



New Earth News

A Quarterly Publication of Tierra Nueva

Winter 2006

A Letter from the Director

Lift Up Your Voice



At Tierra Nueva, we have always felt a strong call to advocate for people who lack legal standing and “voice” due to poverty, low social standing, immigration status, criminal history and other factors. Advocacy is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit—the *Paraclete* (a Greek word meaning “one who calls out from alongside”). The role of the *Paraclete* is to comfort and defend those who stand before anyone functioning as *satan*, the accuser.

A primary purpose of advocacy is to free people from social, economic, and spiritual forces that keep them from exercising their call to participate in God’s Kingdom. We believe that in Christ we are all children of Abraham (Gal 3:6-9), called to be a blessing to every family on earth (Gen 12:1-3) and to all of creation (Rom 8:19). We join Jesus in calling people who consider themselves of no value or importance (1 Cor 1:18ff) to become empowered as agents of healing, enlightenment, and transformation as they follow Jesus.

Years of ministry with the poor in Central and North America have sensitized us to God’s heart for the downtrodden. We have drawn from Biblical prophets and contemporary leaders who side with the poor (Oscar Romero, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, John Perkins, Jean Vanier and many others) for inspiration and council as we minister. We have also placed a priority on learning directly from the people with whom we minister, along with study of the Bible, theology and the social sciences.

Recently, we have been learning firsthand about the power of hearing God’s voice and prophesying for the building up and comfort of others. This learning has come as we’ve opened ourselves to teaching and ministry from the global body of Christ, as well as those who believe empowerment comes from being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

We came into fruitful dialogue with charismatic Christians quite reluctantly, after years of frustration and even disgust at what we perceived as North American charismatics’ naïvely enthusiastic support for military interventions and other conservative political agendas.

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Tierra Nueva is an ecumenical ministry dedicated to proclaiming the Good News of God’s reign (on earth as it is in heaven) in solidarity with the poor for our mutual liberation, healing, empowerment, transformation, and total salvation.

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Now available in audio format!

Visit the online store on our website to order your copy of Bob’s newest book, now in print and audio CD.



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Join the Tierra Nueva online community and receive announcements of upcoming events, testimonies, new product releases, and more! To add your name to our email list, send us a message at email@peoplesseminary.org.





Martin Luther King, Jr.

We have since learned that we and the people we serve desperately need the spiritual renewal available from the body of Christ universal. This interaction has been so inspiring and fruitful that we are convinced of the need to integrate charismatic understandings, experiences of God, and the prophetic with our existing social prophetic commitments to societal transformation.

The prophet Joel's famous oracle announcing God's eventual pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh to empower a universal prophetic

movement is quoted by Peter to explain Pentecost. Paul's admonition to "earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you might prophesy" has been understood in very different and often divisive ways. The church is seriously divided between theologians and practitioners who emphasize the prophetic call to "do justice, love mercy, and defend the widow and the orphan," and charismatic Christians who listen to God in order to "give a word to the weary" (Isa 50:4-5) and bring encouragement to the body of Christ (1 Cor 14).



Jean Vanier



Cesar Chavez

Social prophetic voices like Martin Luther King Jr, Oscar Romero, and their adherents are often worlds away from prophetic streams within the charismatic movement and apocalyptic-oriented Christians expecting an imminent rapture. While some read the prophets to determine their agenda resisting the IMF and USA, others seem primarily concerned with hearing a personal word of direction or determining a blueprint to identify current events in the Middle East as signs of the end times.



Desmond Tutu

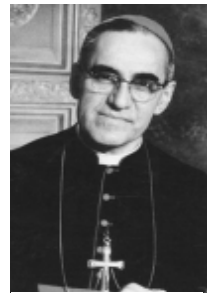


Mother Teresa



John Perkins

Join us as we seek to understand and live out an understanding of the prophetic which includes "social prophetic" concerns like social advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and resistance to the powers, along with "charismatic prophetic" practices like hearing and communicating words of knowledge for encouragement and healing, prophetic evangelism, and spiritual warfare.



Oscar Romero

—Bob Ekblad, Executive Director

Regular Events at Tierra Nueva

Camino de Emaus

Two worshipping communities meet at Tierra Nueva on Sunday nights in our Burlington office, at 701 East Fairhaven. Everyone is welcome. English service - 4:30 p.m. Spanish service - 6:00 p.m.

Soaking Prayer

Come rest, receive, and make space in the busyness just to be in God's presence. Mondays from 7:00-9:00 p.m. upstairs in the soaking room. For more information, visit our website or call Elizabeth, 755-5299.



Our New Audio Library

Tierra Nueva has recently released several new recordings available for purchase. Titles include "I Pledge Allegiance to the Kingdom of God,"

"Intimacy with God and Hearing God's Voice," "Empowerment and Authority," and Genesis teachings from the Reading the Bible with the Damned series. Additional audio teaching titles will soon be available. Visit the TN store on our website for complete descriptions and ordering information: www.tierra-nueva.org.



Freedom for the Prisoners - News from the Jail

Chris Hoke, Assistant Jail Chaplain

Jesse throws on a clean shirt as he steps out of the trailer where he lives with his mom, Epifania. She hands him a lunch she's prepared for his dinner at work, and smiles and waves as we pull out of the RV lot. This is the first of her four sons to return to her. She has been alone, with one dead and the rest in prison or jail, all from lives of drug addiction, violence and crime.

Already two months have passed since I picked up Jesse from the curb in front of the jail and brought him to Tierra Nueva where Roger and I prayed with him, for his freedom from addiction to live into his destiny.

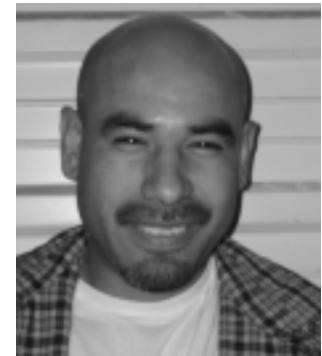
Now, en route from his house to his stable job, we get to catch up in the car once again.

"That was one of my biggest fears: getting out of jail. Not having friends, other than the ones that tore me down, who were only there for me when drinking and drugging. But when I went straight to Tierra Nueva, and each time I come there now, I feel like I got family. I love coming to Tierra Nueva. Along with the Zion church."

Jesse's excitement about his recent experiences in Spirit-led communities deepens our growing belief that people coming off lives of heavy substances and action have a spiritual thirst that needs to be met by the full vitality and experience of God's Presence and Life. If not, drugs will eventually be more

satisfying than humdrum church or some 9-5 job that gives no meaning to their unique, God-breathed lives.

"When I was drinking and doping I always looked forward to Friday to get drunk, to numb my sadness. But after enough suffering, like now, I look forward to Saturday at Zion. There I can pour out my soul to God, you know, where we all sing, really loud."



Caring for the Flock— The Family Support Center

Roger Capron, Co-Director, FSC



"For just as the body has many members, and all the members are one body, so it is with Christ."

At Tierra Nueva, we seek to incarnate this truth as we minister to wounded and threatened families.

Ramón's wife came to the FSC asking for help to get her husband out of jail

and back to his home and children. Ramón was being held on serious felony charges. He would likely end up in deportation proceedings and eventually be sent back to Mexico.

Rocío, Co-Director of the FSC, insisted that we help. While Ramón may have made a bad decision, deep down he was a loving and responsible father. If Ramón were deported, the family would be forced to the streets.

The FSC staff collected letters of reference for Ramón and arranged for trusted legal help. Nick, a long-term volunteer, set-up anger management classes. Chris, assistant jail chaplain, made regular contact with Ramón to give spiritual and emotional support.

The situation looked hopeful. The prosecutor agreed to a plea to non-deportable charges. But then the Border Patrol discovered an earlier con-

viction. They took Ramón to their Tacoma detention facility. Another flurry of phone calls and letters were sent, this time to the judge. Finally, Ramón walked free on bail. Because of ineffective representation four years ago, he should have never been charged. The faith communities at Tierra Nueva continued to pray for Ramón's liberation out of the hands of the city attorney and the border patrol.

The verdict came: "Not Guilty plea will be accepted." Eventually, Ramón's attorney convinced the city attorney to drop the case without re-charging Ramón. Ramón's green card and legal immigration status were reinstated. Ramón was a free man!

All told, twelve members of the body of Christ labored in the unity of the Spirit to help our brother, Ramón, regain his freedom, his dignity, his family and his community.

Good News to the Poor – Tierra Nueva Honduras

Bob Ekblad, Executive Director

This month, I traveled to Honduras to visit Tierra Nueva's village trainers. I was encouraged to see them renewing their commitment to serve farmers in extreme poverty—the landless, single mothers, and those struggling with alcoholism, domestic violence, sickness and depression.

Near our center in Minas de Oro, I visited an impoverished village where promoters David and Jorge Calix live. They invited the villagers to a Bible study on Mark 1:21-34. We talked about how Jesus began his ministry at the margins of society, in Galilee. He preached, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel," and then began calling ordinary people to participate in his ministry of healing, deliverance and proclamation. We noted that Jesus spoke and acted with great authority, evident through his teaching and rebuking of unclean spirits. Jesus raised up Peter's mother-in-law, sick with fever, and healed all the ill and demon-possessed.



Where did Jesus get his authority? We read the account of Jesus' baptism, when the heavens were torn open and the Spirit descended like a dove and a voice announced God's favor—even before Jesus had done any works. We invited the Spirit to be present and prayed for people suffering from pain and sickness. Several people said they experienced relief, and all of the fifteen participants desired prayer to receive more empowerment from the Spirit to become directly involved in Jesus' ministry.

The next day, Elia (a TN promoter) and I visited women she attends in nearby villages. With every encounter, signs of God's kingdom became increasingly visible. A family in the hamlet above had children suffering from Dengue fever. "Let's go pray for them, Roberto," Elia said. I agreed somewhat reluctantly, afraid of getting sick from the dreaded fever. But the thought of Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law from fever mobilized me. We hiked up a steep trail to a humble home with corn husks drying in the sun. We laid hands on the girl and her brother, commanding the fever to leave in Jesus name. In addition, we prayed for their father, who had continual pain in his lower back and leg. He said the pain completely lifted, and enthusiastically urged his wife to receive prayer for pain in her head, neck and spinal column. She reported a fuego (fire) from her head to her lower back, and the pain completely left. Now the daughter was lying with her head propped up, smiling, and saying she felt better. The son had gotten up, his fever gone. Elia and I headed down the trail, giving thanks to God.

Next we visited Hector, a retired TN promoter who had led a phenomenal Bible study with thirty villagers for nine years. Sadly, the success of this study led the local Catholic delegate of the Word to close the study two years before. We prayed that God would help us see reconciliation and renewal in this community. When we arrived, the delegate greeted us warmly. I told him that Hector wanted us to lead a Bible study or perhaps pray for the sick. He invited us to a special service for the Virgin of Suyapa, a commemoration of a Honduran manifestation of mother Mary. I agreed to go, remembering Jesus' frequenting of the synagogues in the villages he visited.

We proceeded up the dirt road past rows of adobe houses and were ushered into a crowded home with some fifty men, women and children. The service began, with songs commemorating Mary, Scripture readings and an inspiring homily by the delegate, who upon finishing announced that I was now going to lead the group in a service of healing. Shocked, I quickly sought a way to avoid being the gringo man of power for the hour—a role I have intensely disliked. I spoke briefly about Jesus' passing his mission to the disciples, giving them power and authority to do the same. So Jesus desires to empower all of us, I concluded, inviting people to pair up and pray for each other to impart the Spirit of the Lord upon their partner as they repeated Luke 4:18-19 over each other.

TN Honduras con'd

The people enthusiastically responded, and I asked who needed healing. More than twenty-five people raised their hands. I invited everyone to lay hands on each other and we prayed, commanding pain to leave in Jesus' name. We repeated: "This healing belongs to me because I am a child of God. I receive my healing now as a free gift in Jesus' name." Over fifteen people experienced immediate and total healing. The group gave rounds of applause to Jesus, who had visited their village in such a concrete way. We then invited anyone needing more prayer to a nearby home, which was soon crowded to overflowing with others who had heard about the healings. For the next hour, Elia and I prayed for the sick, including the delegate of the Word himself, who broke down weeping and confessing his need to humble himself and receive, even from people who weren't Catholic. Elia and I returned to Minas de Oro late that night, amazed that the Kingdom of God had indeed come close. I return both humbled in awe struck by the new things that God is doing among us.

On Earth As It Is in Heaven – Testimonies of Renewal

Roger Wyatt, Jail Bible Study Volunteer

I've had osteoarthritis in my lower back for five years. During the past six months it had become so severe that I could not sleep at night. I finally decided to consult my doctor and he prescribed pain killers and fifteen visits to the physical therapist.

I know God heals, but considering the pain Jesus and the other disciples endured, I was reluctant to ask prayer for myself. Finally, I shared my problem with my men's Bible study, and they prayed for me. The next night, I shared it with inmates at the Skagit County Jail and asked prayer at the close of Bible study. One of the men stood up and said, "We won't wait until the end." About twenty-five men got up and laid hands on me and prayed for healing. I was overwhelmed by their great faith, which seemed much greater than my own.

Next, I received a call from Bob Ekblad inviting me to a Bible study and time of prayer at Tierra Nueva. I really felt the leading of the Holy Spirit to attend. I listened to Bob relate many miraculous healings performed by Jesus, and Bob's own testimony of receiving the power of healing at a pastor's conference in Toronto.

After the study, the entire group prayed for my healing. From Bob's hand, I felt warmth across my lower back, into my hip and down my left leg. I came away praising Jesus and feeling completely healed and pain free. The next morning I felt greatly improved and ready to cancel the remaining treatments, but since I still felt some residual pain, I decided to continue with the therapy.

I was able to share my healing experiences with one of the therapists on my next visit. The therapist told me she also believed in Jesus and had the gift of healing. We both rejoiced in the many ways God works in our lives. I believe I am on a journey with God concerning this whole episode, and God is not through using me. Thank you for your continued prayers!





Come to the Table

You'll never be the same!
Join us for these upcoming People's Seminary events at Tierra Nueva:

Catch the Fire Partners with Tierra Nueva

Soaking Prayer School: Soaking in God's Presence - Thursday April 20—Saturday April 23

To "soak" in God's presence is to rest in God's love, rather than striving in prayer. As we rest expectantly in God's presence, the Holy Spirit hovers over us to reveal more of God's love and to renew and repair the deep areas of our lives. Inspired teaching, combined with time for rest and contemplation, will breathe the fresh, healing wind of God into your soul. Topics included in the weekend are: What is soaking? Hearing God's voice, the Father heart of God, intimacy with God, the power of the cross, performance, the importance of forgiveness, and contemplative prayer.

Transformational Ministry Course - Sunday July 9, 4:30p—Friday July 14, 9:30p

This course is open to pastors, lay leaders, students of theology, and anyone seeking to minister God's love in a broken world. Topics include: advocacy and accompaniment, hearing God's voice, healing prayer, reading the Bible with the marginalized, prophetic evangelism, empowerment by the Spirit for ministry, and contemplative/soaking prayer.

Visit our website for more information or call 360-755-5299 to register.



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