our despair in one hand, and the full depth of our hope in the other—honoring both, and allowing the process of seeking balance to propel us towards action.

That afternoon we were introduced to the work of Thomas Berry, whose philosophy that "the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects," became a recurrent theme for the rest of our sessions. This led into a discussion about the revelation of God's love and grace through the beauty of creation, and how we are connected, through that love, to a larger community of life. The next morning each of us composed a story about a time when we knew we were standing on holy ground and many agreed that the awe of these moments were enhanced exponentially by sharing the experience with others—most notably, the next generation. We spent a good deal of time over the course of the conference exploring the ways in which the natural world contributes to the sustainability of our hope, as well as the importance of making space in our lives for Sabbath—time that allows us to reconnect with creation and the Creator.

Feeling inspired by our dialogue, we concluded the weekend by exploring different tangible avenues for constructing a lifestyle that reflects our acknowledgement of the role we play in God's creation. We were challenged to begin the process by identifying specific choices we can make in our own lives that reduce our footprint on the earth, and creating awareness within ourselves and our communities of

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Sustainable Living: Lessening our Footprint
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the consequences those choices have on people already living in poverty and marginalization.

Saying goodbye to new friends, we couldn't help feeling overwhelmed by the blessings of the weekend. The chance to come together with such a wide variety of like-minded people—especially in such an exquisite setting—was energizing in a way neither of us had anticipated. While the importance of our personal and communal action planning cannot be overstated, our time of fellowship together awakened within us an understanding that went much deeper. Towards the end of our second day, Cheryl shared, during a small group exercise, an experience in which she suddenly realized that “all of creation is just *waiting* for us to come home.” This weekend felt like the beginning of that home-coming—a joyful reunion between two members of the same family who have only begun to realize how much they've missed each other.



Cheryl and Jim share with participants the challenges of and avenues for being better stewards of God's creation (JPA Forum on Sustainable Living)



Eran Goudes, the Israeli facilitator, advises the Israeli peace negotiating delegation, at the 7th GJV experience, as part of a role playing exercise with the Palestinian delegation facilitated by Reem Jafari

**Sustainable Living:
Working Together to be a Part of the Solution**
(By Brandon Denison, Senior at Shepherd University)

I had never been to Ezekiel's Place before. The first thing I noticed was the pure beauty I was so blessed to enjoy during my drive. A perfect scene to put me in the right state of mind for the deeply spiritual, and profoundly awakening experience of which I was about to take part.

Jesus says that where two or three gather in his name, He is there also. I am convinced Christ joined the group at Ezekiel's Place for our forum: *Toward Sustainable Living: Bridging our Faith and Life Style Choices*.

It is really incredible what happens when people of all different types of backgrounds come together willing to share a piece of their life and of their heart with each other. The first few minutes are spent shyly walking into the room, trying to ease the awkwardness of being out of place and uncomfortable. But such hesitations fade quickly at Ezekiel's Place. Community, I realized quickly, is what this place is all about!

The discussion began with a spiritual and educational deepening of the crises God's earth faces. The group entered a period of lament and repentance both for the disregard humankind have shown for the earth, and the disregard we as individuals have shown toward the earth in our every day lives.

The discussion then moved toward grace, and about what we as individuals can begin to do in order to turn the tide, and be better stewards of God's Earth. Indeed, it was overwhelmingly agreed upon by the group that we are most certainly expected by God to be good stewards of His land.

The weekend ended with each of the participants offering to alter our personal goals and plans of action for being better stewards. For me, the most powerful event of the weekend was hearing the group share with one another their ideas about grace. The compassion of the group was so clearly evident. I think each of us was filled with hope.

Throughout the weekend, times of silent reflection were encouraged offering the opportunity to hear God's voice in the silence and to ponder the seriousness of the environmental crises we face.

The resource speakers for the weekend, Cheryl Hellner, Jim Hall, Helen Smith, and David Smith were fantastic! They were such great listeners and moderators. Their passion for God and for God's earth was truly inspiring. They were all clearly called by God to be doing the work they are doing.

I was so deeply blessed and moved by this weekend. I was convicted, inspired, saddened, and uplifted all in the same weekend. Perhaps the best part for me was simply conversing with the other participants during the breaks and in discussions. True community, I feel, was formed. Which is incredible considering the short amount of time we spent together. Our only hope for healing our land is working together. And it feels so good and so right to be a part of the solution instead of a part of the problem.

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Deepening Out-of-Classroom Learning About Global Poverty through My GJV Experience

(by Marianne Monkam, Junior at Trinity University)

I found the GJV experience at Ezekiel's Place very interesting. I was part of the Mexican family. When I arrived Friday afternoon, I met other students from different universities who were going to participate in this experience.

As a member of the Mexican family, my resource person was Felipe Rangel, from Guanajuato, Mexico.

After the initial orientation, each family was allocated food rations, which varied according to country's standard of living. At the evening orientation, we were asked to give a brief overview of our country and the situation of our family, which enabled me to learn more Mexico and the other five countries.

We had to walk back in the dark to our little hut, and were given a little torch for light, but since Mexico was one of the poorest countries, we had one of the smallest torches, plus it was running out of battery. We were sleeping on a hard floor. Before Diana and I went to bed, we talked a little bit, and shared our frustration about being hungry. We prayed together that God would help us and give us the strength to go through the week-end.

The next morning, Felipe led us in the role playing exercise, and we had to do some manual labor in the field, so that we could earn money to purchase food later in the day. After all the energy spent on the field, we did not have any food for lunch, so Diana and I took a nap. In the afternoon we had to work in the garage used as a sweat shop, sorting, cleaning and packaging rice which was being used for enhancing the efficiency of computers. After this role playing exercise, we went to the international shop, where I was the seller for my family. I did a pretty good job by selling at a higher price to the Appalachian family since they were well off. I was using my business skills; I sold all my tortillas as well as my salsa, and had a cup or two left of the beans. I made money for us to buy more food.

After dinner we had a global forum, involving every family as well as several professors. We formed two groups, one on globalization and the other on millennium development goals. I was part of the second group; I enjoyed the group session because it gave each individual an opportunity to express an opinion.

The last day we went over to the Appalachian family to negotiate for financial aid to help our individual countries. However, most of the US aid was diverted to help finance the war in Iraq. Afterwards, we had the opportunity to hear some personal stories from the overseas summer volunteers (Stacey Morgan and Lindsey Warf). Finally, we shared our reflections of the weekend experience as a whole group.

The weekend was a great experience for me; and I look forward to coming again next semester. From this experience, I learned that poverty is not a little issue; it is an issue that needs to be taken seriously by everybody. I was able to feel what a poor person endures in Mexico, but I had a way out. In my case, I was just playing a role; for others, enduring poverty is the way of their every day life. Some die every day without having a way out. I hope to take what I learned from this experience and make a difference later on in my career.



The "Mexican family" at GJV experiences the challenges of day-to-day living by most Mexicans, while also affirming their cultural heritage (facilitated by Felipe Rangel).

*"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
And the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
And a little child shall lead them... (verse 6).
Isaiah 11: 6*



Imani and Amani, Ezekiel's Place sheep-in-residence, enjoy the tranquility and pasture of the land.

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