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HARVEST TIME is rooted in the Biblical vision of economic justice which calls us to harvest God's abundant creation in such a way that everyone has enough.

Through a variety of avenues, Harvest Time supports Christians of unusual wealth as they move into deeper freedom so that their personal resources become instruments of God's love and justice.

Harvest Time is partnered with over 25 grassroots ministries in political and economic "war zones" in Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Washington, DC. Wealthy Christians in the Harvest Time network are invited to invest their lives and resources in these partnerships. Harvest Time's primary mission, however, is to encourage wealthy Christians to freely and joyfully respond with their lives and money according to the leading of God's Spirit—within or beyond Harvest Time's own efforts to stand in economic solidarity with the poorest of the poor.

The Other Disciplines

By Rosemary Feerick

In our last newsletter, we named three disciplines that we find helpful for the journey from philanthropy to discipleship. Specifically, we spoke of nurturing our relationship with God through prayer and Sabbath, getting connected with a community of wealthy Christians, and forming relationships with people who are poor.

In this newsletter, we'd like to describe a few more spiritual disciplines. We refer to these playfully as "the other disciplines" because the connection between these practices and the money and faith journey may not be immediately apparent. Some of us may not consider these to be "spiritual" disciplines at all. Yet our experiences have taught us that they are particularly helpful, especially during moments where we feel "stuck," paralyzed, or are tempted to walk away from Jesus' invitation. Specifically, **three "other disciplines" that we'd like to suggest are being playful, getting in touch with our bodies, and using our imaginations.** To set the tone for this article, let me begin with a light-hearted story:

About a month ago, I was talking to Bryan on the phone about what Harvest Time has learned about money and freedom while my two boys were playing in the bath

nearby. Suddenly, my son Roddy jumped out of tub, screaming. I quickly hung up and ran to see what was going on. When I got to the bathroom, Roddy was still screaming. Little Ian – who is not quite 2 – sat in the tub with a look of innocent bewilderment on his face. Little poops floated all around him. They both looked up at me, wondering what I was going to do. My immediate response was laughter. The energy shifted, the two of them joined in and we all laughed about the fact that our attempt to get clean had resulted in "poop" floating to the surface.

The money and faith journey can sometimes be like that. Many of us get started on this path because we desire to "clean up" our financial lives. Somehow we have become aware that holding on to wealth in the ways that our culture has taught us to is inconsistent with our faith. Wanting to realign our lives, portfolios, and budgets with Jesus, we begin the journey by taking steps such as educating ourselves about biblical economics, attending workshops, moving our investments into socially responsible funds, rewriting our wills, and/or making major gifts for the first time. For many of us, the money and faith journey begins with a genuine desire to "clean things up."

But we don't have to go very far

*Nurturing a new breed of rich rulers not turning away sadly (Mark 10:22),
but turning to Jesus with rejoicing and hilarious generosity.*

before some other “stuff” starts floating to the surface. Each person and family’s situation is different, but some form of difficulty and/or pain is almost always a part of the process of shifting our security base from mammon to God. Some of us have to deal with emotional difficulty as we come face to face with our fears, our childhood wounds, family issues, and differences in our marriages. Others become aware of prejudices and blind spots that have influenced the ways we’ve worked with money. The issues are different for each of us, but realigning our money lives with our faith often involves hard work and pain. That’s the bad news. The good news is that the journey really is about moving into deeper freedom and joy. Knowing that pain and/or some other kind of “stuff” can and often does arise helps us to be better prepared to stay the course when it does. The disciplines that this article focuses on are for those moments when the journey gets difficult – they are the ones that prevent us from jumping out of the tub screaming.

There is another reason why these disciplines are important. Some of us who are committed Christians may have inadvertently come to believe that God operates in a well-ordered, rational manner. We may have forgotten that the nature of the Holy Spirit is to “blow where it will,” (John 3:8) and to leave disciples appearing as if they have had too much wine (Acts 2:13). Perhaps we’ve never experienced God that way. Perhaps we have not learned to recognize the miracles that occur through the movements of the less predictable side of God. Perhaps we have limited our experience of God by failing to open our hearts to the Spirit who creates out of chaos (Genesis 1:2). Our desire

“By playing our roles lightly, it’s easier for us to be ourselves. At board meetings, when a person starts talking about how serious this or that is, we put on Groucho Marx glasses to lighten things up. We are dealing with Guatemalan murders, Nepali blindness, Native American alcoholism, and things can get very heavy. Keeping a balance of humor and love and responsibility enables us to keep exquisitely close to the spirit.”

Ram Dass

quoted in

[We Gave Away A Fortune](#)

to control our lives may have shut some part of ourselves down to the God who calls us into the unknown.

But if we seek to open ourselves to the core transformation required to genuinely place our security in God, we need to be open to the Spirit whose unpredictability and playfulness makes the impossible possible. Learning how to connect with and trust this Spirit is precisely what enables us to move beyond the places where we get stuck into deeper freedom and joy.

REMEMBERING TO PLAY

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he invites the church gathered there to give “hilariously” (2 Corinthians 9:7). But conversations about money and faith are often heavy and serious. Studying and learning about biblical economics and money is a part of what we all need to do and for most of us that will involve work. But *only* having the conversation this way can paralyze us and/or keep us from seeing joyful and playful possibilities of how we might respond to God with our wealth. Being too serious about our money can even be a way of keeping the spotlight so intently on us that we become blind to the ways God is moving all around us. A wonderful way to counteract the tendency to take ourselves too seriously is to deliberately cultivate a spirit of playfulness.

Remembering to play is also essential for those of us who are closely connected to the poor. When we are in regular contact with people who suffer under systems of oppression, it is easy to become weighted down by grief. The needs of the world often feel overwhelming. The pain of knowing people who can’t eat is intense. Having our eyes and hearts open to the horror of injustice is agonizing. It’s easy to be overcome by what a friend refers to as “the river of grief.” This grief often sucks the energy out of us, leaving us feeling powerless.

While it’s obviously healthy to feel grief in a situation of suffering, few people have the energy to respond to injustice with love and creativity when they are overwhelmed with sadness. Knowing how to connect with joy in the midst of sadness is a key part of what keeps our spirits alive when

our hearts are heavy. Being able to hold together our laughter and our tears is what enables us to keep doing what is ours to do to respond to Jesus' call in the midst of pain. The particular form of play that is helpful is different for each person, family and community. **The important thing is to remember that the Spirit often shows up when we lighten up.**

Let me give a couple of examples. I was recently at a gathering of wealthy Christians that has learned to incorporate play into its discernment around money. In the course of the retreat, the group decided to hold a lighthearted "money sinners anonymous" meeting where each of us confessed some aspect of what was going on in our money lives by introducing ourselves with the first playful name that came to mind. "Lucy Goosey," for instance, had a tendency to spend too much money. "Hank Do-Do" was having a hard time keeping the Sabbath. "Dee Nile" was aware that her meticulous budgeting had become a way of shutting out the Spirit. And so on. In the course of the conversation, some of us found that we were able to verbalize the core issues we were facing. The playful ritual, in other words, functioned as a short-cut that helped us to identify and name some area of our money lives that we needed to look at. Having the conversation in a lighthearted spirit also meant that we could laugh at ourselves, which in some cases, made it possible to take whatever next step was needed.

Remembering to cultivate a spirit of playfulness can also provide a way for us to reconnect with hope and strength in the midst of very difficult situations. Several years ago, I participated

"The soul loves laughter because it seeks truth, and laughter often reveals reality. But above all, the soul loves life, and both silence and laughter are life-giving."

Parker Palmer
A Hidden Wholeness

in a Ministry of Money reverse mission pilgrimage to Bosnia. The trip was very difficult for me. One evening, after an exhausting day of witnessing the destruction the war had caused in Sarajevo, we returned to the Franciscan monastery for dinner. After we ate, one of the monks took out his guitar and began singing. Quite spontaneously, several of us started dancing. We spent the rest of the evening singing and dancing. Our celebration was exactly what I needed to move from despair to hope.

Of course, being playful can sometimes be a form of denial. Sometimes people joke around as a way of not dealing with the issues they need to. That is not what I am referring to here. Instead, I am speaking of letting playfulness move us into and through what is difficult. When pain and grief bury our energy and hope, remembering to play can dig them out.

GETTING INTO OUR BODIES

Another way that we've learned to work through difficult moments of the journey is by cultivating disciplines that get us into

our bodies. Many of us who believe in the incarnation are, somewhat ironically, "atheists from the neck down," as Walter Wink says. When we've spent much of our lives training our minds, it's easy to forget to honor the sacred knowing of our bodies. At Harvest Time, we have learned to prioritize disciplines that pay attention to and honor the body's wisdom.

How we do this varies from person to person. Some of us have serious disciplines of body prayer like yoga, for instance. Others find sports to be the most effective way to move out of their heads and into their bodies. Still others find that they are able to tap into a more joyful side of themselves while dancing. What we find important is remembering to engage in some form of physical discipline – particularly when we are feeling stuck – and/or to pay attention to the inspirations that come to us when we do.

My good friend, Howard, for instance, who has been working with the connection between money and faith in his life for a few years, often finds that he connects with his deepest wisdom while running. That is when he often gets clear about some new step he needs to take. Part of his journey has involved learning to notice what percolates during his runs. Howard describes the connection between running and his spiritual life this way:

As I've reflected on running as a spiritual discipline, it occurs to me that the issue has something to do with creating the circumstances under which all the senses come together in a balanced whole. My sense of touch (am I cold, warm, or comfortable),

sense of smell as I run through different sorts of places, sense of the limits of my body on those days when running doesn't feel so good, sense of scale (I feel awfully small as I run along an empty country road or an ocean beach), all complement in various ways the workings of my mind. It's not that I stop thinking, but just that the other ways of knowing are given a chance to contribute.

A few years ago, I was running along a beautiful trail through some old growth forest. It was one of those magical days when I felt totally connected with my surroundings. I remember running pretty fast down the trail and having the uncanny ability to somehow respond without thinking to various impediments along the way such as tree roots, uneven ground, rocks, etc. It was amazing to experience myself somehow making minor adjustments in direction, pace, and foot placement, often just in advance of actually seeing any of these things. Somehow, my body knew to make those subtle adjustments. The result was that I felt as if I was positively flying down the trail, with no fear of stumbling, falling, or hurting myself. I also remember simultaneously hearing sounds and smelling the rich, damp forest, feeling entirely at home in this, my native habitat.

The next day, I ran the same trail, hoping for the same sort of experience. Instead, I was trying to work something out entirely "in my head," the result being that I nearly killed myself on several

*Every
Child
Has known God,
Not the God of names,
Not the God of don'ts.
Not the God who ever does
Anything weird,
But the God who only
knows four words
And keeps repeating them,
saying:
"Come dance with Me."
Come
Dance.*

Hafiz
The Gift

occasions tripping over things and nearly falling often. I suspect that I was effectively shutting out all those other ways of knowing, with the result that I felt like an alien in a strange world. The feeling was exactly the opposite of the day before.

Last spring, Howard took a major leap in his life when he left a prestigious position at a university in order to respond more deeply to his sense of God's leading. In many ways, he ran himself into his leap.

A very different body discipline that we have learned to practice involves offering and receiving simple hand and foot massages. We stumbled into this discipline at one of Harvest Time's early retreats. It happened when we were in the middle of

discussing the violence and poverty of Haiti and whether or how to respond with money. Some of us were feeling powerless. Others were feeling overwhelmed. As a group, we had hit a place where we didn't know what to do. Quite spontaneously, I turned to a friend and began to massage his feet. Others followed suit. As we did so, the energy in the circle shifted and we were able to continue the conversation in a spirit of hope. Since that time, we have learned that incorporating simple hand or foot massages into gatherings that focus on money can help us break out of a controlled, surface way of talking about money into one that authentically and lovingly speaks to the core issues of what keeps us from surrendering our lives and wallets to Jesus.

There are all sorts of ways to get into our bodies. For some of us, moving our bodies might be part of our prayer time. For others, it might be part of our recreation. Again, we find that the form of the discipline matters less than learning to involve and pay attention to our body's wisdom in the process of moving into deeper freedom.

IMAGINATION

If you were a volcano, what kind would you be?

This morning I went to my son's preschool to read the children books about volcanoes. Together we learned that there are different types of volcanoes. Some volcanoes, like the ones in Hawaii, have gradual sloping sides. They erupt with a slow, constant flow of liquid lava. Others are tall and shaped like a cone, with steep sides. They explode rarely, but with powerful explosions of fire, ash, and debris.

It's a playful question, but before you dismiss it, see if you can visualize in your imagination these two types of volcanoes. If you were a volcano, which would you be?

Perhaps you're not a visual person, so let me ask the question a different way. Close your eyes and imagine – as I did with the children this morning – that you can feel the magma down at your feet, now rising up through your legs, into your gut, up into your chest, and now exploding. Put your body into it. Act it out. Imagine you're a volcano and explode.

It's just an invitation. But why not?

I'm being lighthearted and playful and I am deliberately inviting you to involve your imagination in two different ways – obviously - but if you actually did it, perhaps you're feeling more energized now than you were a moment ago. And if you really got into it, perhaps you just got in touch with something in you that is longing to find a way out.

The Christian faith has rich traditions that involve the imagination in prayer. The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, for instance, encourage the use of the imagination as a way of moving from simply observing the Gospel story to entering into it. Though I was trained by the Jesuits in college and seminary, I have to confess that I often resisted this particular way of relating to God. I far preferred to get centered or to talk about Jesus than I did to actually trying to imagine myself in the Gospel story. I had far more confidence in my intellect than I did in my imagination.

Then I had kids. About the same time, I became close friends with a woman who is an artist. Before I knew it, I was painting, drawing, dressing up, and pretending – sometimes publicly – to be a volcano, to speak a variety of alien languages, to be a motorcycle rider. Deliberately cultivating my imagination in these and other ways consistently puts me in touch with parts of myself that are full of life, creativity and joy. When I am able to bring these parts of me to the conversation about money, new possibilities open up.

A couple of years ago, for instance, I was with a group of people who were agonizing over how to give away money that we had pooled together into a common pot. After spending a long time trying unsuccessfully to think our way into clarity, someone suggested that each of us respond to the question on the table by drawing. Though I am typically a person who cringes when people take out crayons, I was willing to give it a shot. Somewhat amazingly to me – though not at all to my artist friends – we found that moving to our imaginations in that way was precisely what moved us out of impasse, so that money could flow through us into the world.

At Harvest Time, we have been blessed to have several artists in our network. Some of us are musicians. Some are gifted with paintbrushes and crayons. Some are actors. Others – like myself – simply know how to play “make believe” with children. **Together, we have learned that welcoming our creativity and imagination into conversations about money often has the power to open doors we had assumed were locked.** We have learned that the

creative parts of ourselves can free us to imagine new ways of responding to the world's needs with our wealth.

CONCLUSION

Though I have been somewhat lighthearted in writing this article, we are actually quite serious about these disciplines. We find that remembering to play, to stay in our bodies, and to use our imaginations can be valuable disciplines that help us to engage more of ourselves in our discernment about how to respond to Jesus with our wealth. While these disciplines may not be right for everyone, our repeated experience of the powerful shifts that take place in individuals and communities that incorporate them leads us to offer them to you. We invite you to give them a try!



If you would like to continue this conversation or otherwise be in contact with us, please feel free to get in touch with either Rose, Don, or Bryan.

Quotations in this article are from the following books which we recommend:

Ladinsky, Daniel, translator. *The Gift: Poems by Hafiz.* Penguin Compass, 1999.

Mogil, Christopher and Anne Slepian. *We Gave Away A Fortune.* New Society Publishers, 1992.

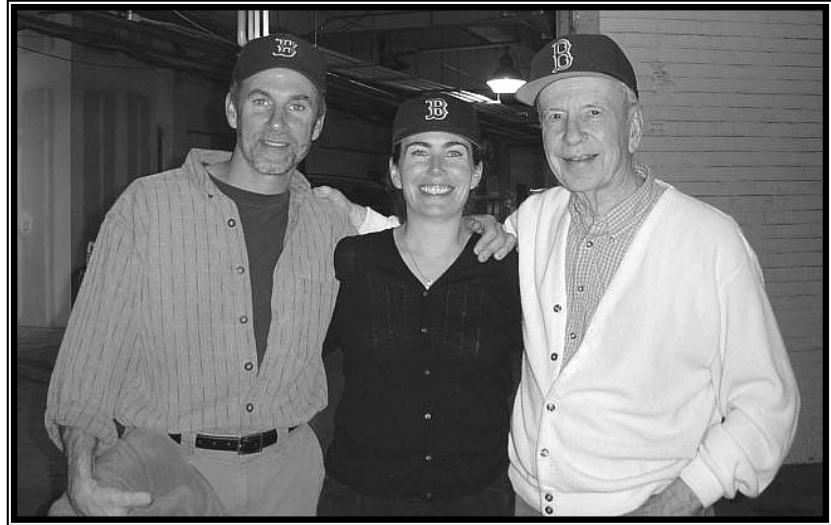
Palmer, Parker J. *A Hidden Wholeness.* Jossey-Bass, 2004.



On behalf of all of us at Harvest Time, we would like to extend our love and appreciation to all of you who continue to encourage us and support our efforts and work. We hope and pray that 2005 is a wonderful year for you all.

God's Peace to you,

Rose, Don, & Bryan



Harvest Time Co-Directors

Bryan Sirchio, Rosemary Feerick, and Don McClanen



UPCOMING EVENTS

"Creating Community Along the Narrow Path"

February 11-13, 2005

Friendly Crossways
Conference Center
Harvard, MA
(1 hour from Boston)

The total cost is \$200 for each participant and includes accommodations.

For more information, you can visit us online at www.harvesttime.cc for a downloadable brochure, or contact Rose Feerick at 408-264-3039.



HARVEST TIME ON THE WEB

We now have a web site up and running that provides easy access to our newsletters, brochures, contact information, and other items of interest regarding this ministry.

Visit us online at:
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"The one who had gathered a large amount did not have too much, and the one who had gathered a small amount did not have too little. They so gathered that everyone had enough to eat." Exodus 16:18