

*"Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ."* – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

*"Let him [or her] who cannot be alone beware of community... Let him [or her] who is not in community beware of being alone."* – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

*"Benedict's rule requires a 'vow of stability' -- the uniquely Benedictine commitment to live in a particular monastic community for life. At first, this may seem to apply least of all amid other ways of life. Yet precisely because it contrasts so sharply with the fragility of most commitments in our hypermodern society, the Benedictine vow of stability may speak more directly to our age and churches than anything else in the Rule... And one cannot understand the vow of stability apart from the Benedictines' two other vows -- conversion of life and obedience, which in turn requires us to face questions of authority. Still, what I wish to argue is this:*

*It is no use rediscovering any of our church's roots, nor discerning innovative ways to be faithful to our church's calling, if we won't slow down, stay longer even if we can't stay put indefinitely, and take something like a vow of stability. Slow down -- because postmodernism may really be hypermodernism. Stay longer -- because there is no way to discern God's will together without commitment to sit long together in the first place. A vow of stability -- because it is no use discerning appropriate ways to be Christian disciples in our age if we do not embody them through time, testing, and the patience with one another that our good ideas and great ideals need, in order to prove their worth as communal practices. As one Mennonite church leader remarked to me concerning the impact of constant mobility on our congregations: "It's getting so the Abrahamic thing to do is to stay put."*

– Gerald Schlabach, "The Vow of Stability: A Premodern Way through a Hypermodern World"

*"By making a vow of stability the monk renounces the vain hope of wandering off to find a 'perfect monastery'. This implies a deep act of faith: the recognition that it does not much matter where we are or whom we live with, provided we can devote ourselves to prayer, enjoy a certain amount of silence, poverty, and solitude, work with our hands, read and study the things of God, and above all love one another as Christ has loved us."*

– Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas*, 9-10

#### Wendell Berry Quotes

*"What impact does place/community have upon the way we choose to live our lives? What impact does our location have upon the things that we value/esteem? These are questions that I've been pondering significantly over the last several months . . . A community, unlike a public, has to do first of all with belonging; it is a group of people who belong to one another and to their place."* – *Sex Economy Freedom and Community*, 147-148

*"A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."*

*"So, friends, every day do something that won't compute...Give your approval to all you cannot understand...Ask the questions that have no answers. Put your faith in two inches of humus that will build under the trees every thousand years...Laugh. Be joyful though you have considered all the facts....Practice resurrection."* – *The Country of Marriage*

*"Love the Lord. Love the world. Work for nothing. Take all that you have and be poor. Love someone who does not deserve it. Denounce the government and embrace the flag. Hope to live in that free republic for which it stands. Give your approval to all you cannot understand. Praise ignorance, for what man has not encountered he has not destroyed."* – *Farming: A Hand Book*, 1970

*"Rats and roaches live by competition under the laws of supply and demand; it is the privilege of human beings to live under the laws of justice and mercy."*

*"If I solve my dispute with my neighbour by killing him, I have certainly solved the immediate dispute. If my neighbour was a scoundrel, then the world is no doubt better for his absence. But in killing my neighbour, though he may have been a terrible man who did not deserve to live, I have made myself a killer—and the life of my next neighbour is in greater peril than the life of the last. In making myself a killer I have destroyed the possibility of neighbourhood."*