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# NEWS FROM

# Celebration!

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## A People Serving the Church

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2016-2017



Håkan Joëlsön, environmental activist and priest in the Church of Sweden, recently spent a month with the Community in Aliquippa. He and his young family lived with the Community of Celebration in England and Scotland in the mid-70's. Several decades later, after having lost his wife to cancer, he married Ruth Wieting, long-time member of the Community. Håkan and Ruth presently live in Umeå, Sweden.

Some of his reflections:

### #1 Boat Across the Atlantic

Of course it depends on how one sees things, but as far as I was concerned, I had long ago used up my flying quota in terms of my ecological footprint. So how to get to America from Europe in a sustainable fashion? Train and bicycle were out of the question. Perhaps by boat?

I ruled out cruise ships - not my style. But as a child in a missionary family, I had traveled several times on cargo vessels between South Africa and Sweden. So I started investigating. My first boat trip attempt in 2014 didn't work out, but the idea persisted, and this year I was able to make it happen.

To travel on a cargo vessel there are two parts to arrange: the actual boat trips, and the connections to and from ports of embarkation and disembarkation. Since my whole journey was based on the principle of not flying at all, I was determined that the connecting trips should be by public transport, i.e. train or bus.

The actual boat tickets that I purchased were with the container-vessel MSC Lausanne from Sines, Portugal to Newark, New Jersey, and then with the mixed cargo vessel Rickmers Seoul from Philadelphia to Antwerp in Belgium. The only connecting trip I arranged ahead of time was by train through Europe to Portugal. Since cargo ships do not guarantee arrival or departure dates, the rest would have to be worked out along the way.

So off I went, a backpacking 69-year-old globetrotter. Getting to Portugal turned out to be quite an adventure in itself, but I finally made it, boarded the ship and began to relax.

In the same manner, "wrapping up" at Celebration in Aliquippa to return home to Sweden was defined by the conditions of cargo ship traveling. Every day you phone the shipping agency at the port of embarkation to check the vessel's schedule, nervous that on a whim the boat is ready to leave and you haven't made it on board. And the schedule keeps changing - normally it is delayed. "My" boat was delayed in Norfolk, VA by rain (!). I thought boats were built to withstand water, but was informed that some cargo should not be exposed to rain, so the boat had to sit there in Norfolk, waiting for drier weather. Finally I was given notice that the vessel was on its way to Philadelphia, where I embarked.



*(continued on back page)*

## 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Celebration Conference: “Sermon on the Mount”



*2016 Conference attendees*



*Plenary session led by Bonnie Thurston*



*Taizé Worship*

**Save the date!**  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference**  
**June 16-18, 2017**  
**Celebration Center**  
**Aliquippa, PA**  
**Topic to be announced**

Mimi and Bill led worship at the 4th annual CAROA/NAECC (Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas / National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities) conference at the Sienna Center, Racine, WI, April, 2016



UK Alumni Gathering, October 2016  
Salisbury, England

A quick trip to friends in North Carolina



*Håkan, Ed Eastman, Betty Pulkingham, Bill, Mimi, Alena and Mary Geringer, Nathan Pulkingham*



*Bill, Jane & Dave Porter, Jodi & Howard Page-Clark, Margaret & Phil Bradshaw*

This summer, we welcomed John, Alison, and Luke Stanley for a month's visit from Australia.



*Alison Stanley with Samantha Guzie*

*Lynn Bailey, John Stanley, Nancy O'Leary at the Memorial Day picnic*



Heading westward to the USA, we were three passengers, but going East to Europe I was the only passenger.

The actual boat-rides could be savoured in a very relaxed manner. The days blended into each other. I had written a rather lengthy list of things to do on the boats, but came home again with only a fraction of them checked off.

We passengers were allowed up on the bridge to our heart's content. On both vessels the Chief Engineer was quite willing to let us go on a tour in the engine room (7 cylinder engines at 50,000 kW and 30,000 kW respectively). On the second day after departure there was a "fire-and-lifeboat-drill". Time easily slipped by, talking to crew

members, investigating machinery and technical equipment, exercising in the little gym on board and for further exercise rushing up and down the 7-story stairway (which could be done well enough even when the boat was rolling), being served three cooked meals a day, simply savouring the expanse of sky and sea, giving cause for reflection. At times it actually was a bit of a retreat-like experience, with no Internet or telephone - wonderfully "unplugged."

So is cargo boating something I recommend? Yes, indeed.

1. For the sake of climate/environment. It is a small step in a different direction. I have not done deep research into evaluating how good/bad this mode of travel is for the environment and climate. A simplified answer could be that the boats would be sailing anyway and my body-weight is totally negligible on a 30,000-ton vessel. Considering that the MSC Lausanne could carry more than 3000 containers, it seems plausible that a boat would have less impact than 3,000 trucks traveling the same distance, and far less than if the same cargo was "shipped by air" so to say.

2. The factor of "inner growth" is a spiritual dimension. Slow traveling does something in one's inner being. Being unplugged for a period of time carries blessings - besides avoiding jet lag.

A sailor's life is not glamorous. Life onboard was not always comfortable (skirting a low pressure area, the Rickmers Seoul was exposed to a considerable roll), but is maximum comfort the ultimate goal in life?

## #2 Pleading for Mother Earth

As time approached the big United Nations Climate Conference (COP21) in Paris in December 2015, there were many organizations around the world that staged actions to highlight the seriousness of the global climate issue and to urge delegates and world leaders to come to a bold agreement on how to halt global warming.

Some regions in the world will be more adversely affected by the climate change than others. One of them is the Arctic.

In Sweden a group of 6 people working with theatre production in the National Swedish Theatre Organisation (*Riksteatern*) decided to stage a kind of performance directed at COP21. They arranged a runners' relay day and night nonstop, starting Nov. 9 from Kiruna, Sweden, above the Arctic Circle, to arrive in Paris on Nov. 29, the day before the summit meeting was due to begin. The arrangement involved approximately 900 people running or walking over the course of those 20 days. The project was named Run For Your Life, inspired by a quote from Naomi Klein: "In a crisis, you may have to run for your life! The world is in a crisis now!"

To signal urgency, runners were encouraged to wear normal clothes. It turned out that most runners wore regular running gear anyway, but I decided to wear ordinary pants and a normal jacket with reflector strips sewed on it.

Stones play an important part in the culture of the indigenous Sami people of Northern Scandinavia. So a stone, picked up in Lappland, became the relay "baton".

It was a hi-tech arrangement, with continuous live streaming on the Internet. Watching early runners, I noticed that the leader car with the camera also had a microphone, and an idea began stirring in me that on Nov. 12 while I was running the 15 miles I had been assigned, I could take the opportunity to speak to the world from time to time.

So there I was, running in the dead of night on a narrow road through the woods in the North of Sweden, calling out my hope and sorrow to the world. I called to the UN conference delegates, to rich, to poor, to the world's financial systems, to the human race, and I sang my lament to Mother Earth.

Here is a link to a 12 minute video that is an excerpt from my run. <https://youtu.be/322ncC5nbUA>

Håkan