
Dialogue

Volume 8 Issue 3

Strength for the church's journey into wholeness in Christ August 2007

The subject: *Being World Christians*

Being a "world Christian" is not about finding a great place to spend spring break, or notching a few more countries in our fanny-pack belts. It is about having, as our fundamental identity, citizenship in the worldwide kingdom of God.

There are many implications to be drawn from our new identity. Paul is just scratching the surface when he states what is now obvious for us in Ephesians 2: *"You were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one."*

"The two" he was talking about were Jews and Gentiles. We now have the ability to share the truth-telling and peacemaking ways of Jesus among a lot more than two people groups! We can not only know about all sorts of people in the world, we have the capacity to go be with them. Just lately we are deciding if someone from Shalom House should go to Bogota to help bring attention to the harassment peacemakers are receiving there, and to learn ways to bring people together in Germantown. We have much to share and much to learn. It is an exciting time to be the church.

The loved-ones speaking and spoken-of in this issue have such a wealth of wisdom, born of their experiences! To whom much is given, much is required. We have some unique opportunities that God will be helping us to take in the next few years. I pray they are about Jesus making us one, and not just about one more great thing we got to do! — **ED.**

Immigrant Impressions

Part of Circle of Hope's mission says that promoting the growth of diversity and reconciliation is at the prophetic heart of our gospel. We ultimately strive to be a people who, through God, reach across barriers and welcome everyone into our community.

We have at least eight individuals in our congregation who are not originally from the United States. There are from places like Russia, India, Zambia, Mexico, Liberia, Indonesia, Trinidad and Eritrea. They each bring something different and unique to our community.

Although raised in another part of



the world, they still found their way to Circle of Hope just like the rest of us did.

Meet Natalie Mufalo. She was born in Zambia and moved to England when she was nine to go to school. A few years later she moved back to Zambia. And six years ago she moved to Philadelphia. She said she came to the United States because she had some family ties, and originally planned on moving to Georgia to be with her aunt. She knew a few people in Philadelphia and was back and forth between here and New York.

"I fell in love with Philadelphia, found work, and six years later, I'm still here," she said.

Natalie grew up going to Pentecostal churches and said that being a part of Circle of Hope is much different than what she's used to. She originally got in-

volved with Circle a few years ago because of one of her neighbors in Germantown. The Church was flooded, so the congregation met at her neighbor's house. Her neighbor invited her to worship that night and she has been a part of the community ever since. She said what she liked best was the feeling of community she received and the ministry that goes on within Circle of Hope.

Natalie said the most noticeable difference about living in the United States compared to the other places she has lived is the amount of freedom we have here.

"The best part of America—there are no other places like it. The freedoms and possibilities are available to everyone. You can be who you are. There are never any restrictions. And we can worship how we want to. Having lived in other parts of the world, this is very obvious," she said. "There is so much freedom here—there's also lots of racism and inequality, especially living in the city. You really learn a lot living in a place like this."

Olga Dekalo also knows she is living a completely different lifestyle since moving to the United States 15 years ago. She is originally from Russia, but grew up in Latvia. In 1992, she moved to Brooklyn and in 2005, moved to Philadelphia.

The biggest difference between living overseas and living in the United States, for her, is the difference between cultures.

"Culturally, it is completely different here. Moving here to a democratic country, everything's different—school systems, stores, living privately and owning houses," she said.

Olga said the best part about living in Philadelphia has to be the Circle Community and just having a group of people that you're accountable to.

It is particularly interesting to take a look at where we all come from and how and where we have found God in these different places.

Here are two of the proverbs of Circle of Hope that I find to be especially remarkable when it comes to describ-

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ing who we are and what drives us:

All cultures are fallen, yet Jesus reveals God in all of them. The church does not need to force people to leave all aspects of their culture in order to worship God through Jesus Christ.

Welcoming the “stranger” is at the heart of being a Christian. Hospitality exposes the fear of the giver and receiver to the transforming touch of God.

I think, in a Church like ours, with people coming from different backgrounds, each bringing with them their individual stories, it is easy to see just how blessed we are and how much potential this community has to grow.

Melissa DiPento



Burdens and Blessings: the experience of growing up in two different cultures

In an era where nationalism runs unchecked and uncontrolled and in a season where many people within our congregations are questioning whether Christians should be patriotic or not—the question of national identity has become even more relevant. To what country does one show allegiance? Should one even show allegiance to a nation-state? What does this accomplish? Isn't our “kingdom not of this world”?

As complicated as these questions are for those of us who have primarily grown up in one country—they become even more complicated for those who have a much more ambiguous national identity. This became clear to me when I had the chance to have a conversation with three “missionary kids” that are part of our Circle of Hope: Tandi Book, Joel McIntosh, and Brian Shingledecker. All of these self-described “Third Culture Kids” (TCKs)—a term Ruth Hill Useem coined in 1961—struggle with their national identity. A TCK is basically an individual who grows up in a foreign country and is raised by parents that grew up in another country. Most missionary kids whose parents stayed an extended period of time in a country are “TCKs.”

Tandi Book – Colombia

Tandi Book, an Irish German who spent ten years in Colombia (ages 10 through 18) told me that it wouldn't surprise her if someone considered her Latina. Ten years of being completely emerged in the culture does that to someone, she explained. Much of her national identity is tied to the Colombian culture. Even Colombians mistake her for Colombian, and think her parents are also Latinos. “I feel like we were really closely tied to the culture,” said Tandi. “... people absolutely think I'm Colombian.”

Part of what made Tandi so integrated in the Colombian culture was that she spoke Spanish in public. She did so because she wanted to respect the people of Colombia. Additionally though, “Because of the political situations, you don't speak English in public,” she said.

This concern with integration sets Tandi and her parents apart from many missionaries. Many missionaries have a pseudo-colonial image—many missionaries seem to be trying to spread Western customs and ways of life as much as they are trying to spread the name of Jesus. But Tandi says her parents were totally different; “My parents saw Colombians as equals,” she said. “They really did try to learn from the people.”

However, coupled with the benefits of being so integrated in a culture is a world of complications. Addressing missionary kids or missionaries planning on having children, Tandi notes that, “You will never feel like you have a home,” “you'll never totally have a home” and your identity will be confused. However, Tandi resists the idea that people need to fit in “neat, little boxes”—the truth is that all of us don't fit in anywhere.

However, living between two cultures still leaves a lot to be desired. Tandi confessed “a desire to want to belong.” She doesn't want to have “some crazy nationalism,” though. Beyond wanting to merely want to belong in one culture, Tandi's experiences in both has given her twice the amount of privilege. “I can pick and choose and have the privileges of being white and the ‘exoticness’ of being Latina.”

As I was chatting with her I noted that she had a Colombian flag in her pencil holder. I asked her about it, and she pointedly said, “I would never have an American flag.”

Tandi describes herself as more

proud of her Colombian roots than she is her American roots. Part of the reason for this disparity deals a lot with the relationship that the United States has with Colombia. Colombia is indebted to the United States. As a result of the indebtedness, the World Bank and the United States have certain control over much of Colombia's natural resources. “The American flag symbolizes a lot of things to me that I am against,” she said.

In spite of all the complications that growing up in two different cultures brings, Tandi is grateful for how she grew up. And in the end, it appears like she finds more allegiance to Colombia. “[Colombia] is where my heart is.”

Joel McIntosh – Peru

Joel's situation is not unlike Tandi's. Joel was born in Peru and stayed there for the first 17 years of his life. Whereas some missionaries may stay three years in one country and one back home—Joel's family stayed roughly four years at a time and came back to the States for only three months. His exposure to the United States was smaller compared to most missionary kids.

Joel came back for college and cites this as a common reason for many missionary kids to make their pilgrimage

Dialogue

WHY? *This quarterly journal is a gift to everyone who wishes to be a part of the ongoing dialogue we share in Christ that forms us and deepens us as a real church. Whether you just arrived or have been with us from the beginning, we want you to be part of the conversation and an informed member of the team. We hope you will work with us to build a safe place to experience and share the love of Jesus Christ. Dialogue is a crucial part of that.*

If you would like to respond to any of the articles printed, that would be great. We have never turned a response away, yet — but we reserve the right to do so.

back to the U.S. “A lot of missionary kids just come back to the States for college,” he said. That’s pretty standard—apparently schooling in the U.S. is better. “A lot of missionary kids are just anxious to get out.” Joel was simply ready to move on.

Joel’s family partnered with an Evangelical church in an 85 percent Catholic country. “I wasn’t raised with the idea that Catholics had it all wrong,” he said, “but more with the idea that the Catholic Church was not doing a very good job of nurturing people spiritually.” Joel’s parents were interested in planting largely Evangelical churches and fostering indigenous leadership within those churches.

Joel told me—point blank—that, “the most essential thing about the missionary kid experience is that you don’t know where your home is.” Whereas, most other missionary kids that Joel has met have been to two or more countries, Joel is a dual citizen. His identity isn’t primarily planted in the U.S. with some Peruvian—for the majority of his life, all he’s been is Peruvian.

Joel moved back to the States and ended up studying social work at Messiah. Getting acclimated to the States wasn’t necessarily an easy task. There were a lot of odds and ends that he had to get used to; things like gas stations and convenient stores. Beyond these subtle-

ties, Joel describes relationships in the U.S. as “surface-y and superficial.” Joel said that he “had difficulty connecting to people on a meaningful level.” Additionally, “being in the suburbs [had] a very isolating feel.”

Additionally, he found that “the patriotism that a lot of Americans sympathize with—as far as singing the National Anthem and rooting for the [United States]” to be really different than the patriotism he was used to seeing in Peru. “Peruvians are very patriotic. They love their food, they love their history, and they love the things that they do,” he said. Joel also explained that many Peruvians are also “very skeptical of their government.”

Ironically, when Joel was growing up, he wanted to be in America and not Peru. “I was basically the only White kid in my school... I went to a private Peruvian school.” He didn’t attend the standard in-

ternational, missionary kid-type school. He grew up learning both English and Spanish, and spoke a great deal of Spanish. He jokingly admits that he botches casual American phrases all the time.

As a result, Joel can really relate to many of his Latino neighbors. Much like them, he doesn’t necessarily belong. Of course, his employer and his friends don’t necessarily know that. Joel admits that he has the ability to “act American.” He understands that he can never truly relate to many of his Latino neighbors merely because of his skin color, but he strives to “have an empathy for people that come from different backgrounds.”

Brian Shingledecker – Kenya

Brian, like Joel, was born in the country his parents served in: Kenya. It may be worth noting that unlike many Eastern African nations, Kenya is relatively stable. According to Brian, “It’s probably been one of the most stable

countries in East Africa.” Although it was a British Colony (and often times former colonies have ethnic strife), “Kenya never really went through civil war.” Brian’s father went to Kenya to try and develop a university. The fruits of his labor exist to-

day in the form of Daystar University—a private, Christian college that trains pastors. “My parents chose to do things differently than most missionaries at the time.” Whereas, most missionaries lived with the ex-patriots and in the embassies, Brian’s parents “chose to live in a working-class neighborhood.”

Brian’s national identity is also ambiguous—not just because of his experience in Kenya either. Brian stayed in Guatemala for a period of time as well. He doesn’t cite much Kenyan nationalism—and certainly little pride in the U.S. Brian explained to me that he was “really not big on nationalism.” Brian says, “I’m proud of the States in some ways... if you talk to any missionary kid that spent most of their childhood abroad... they are going to

have a very difficult experience moving back.” Many missionary kids seem to have “a lot of anger and cynicism and hate” toward the U.S.

Brian, who plays Soccer at the open space on Frankford and Susquehanna every Sunday afternoon, developed his interest in the sport in Kenya. Also, in Kenya, he attended a middle school that was very diverse; it mixed with Kenyans, ex-patriots, and Westerners as well.

When he moved to Michigan—although he shared a minor connection with other “new kids, he felt largely isolated. There was no one that really relate to him. A strong extrovert in Kenya, Brian became rather introverted in the U.S.

Brian spoke of the fact that the back-and-forth lifestyle between Kenya and the U.S. made him long to live in the U.S. “I want to see movies when they come out, I want to eat McDonald’s, I want Lucky Charms,” he said. “When you get [to the U.S.]... you start to see things in a way that’s completely different than you saw it before.” The U.S. is not nearly as satisfying as he idealized it to be.

When offered an opportunity to go back to the U.S., Brian jumped on it. “We wanted a chance to go and be American,” he said. “It wasn’t what I thought it would be... it was hard to break in to what was supposedly my culture.”

Brian can relate very closely to the sentiment of Joel and Tandi: “Sometimes you feel like you have a lot of cultures in you, and sometimes you feel like you don’t have anything.” In a lot of ways, Brian just wanted to belong. On one hand, Brian feels American: “my skin is White, I have a U.S. Passport, my parents are American, we have Disney movies... [and] care packages that people would send us with JELL-O.”

At the same time, he sometimes felt totally Kenyan: “You feel like you belong [in Kenya], but when you go out, especially in rural areas, people are staring at you.” Brian even says that if he is with a Kenyan for a while, he’ll begin to speak like a Kenyan.

“Should TCKs be patriotic?”

Although that subtitle is largely a play on Deb Valentine’s recent sermon on patriotism—it’s still a good question. All three of the individuals I interviewed

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not only had a jumbled and ambiguous national identity—they all seemed to specifically shy away from American patriotism. Perhaps growing up in another country gives someone new perspective, perhaps growing in a country exploited by the West makes one skeptical of the U.S.—one probably can't place rules on such matters. But one thing that is confirmed by these conversations is that following Jesus always proves to bring along a mixed bag of experiences. Most of us would probably love to live in another country, learn another language, and experience a new culture. Tandi, Joel, and Brian absolutely did. But at the same time perhaps even the least patriotic of us, would feel a bit lost without our definitive American or national identity.

Jon Rashid



Brethren in Christ Mission

How do we become world Christians? We are world Christians, we don't need to become them. We are the Church and as Jesus' body we are connected all over the world. However, we can become more aware world Christians, and I think we should be actively learning about new cultures in order to understand God and our joint mission. Our church denomination, the Brethren In Christ, has prayed and prepared several options for people seeking to connect to the work God is doing around the world through the Brethren In Christ World Missions (BICWM).

In 1894 money was donated to help send people from Canada and U.S.A. to the other regions in the world, BICWM was begun. "Today the BIC family has 3 international congregations for every 1 in Canada and U.S.A." <http://www.bic-church.org/wm/annrpt06/whereweare.pdf> 7.24.07 Some more numbers (for those who like them): of the 110,313 BIC members, 26,629 live in Canada or US (the remainder is 83,684). You can find these statistics and more on the Brethren In Christ World Missions website.

If you would like to join the International team of BIC missionaries you can start with the web site. It will direct you to the Missionary Development Program

(MDP), "a self paced, character forming and competency driven program." Find the application on their website. Completing the application is not a commitment. If you decide to make the commitment, it is a 3-5 year process that was created to prepare people for effective service in a new culture. It is a well-developed program to help you discern your gifts and listen for God before moving to a new place.

Kim Crognale did not complete the MDP, however she did follow many of the steps involved. During college she studied in Spain and Guatemala. She went to Colorado for missionary training in cross cultural issues and ministry. Then she got connected to BICWM and was sent to Venezuela. It is important to note that she started her life in Zambia and lived there till she was 9 years old. She has been connected to a world mission all her life.

In Venezuela Kim worked as a teacher at the International Christian School, a school for children of missionaries. Kim helped to lead worship at the two BIC churches she was connected to during her time there. She also helped summer mission teams arriving from the U.S. get acclimated to Venezuela. I asked Kim if she felt prepared to serve outside of the U.S. She said that her experiences with shorter missions trips were good preparation for her time in Venezuela. Although she wished she had more language skills, "One area I didn't feel prepared was not being very secure with Spanish speaking. And Venezuelan Spanish is faster with different pronunciation...When you're in an uncomfortable situation, especially language, you really need to rely on God, you see your weakness and God working through your weakness. You can't rely on yourself, you just don't have the skills." Kim and I talked about how she learned to rely on God in a new way in Venezuela and what it is like to rely on God in Philadelphia. She has worked in the public schools in Philadelphia and she sees the overwhelming problems of the city's schools, but even still she said these problems are not as personal, that she can walk away from them. She realizes that she is able to protect herself from problems in this

Today the BIC family has three international congregations for every one in Canada and U.S.A.

culture more than she was able to in Venezuela.

Mim Stern followed a different path to service. She and her husband moved to Zambia and Zimbabwe in 1952 when she was 25. She was trained as a nurse and he as a teacher, but they were not trained as missionaries. When talking about the current BIC process she says, "now they're much more fortunate...the Holy Spirit filled in where the lack of training was." She certainly sees the MDP as a wise step in committing to missions. "It was because of the Lord that we were there, so we knew we could trust."

Mim and her husband also learned to trust God for their family. One of their assignments was to be house parents in a youth hostel. "We didn't have biological children, so those kids filled a great bill... we poured our heart and soul into those kids for 12 years." God provided in ways they did not expect and they parented a generation of missionary children.

The BIC has other ways to serve while staying at home. One of the first that people suggest is prayer. That might seem like a simple suggestion, but I have found that when I actually try to incorporate it into my day it is not so simple. The BICWM has The World Prayer Team; "committed to seeing an informed Church that enthusiastically prays and intercedes for world evangelization." <http://www.bic-church.org/wm/annrpt06/sending.pdf> 7.24.07. Again you can find information about the Prayer Team on the website.

Another suggestion people make is donating money. This really is as simple as it sounds. If you have money and you share it you will be joining in God's work around the world. It is a smart way to use your money. One of the ways the BICWM has created to do God's work in India and Nepal is the Scholarship Program for International Children's Education (SPICE). Clever isn't it, Spice, curry, India, anyhow. We could figure out how many mochas or song downloads are divisible by a child's education, but that's doesn't really help. What would help is some interest and then some money.

If God is leading you to grow in your awareness as a world Christian, I think you should ask your cell to pray with you about it. You could also talk to people that have already committed to missionary service. Consider committing to pray or send money and see how that commit-

ment changes you. I have been asked to be a prayer partner for my sister-in-law as she begins service in Albania. That means committing to pray for her every day until she returns to Lancaster. This is no small task that I am agreeing to. In fact it is daunting. But it is important, tremendously important, for her and for me. I am sure I will be more aware of the world and what God is doing beyond Philadelphia because of it.

Steve Hoke



Americans Abroad

I think I actually gasped when I heard the announcement in my 7th grade classroom: a summer trip to Europe! “Mom, I want to go,” were my first words after school that day. Despite the fact that I had never been on an airplane and none of my immediate family had ever left North America, my desire to travel was strong. Since that first 10-day trip, I’ve spent 11 months in Australia (age 16), a summer in Germany (age 18) and 2 years in Poland (22-24), not to mention several trips to Europe and Australia to visit friends and just have fun. The opportunity to experience other cultures at a young age showed me that there is good life and lots to learn outside the US borders. The vulnerability that comes from a journey to an unknown place required me to depend on Jesus in a different way than in the routine of daily life. Those experiences built a strong foundation of faith and trust that I carry today.

A lot of us at Circle of Hope have lived overseas—many of us a few times in different places. I heard from sojourners in our community who have lived in Africa, Europe, Asia and South America. Our reasons for leaving home included restlessness, education, curiosity, evangelism. As each of us shared ourselves with the folks we met overseas, we were impacted by our experiences. I wanted to share some of what we brought home with us.

Some cultures value a community of family and friends more than we Americans do. “The very basic element of the

community and the family is of foremost importance in the value systems of Asian culture, whereas in our North American culture the individual and personal rights and freedoms are of utmost significance and consideration,” says **Mariko Snook** of her 2 years in Chiayi City, Taiwan. “I think North Americans could gain from a sense of connection with and responsibility for our families, our neighbors and our communities. This sense of connectedness directly affects every element of culture and society.”

Brooke Hoffman noticed the same thing during the 3 years she spent teaching and sharing her faith in Luzhou in Sichuan Province, the People’s Republic of China. “Everything revolves around family and friends. A meal of hot pot easily stretches into a whole evening of eating and talking and eating and talking, because the point is not so much the food—even though it’s so good!—but the people with whom you’re eating it.” Sounds kind of like the community of Circle of Hope, where communal meals happen throughout the city during each week and we celebrate our community by eating and spending time together at Love Feasts.

Brian Baughan spent a year at the University of Durham in England and, based on his time there, he says, “I wish that Americans had a greater sense of the national past, the struggles of past generations, and maybe more about world affairs in general. I remember the English being much more conversant about things like WWII and what events like that mean for us now.”

I learned a lot about overcoming but not forgetting the past during my time in Warsaw, which was 80% ruined by World War II bombs. The Polish people’s resilience amazed me—days after the war ended they started moving the rubble and rebuilding their lives. Today they have overcome not just the ruin of the war, but also decades of Communism. Their history is a part of the present, but it does not weigh them down. It informs who they are and where they come from, but doesn’t say anything about

where they are heading.

Gratitude and joy are attitudes many of us learn overseas. **Melissa Powell** spent 7 months in Nigeria where, she says, “the children taught me the most. They taught me the importance of being genuinely grateful, even for scraps. They showed me the beauty in sacrifice. Mostly they taught me to find joy in all situations.”

The people of Mexico and Brazil showed **Greg Landis** the beauty in sharing. “Their generosity even extended to me, someone who is overwhelmingly wealthier than they. I would love to see this attitude incorporated here in the more affluent circles of Philadelphia. I think that it is probably already at work in the lower classes.”

A slower pace of life is a characteristic of many other cultures. “I miss the afternoon rest time, *xiu xi*, when everyone returns home for lunch and rest,” shares Brooke Hoffman of her time in China. “I miss having my devotions in the local tea garden, where old men gather to drink tea, talk, and listen to their birds singing in cages hanging from the trees.” The North American tendency to hurry through each day is foreign there. The common understanding that “time is money” has no meaning.

Mimi Copp also experienced a more relaxed culture while spending a year in Spain studying peace studies/conflict transformation “Siesta, slower pace of life, no societal messages of guilt given if you’re resting, just being, hanging with friends and not working,” she says. She notes that Spanish speakers frequently use the word *tranquila*, “essentially meaning ‘no worries’ or ‘calm down.’” People generally did not get too anxious or stressed about things.”

Hopefully Mimi will bring a general sense of *tranquila* into Shalom House, the peacemaking community that she’s helping to establish.

Dan Flannery has spent time in Turkey as part of his studies. Back home in the US, he misses the musical worship of Turkish churches. “I really loved singing praise in Turkish in my church there. I love that at Circle we often worship in other languages and it would be a dream come true if we ever did a Turkish (or Farsi)

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song." Dan has incorporated many aspects of Turkish culture, such as music, books and even television, into his life in Philly. Perhaps he'll soon teach us a Farsi song at a PM.

In 1998, after two long years in Poland, I felt that it was time for me to return to the US, at least for a short while. I traveled the country in search of my new home, and I drove a couple thousand miles before God told me I had arrived. I was driving the familiar Schuylkill expressway, heading to visit my brother, less than 100 miles from where I grew up. I couldn't believe that my journey was ending in this familiar place. A few weeks later when I first visited Circle of Hope, God showed me the hub of my new home. It's a place where I can share what I learned while living abroad. We enjoy community, reflect on the past while moving steadily forward, share our gifts, encourage each other to rest and worship together. There is room for others to incorporate their experiences too. After so much traveling, it is good to be home.

Jane Clinton



Last Tree Standing

It seemed pretty pointless at the time: digging one hundred holes in hard orange clay-like dirt, placing an already withering baby tree into the ground, covering its roots with the same clumps of orange dirt, and pouring a gallon of water on it. It was obvious that none of these trees were going to last in the hot West African sun. These one hundred wouldn't and the over three hundred others that we had planted in the two previous days wouldn't either. So it seemed pointless. It was disappointing.

It did seem important when we began. I was leading a team of twenty people on a trip to Burkina Faso, West Africa. We loved Jesus and wanted to help. And twenty white people showing up in a village with a truck full of trees – that caused quite a commotion. The children ran out of their huts to see who we were – they stood on the side of the road and waved as we drove by. The village elders made a big fuss over us – thanking us for our kindness, offering their blessing. The local pastor prayed over us and over the

trees – there was even dancing and singing; worship erupted because of God's provision of these trees. And so we set about doing what we had come to do that day. We planted about fifty trees. It was exciting. We were ministering in a real and practical way in a hurting and needy country.

Day two of planting was a little less exciting. We were at another couple of locations with the same fanfare each time. And though that was fun, blisters had begun to become irritating, the sun was so hot (was it truly culturally necessary for us to wear pants?), and the dirt was so difficult to dig in. We worked hard that second day of planting trees. Two hundred trees went into the ground.

On day three, fatigue started to set in. In the morning, we were scheduled to plant fifty trees along the main road of the capital city of Ouagadougou. The trees would lead right up to the mayor's office. The mayor came out and explained to us how grateful everyone was for our efforts. Trees were so important in a country that suffered drought on a regular basis. They provided shade from the sun. They attracted rain. They held water in the ground. They provided food. This was important work. And we were representing Jesus.

After the fifty trees went into the ground, we took a short break and then headed to a village on the edge of the bush. There was a church there. It was a young church with a young pastor. The plan was to plant one hundred trees around the church property. But for me, as we dug, it seemed, as I said, pretty pointless. But I worked hard anyway and tried to keep my cynicism at bay. Still, in the back of my mind was this feeling that none of this was really going to make a difference.

Fast forward three years. I am back in Burkina Faso for the second time. Again, I have a team of people with me. On our way from the airport to the place we would live for the next few weeks, we drive by the mayor's office. Fifty trees were planted there. Fifty trees have died. Talk about discouraging. I ask our host (my friend Pete) about the

trees we planted. He tells me that all of them have died. All of them except one. Four hundred trees were planted. Three hundred and ninety-nine have died. Disappointing.

A few days later, we are driving and Pete pulls off the road and starts heading for what appears to be nowhere. When our vehicle finally comes to a stop, we are in front of a church and there is a solitary mango tree growing in front of it. The one tree that survived. The one tree that sprung to life. It is healthy and it is beginning to do the things that we hoped that it would do. It is growing roots, it is holding water in the ground, it is providing

shade and fruit.

In that moment, I wonder to myself if all the effort was really pointless. Surely it wasn't. This one tree survived, and it was making a difference for that church and that village. That was amazing.

And I think that this is the story of Africa (and by the way, the story of God). There is so much work to be done. Poverty. AIDS. Diseases. Wars. It is a continent in need of hope, in need of love, in need of peace, in need of Jesus. And the body of Christ needs to respond. The body of Christ needs to minister in real and practical ways to a hurting land. When we do that, it may seem pointless. There is so much poverty. There are so many people infected with diseases that we cannot cure. There is so much pain and fear as a result of war and racism. Our efforts seem like a drop in the bucket – there is always so much more. But the body of Christ needs to put forth the effort. Because the effort makes a difference to the one person who finds life as a result. I see the work of God in that picture, do you?

Pete is my contact in Africa. He's always up for a visit. He always has work to be done. It is not pointless work – it makes a difference...even if it's to just one person.

Have you been to Africa? Do you have contacts in Africa? Do you have contacts with a stellar international travel agency that might be able to find cheap flights to Africa? Would you mind sharing that information with us?

As a network, we are beginning to pull together an Africa Database with the hopes of inspiring more people to put forth

There is so much pain and fear as a result of war and racism. Our efforts seem like a drop in the bucket – there is always so much more. But the body of Christ needs to put forth the effort.

the effort that is needed to minister in real and practical ways in Africa. We think you know people and we want to know those people, too. If you have any information that you can contribute, please contact CJ Reynolds or Nate Hulfish. Once the database is up and running, it will become a resource for you to use in perhaps planning your own tree planting, life giving, or life changing trip. Maybe we'll go see Pete together – he'd love you.

Nate Hulfish



Reports from the Field

Christians have always known they were transcultural. If you are rich, like Americans, you can take advantage of the technology and act like it. We have friends all over the world, right now. We're one with them and they with us, even though they are having some remarkable experiences. Here are four excerpts from various blogs, lists, emails about what people have been doing this summer.

David Sonne in China. May 31, 2007

David doesn't say a lot about where he lives or what he's doing. His visa isn't for being a missionary. But he did send out a bit about his trip to Tibet. David is a covenant member and does his best to keep the connection. This is part of a letter his brother sent to a list of loved ones...

We went to the only mountain in the world that has never been climbed. There have been many teams over the years that have tried to conquer this peak, but they always die trying. The local Tibetan Buddhists believe the mountain to be a god, so they put a curse on anyone who tries to climb it. It's rated as the most beautiful snow-covered mountain in China. But it's shrouded in cloud 300 days out of the year. If you are lucky enough to see the mountain at sunrise though, all the white peaks turn golden in the rising sun. We just happened to be there when there were no clouds, and we got up at 5:00 a.m. to see it during the

sunrise. By the time the sun finished rising, it was already covered in cloud, but we had already taken lots of pictures.

We climbed up to a 15,000 foot altitude prairie later that day, and we made a fire by the side of an alpine lake and cooked yak-butter tea. The mountains above this prairie are so high that even yak will not climb it, and the local people have to eat brown sugar to counter-act the altitude sickness. We walked back down into town, and that night we got up on the dance floor and sang and danced with all the Tibetan young people. The next day we taught in some primary schools and then started on our return trip.

We passed through Shangri-la on the way back and visited a huge Tibetan temple. My Chinese friend had connections with the local government officials, so we were able to visit a national forest there for free as international guests of the government. Our whole week of travel only ended up costing us about \$80!

Annie Kopena in Kingston, Jamaica. June 25, 2007

Annie threw herself into the lives of children for a few months. She sent this reflection to include in our website's blog...

I have met a lot of really amazing people here. Some of these people are just sacrificing so much to serve God, that it's really awe inspiring.

I was supposed to meet a pastor this week; he did a lot of work in one of the most violent areas in Kingston, Rema. This pastor went into that community and started rebuilding. He helped at the school I'm working at. I still hadn't met him because he's been so busy. On Friday he was murdered with a pitchfork. All people are saying is that his past caught up with him, which in Jamaica implies "sexual immorality." Now many of the people of Rema are crying out against Christians, and threatening their lives.

The really strange thing though is that most Jamaicans, believe in Jesus, they see him as God; but many people here don't think God has any role in their lives. They feel completely displaced, like they live in an environment so godless that developing a relationship is futile. I think what the people are really mad at the pastor about is

that they wanted to feel that change was possible, and now because a pastor couldn't be perfect, they feel like it's not possible for them.

The thing is, in this country I think Christians make people feel that way. There is so much thinly veiled judgment in the church community that it's hard to breathe sometimes. It often sounds like if you're not a Christian you're a member of an inferior species. Today at a prayer walk some one prayed that certain poor communities will "cast off their animal ways." To me when people do that they're misusing the name of Jesus. Jesus didn't shed his blood just for Christians, or just for super-Christians who carry their Bibles in special cases or affix crosses on every possible accessory. Jesus died for all of us. As a Christian, I feel like it's our responsibility to reach out to people, regardless of whether they're Christian or not. It's our responsibility to provide fellowship.

Here, when I meet people, when I say I'm a Christian, I feel some recoil and become more apprehensive. That tears me up inside because, that kind of fear won't bring people to God. Fellowship and openness provides an opportunity to bring people in, to grow and experience God's love. Judgment doesn't. I wasn't always a Christian, and luckily I wasn't cast aside like a leper.

I understand what people are trying to accomplish here with strict rules and judgment. They feel like they're throwing a lifeline of structure in a society that is so chaotic and unstable. They're providing another option in a country that is filled to the brim with crime, corruption and other troubles.

I've been thinking a lot about the Parable of the Sower. Especially, when Jesus says "Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants" Matthew 13:7 (NIV). I think of those thorns now, not only as natural flaws, but obstacles of environment, and socio-economic situation. Any one who has ever gardened knows that you don't get plants to grow in tough soil by cursing. The plant needs work, time, attention and love. Jesus used metaphors because when every thing else becomes so complicated it's easier to look at things in simple terms. I pray that Christians of Jamaica will take a step back, use the metaphors Christ has given us and say "Look here, yelling's not really going to work."

(Continued on page 8)

Andrea Wilson (sister to Sarah) in Kabul, Afghanistan. July 7, 2007

Andrea recently extended her assignment with the National Health Service through the end of the year. This is an edited part of one of her blogs...

6:30 Barely awake, I shuffle the mere 20 yards across the compound in search for coffee; a process which, in true Afghan style, takes nearly 20 minutes. Each greeting spins away in Dari (the Afghan version of Farsi—Persian) with a barrage of salutations that translate as, "How are you? Are you fine? How's your family? How's your health? How was your previous day? How is the weather? How's your style?" and

countless others.
7:10 With Arabic pop music blasting through broken speakers, we pile into the 70s minivan and truck across town. The streets buzz with morning life in Kabul, which results in a near 8:1 male: female ratio.

7:30 Training begins. The distinctive features of Hazaras, Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Uzbeks are present in a wide and abundant variety as 59 men and 2 women from Afghanistan's 12 central provinces gather for regional training. I'm responsible for managing the national health survey within Afghanistan's central region, which can prove quite the entertaining as well as challenging undertaking.

12:00 Lunch break. Trays of kofta (ground beef), mutton (goat), Kabuli Pulo (fried rice with raisins and carrots), and an absurd pile of naan gather into a sea of food. The table of 12 men explodes into laughter following a recurrent joke of the misery a man faces following marriage. So...after the laughter subsides I comment that I've frequently heard a given rendition of this joke and wondered if women joked similarly amongst themselves. Blank face, they stared back until one responded..."Oh...well...we have no idea."

2:30 Tea break....number 4.

5:00 While discussing details for our compound 4th of July party, an Afghan colleague comments that such is our Independence Day. "In your country you have only one Independence Day, but here in Afghanistan we have many....one from the Brits, one from the Russians, one from the Taliban, and hopefully, one from the US"...and the list continued. Though executed with humor, his comment was a stark illustration that Afghanistan's fight for independence is centuries old, and will not easily be solved.

6:30 Over dinner with fellow expats, the conversation turns to stories under the Taliban reign. Some stories were dreadfully horrific, others well documented but nonetheless unfathomable, and then there were recounts of the simple mundane daily occurrences. Two accounts, however... caught me so off guard, they simply must be shared.

Today at a prayer walk some one prayed that certain poor communities will "cast off their animal ways." To me when people do that they're misusing the name of Jesus. Jesus didn't shed his blood just for Christians, or just for super-Christians who carry their Bibles in special cases or affix crosses on every possible accessory. Jesus died for all of us.

A. Resulting from (apparently) the global rage over Hollywood's "Titanic", "Titanic Haircuts" were national outlawed under the Taliban...the Leonardo DiCaprio golden hair swoop would simply not fly in this country.

B. The summer of 2001, a friend was invited to join the local security force

(aka...the Taliban) for dinner. After what he recalled to be a frightful dinner with long bearded men refusing to break a smile, he noticed a large display of trophies in the back of the mud compound. Plagued with curiosity, my British friend delicately probed for an explanation of the competition, war, etc. which resulted in such a collection. Stone faced, a man responded "Oh... the Taliban volleyball competition."

9:00 The fifth and final call to prayer (aazam) echoes throughout our room with the two nearby competing mosques proclaiming from the top of their minarets:

"Allah is great

There is no God but Allah
Mohammad is His prophet
Come to prayer.
Come for deliverance"

10:00 The electricity cuts out...for the 10th time today. I surrender to this reality, and quickly fall asleep.

Bryan Gouge, On boat to Iquitos, Peru in the Amazon, July 22, 2007

Bryan and his friend, Steve Williams did a shoestring tour of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, looking for adventure and God and ways they might serve. This is a bit from one of his updates...

The food line has become the new point of interest and excitement for both Steve and myself. It mirrors much of the depictions from Nazi concentration camps.

We were instructed beforehand that there were no utensils or bowls on board so we had to purchase our own prior to boarding. When any meal is served everyone saunters down to the bottom floor and lines up in a queue of massive proportions. Each passenger stands with their bowl in the left hand and their spoon and ticket in their right. There is one cook, a flamboyantly gay, portly Peruvian who refuses to cook with a pot smaller than a Volkswagen bug and pays intricate attention to keeping his rainbow-painted fingernails unscathed in the process. And there is one ticket checker, a flamboyantly gay emaciated Peruvian whose eyeliner seems to be frightened of his eyebrows and constantly runs down his face.

We are met by these 2 lovely men when we reach the end of the food line. The overall morale of the line is low and the structure is regimented. It moves swiftly and no one complains when they receive their food. This is, most likely, because no one knows exactly what it is they are being served and by the time you weave your way through the army of hammocks you are too tired to question the methods of the maniacal cook.

This morning due to the extreme heat I entered the line without a shirt. I was served an extra helping of grey stuff and received a helping of good bread. This leads me to believe that if I continue my flirtation with the cook we may get lobster. It's a risk I am willing to take at this point. I have been reduced to joining in on a great dance of seduction with a sweaty, overweight Peruvian man. Life on

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a boat is rather maddening.

It is exciting to celebrate the connections we have all over the world. There are many others who are across borders right now. It makes you want to pray.

Rod White



A World Christian Family

My relationship with Kim Kyong Ah, began in Tokyo in the spring of 1995. You might know her now as Kate Sorrentino. At the time, to me she was Kim-san.

Our story and its details are particular to us, but as I sit down to think out the interesting challenges of a Christian international marriage and family, it seems the most relevant body of data available. We happen to have tons of interesting challenges.

In the spring of 1995, the main challenge was communication, on a pretty basic level. As in I think I'm saying, "Wow, you look really pretty today," and Kim-san hears, "Continually similar to flounder today," or something worse. It was a wonder we were able to have any kind of exchange of ideas. But infatuation makes a lot of that superfluous I suppose.

Kim-san and I were both students of Japanese language in Tokyo that year, and both of us were having our romansbildung, the journey abroad of the emerging adult. I was escaping inevitable post-graduate restaurant work, she, similarly unrewarding office work in Korea. Our courtship hastened our acquisition of language skills considerably, and it was all such an adventure, and so difficult, and so rewarding. The common things that many couples could get hung up on, notions of values and ambitions, what each of us wanted from life, all these things were refreshingly absent, indeed they were at that time all but inexpressible for us. All our communication efforts were concentrated on the immediate and tactile. It was exciting to understand each other a little more each day. In such a whirlwind we promised ourselves to each other, for life, whatever changes may come.

When I think back to that time I seem

pretty courageous, or maybe reckless, to myself now. I knew that what we were doing was unconventional, and there would be some difficulty, but that seemed to make it all the better. It seems to me many international, cross-cultural, and trans-lingual romances start out in that same kind of spirit. Many of us who marry outside our culture group are adventurous and curious people; it isn't strange that that spirit shows up when we take on the challenge of finding a mate to share one's future.

Given the difficulty (even though I couldn't have known it completely then) it was not a small thing that Kim-san and I shared faith. Despite our limited communication skills and our very different sets of experience and expectations, we were both we on radial paths striving for the same Center. Jesus seemed bigger than all our differences, so speaking for myself here, I thought it would work out. We had Jesus with us. That seemed safe enough.

Since then, our shared life has changed a lot. Each change brings with it a new challenge: a risk that our basic differences will discourage and frustrate, and an opportunity for love to find a means to cover the divide. As we grow and change together, I am constantly surprised by just how different we are, and the great gift of love that spans the separation. Here are a few of the many challenges:

Country

You have to live somewhere. When Kim-san and I were deciding to get married, we were in a country native to neither of us. We shared the frustrations of being outsiders in a very homogeneous culture, as well as the joys of discovering a noodle shop we hadn't yet tasted, or a new useful phrase in Japanese. We were on even ground in a sense: though Kim-san was slightly older than I, and rather more fluent in Japanese, I did not perceive a difference in our age. We divided the household duties and decision-making pretty evenly and effortlessly.

In 1999, we moved to my home state of New Jersey and started a very different life. Kim Kyong Ah became Kate Sorrentino, resident alien. I was working, she was taking care of the kids. I began to perceive a difference in our age - I felt much older and did

not welcome the new un-evenness in our relationship. Kate was not the independent free-wheeling equal partner that Kim-san was.

First, we went from an urban lifestyle to a suburban one. Having a license to drive was a matter of course for me, for Kate, it had never been relevant before. But now, she was stuck in the house or being driven around by me. She had to be driven everywhere, which was tiring. How I missed trains and local markets of our Tokyo neighborhood!

In Tokyo, we lived separated from both our families. There were some Japanese friends, but we were basically a little two-person community. When we came to live in the states, my family was all around, all the time. Of course they had expectations of how a wife and mother should be, how a house should be kept, how food should be prepared and stored...all completely unknown to Kate, expectations which they unknowingly transmitted. Though this was not intentional, it caused Kate much stress. They were simply doing their best to understand her through their limited experience. They couldn't know that their expectations would be considered completely strange in Korea.

Children

As our children got bigger, and even now as they continue to grow into each stage of life, we discover differing attitudes and practices about childrearing. Things I considered normal were just not a part of Kate's upbringing. So each thing has to be talked out "from scratch." It's not just "how should we assign chores?" but "I think chores are important because..." or even "around here it's normal for children to have some household responsibilities..." Often we discover that we have really different ideas of what "normal" is. It takes some detective work at times to discover what we're actually fighting about. A conflict that appears to be about who dropped the ball, say, is actually the result of a lack of consensus. It could be about bedtimes, or education, or whatever. For example, in Korea, where there is immense pressure to study and succeed for middle and high school aged children, early childhood is seen as a time for tolerance and relatively lax discipline. My expectation and upbringing was completely opposite: I gained more freedom and the discipline

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relaxed as I entered adolescence. What I think it is the right way and normal is unknown to Kate!

Cluelessness

The worst part is that I was pretty blind to the changes going on. Immersed in the warm familiar bath of my own culture, I became blind to the radical difference of Kate's experience: the constant tension of the need to interpret everything, the uneasiness of every interpersonal exchange in a new language. While trying to help her through the adjustments, I became more and more impatient. Things that were so easy for me were so time-consuming for her! Even though I was "home" everything was a hassle! And there was no good way to express the frustration.

Context

The choice of where to live is a very significant decision for international couples. Unless home is in a neutral country such as our Japan, the setting inevitably privileges one spouse and disadvantages the other. I really should have known better. I experienced being the outsider in our first shared church community. We were attending a Korean church in Japan, and the experience was very difficult for me. I understood little of what was being taught or sung. I felt unaccepted by the other men of the church. They would invite me to participate in classes and such with a forceful bravado that made me really uncomfortable, and I would decline, or join in begrudgingly, feeling pretty coerced. The Koreans did things in the name of church that were unfamiliar to me, and sometimes even things that seemed downright wrong, and I had no one to call on to explain it to me other than Kim-san. So I made her answer for all Koreans. Things were better when we started attending a Japanese church in the neighborhood. At least when weird stuff happened, Kim-san didn't have to feel the blame of it.

It is a discipline to understand your relationship with your spouse, in all its imperfection and lack, as a real spiritual

unity, particularly when one partner is feeling so dependant or mystified and the other feels nothing but impatience and limitation, or even blame. The perceived weakness of one spouse, if we are to take Paul's encouragement to the Corinthian church seriously, is actually strength to the unified two. If we can really get into all the glory that's packed up in God's word to Paul, we might think differently about all the "hassles" of taking a spouse from a radically different background:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

And Paul's instructive reaction:

"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Well that's a pretty freeing thought for me.

*Gladly!
Delight!
We are strong!*

If I am really going with Paul's understanding here, I have quite a lot of security to bank on. I can go ahead and feel limited, misunderstood and encumbered and know that it's working out for the greater unity of Kate and I. I'm free to not see every difficulty as error, or of "incompatibility" (whatever is meant by that!) but as the gift of a space that love can grow into, and the promise of seeing that happen.

Scott Sorrentino



MCC

An article highlighting our involvement with the Mennonite Central Committee will appear in the next issue. Here are a couple of examples of where we are involved in unusual places.

MCC in Afghanistan

MCC supports education, community development, peace-building and health work in Afghanistan.

In Paghman, west of Kabul, MCC provides a grant to Help the Afghan Children to manage a school for 2,000 boys and girls and to help train teachers. Another partner that works with children and youth is Le Pelican, which has a center in Kabul providing education, vocational training and supplementary meals.

MCC contributes funds and helps support personnel in an International Assistance Mission (IAM) project to bring electricity to rural communities. MCC also supports an Afghan nongovernmental organization, Cooperation for Peace and Unity, for conflict transformation, peace-building and community development efforts and has helped support a tuberculosis control and treatment project of MEDAIR, a Swiss Christian agency.

MCC in North Korea

As North Korea becomes more marginalized, MCC feels it is important to remain involved there, even if the going is uncertain.

In conjunction with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Caritas Hong Kong, MCC sends shipments of canned meat, grain and newborn kits to North Korea.

MCC works with American Friends Service Committee to facilitate agricultural exchanges between North Korean participants and Mennonite farmers. MCC encourages the U.S. and Canadian governments to use engagement rather than confrontation in political dealings with this politically and economically isolated country.



**Readers,
please respond!**

Your responses may just be printed in the next Dialogue! We love hearing what you are thinking.

E-mail to rod@circleofhope.net

Goal Check *January-August 2007*

This is a regular feature of this publication. We want everyone to have some facts so we can have authentic dialogue! We adopted these goals in January of 2006. Every issue we ask our leaders to evaluate our progress toward meeting them.

Network

Jeremy Avellino, Coordinator, assessing

• Find the next 200 -- Grow enough to justify preparation for another planting

We are discerning as a network on how to move forward with the K&B building project. Since beginning to actively seek out other options a new sense of life has emerged around the imminent need for more space. Events at the BW space bring in many first timers.

• Share the spiritual wealth -- Encourage training and development

ESOL classes continued at sites connected to both congregations. Monthly cell leader trainings continued to be a setting of learning, growth, sharing, and development.

• Operate out of our uniqueness -- Refine our sense of being one and many

The seed of Danielle and Bess' coffee shop has been planted. We tried a new format for the love feast, with baptisms / hang out time at the beach and the feast back in the city. More folks continue to value our common vision by making a covenant.

• Make it easy to connect and contribute -- Propel the network's common purpose through better communication

The communication via the revamped website continues to develop and flourish, including blog entries from various members of the community. We're also up to Chapter 9 of the interactive book, 'A Circle of Hope'!

• Take what God's built into the next level -- Provide for an administrative overhaul

Dave Valentine, Paul Kohl and a dedicated group are forming the Network Operations Team to better assess how we'll operate when we double in size to 800.

Circle Venture

Nate Hulfish, CV Vice Chair, assessing

• Refresh Circle Venture as part of Circle of Hope's DNA

The Coordinators receive the bi-weekly "Recent Ventures" e-mail.

A quarterly one-shot opportunity occurred in July. Eight Circle of Hope people aided in neighborhood clean-up efforts with Philadelphia Praise Center (an Indonesian Church in South Philly). Thanks to Randy Nyce for his efforts in connecting with PPC.

A training session for CV mission team leaders was held on August 20, 2007. The leaders discussed the financial aspects of generating compassionate service.

• Give people better tools to tell the Circle Venture story

A bi-weekly e-mail is sent to Mission Team Leaders and Coordinators.

The Circle Venture website is still in the upgrade process. Circle Venture is in discussion with some individuals about helping this process along.

Video footage is still being taken as part of the plan to highlight CV teams.

• Include Circle Venture in the Administration plans of Circle of Hope

Circle of Hope did not hire a Pastor of Operations. Circle Venture has participated in general Network Operations discussions.

Budgeting discussions have occurred with individual Mission Team leaders in order to improve the budgeting process. The CV Core Team is learning how to communicate with teams when it comes to money.

• Aid in the expansion and connectiveness of our agencies

Circle Venture aided BLUYS monetarily after a robbery in the early summer. We continue to seek to integrate BLUYS into the Network and connect to the Northwest neighborhood.

The members of Shalom House moved in on July 1.

• Deepen the sources of support for our mission teams

Some grant research has occurred and potential grant opportunities were highlighted for numerous teams that fit these grants. Presently, Free CFL and Unda Water are in the process of grant writing.

Circle Venture has been working with abunga.com in order to be listed as an approved non-profit.

The Summer edition of *New Ventures* was published and mailed in July.

Broad and Washington

Rod White, Pastor, assessing

• Find the next 100 -- Penetrate neighborhood tribes, oikoi and social systems.

We are incrementally growing in a healthy way. But aren't near the 100 mark. We have made some strides in penetrating new oikoi and have more plans in the offing.

• Use our attractive front room well -- Hold fun, useful and helpful events in our space.

The Events Team, 12 for the Next 100 Team, Circle Thrift have all contributed to the use of our space. We learn to use it better all the time. We recently hosted our first quincenera!

• Welcome the whole kingdom of God -- continue to diversify

The ESOL classes continue to reach out. We connected with our Indonesian friends down Broad St. We continue to meet neighbors through the PMs and Circle Thrift.

• Open a new front door -- Help Circle Thrift 2 to succeed

It is amazing that the store began to turn a profit so quickly! We're wondering if we can get people to go to the mezzanine for an annex, if it expands.

• Reach out a loving hand -- Connect with the needs of the neighborhood.

We did some street cleanup. But, apart from people who serve professionally, we are not dramatically connected to the needs of the neighbors. Circle Thrift and Circle Counseling should not be forgotten. The work of the CFL Team, Reconciliation Team, ESOL Team, Shalom House, Community Connections Team, also help engage us.

East/Kensington and Boston

Joshua Grace, Pastor, assessing

• Step up to the challenge -- Move to the new home base

We've been kept out of our new space for over a year, and a new team is forming to come up with the next rendition of our plan.

• Spread the surface area -- Use our buildings well

The free Baby Goods Exchange, film debuts, and some shows help us make new friends.

• Celebrate our diversity -- Continue to foster connections

The ESOL teams "English Conversation" at a local restaurant have been fruitful.

• Get organized -- Refine our administration and communication

The Network Operations Team has been forming, we've been reforming our infrastructure to better facilitate mission.

• Commission new workers -- Bless the partners who are will to serve

We have a large group of new cell leaders and apprentices, this season we'll unleash some new worship leaders as well.



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