

**New  
Direction** **MAY 2010**

PO Box 968 Mars Hill, NC 28754 (828) 680-9417

*Dear Friends,*



Will Hunicutt was a man who was living on the property of what became New Direction Farm long before the ministry ever became a vision. Once a sharecropper for a family who owned a farm at the bottom of the mountain, Will moved to the top farm after his wife died. We were told that he approached the owners of the uninhabited mountain top farm and asked if he could move into an old abandoned house in return for watching over the property. Little did he know that 20 years later we would move onto the property. Thinking he would need to vacate and find another place to live, God obviously had quite a different plan. Not only did we tell him to please stay, we hired him as a caretaker of the land. The providence of God is so amazing. Whereas Will needed renewed purpose and meaning in his life, we needed someone to teach us how to live on a mountain. We didn't know how to build fences much less take care of animals. I never will forget the rapid fence work that needed to occur before the herd of Scottish Highland cattle arrived..... and then the herd of sheep... and then a family of pygmy goats.

Will looked upon work like no other individual I have ever met. A master gardener he would often sit on his porch and wait until the sun rose so he could begin his day. We were never sure of his exact age until he died at the age of 86. For the four years he was with us, if it was a good day he would say he was 81. If it was a bad day he would tell us he was 86 and soon to die. While he was alive we added whatever conveniences to his home he was willing to receive: a bathroom, a gas heater, new front porch. It didn't take long for us to understand that we needed to be careful to not wound his pride. One day we brought him two bags of groceries only to find they were flung promptly out the back door to his dogs, with Will muttering "they was fancy people food."



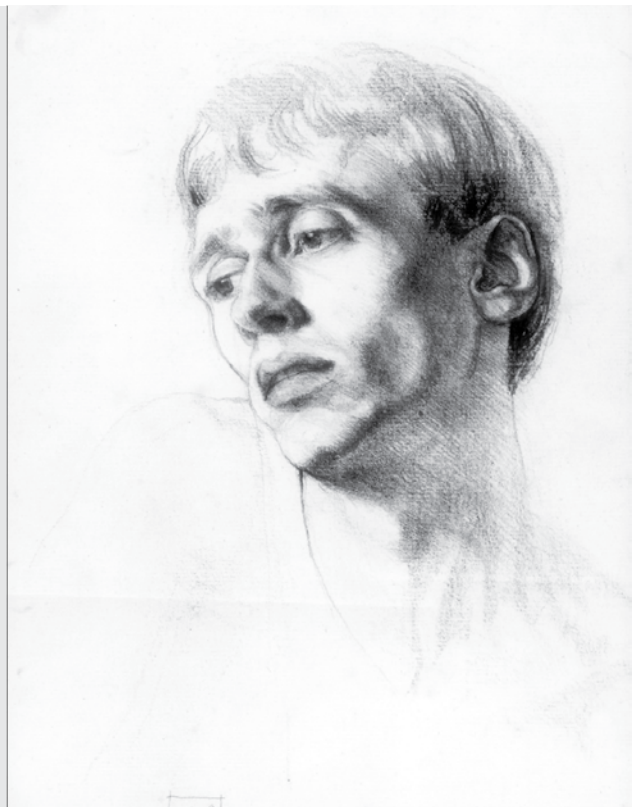
After Will died we began restoring the house. It has now become our craft shop.

The day we began the restoration with a church from Tennessee, we went up to the attic for the first time. On one of the walls was a very large cardboard picture which caught my attention. To this day I can still clearly see the details of that image. I wish I had salvaged it as I have thought back to it often. The sky in the picture was the blue we often see up here on the mountain. Beneath the sky was a green, rolling pasture on which were five or so young guys, about the ages of these young men who live at New Direction Farm. They were running down the hill, with wide-open, exuberant smiles. The first word that came to my mind was : free. This was the picture of young men who were free. I have wondered why Will put this on the wall. Did it remind him of the days of his youth? Of a treasured memory? Or was it a whisper of what he wished he had in his youth?

If you have ever been to the Chapel of the Prodigal at Montreat College there is an exquisite fresco of the story of the parable of the lost son as told in the book of Luke, chapter 15. The expression of the prodigal son is the exact opposite of those depicted in the free boys in the pasture. The artist Ben Long captured an expression on the prodigal son which we have seen often up here at the farm on the faces of young men when they come to the farm. Whether from deep pain, anger, or apathy the countenance is often the same with a jaded resignation to this life set before them. No eager beavers are they to rise and wait for the sun to appear so they can dig into this day the Lord has made. They don't understand the goodness of God much less that every good and perfect gift comes from above. While they might not have run away from home and completely embraced the world and all that it offers only to find the emptiness and disillusion that comes from all of the counterfeit attempts at "life", many of their illusions have fallen to dust. And this is such a good thing... might not feel good..... but such a gift.

Over the years we have often referred to this passage from the book of Matthew 11: 28-30 : "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Never assume your audience has an accurate visual unless you have an accurate visual. Many of this present group of young men have been with us for three years and have probably heard this scripture at least 8 or so times, along with descriptive movements attempting to paint a picture of what this may look like. Last May for our 34th wedding anniversary, Dave gave me the gift of a magnificent antique yoke. (Of course my first question was "what are you trying to say to me?" thinking this was some twisted inference of our years together). Wednesday night's Bible study found us gathered around this hands-on actual yoke.



Three of the guys, simultaneously said “oh..... I was thinking of an egg yolk all these years.” Needless to say we had quite a good laugh over this.

If you have ever picked up one of these old oxen yokes you know how heavy they are. And if you have put your head in one of the openings you know how restrictive that opening is.....yet, Jesus says that this is the place we will find rest for our souls. It is a position we are given at the moment of the miracle when through the power of the Holy Spirit we, personally, come to faith in Jesus. It is an abiding walk as depicted in psalm 23 which entails trusting and obeying. The work we, as a staff, are called to up here on the mountain is in a sense, a dual yoking. One in which we are walking with Christ and then have the boys yoked to us. As you can imagine it is not an easy work because the human inclination of most of the young men who come here is to buck being led by another.

But at the same time it is a very joyful work because we have the privilege of being a part of this piece of the journey in their lives. Many of the boys who come here have never liked reading. Over the years we have searched high and low to find material that interests them. Lately the middle school boys have been reading the Elizabeth George books about Sam Gribley, who is the same age as these guys, who finds himself living off land very similar to our terrain. And then there are the Gary Paulson novels which also have a survivor type slant. The guys love these books as they are sparking their imagination. And then there are the real people of the Bible, some who felt they could live life independently without God and those, like David and Paul, who surrendered to the will of God.

We were sitting around the dinner table the other night almost an hour after we had finished our meal. Everyone was participating in the conversation. The guys might not have been running down the hill but they were full of exuberance.



And there has been that same level of interaction during Bible study or early morning hikes. Something quite beautiful is happening in the midst of the cumbersomeness of the dailyness of life up here on the mountain. Many are beginning to believe that Jesus is truly Who He says He is and are entering into that perfect place of peace and rest. Thank you for the part you are playing in setting captives free.

God Bless you

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bright Lane". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

All of us At New Direction Farm

“For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them the bar across their shoulders the rod of the oppressor.” *Isaiah 9: 4*

“In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength.” *Isaiah 30: 15*

“Something beautiful, something good; all my confusion He understood; All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, But He made something beautiful of my life.”

*Gloria Gaither*

---

EXCHANGED LIFE MINISTRIES  
dba New Direction Ministries  
P. O. Box 968  
Mars Hill, NC 28754-0968