



...This sunrise will slip around to my children's dawn as well; there is no seam to divide the dawns of this confused species. The only way to promise my daughter a morning will be to promise yours one as well. But though I am glad for our common interests I am also afraid. In this world of nuclear, biological, and economic techniques, what once seemed certain is no longer so. Certainty now removed from sunrises appears to have found a home only in the will of Statesmen and executioners. -from andrew mandell's letter to a friend in Iraq

FREE PATRIN #5



*You must know, but let me tell you, rather as Albert Camus suggested, **let me proclaim simply and loudly enough to inspire my own action** that I too want to see a tomorrow for your daughters free from regimes and detentions, free from sanctions and air raids, free from all these forms of legitimized murder. Iraq has had enough of blindfolds and rifles at dawn. It is time for a modest sunrise...*

About recording, I'm working on new material for a second cd. A local friend is providing the studio. Not sure when it will be done, just waiting for the right melodies, words and time to lay it down.

6.) Is the factory a full-time thing for you? What about the others who are involved? Are you looking for people to volunteer part-time or do you envision a full-time intentional community?

Yes. Just as with psalters, it is a way of life, not just a band, profession or community. As of now, we're definitely in the beginning stages. The factory is run by me and friends spread all over the place. Such dear friends as psalters, Deb and Charlie Tucker (who cook and provide much of our food and flowers), Janeen and Ben Messner, Joy Jansen, Abby and Ryan Dixon, Tad and Maryssa Harlan, and many volunteers. But it is not as full-time for them as it is with me at this point. Because we have no place to work out of, and carry different lives and professions, it's hard for everyone to be full-time.

I envision both part-time volunteers and a full-time intentional community. As I said before, it is not exclusive. Ideally, it would be amazing if those close friends who've helped through the years and I (dedicated to the glory of Christ) could find a plot of land, build upon it to use as our headquarters, have our own garden to pick flowers from and disperse in the city (as we do in the celebrations and frequent walks), our own produce, letterpress workshop, studio, etcetera.

7.) How vital is it to your vision of the factory to have a physical space/building to share?

It is definitely vital. For the factory, if we want to give to others, then we must have a place to give from. Of course giving spiritually is another story, and most important. But we must be self-sufficient to some degree, so that we will not be dependent upon others for survival. Even giving spiritually is somewhat dependent upon giving physically. If we cannot take care of ourselves (whatever the reason may be), then I believe we're falling short of what we could in fact give spiritually. Having a place is necessary so that we can give.

Self-sufficiency is not meant to separate us from others, but should really bring us closer, and make us more able to provide the needs that should be met.

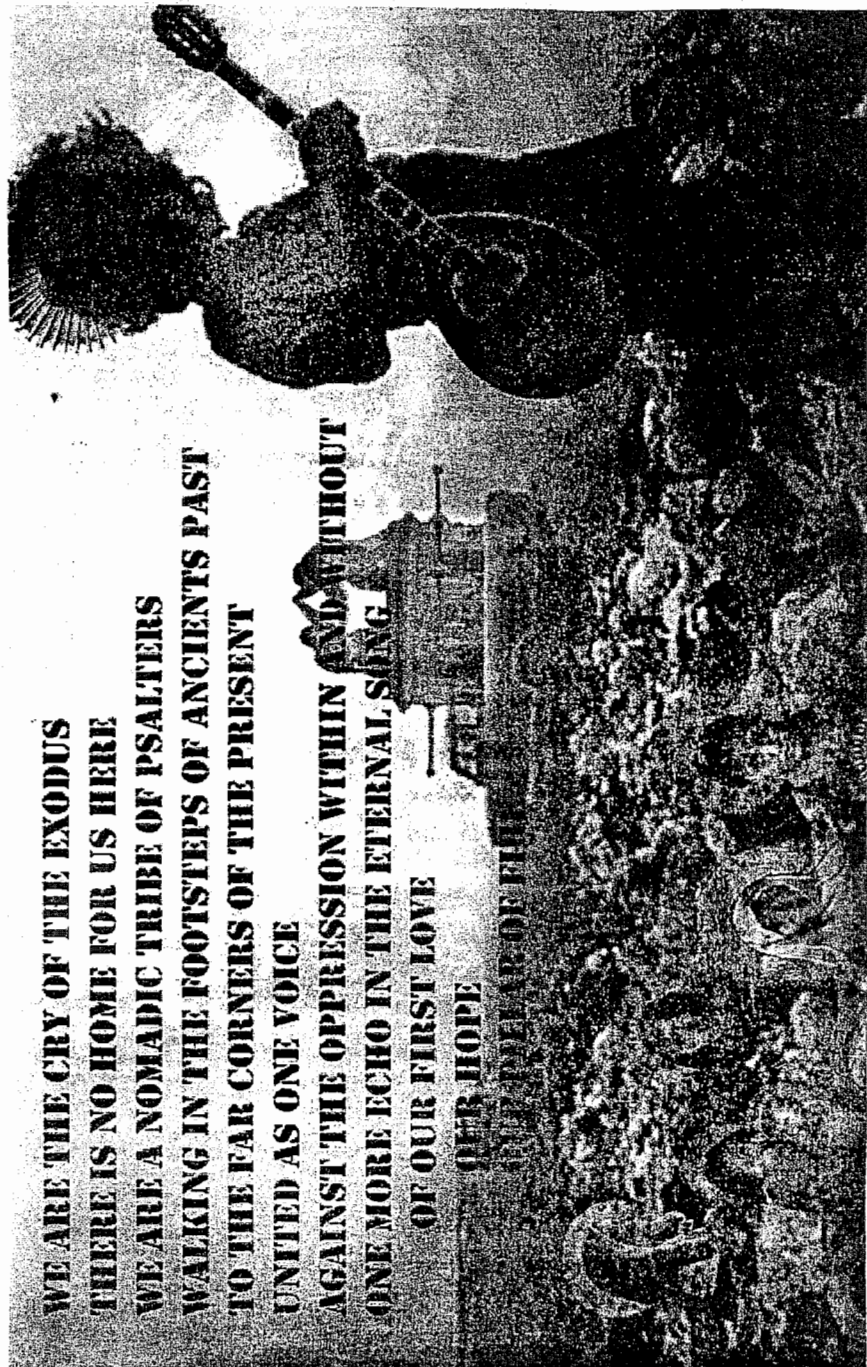
8.) As a recording artist, how closely tied is your music to this project?

All my writing is interwoven in the project. It is just another voice among the many crying out, embodying Christ.

9.) We hear you acquired a letterpress, what are your plans for that?

I don't have one yet, but I am in the market. I have some money set aside to establish a letterpress studio. Here, I and (hopefully soon) others will not only produce letterpress books and posters for the factory, but also undertake jobs for other musicians, artists, communities, businesses, churches, etc. It is a good way to serve the community, promote and build upon our skill.

We will produce tri-monthly publications of current dialogues, projects, articles, writings and art of the people. Obviously many need to be involved with the production process, so it may be a year or so before we're able to produce our first book



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2.) What/who inspired and influenced you in birthing this project?

The need for what is real: to receive and then give it. Intolerance of myself. Intolerance with the world, the way we assume creating, defining and living in it. Influences: Simone Weil, Slavoj Zizek, Elihu (of Job), Thomas Merton, Nietzsche, Martin Buber, T.S. Eliot, St. Francis, family/friends that believe not in me, but Christ in me.

3.) How do you see the porchfront factory role in partnership with a larger body of Christian communities? Who are you trying to reach out to?

I would love to partner with other Christian communities. But because we are believers, we will always live and work among the non-believers. It will not be an exclusive thing. The only difference between believers and non-believers is that they're more aware of their need, and by grace can fulfill it. So if this is true, then knowing our need should only place us in the middle of the world.

It is not a matter of "reaching out" nearly as much as it is just fulfilling the obvious: within ourselves, and then with others. We are 'the hungry', and therefore find it all the more urgent to feed the hungry. We just want to follow Scripture when it says "love your neighbor as yourself". If every time a person went without a meal, we felt the stomach pains, would we not rush to make sure they were fed? How different is this from spiritual food? If we felt the absence of Christ within, as the world does, would the urgency and pain not be greater?

4.) In the porchfront manifesto, you talk about the concept of hunger as a main theme behind the project, can you briefly explain it and how it affects the project?

The urgency of knowing our hunger increases everyday. Without it, we are able to be and do nothing. Its place inside demands our attention. And as believers, it is all the more urgent to go to this place and offer our lives not as the sacrifice, but as the temple to receive the sacrifice. The great distinction between Christianity and other religions is that it requires nothing of those who believe, other than the positioning to receive. We must acknowledge that in a society addicted to distraction, knowledge, money, spirituality, sexuality and ultimately itself, we must know our need (which is our hunger)! And that need is the love of Christ.

Awe is like standing at the edge of a mountain cliff gazing at a view that is entering your being, and at the same time looking down at the long drop and realizing how close death could be. You understand that your life is at risk, but it is worth it. The fears that controlled you before are displaced as the mountain enters, and you are ready to listen to whatever it may have to teach.

Being in awe is the amazement and bewilderment of a change that takes place because of an encounter. And the desire and reverence that comes about for the one you have encountered. And if this encounter is with The Liberator, it is a change that frees us to receive a living Word from Him. It transforms our stony, hard heart into good soil for the Word, for the seeds of faith, hope, and love to grow. And it gives us the courage to incarnate this growth. As the apostles were in awe they began to say things like "We must obey God rather than man.", and they really did it in a world where to obey God meant to suffer. For when we are awed by God our idols fall. Other masters fall away in the brilliance of His glory, and we fear God alone. No longer do our fears for safety control us; our worries about the future can't control us, addictions and selfishness can't control us; crowds, movements, fads and fashions can't control us; organizations and institutions can't control us; we are liberated.

In speaking of awe we must remind ourselves that this is something only God can do to us in His own chosen times. It is not something we manufacture. We cannot climb or force our way into heavenly realms. God is not bound by any incantation we may utter. "For God is in heaven and you are on earth..." (Ecc.5:2). Only God can break this law. My emotions can't; Performing rituals can't; I cannot decide the hour of His coming. However, what I can do is be ready for Him. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." (Matt. 24:42)

One of the main ways to keep alert, to become more attentive is through worship. Worship should be an entire way of life of course, but the specific times we intentionally gather for this purpose are especially important for preparing us to receive him.

This world and the contents of our daily lives are constant distraction from the still small voice of God; a screen blocking out the wind of the Spirit. Society is a consistent flow of propaganda and noise, blocking out the Word of God, causing us to drift into conformity with it. To hear God in this there has to be a miracle, because drifting away from God is the normal state of life here. So, we ask what to do? And the Bible admonishes us to first "pay much closer attention..." (Heb 2:1). As we empty ourselves by crying out to God, with everything in us, through a time of worship we can break the spell of these distractions. Worship creates space for the miracle.

This is one way that worship always should carry out the prophetic role of John the Baptist. The worship leader is preparing the way of the Lord. We pray that our cries will do this. That when God chooses to come the door will be open, and as we are awestruck, His coming kingdom will grow into a way of life now.



Although faith leads you to not doubt that God will provide, it is always surprising how He does it. Many times even in just the last two years, He has amazed us with the means to continue this ministry when we had no idea how that was possible. Not only has He met needs of life and work, but He has provided joy.

God knows what gives us joy in this world, and if we seek him first will provide what we need. Which is not always just food, clothing, and shelter. Self-denial is a necessity to a life of community, homelessness, and vocation. Choosing to live as a psalter meant I couldn't do everything the way I wanted to every time; it meant there is not room to take all my books, not money to buy good vegan food or new CD's, not the free time to climb every mountain we pass on tour or to hang out with friends and family whenever I feel like it.

But God at times has chosen to give these joys in better ways than I could have ever done for myself. Most often we feel that we must work hard at whatever we can to be able to get the money to be able to do something enjoyable after the bills are paid. If we wanted to ride horses, we'd save up the money and pay to ride at a place that offers that. But we end up trading most of our time for money, to secure our ability to live and do the things we want to do with our life. But most of our life is not spent doing the things we really want because there is no time. So our pay check becomes the source of meaning to life.

One of the psalters who grew up riding horses gave up the security of being able to choose when and how to do that in her life, but now as I write we are staying at a house that has horses and she can ride every morning if she wants. A week before we came here we didn't even know where we were going to be staying.

I remember the first night we stayed at Rock Creek Fellowship in Tennessee. A table in the back of the sanctuary was over flowing with food for us. Our hosts were already asleep, but a note said to dig in. I scanned the table, but quickly assumed that I couldn't eat most of what was there; nacho cheese, cookies, and all kinds of treats. But the next morning I realized I had overlooked a note on the table that said vegan. "Even the cheese?" "Yes, that too", said St. Deb. All day I feasted on a magical vegan feast. I got full. It had been a long time since there was a table of food where I could eat it all, and keep coming back for more. I could have never provided a meal like this for myself if I tried. It tasted better than any restaurant, it was free, and it was part of beginning a new friendship.

Times like this have been mixed with times of having almost nothing to eat, but it is this lack of stability that can make life so beautiful (and I'm someone who likes routine, but I find way to make routines in different situations). When I am forced to realize that I don't know what tomorrow will bring, the rejoicing is so much greater when it brings something good. And whether it brings something good or bad I can still rejoice because seen through the context of living out this vocation each experience is indwelt with meaning.

I know many travelers, who take risks and experiment with their lives, have amazing stories of experiences that seem miraculous but are viewed as the exciting coincidences that are a part of this life. But I choose to accept some of those experiences as miracles from the hand of God. And this draws me near to Him, and so makes my joy in Him deeper.

-prince edwin ransom

The word "mass" also has a similar double meaning: it is the liturgy of the Eucharist (or communion) and Webster's says, "it is a great body of people as contrasted with the elite." So how can we, as everyday folks with various degrees of education and experience who come primarily from a people group whose teachings and ideals are contrary to our faith (ingrained in us from birth), ever unite?

Here I will suggest that one very transformative, unifying, challenging, and beautiful way to oppose the things that are against Christ, to remind us of the way we should live, and to symbolically incarnate all of our hopes, is to create a new ritual or rituals. Create a ritual that is rooted in the way of Christ, and that learns from the ancients who have also lived against the world and focused on changing the dominant anti-Christ culture.

The Liturgy gives us a form that can be adapted to address any problem of the present age, while always reconnecting us to that great cloud of witnesses who have fought the good fight and carved out a distinction, in their cultures and ages, between the world and the way of Christ. The Liturgy is a symbolic art form, a communal mysticism, a way of entering into the body of Christ. It is also one of the last ways we have left to challenge the dominant reality and dream together about a new one. It instills in us a return to the mystery of faith, a mystery that inspires awe and reverent fear, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

We traveled to South Dakota on one of our wanderings and visited the Badlands. As soon as we entered the area I could do nothing but stare, mouth dropped, at the amazing beauty, power and other-worldishness of the landscape. It automatically made me acknowledge the Creator. I later got a chance to listen to some paleontologists and geologists while visiting and their in depth and devoted study and reflection and practice helped them understand and appreciate the environment so much that they have committed their lives to protecting the beauty and helping others realize how special it is. What awe they must have had to want to go so deep into an understanding and relationship with a place. How much more should we desire that with the One who made it?!

We have come to notice that our culture's rituals and life-styles have forced out that mystery. Too many of our places of worship resemble office buildings and conference centers. Too much of our spiritual teachings are in sound bytes or 12-step programs. Too much of our lives are shaped by our materialistic, technocratic, individualistic, arrogant culture instead of by the beautiful, suffering, relational, radical Christ that we profess to follow. We need to stop relying on our own ambition and begin letting Christ incarnate Himself through us.

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Daily life's detached on the road because no thing is any longer daily. Nothing will be consistent from yesterday to today- particularly not to tomorrow- excepting attacks of scatteredness and feelings futile. The beauty of each spontaneous moment is obvious to appreciate... comfortably from a recliner. In the moment how to remember my reason, His reason. It goes to pray never ceasing or never pray at all.

I become begrudging of words, mine and yours. Possessive of personal time peaceful for prayer. I need my time with God. I can only hear from Him directly, only way. I. I. I.

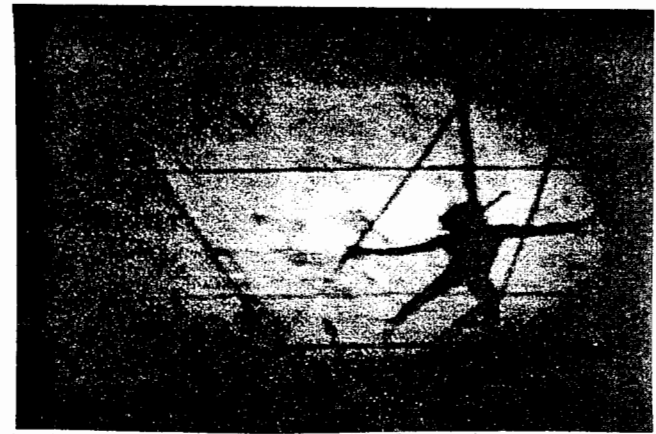
Then where does I belong? Beyond. Be gone all grasping grappling for feelings I'd want. It comes to conversation, commitment, compassion: giving away time and thoughts is giving myself away. And my Self goes away, divided up among the other selves in this life. My growing thin transparent God, help?

He speaks silencing all and wipe us out. I sense a shatter in my being, perceiving the presence of the Other. Smitten down on whatever mountain, hours or days, swallowed in stripping away layers of previous perceptions.

I understand nothing, He fills until my body does indeed shatter. All that's left is one thing: the act and fact of awe; being that I have no understanding, only fear, yet- fill me again and again please, O Lord. I am willing to be awed. Every day, though it be a painful piercing.

- Lady Pickaway Brave

Some days you tread the grass tipping the toe in awe
Some days you draw the sword, some nights you spit at the stars
We serve a God of grief and pleasure; we swim in passion and tears
Fasting fills our minutes, but feasting fills our years



Being in awe is the direct opposite of being bored. To love Christ is not banal, and if it seems that way to us than there is something wrong. It doesn't always give us happiness, and it isn't pain free, but it shouldn't be boring. And that is why we are talking about awe, not to present it as a goal for you to strive after, and then give you tips on how to get there, but to describe how our faith could and should be and has been in its best moments. And to say: if it is now boring, it needn't be.

Again awe is not something we can seize ourself; it comes in a surprise attack. It is a mystery. There is no self-help program to awe; it is the byproduct of a real encounter with God. It can be waited for, lived through, and remembered to God's glory, but never predicted or sustained.

Awe is part of a cycle that hopefully we live through often in our sojourning - from waiting, prayer, and worship - to God's presence meeting with us again - to our being in awe of him. As we said before worship is one way to be attentive. Another way to be attentive is through our lifestyle. It is a form of prayer to throw yourself into a situation that you could not accomplish unaided. To step in so far over your head in trying to love God and neighbor that not being dependent on Him isn't an option. It is good to see God provide for us. When we are taking care of ourselves, when all our blessings come from our own hard work, when we have decent jobs that pay the bills and put bread on the table, when our schedules are manageable and relationships are kept distant and easy, when the government has our back for being good citizens, when we have found the most efficient technology to accomplish all our desires, this is when we have no place for God. This is when our prayers aren't urgent because we are not desperate, when even if it is still true that every good thing comes from God, we have no reason to respond in awe, because we knew everything would be ok anyway.

So, you begin an experiment, you try to let go and listen: We recognized things needed to change, and we jumped on a bus. We've made mistakes and we've made some progress. It is a journey, as is so often talked about these days, and on this road we have still experienced times of boredom, self-sufficiency, and distraction, but we have also learned to be attentive in ways we never knew before, and have been awed by God anew because of it. Here are some stories from the road: