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Community Federation in Landholding Trust

Griscom Morgan
Vale Community

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Learning Nucleus May Be A Leaven For Larger Community

[Frances Crary, Box 403, Lakeport, Calif., received more letters about their efforts at community (reported in the November *Green Revolution*) than she could handle personally. She sends this additional information.]

Our effort here is to form a nucleus group in the hope that we can ourselves live better lives and create a more creatively human way within the "normal" community. Our "school" is a loose arrangement of meetings. We do not want to form "classes." We want, at least right now, to remain fluid. We are trying to find out through established groups, classes and institutions what the community wants, and whether it is or it not getting it. We want to arouse awareness in people of their own meaning or meaninglessness. We don't mean to tell them, but help find ways of becoming aware of this. We have much to learn; social scientists are trying to answer the questions we're seeking answers for. But our job here is as much seeking questions: we discover slowly the true reality of our town, our county; and to us this is education.

We all live in our regular homes in our neighborhood; any person who wants to may join us; to study our community, educate ourselves. We share my ranch, with farm pond, hiking, fishing, swimming, picnicking. Another shares his orchard, fruits and land, where he can. Another sells his crop to us at his wholesale price; the lives of the whole group are enriched. Most of us homestead in small or large ways. Sharing food is easy, and we enjoy that. We meet once a week, and try to discover how to behave so that no one will be disturbed, imposed on, or feel pressured. We try to introduce into each meeting some new experience, some new awareness, to become conscious of our feelings, our bodies, our senses, our degree of awareness or non-awareness. We talk some; find much to explain and understand about ourselves; we watch our emotional reactions to each other. This learning about ourselves (what attitudes we have and have had) gives us new insight into what goes on in the town and country. We test ourselves daily in our dealings with ordinary people.

A Few Examples

We sometimes struggle with the difficult and painful problems of working with a neighbor who is rigid, lonely, absorbed in her own illness. We can be impatient and suppress it; we can be irritable; or we can learn how not to be impatient. We can relate, concentrate, make a real effort to see beyond our impatience, and watch impatience disappear. Such is growth. We work by being a neighbor, helping out, visiting, taking her places when she can't manage, etc.

Another might be being a neighbor with one who would not repair his part of a fence around a common pasture in which both had stock. To talk to this neighbor without anger, to deal with his anger, and deal with our own: listen to his excuses, tell him what we thought was the truth. Then go home and rebuild the fence, accepting that he "could not do his share at this time in his life." How he responds when he sees it all fixed may be a learning for him. But it was a learning for us, to feel good about it all.

We also see ourselves not learning, when a neighbor got badly hurt and we made excuses why we could not send money, make food, go help with their chores, do what they needed. And we never did. We saw ourselves miserably calling finally to say, "Tell us if we can help." But they didn't. What are we then?

Or when a family without

bed and board (due to their own bad management, true) wanted to move in with us, and we took them. But then felt our own frustrations, angers, ruined privacy, resentment of their "free loading." . . . What is real human behavior when a stranger knocks and is unable to take care of himself (for physical, mental, emotional reason, or simply because he is a child yet)? What do we do with smug satisfaction when we do manage to act human? What do we do that is good for the person, even though he may not like us for doing it? What is the test of what is "good for another"? These are people in the large community, and the large community does not ask the question.

Leaven

We try to live as aware community within the larger community because it seems sensible to us that real change in our world will come through the effort of ordinary people, living as part of that work; of people consciously making an effort to affect their community, not just an expression of private satisfaction, but as a whole way of life. Service clubs "do good" in the community, but not through self study, self awareness and growth. We are consciously opposed to any group that defends, or does not question; fears all deep analysis or self study. But such groups act as foil for our excesses, and are valuable. We hope example will be convincing.

We would like to educate children, our own, at first, in a manner that is more intensely human-centered. So far we have done little. We need more people to help. We also want to open a book-coffee-shop, and publish a small paper—a place where anyone can come any time, talk, express his ideas, anger, love, fear, whatever—and know he will be received and heard. We would have speakers, discussion. We had a chance to rent or buy a building with a Health Food Store, but so far none of us has time to run it. If we had a person to set up such a center, we could function—exchange and sell excess garden foods, etc.

I suppose our effort is to learn to be human. To learn it in a normal environment, and to practice it with the help and consciously expressed effort of others living near us. This is our education for living. — Frances Crary, Box 403, Lakeport, Calif.

[Editor's Note: We agree that this is an important part of learning how to live. Knowledge of self and awareness of others is often a very neglected part of education. And it seems to us a necessary part to that further and needed step in education—the changing and improving of institutions, or regularized and legalized aspects of living. To have the knowledge and trust that comes from the sharing practiced in the Lakeport nucleus community is the basis for good communication about other wider and serious public problems like land tenure, exploitive credit, indeed the whole problem of Government and the political State. Learning how to live, in both personal and public aspects, is a life-time task. Courage and congratulations to the Lakeport group, and any group attempting it.—MJL]

The Green Revolution

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Dee Sprague to Judge Kenneth Proctor

Dear Sir:

May I say that we do not take this matter flippantly — our resistance to compulsory vaccination, and its resulting charge of negligence. Nor do we think we are fanatics or perverse humans who enjoy flaunting the law or doing battle with it. Perhaps we have been ignorant or naive in reaction to a regulation which, on the basis of our deepest convictions, we felt was at best, unnecessary, and at its worst, potentially dangerous to our children.

I realize this may be contrary to prevailing medical opinion. However, I am sustained by a philosophy of life and health which has helped me raise five children (from 8 to 22 years of age with singular results, despite many odds, as far as health goes. They are not perfect and I am an imperfect mother. Still, not one of them has a dental cavity, not one has been hospitalized (except the 8-year-old with a tongue laceration after a car accident). Not one has had tonsils removed, nor suffered from a serious or critical illness.

For this I feel little indebtedness to the medical or dental professions. A couple of doctors have scolded me for questioning and resisting antibiotics. A dentist was amazed at my concern with nutrition, saying, "Kitchen dentistry, we call it. I say let the kids have their sweets, just so they brush their teeth and have regular check-ups." No doctor encouraged me to breast-feed my babies, but they were all breast-fed for at least a year — nature's way of immunizing tiny new life through a healthy mother. Every summer of their lives my chil-

dren have had a garden full of fresh vegetables, and I have tried to encourage in them a reverence for the soil and the inter-dependence of living things.

I have for many years been interested, along with a minority of people, in ways of encouraging and educating families and young people toward creative, productive and independent country living. This to counter what we consider the over-concentration of humanity in urban centers alienated from nature, breeding tension, crime, congestion and disease. In view of this and what I have said above, it is somewhat painful to be charged with "neglect."

It would seem that the effort required to take one's child to the doctor for "shots" occasionally is as nothing (and perhaps closer to neglect) compared to the sustained effort over the years of trying to teach your children responsibility for their own health, disciplining their food habits (and your own), raising and processing a garden, etc.

We have expressed our willingness to let the children take an oral vaccine for smallpox as given by homeopathic physicians, but we were told that this was not acceptable. Later we learned that the Homeopathic M.D.'s are licensed to practice in Maryland. We are still willing for the children to take this treatment, which we consider much safer, should the Court modify its stand on the matter.

If we were to pledge to the Court that we would move out of Maryland as soon as possible, would the charges against me be dropped? — Delores E. Sprague, Dec. 29, 1966

Community Federation in Landholding Trust

[Griscom Morgan, of the Vale Community and of Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, O., writes to Mark Goldes, founder of the Shalom project, Oregon.]

Dear Mark Goldes:

I found your letter in November *Green Revolution* about your community project of particular interest. Perhaps primarily because you found inspiration from Buber's *Experiment That Did Not Fail*, but also because of the importance of the principle that the land does not belong to the individual communities. (This is exemplified in the communities in Israel, in the Adventist communities associated with the Layman's Foundation, and in the Rudolph Steiner-inspired communities.) In our community, The Vale, we are seeking to have our land held in a similar trust, in association with other communities because we feel that there are undesirable implications to community ownership of land, as there are to individual ownership of land.

The community can be as selfish as an individual. The individuals in a community can look forward to the breaking-up of the community and dividing the land among them. And one community is too small a unit of operation. Communities, as Buber points out, need to be in a community of communities.

Fellowship of Intentional Communities

It was for that reason that many years ago we began the Fellowship of Intentional Communities and the Intentional Community Exchange, even earlier. But there was not enough basis of unity in that arrangement. We needed the deeper recognition that in the community movement we were part of a larger and diversely experimental fellowship, and that the assets that some of us had devoted to the community movement should not be at the mercy of the success or failure of each particular group.

Jewish National Fund

I have a letter from the Director of the Jewish National Fund in Israel outlining the procedure for developing the land-holding and supervision features that

made the Kibbutz possible. We need as much information as we can get before setting up the trust agency between communities for such landholding. We also need association with others with a similar interest and concern. One item to read is the Jewish National Fund and Hechalutz publication, *Forms of Settlement*, by E. Orni, telling of the varieties of community. To the Fund or Trust holding title to land should go enough income that it would be able to "service" or have a staff to help the separate, different communities.

Do you know of the Homer Morris Fund, to help intentional communities with short term loans? We have annual meetings: I am secretary. This Fund also finances travel of community members to the annual meetings, so that our Community of Communities can have a chance to come into being. It has also aided Koinonia when it was subject to severe attack.

Community Among Indians

One of our concerns is that we have fellowship with and learn from the American Indians who have maintained what are truly intentional communities. They have a great resource of wisdom, a great heritage, as D. H. Lawrence, among others, has observed. Some of these Indians have qualities missing from the rest of the world, and needed as a complement. Little have we learned the spirit that is so strong among the Indians of live-and-let-live, or nature as a part of community life rather than something to exploit, of respecting the integrity of both the community and the individual. . . . A Yugoslavian working for the State Department considers the Indian culture of major importance; he found visits to them impressive and significant, not overshadowed by big industries or cities.

Non-exclusion

In our work with communities, we have seen the need of avoiding a doctrinaire mold, excluding one another as not being true communities or not the right orthodoxy. Review of the worldwide community movement shows that there must be a variety of approaches. We are

Letters To The Editor

Student Utopians

To the Editor:

A group of students here at San Francisco State College will sponsor seminars, workshops and activities with current utopian thought, and particularly those examples now being put into action. We will gladly distribute free literature and solicit subscriptions for groups such as the School of Living which come close to our own ideals. Hopefully our efforts will stimulate more involvement among the younger generation toward constructive activity in areas of concern such as yours. Please send us *Go Ahead and Live!*, *The Green Revolution* and any preliminary material you consider useful. Yours for a closer, fruitful relationship for a greater future. — Darrell Tarver, Box 16335, San Francisco, Calif.

Brain Damage

To the Editor:

Many have seen in recent newspaper reports an account of the lethargy of TV watchers being linked to radiation beams. In our *Des Moines Register* there was such a story (taken from the *Los Angeles Times*). Dr. John Ott, a Florida nature photographer, has spent 15 years studying the effects of visible and invisible light on plants and animals. His findings show that various elements of the electromagnetic spectrum can change life behavior.

In one experiment, he placed 3-month-old rats in two cages directly in front of a color television, turned on 6 hours a day and 10 hours on weekends. The rats in one cage were protected by heavy black paper.

Within 10 days the rats showed abnormal behavior, and in 30 days were extremely lethargic (had to be pushed to make them move about in their cage). Examination showed severe brain damage.

Lead-shielded animals showed less brain damage.

In another experiment the color set was 15 feet from an animal breeding room, separated by two standard wall partitions. Female rats (which had previously borne 8 to 12 young, had litters of only 2, and many of the young did not live. Dr. Ott speculates that the cathode tube was responsible for damage.

I wrote down my observation, 6 or 7 years ago, of the effect of TV radiation, but I did not suspect actual brain damage. If Dr. Ott's findings carry over to the tens of millions of people watching TV, it would most likely be irreparable, and that compounds the catastrophe.—Miles Roberts, Villisca, Iowa.

Cold Climate Apricots

To the Editor:

I've finally tracked down those cold-climate apricots you once mentioned in *Green Revolution*. Manchurian apricots may be had from New Plants, Brookings, S. D., and a brochure about them also.—Mrs. N. A. Eisen, Box 242, Aurora, Mo.

(continued on page 5)

deeply interested in a fellowship of diverse traditions.—Griscom Morgan, The Vale, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

[Editor's Note. For many of us, Griscom Morgan's concern for a land-holding trust is as welcome as it is urgent. Since the mistake of present land-holding is so serious, ways of "solving" or dealing with it in ethical ways are necessary. Some members of School of Living attempted this in the early (1930) days of community-forming under the first Independence Foundation. We hope to revive it in the now internationalized Foundation for Independence, and work with the Gandhian Institute when J. P. Narayan comes to the United States in the fall. And of course we approve of an Inter-Community Trust for Land-Holding.—MJL.]