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THE PEOPLE OF PRAISE • "CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY."



City-Building Plans in Portland

Branch members set their sights on a bold new future.



A new way to live in every way.

A People of Praise City Takes Root in North Portland

Editor's Note: At last year's Leaders' Conference for Men, Craig Lent introduced the concept of People of Praise cities, groups of a few hundred community members who live and work together in geographical proximity. Stimulated by the conference, a group of nine families in the Vancouver/Portland branch has been talking together about building a People of Praise city in Portland, Oregon. They have targeted an area, North Portland, and members have begun buying houses and establishing businesses there.

Charlie Fraga, the head of the Vancouver/Portland branch and a member of the community's board of governors, is spearheading the Portland city-building effort. In this interview, he talks with Vine & Branches reporter Josh Caneff about People of Praise cities and the plans to build one in Portland.

Charlie: I bet I know what you're thinking.

Josh: So what is a People of Praise city?

Charlie: I like to think of it like Chinatown or an old-time ethnic neighborhood, a section of town with its own unique character and some real pizzazz. Think of Little Havana in Miami or Polish Chicago, but instead of Cuban jazz clubs or Polish sausage stands there are community households and businesses, perhaps even a campus of Trinity School. It's an area of town that many people will associate with the People of Praise.

Also, People of Praise cities are places where community members live very close to one another.

Josh: How close is "close"?

Charlie: In Portland, we're talking about groups of community members living together in several neighborhoods within our target area. We're calling these neighborhood groupings "hubs," and we think that all the hubs should be within walking distance of one another.

Inside a hub, however, "close" means close enough for your kids to haul a heavy pot of soup, a vacuum cleaner and 20 folding chairs over to a neighbor's house for Lord's Day. If you can't haul the soup on foot, you live too far away. If the soup gets cold, that's definitely too far.

Our aim is contiguous groups of households, or groups of households as close as possible.

Josh: I know you're talking about a plan for Portland. Can you say something about how your plan ties in with the Leaders' Conference for Men?

Charlie: The Leaders' Conference for Men had a huge impact in Vancouver/Portland. After hearing the talks, some families in our branch began talking and praying together in earnest about how to respond within the city of Portland. How we got to where we are now is a long story, but the short answer to your question is that our plans are a local initiative

inspired by the conference.

Josh: How will businesses fit into People of Praise cities?

Charlie: Our plan calls for establishing a thriving business district that is centrally located for all the hubs. The hubs will be arrayed around the business district, making the district the "downtown" for our People of Praise city, if you will. Our business district will feature community businesses, businesses run by community members and offices for community members who need them.

Josh: What's a community business?

Charlie: The LaSalle Company in South Bend is a good example. (See the February issue of *Vine & Branches*.) A community business is first and foremost a business. It may sell textbooks, manage property or perform another kind of service to turn a profit. In that respect it's like any other business. But the culture of



Carlos Fraga

From left: Pat Clark, Keith Justen and Charlie Fraga inside Direct Development's current Portland office. Below: Their new building.



Charlie Fraga

a community business is unique. It's a People of Praise culture. At the LaSalle Company, the employee manual cites *To Serve as Jesus Served* by Clem Walters. Just to prove they're serious about service, managers will sometimes answer the phones or empty the trash.

Josh: How close will each of the hubs be to the business district?

Charlie: Here, "close" means a 15-minute walk, a 10-minute bike ride or a five-minute drive from your house to your office. Imagine stepping outside your office for lunch, walking a few minutes to a park and meeting up with stay-at-home moms, community kids and retirees playing checkers and kickball, or perhaps just chatting.

I should add that all my comments about closeness only reflect our plans and goals. We're certainly going to face obstacles. For example, it may take us years to acquire property as close together as we'd like it to be. We are in this for the long haul, and we're also banking on many miracles along the way.

North Portland

Josh: What makes North Portland an attractive spot for a new city?

Charlie: Location, location, location. North Portland is right on I-5, which puts us only 10 minutes from the 30+ brothers and sisters who live in Vancouver. Also, the University of Portland is right there. Eight campus division students currently attend the U. of P., and they're already recruiting young talent for city-building work.

Josh: What are the houses like?

Charlie: North Portland homes come in a variety of styles, sizes and, perhaps most importantly, they fit into a variety of budgets. Also, North Portland may be the last part of the city that hasn't been overrun by real-estate developers and the skyrocketing housing prices they bring with them.

Josh: And the business scene?

Charlie: We are very interested in the business district in Kenton, one of the North Portland neighborhoods.



Charlie Fraga

The Kenton neighborhood business district features many traditional storefronts.



Greg Cole

Branch families and campus division members gather for a picnic Lord's Day celebration at Overlook Park in North Portland.

Kenton has been struggling commercially for a few years. Right now there are a few professional offices and a smattering of small restaurants and retail stores. But things are looking up for Kenton. A new light-rail line has just brought the neighborhood closer to the rest of the metropolitan area. The city has designated Kenton as an enterprise zone and instituted incentives for businesses that move there. Now is a very good time to invest.

Josh: What else is attractive?

Charlie: Lots of family-friendly neighborhoods with sidewalks and parks. Also, if you know where to look, you can catch a glimpse of Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens or the downtown skyline.

Progress

Josh: Tell me about the progress you've made so far.

Charlie: The Kabeles, the Clarks and Jenny Aman, a member of the Clarks' household, have been living next door to one another in North

Portland since last October. They're the start of one hub. Eight blocks away, an investor in the branch has purchased a home for campus division men, who will start living there in the fall.

Josh: What's next?

Charlie: Buying more houses. Six more families are itching to move into the target area.

Josh: Who are some of the families?

Charlie: The Glovers and the Shreveses will be moving from northern Virginia to North Portland soon. (See "LifeNotes.") A third family, the newly underway Castros, already live in North Portland and are interested in living in one of the hubs. The Fragas, Martinezes, Justens and Coles are also eager to move.

Josh: Any progress with businesses?

Charlie: Yes. I run a company called Direct Development, a direct-mail marketing firm. We've just signed a five-year lease on a storefront a few blocks from the Kenton



business district I mentioned earlier. Three other branch members work for Direct Development: Pat Clark, Keith Justen and Dan Kabele. Luke Glover will be joining the company when he arrives this summer. This means that, if our housing search goes well, five of us will be able to walk or bike to work when Direct Development moves into its new office in July or August.

Josh: Locating a business in the area is bound to raise the People of Praise profile there.

Charlie: Exactly. As part of Direct Development’s lease agreement, our landlord is completely remodeling the storefront. It’s going to be obvious that a classy, professional company has established itself in the neighborhood, right by a donut shop and KFC. The storefront is on Lombard Street, one of North Portland’s busiest arteries. Thousands of people drive by every day.

Josh: Any other business developments?

Charlie: Yes. Several branch members are working on a new business, Rhododendron Enterprises. Rhododendron is researching commercial redevelopment projects in Kenton, among other things. The company wants to help with the city-building effort and is exploring several ways it could be helpful over the long term.

Beginnings

Josh: How did all this get started in your branch?

Charlie: Last May, Carmen and I invited the Clarks and the Justens over to talk about city-building. Our three families have some history together. We all had moved to Portland from NOVA and we all had thought that God was calling us to grow the community in Portland. This was a new direction for the branch, which has historically been centered in Vancouver, just across the

Columbia River. When we moved, we wound up living in completely different sections of Portland, some of them miles apart. By spreading out, we had hoped to increase our surface area and win Portlanders to the community.

Josh: Did it work?

Charlie: No. Living so far apart from one another made it difficult to share much life together. We were not particularly visible and we didn’t grow, either.

Josh: What caused you to change your strategy?

Charlie: Conversations about visibility, city-building and related topics in board of governors’ meetings. Also, Craig Lent’s call at the Leaders’ Conference for Men for the community to become a “more visible contrast society” really struck me. It’s hard to be visible when you’re off by yourself. Contrast that with the hubs. Hubs are like bonfires. The friction caused by close common life creates heat and combustion. The result is a flame no one can miss. Remember, this is a really different way to live. Nowadays, neighbors don’t carry hot soup next door anymore, like the Clarks and the Kabeles are already doing. There’s nothing subtle about life in a People of Praise city.

Josh: How did you move from the goal of building a city to a concrete plan?

Charlie: We started by discussing some interesting readings. The term “contrast society,” which Craig used, also appears in a book by Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*.

(Actually, the community has been calling itself a contrast society since its earliest years, even before Lohfink used the term.) Discussing readings like that led us to talk freely about city-building and come to unity of mind and heart about our aspirations.

After meeting monthly for a while, we began having Lord’s Days together. We especially wanted to include children in our conversations. The Lord’s Days led us to a surprising realization. We wanted to live like we did on Saturday evenings all the time, sharing meals, enjoying one another’s children, learning more about one another’s lives and strategizing to grow the city. The only way to do that was to move closer together.

Soon, other branch families joined our discussions, and families across the river in Vancouver also started talking about city-building there.

Josh: So that’s how proximity became a top priority?

Charlie: Exactly.

Josh: I assume other priorities emerged, too?

Charlie: Absolutely. We made lists, compiled them, ranked them and distilled 14 criteria for a city site. The results included proximity to Vancouver, affordable housing, a business district worth investing in, access to people under 30, family-friendly neighborhoods and a few others. It wasn’t hard to pick North Portland, once we had agreed on our criteria.

Josh: Last question. How fast can you build a People of Praise city?

Charlie: It may take us 10 years to reach our goal of 12 hubs with six or seven households per hub, a target population of a few hundred people. But we’re certainly open to doing it more quickly! ■

Front cover caption: Luke Kabele and Addie Clark race down Hurst Avenue, home of the first hub.



Tom Noe and Kathy Gleason appraise a set of silver.

Mary Beckley

A new community business venture in South Bend. *Selling Everything With Gabriel*

V&B Staff Writers

Do you have a mint condition baseball card autographed by Mickey Mantle tucked away in some dusty attic trunk? Have you found yourself thinking a lot lately about what Jesus said about selling everything you have?

Gabriel Real Estate Management, one of the community's youngest businesses, has just spun off Sell It With Gabriel (SIWG) for people like you, clients who have items they'd like to sell on eBay. eBay is a popular web site where anyone can list items for auction and sell them to the highest bidder. One recent search of offerings revealed an ancient Egyptian bronze cat (circa 600 B.C.), more than 18,000 laptop computers and a \$4,000 bicycle autographed by famous peddler Lance Armstrong. SIWG has already sold antiques, prints, college textbooks and barcode scanners, and stands ready to list any item worth at least \$50.

So what's a property management firm doing hawking antiques, jewelry and electronics on the World Wide Web? SIWG manager Kathy Gleason says low start-up costs and high potential profits made the venture attractive. "Clem Walters and David Sklorenko, the president and vice-president of Gabriel, are very

creative businessmen who are always on the lookout for any good business opportunity."

Tom Noe, a part-time Gabriel employee, has been moving English porcelain and mineral specimens on eBay for years, sometimes buying up undervalued items and reselling them at a profit. (Tom once paid \$200 for an 18th-century figurine, which later sold at Christie's auction house in New York City for \$4,800, netting him a hefty profit.)

Clem realized that Tom's appraising and online selling experience could help Gabriel build a new profit center, while Kathy could help drive the venture when she wasn't busy with other projects. Mary Beckley has also made big contributions, taking attractive photographs of the items.

Currently, SIWG accepts items from individual sellers only, but Kathy says they are also considering selling overstock items and have been in negotiations with several businesses. SIWG has also been experimenting with marketing items for clients outside of South Bend. They are trying to sell a large refrigerator owned by a florist and Muncie branch member. (The refrigerator is by far their largest and heaviest item to date.)

Only a few months ago, Kathy

was polishing off degrees in math and economics at Notre Dame. Just the other day, she typed an e-mail in German to a seller offering a dessert plate Kathy needed to make a complete set. This job is certainly taking her a long way from the math classroom. So how does she like it?

The best part is making money for the community, she says. "I'm excited about the job because money makes things happen. Our profit goes right back into funding all that the People of Praise is doing."

"It's the opposite of monotonous," she adds. "It's fun and I love the freedom." ■

Want to see some of the items Sell It With Gabriel has for sale?

Go to www.eBay.com and click on the "advanced search" link, located near the big search bar at the top of the page. When you get to the advanced search page, scroll down until you come to an area that allows you to search for items by seller. "Gabrielmgmt" is the seller ID you'll need. Type it in, hit "enter," and you'll be able to view a list of everything Sell It With Gabriel is currently selling.

Going the distance to keep their common life alive.

Heroes in Biloxi

By Claire Holovaty and Sean Connolly

Hurricane Katrina walloped Biloxi, Gulfport, Pascagoula and Wiggins, the Mississippi hometowns of the 14 brothers and sisters who make up the Biloxi branch. Besides doing damage to nearly every roof in the branch, Katrina totaled two houses, put one member out of a job and sent four adults and two children packing to Jackson, Mississippi, three hours to the north.

The tight-knit Biloxi branch has always faced challenges posed by their geography. For years, branch members in separate towns have endured drives of 30 minutes or an hour just to get to weekly meetings. The branch always responded creatively to these situations, frequently holding their men's and women's group meetings on the same night as their branch meetings. "We've always been a spread-out branch," says branch leader Phil Ehemann. "We had a 90-mile stretch between the farthest homes."

No one could have predicted that a category 5 hurricane would increase that distance today to more than 150 miles. Or that the community's second-smallest branch would have spun off its own satellite mission in Jackson, either. Rather than taking the

disaster lying down, brothers and sisters have returned to the highways, ratcheting up their level of commitment and going the distance to keep their life in common alive.

The entire branch, including the folks in Jackson, meets for a monthly Lord's Day meal, typically at the Fortenberrys' home in Wiggins, a midpoint between Jackson and Biloxi. Those who can make it gather weekly in Biloxi on a night that's part branch meeting and part men's and women's groups, just like before the hurricane. There's even a women's group of three in Jackson.

"I think everybody in this branch is willing to step up," says Loyd Fortenberry, adding that he sometimes makes that hour drive to Biloxi

three times a week for branch events and visits. "I'm willing to do whatever it takes. I'm not only committed to the People of Praise, I'm committed to the people in this branch. They're like brothers and sisters to me. Actually, they *are* brothers and sisters."

"I don't want to experience life without the People of Praise," adds Mary Mozingo. "It's like the pearl that you don't want to let go of."

Mary and her husband John faced many difficult choices after Katrina tore at their waterfront Biloxi home with 175 m.p.h. gusts and flooded it with three feet of water. Before Katrina, the Mozingos had been planning to send Mary and their son John to Jackson so that John could enroll in a special school. Afterward, they decided to send both their children with Mary, while John stayed in Biloxi to keep the family real-estate businesses going. For eight months now, John has been commuting to Jackson on the weekends, or Mary has brought the kids down to the coast.

Mary was able to rent a home from a church in Jackson at a discount rate, while branch women threw a shower giving her clothes and other essentials. Dede Schneider is Mary's aunt and also a member of the branch. Her Biloxi home was minimally damaged, but the accounting business where she had been a receptionist for 20 years was destroyed. Dede decided to move in with Mary



George and Lucy Henneberger at their 50th wedding anniversary dinner.



and the kids in Jackson and has since found temporary work.

Meanwhile, with their Pascagoula home in shambles, George and Lucy Henneberger settled into an assisted living center in Jackson, just 15 minutes by car from Mary and Dede. For the Hennebergers, the arrangement has been a blessing on the order of a miracle. For a few years leading up to Katrina, distance and health problems had severely hampered the Hennebergers' participation in branch life. After a series of heart failures and surgery for colon cancer, Lucy was tethered to an oxygen tank, confined to a wheelchair and recovering slowly. George had eye trouble that kept him from driving to evening branch meetings.

Since the move to Jackson, though, Lucy's health has taken a surprising turn. She no longer uses portable oxygen and she's out of her wheelchair. She uses a rolling walker instead, and George says that sometimes she doesn't even bother with that. "She looks like a new person," Mary says. "She's thriving."

Now, instead of missing meetings, Dede and Mary get together with Lucy weekly. This group sometimes expands to include George, and often, when John is up for the weekend, everyone goes out to dinner. Mary and Dede have also been ferrying George and Lucy to the monthly meetings, which included one recent gathering in honor of George and Lucy's 50th wedding anniversary.

What else are branch members saying and thinking about, eight months after Katrina? They're inspired by God's blessings, especially the blessings they have in one another. Also, just like the rest of the community, they're thinking a lot about growth.

● Liz Palermo: "We've always been good at serving one another. Now we're trying to stick together like glue. When we do see one another, there's not enough time to visit. A lot is changing, but I'd say I'm full of hope."

● John Mozingo: "They say good things come in small packages. That's true of us. We're a tight branch. Recently, Bobby and Liz Palermo need-



Above left: Branch members Mary and Jim Hinkle. Right: Carol Ehemann and Liz Palermo.



"I think everybody in this branch is willing to step up."

—Loyd Fortenberry

ed help putting a new refrigerator in, so several of us went over and did it after a branch meeting. That kind of thing happens all the time with us. It's the little things from people who are truly good examples of Christ alive on earth."

● Regina Fortenberry (from a word given at a recent branch meeting): "Don't be sad. Behold, I am doing a new thing."

● Mary Mozingo: "I wouldn't be where I am in my life if not for members of the People of Praise. I can call anyone and get prayer and support. People at church here in Jackson wonder at my faith and my ability to push forward. It's because of the prayer and support I get from people in the community. I've seen how the love of the people in the community has not only touched my life but enabled me to touch other people's lives as well."

● Loyd Fortenberry: "We're trying to get people interested in the People of

Praise. One couple hasn't been able to come to the last several meetings we've invited them to, but they're interested. I talked to the wife on the phone just yesterday, and she said, "My husband's in Dallas, but don't give up on us, keep calling us!"

● John Mozingo: "We're very conscious of growth. We really want to spread the Lord's message."

The Biloxi branch may be scattered, stretched and split up, down two homes, a job and a bevy of trees and roofing shingles, but no one could call them down and out. In a time when many weaker-spirited groups would have scattered to the four winds or set their friendships adrift, covenant love has kept the Biloxi branch together. "They've been through some tough situations," says Tom Evans, the coordinator responsible for Biloxi, "but their love and commitment have enabled them to survive." These brothers and sisters are heroes of the People of Praise. ■



The Mozingo home post-Katrina.



From left: Dana Oldfield-Williams (Kingston), Genevieve DeCelles (Dinkytown), Rachele Akerman (Saskatoon) and Jen Torma (Dinkytown).

The 2006 Leaders' Conference for Women

Freedom, Growth and Love

By Genevieve DeCelles

I added this preface because I know that my next paragraph is exactly like the beginning you'd expect for a *Vine & Branches* article on the 2006 Leaders' Conference for Women (LCW). My opening lines are, I confess, like a giant cliché—a tangle of common sentiments and pedestrian observations. Some clichés develop because people use a sentence or an idea so much that no one can believe it anymore. My trouble is if you ask anyone who attended this year's conference, they'll tell you that my next paragraph is exactly the way it started.

On March 15, 120 faces lit up, greetings erupted and energetic conversations took off like bottle rockets to light up the Oak Room in South Bend's branch center. The conversational buzz was so loud that everyone had to get closer together, and everyone did, because no one wanted to miss a word from a sister who had survived Hurricane Katrina or crossed an ocean just to get there. The obvious affection was the perfect prelude to three days of talks, sharings and conversations, all of which revealed the explosive power of love.

This year's LCW arrived a year ahead of schedule. As Overall Coordinator Craig Lent explained, the board of governors wanted to follow up

on the clarion call for growth at last year's Leaders' Conference for Men. They thought that it was important to give women in the community the chance to share their experiences of "leaning into growth" over the last year. So, they postponed the scheduled Pastoral Training Institute for 2006 and threw the LCW instead. Freedom was the theme—and we did some heavy thinking on that front—but much of the conference's energy came from sharings about growth.

There were reports on gardening parties in Servant Branch designed to attract women, on quarterly prayer meetings open to women around South Bend, on a Pentecost Seminar

“There is a heartfelt desire and zeal . . . to build the kingdom of God by growing the People of Praise.”

—Therese McNichol

for young women in northern Virginia, on women in Colorado Springs whose families want to move closer together so that they can make community life clearer to their neighbors. That list only covers about half the ideas.



Left: Jodi Engles and Anne Brewer (both South Bend).

“Everyone seems consumed with a desire for growth,” Therese McNichol (northern Virginia) observed. “There is a heartfelt desire and zeal on everyone’s part to share what we have with others and to build the kingdom of God by growing the People of Praise. I thought the sharings demonstrated careful strategizing and planning, from the smallest branch to the largest. There are endless ways we can gain visibility, regardless of our numbers.”

Nano Farabaugh (South Bend) offered a reflection on the surprising possibilities love can create. She teaches psychiatric nursing and spends a lot of her time in a busy mental-health unit. She told about an experience with a woman co-worker who had made a habit of insulting Nano and making cruel remarks. For a few months, Nano did her best to avoid the woman, but one day something surprising happened. The woman told a room full of co-workers that she wanted to go back to church. In the stunned silence that followed, Nano felt her heart go out to her. “You can come with me,” she said. For the next few months, the two of them went to church weekly. They met for supper a few times and grew to be friends. For Nano, that result overturned all her prior expectations. “There is no blueprint for love,” she concluded.

Nano’s sharing was a high point for many women. “It changed my thinking,” Lucy Cunningham (Servant Branch) remarked. “I used to



From left: Dianne Cunningham (Servant Branch), Jackie Brophy (Tampa) and Pat Benito (Tampa).

“There is no blueprint for love.”

—Nano Farabaugh

wait for a sense of boldness or courage in order to reach out and love people. I still need boldness, but I have to take the focus off myself. By looking at the person who needs to be loved, I can see the need more clearly and find the strength to act.”

Craig gave a talk about the freedom we have in our relationship with our Father. “God our Father doesn’t want you to be a robot,” he said. “He doesn’t want a relationship that is simply ‘just tell me what to do and I’ll do it.’ We’re creating a life together. God has gone all-in, becoming one of us so that we can become one with

him. He wants to be friends.”

Mary Frances Sparrow gave six talks about discernment, based on *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola. “*The Spiritual Exercises* are about love,” she said. “Love is really powerful and Ignatius wanted to tap into that. Love takes us further than we intended. In fact, sometimes we will marvel, ‘Look at where love has taken me!’” Choosing a course of action is also matter of love. Our choices can be a loving response to a real person, our Father.

Kerry Koller gave a bold talk about freedom in headship and pastoral relationships. Headship, he said, requires you to love the sister you’re heading, to become her friend and see the world through her eyes. This frees your sister to be herself and to speak from her heart. “Being free and

From left: Alana Busekrus (Oahu), Tracy Scriba and Jenny Nolan (both northern Virginia) and Malia Busekrus (Oahu).



Photos by Gretchen Rolland.

helping others be free can lead to exciting and surprising outcomes.”

There were also updates on the growth efforts of the program offices. Joan Pingel gave an encouraging report on Allendale, where four neighbors have come underway since the summer. Kathy Gleason (South Bend) described Gabriel Real Estate Management’s progress since it began last July, in response to the call for the community to grow through new business ventures. Action has grown rapidly since 2002, and Program Coordinator Mike Zusi said he needs more volunteers in Allendale this summer to get all the work done.

Our weekend to study love together is over, and now we’re scattered like seeds in the springtime, ready to use our love to grow the community. Cheryl Schmitt said

“By looking at the person who needs to be loved, I can see the need more clearly and find the strength to act.”
—Lucy Cunningham

that the minute the women from Muncie got in their car to drive home, they started brainstorming about growth. During the trip, they decided to schedule an all-women’s night to develop ways to attract more women to their branch. Debbie Vaughan (Shreveport) reports that her family has been inviting young couples over for supper since the conference. After meeting the whole branch and everyone in Allendale, one of the couples remarked, “We have never made friends so easily.”

It’s kind of a cliché, but I’d have to say the seeds have started sprouting. ■



From left: Amy Barrett (South Bend) and Carolyn Bassett (northern Virginia).

A member of our board of governors.

Meet Phil Monaco

By Debbie Mixell

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of short biographies highlighting members of the community’s board of governors. We plan to run these biographies occasionally so that all of us can learn about the brothers who serve on our board.

“I think we should pray with someone here to be baptized in the Spirit.”

A prayer meeting was the last place 18-year-old Phil Monaco expected to be just one night after his high-school graduation. Yet there he was, praying at a dining room table with one of his friends, a few strangers, and a leader who had a sense that someone in the room needed a big change. “That someone was me,” Phil admits. “I was the one who raised my hand.”

Less than three months later, in San Jose, California, Phil and his friend Chris Taylor loaded all their possessions into a donated former police car and headed for Corvallis, Oregon. They left family, friends and school to join the fledgling group that soon started calling itself The Vine and the Branches community, moving straight into household with Terry and Connie Hackenbruck. Phil and Chris had met the Hackenbrucks through a mutual friend when the Hackenbrucks were in San Jose attending a Bible seminar. “We went to Corvallis because of the Holy Spirit and because Terry and Connie invited us,” Phil recalls.

Connie fondly remembers living in household with Phil in 1971. “The weeks Phil lived with us were as much like the life of the early Christians as I will probably ever experience,” she says. “It was clear from the beginning that Phil understood community teaching, even before there was a community.”

Three years later, in 1974, Phil married Jean Claska, one of the single women in the community. (Chris married another, Collette Helfrich, and today all four are covenanted members of the community.) Phil’s love of the outdoors, of mountaineering, backpacking and fishing influenced his choice of career. He earned a degree in forest management/science and began spending his working hours in laboratories or doing fieldwork in the forests of Oregon.

In 1979, The Vine and the Branches community began a training relationship with the People of Praise, thanks in part to the close friendship between the leaders of the two communities, Fr. Charlie Harris and Paul DeCelles. Three years later, in 1982, The Vine and the Branches became the People of Praise’s first branch, and Phil became an area coordinator, the first of many hats he has worn in the community. Since then he has served two terms as principal branch coordinator and directed the 2001 High Country Adventure. He wrote a regular Scripture column for *Vine & Branches* for many years. His current responsibilities, in addition to serving on the board of governors, include Action division coordinator and part-time branch administrator.

Board of Governors FAQ

Answers compiled by Tom Noe

What is the board of governors?

The board of governors is the highest authority in the People of Praise. They are responsible for its government, including establishing branches, electing the overall coordinator, setting teachings and other duties. The board approves the community budget and is responsible for the purchase and alienation of property.

Who are the current members of the board?

Charlie Fraga, Joel Kibler, Kerry Koller, Craig Lent (chairman), Phil Monaco, Rich Preuss, Kevin Ranaghan, Hugh Springer, Ralph Whittenburg and Mike Zusi.

When are board members selected?

During an elective assembly called for that purpose. Electors include the overall coordinator, principal branch coordinators, head coordinators and program coordinators, plus previous overall coordinators and head coordinators who have served as such within the past six years.

Who can be elected?

A candidate must be a tenured coordinator and must have served at least three years as a coordinator.

How long are board members' terms?

They are elected for a six-year term of office, renewable for a second six-year term. The beginnings of the terms are staggered, to preserve some continuity in membership.

How many are on the board?


The number may vary from five to 11, including the overall coordinator who serves as chairman.

How often do they meet?

The board is required to meet only once a year, and this is usually for several days in May, to review the work of headquarters, the life in the branches and our outreaches, and also to discuss the budget for the coming year. These meetings typically last from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The board often has additional meetings at other times throughout the year. Usually they have a working retreat in June, which lasts about a week. There are also conference calls from time to time.

How are decisions made?

After much discussion, with all members striving to come to one mind and heart, the board votes. A two-thirds majority is needed to approve a proposal, but in practice the votes are nearly always unanimous.



Phil is extremely well-organized, Terry says. "Because of that, he has been able to keep lots of things moving forward: his family, the branch, the community and his job at an environmental research company where he is highly regarded." Connie suspects that Phil learned motivational and leadership skills while playing linebacker for a renowned football team in high school. Ralph Whittenburg, a fellow board of governors member from South Bend, highlights another quality that makes Phil a good community leader. "One of the most striking things about Phil," he says, is "his understanding of ecumenism and his commitment to it."

In December, 1997, the Lord healed Phil of severe asthma at a leaders' conference in South Bend. "Since childhood I had been on medication for asthma," Phil recalls. "In my mid-thirties it worsened severely, to the point that I was on round-the-clock medication and inhalers. Even so, it wasn't under control." At the conference, Phil asked for prayer and he says that he knew before returning to his seat "that the asthma was gone."

Back in Corvallis, Phil began lowering his medication doses until he was no longer taking anything for asthma. "That was eight years ago," he says, "and I haven't used any asthma medication since."

What Scripture passage has most shaped Phil's life and pastoral care in the community? Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ." "That's what I want to do," he says, "I want to fulfill the plan of Christ by bearing the burdens of other people." ■



Nick Holovaty

A new voice in Shreveport city affairs.

Allendale Neighbors Fight Medical Waste Facility

By Debbie Mixell and Sean Connolly

“I want you to come to the meeting. One of us needs to speak and they’ll listen to you in a way they won’t listen to me.”

Last October, a concerned Bertha Debrow knocked on J-T Kelly’s door. She held a letter from the City of Shreveport, an announcement that a medical waste treatment company planned to move their facility into Allendale. It would be located in an empty building on industrial-zoned land, about 300 feet from her house and 1,300 feet from the People of Praise property on Yale Avenue. The city’s Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) had to approve a zoning variance that the waste-treatment company needed to go ahead. Bertha wanted J-T to speak before the commission.

For the next few months, Bertha, her son Albert, J-T and the rest of the People of Praise in Allendale led a

fight to keep medical waste-treatment out of Allendale. The effort ended in a 4-3 decision by the Shreveport city council in favor of the company, but for the neighbors successes came at many turns along the way. Their entry into local politics won the support of their city councilman, Calvin Lester, secured important restrictions on the waste-treatment facility’s operations, and galvanized the neighborhood, giving the residents of one of the city’s forgotten corners a new voice in city affairs.

* * *

The letter from the city gave just a few days warning before the MPC meeting. Bertha and other neighbors needed time, and the words of J-T and others at the meeting secured a two-week delay in the committee’s decision. Meanwhile, the neighbors called a meeting. More than 30 people

Their entry into local politics galvanized the neighborhood.

said that they didn’t want trucks hauling the waste through Allendale’s narrow, sidewalk-less streets, or children climbing through the broken barbed-wire fence surrounding the site, or their property values sinking. They decided to circulate a petition declaring their opposition. In the next few weeks, more than 200 neighbors added their signatures.

Bertha’s son Albert Hanna is a maintenance supervisor at LSU Hospital in Shreveport. At the second MPC meeting in mid-November, he spoke at length about his own experience overseeing medical waste handling. As safe as the process may be, he said, there is no guarantee against accidents such as a spill or a leaky container. He said that one accident was too many, given the proximity of houses and children.

Many Allendale residents have worked in hospitals, especially in maintenance and nursing positions where they have accumulated decades of experience with medical

waste. Their complaints were based on solid information, not fear or ignorance, J-T says. Still, the MPC voted 4-2 against them.

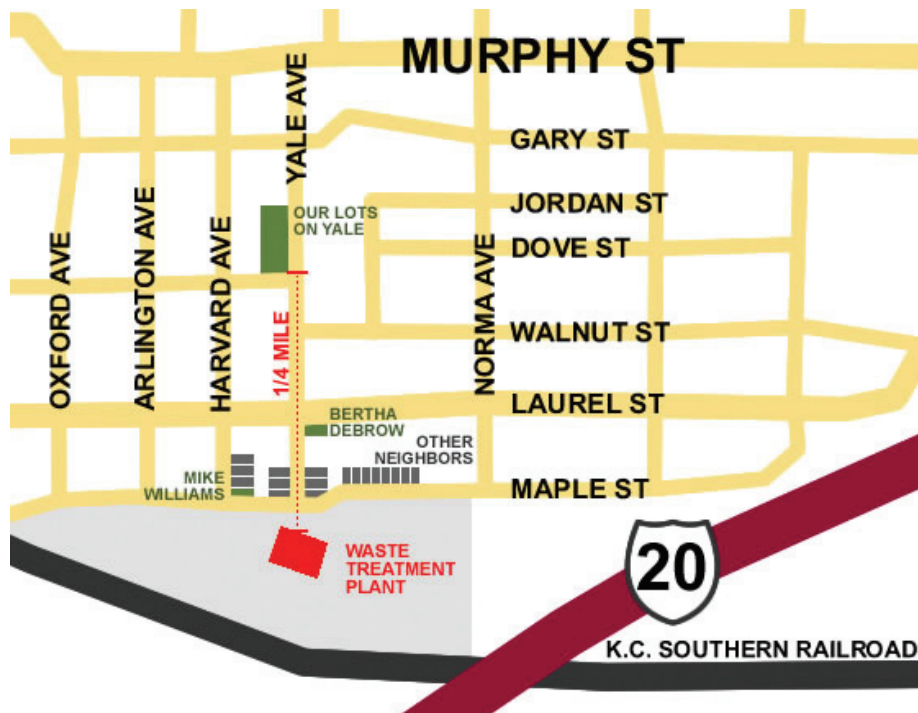
An appeal to the city council came next, and J-T knew the group needed new information to beef up their case. Soon after the MPC meeting, Mike Williams, an Allendale resident and an underway member of the People of Praise, read some interesting news on the Internet.

Mike learned that in 2004, during an inspection triggered by an anonymous tip, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency had discovered two unrefrigerated trailers of medical waste parked outside a storage facility operated by the same company that planned to move to Allendale. According to an employee's allegations, the trailers, marked with biohazard symbols and the words "infectious waste," had spent two weeks parked there. The Illinois attorney general sued the company for violating Illinois environmental laws and operating an illegal storage facility for medical waste. The state won a default judgment when the company failed to appear in court to face the charges.

Armed with this new information, J-T put together a detailed appeal of the MPC decision, forwarding everything to the city council's representative for the area, Calvin Lester. Lester, an attorney, began his own investigation, which produced a 58-page brief for the seven-member city council.

The council took up the neighbors' appeal on January 10. Lester did the majority of the speaking, "Why is it that the people I represent in my district . . . have to be dumped on literally all the time?" he asked. "Somebody years ago had such little respect for the people who live in Allendale that they put in [industrial] zoning. Does that mean, 30 years later, that I have to uphold that mistake?"

Lester urged the council to consider the fact that they would never allow a medical waste facility within a few hundred feet of more prominent city neighborhoods. He suggested that there were suitable pieces of property elsewhere in the city where



the company might relocate, and he encouraged the members to delay their decision and authorize a thorough property search.

In spite of Lester's arguments, the council moved to vote and ruled against the neighbors' appeal by a vote of 4-3.

In the course of the fight, Allendale neighbors secured two important restrictions on the company: repairs to the broken fence and guarantees that trucks hauling the waste

won't drive through the neighborhood. Neighbors also learned that state regulatory agencies have the right to conduct surprise inspections of the site.

Perhaps more importantly, a group of neighbors, led by J-T, Albert and others in the People of Praise, became a louder voice for a corner of the city that is normally quiet in city affairs. The fight showed people "that we care about Allendale and want it not only to survive and get by, but really to thrive," Gretchen Rolland says. "Creating a thriving community is going to mean more ventures into city politics in the future. That could mean vying for the property we want, petitioning for rezoning, getting sidewalks and streetlights put in—the stuff of city-building." ■



Gretchen Rolland

Albert Hanna and daughters

A quick wit and a big heart.

John McManmon

By Mary Pat McManmon

John McManmon always said he wanted to die at home with someone praying with him, and my mother Lorraine was there to pray with him when he died suddenly at home on August 15, 2005, at the age of 71. One of the Scripture passages underlined in my dad's tattered and worn Bible describes how he tried to live his life: "And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 4:12).

John Thomas McManmon was born January 14, 1934, in St. Paul, MN, to John and Hermina McManmon, who already had five daughters. It is said his grandmother would not believe she had a grandson until she checked for herself! An early story illustrates John's quick wit.

He'd been outside playing with a neighbor, and after the neighbor's mother called them into the house to wash their hands for lunch she asked why she hadn't heard the water running. "We were dry-cleaning," John quipped.

"John had a bit of a rascal in him," said Earl Stodden, sharing at John's wake. "We often saw that mischievous little twinkle in his eye that meant a bit of innocent fun was coming." His son-in-law Jonathan Redgrave remembered, "Every time I'd go to John and Lorraine's house he greeted me with a warm smile, a hug and a handshake, and every time we left it was that same smiling face, the face of Jesus."

John attended local Catholic schools and later graduated from the University of Minnesota as a mechanical engineer. He served briefly in the Army Reserve. He was assigned to an engineering unit and had hoped to learn practical skills like auto repair, but mostly he ended up typing discharge notices.

In 1959 John married Lorraine Allmaras. They settled in St. Paul and over the next 10 years they had six children: Mary Pat (South Bend), John

Thomas III "Jack" (deceased), George (Servant Branch), Anne, Molly and Joe. John and Lorraine participated in the activities of the local church, but sought for more. Ed Schwab told how he and his wife repeatedly encountered John and Lorraine at meetings of the Third Order of St. Francis and later at prayer meetings of Servants of the Light (which became Servants of the Lord and later joined the People of Praise). Ed shared, "There was

"Building the kingdom of God with John was the ultimate honor and privilege." —Tom Caneff

a hunger for God within each one of us, and we recognized that we were kind of chasing God at the same time and in the same places."

John and Lorraine relocated to a hobby farm outside Hastings, MN, in 1972. Around that time John was baptized in the Holy Spirit and could be heard praying joyfully in tongues over the noise of the tractor from the adjoining field. In 1976, when members of the Hastings prayer meeting decided to explore community life,

John McManmon
1934 - 2005



John and Lorraine joined Servants of the Light.

At his wake, people mentioned numerous examples of how John used his many skills (building and carpentry, gardening, anything with tools) and many interests (music, stamp-collecting, kite-flying and anything Irish) in serving the body of Christ. Just the week before he died, he used his router to help Earl Stodden make some woodwork for a home remodeling project. In recent years he helped the Gruber boys to create their Pinewood Derby cars in his woodworking shop.

His friends described him as a steadfast, faithful man, noted for his love of the Lord, his love of his wife, children and grandchildren, his love of his brothers and sisters, his love of his friends, and his love of life. "John was a builder," Tom Caneff said. "Building the kingdom of God with John was the ultimate honor and privilege."

John and Lorraine frequently extended the use of their large house to the branch's Hastings area, for men's meetings and retreats, area gatherings, youth activities and other events. "I know of no other home that was so often our meeting and gathering place," Earl said. "What an example John gave us all."

John retired from 3M in 1999. Though he was a very good engineer, he was glad to retire so he could devote his time to visiting his family, enjoying his hobbies (including mowing an acre of grass), and serving the People of Praise (he went to Allendale in 2003 and sat as night watchman for Servant Camp). In 2003, John started experiencing symptoms from two debilitating diseases. Despite suffering from health problems, he was invariably cheerful. John maintained his faith and trust in God, even when he was very uncertain of his future. As Jane Lynch said, "It's that big heart, his way of sharing love, that I will never forget and will always treasure." ■

LifeNotes

■ Congratulations to **Rob Brickweg, Naomi Caneff, Mike Grill, Abe Olson, Eric Yost** and **Jeanette Zimmel** (all Portland), whose hard work resulted in their team's being awarded second place in the University of Portland's \$16K Entrepreneur's Challenge, a competition to develop a business plan. Their project, entitled "Mom's Kitchen," was a business that would help college students in meal preparation.

■ Congratulations to **Dennis Rayl** (St. Paul), a faculty member at Trinity School at River Ridge, who has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to attend a summer study institute entitled "Homes of Mortals and Immortals: Latin Literature in Context" in Italy and at the College of Notre Dame in Maryland.

■ Congratulations to **Tom and Vida Voissem**, Neenah, WI, members of the Appleton branch, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Good Friday, April 14, 2006.

■ Congratulations to **Steve Walker** (Fairfax, VA), who was recently named deputy director of the Tactical Technology Office at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in Arlington, VA. This appointment includes a promotion to the Senior Executive Service, the highest civilian leadership structure of the federal government.

■ **Eric and Hilary Shreves** have been transferred from the branch in northern Virginia to the branch in Vancouver/Portland, effective at the time of their move this summer. Eric and Hilary are grateful for the safe journey and arrival of **Naomi Samrawit Tsegaye**. She was born August 25, 1997, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and joined their family on April 15, 2006.

■ **Luke and Elena Glover** have been transferred from the branch in northern Virginia to the branch in Vancouver/Portland, effective at the time of their move.

■ **Mary Clare Ferber** has been transferred from the branch in South Bend to Servant Branch, effective when she arrived there.

■ **Mark and Maria De Micoli** (Springfield, VA) are overjoyed to announce the birth of **Clara Maria**, who was born April 4.

■ **Russell and Elizabeth Adams** (Falls Church, VA) gladly announce the arrival of **Katelyn Rose**, born on April 11.

From the Executive Office

Appleton:
Congratulations to **Julie McMillan** (below, left) and **Marilyn Pennings**, who made the covenant of the People of Praise on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2006. David Sklorenko welcomed them on behalf of the board of governors.

Appleton:
Tim Loritz is no longer covenanted.

South Bend:
Pat Meeks was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on April 11, 2006.

Deb Walorski was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on April 17, 2006.

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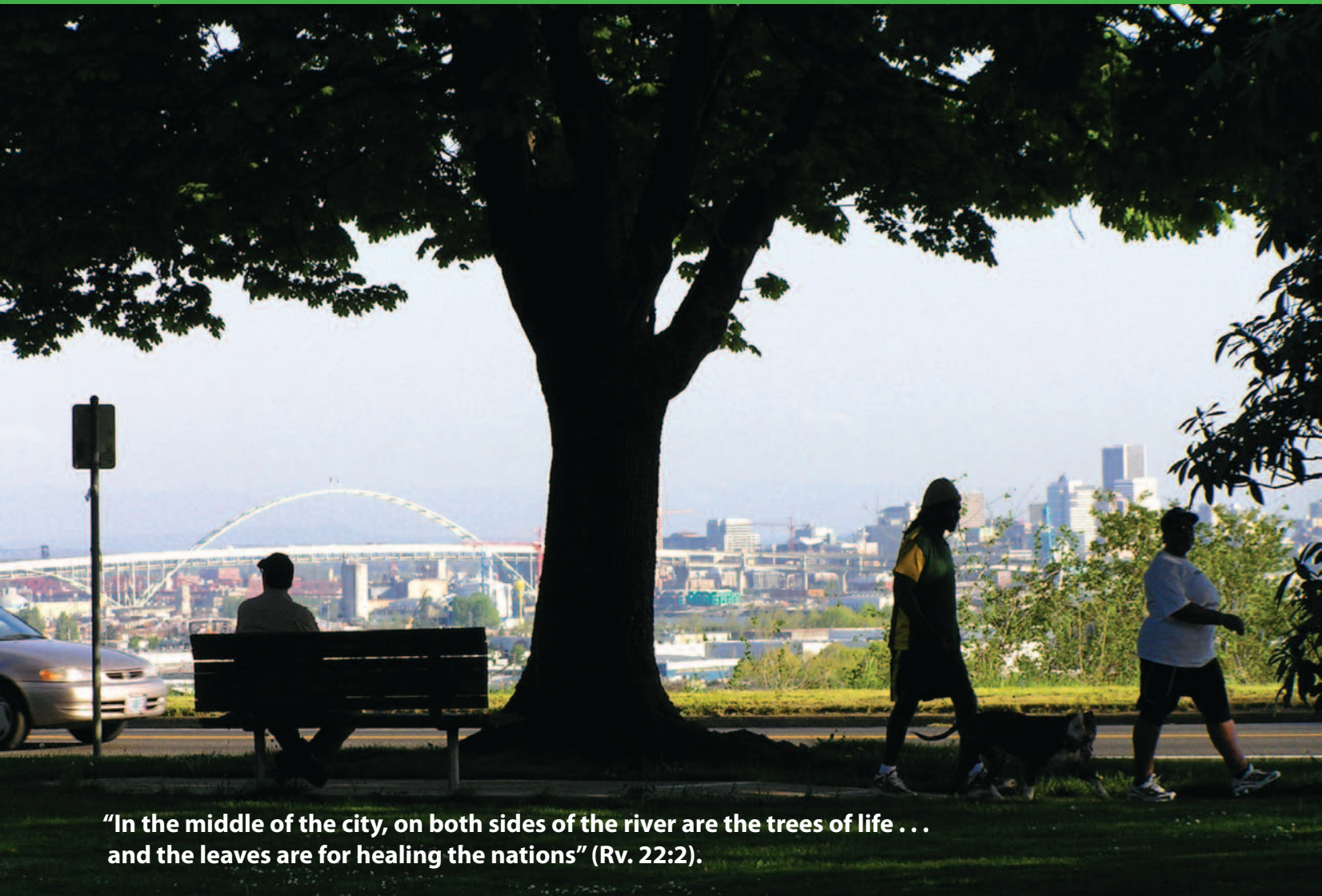
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Ruth Schmelzer



**"In the middle of the city, on both sides of the river are the trees of life . . .
and the leaves are for healing the nations" (Rv. 22:2).**



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