



COLLECTIVE WISDOM

At one point a few years ago, I had three beds and didn't sleep in any of them—the bed I slept in was borrowed. I have tons of kitchen and bathroom supplies, along with myriad books, furniture, and DVDs, some of which I purchased, but many the remaining vestiges of former communities.

When communities end, I'm often the one who receives any items that might be helpful for a future community. I'm also the one people call when they need something and don't know where to get it—a shop vac for instance.

In addition to being a keeper of community goods, I've recently realized that I am also the keeper of a bunch of community wisdom.

Similarly to the various items in my trust, much of the wisdom I share with people does not come from my own experiences or faithfulness, but most often from people like you and the cadre of others I love and share life with.

Bees fly from flower to flower, sharing the pollen and the potency of one flower to the next.

Similarly, I've discovered one of my roles is to receive the wisdom of those I meet with while sharing the wisdom others have given me. It's a huge blessing and responsibility not to be limited by my own experience but to be able to share yours as well. Thank you for trusting me with this collective wisdom and enabling me to share it with the wider Church. I watch it bear fruit every day.

I pray you have a wonderful Christmas season remembering that our Savior comes.

Please read further to learn more about my work. I desire your prayers.

Love,



People gathered for one of our weekly community dinners.

The following contains many links. For ease, you can access it online at mattpritchard.com/newsletter

MY RECENT WORK

When people ask me what I do, I've begun simply replying that I'm a professional connector. It's a short-hand way to explain why I work with so many groups. Here are some of them...

Kingdom Experiments (kingdomexperiments.org) is the organization that I fundraise through to support ALL the following work. Its overarching mission is to help the church defy the captivity of this world and dream, vision, and experiment towards the Kingdom of God. In addition to supporting all my work through the following organizations and my meeting with people in general (and I do a lot of meeting with everyone from church planters to community leaders to people just trying to figure out life), a key project of Kingdom Experiments has been a weekly **Community Dinner** for 30+ people that models the practice of hospitality so foreign to much of the American church and provides space for people to both laugh and grapple with the hard questions of our day.



The bumper sticker on my car.

For the last year and a half, I've served as an **InterVarsity Campus Staff Person at the University of Pittsburgh**. I've been



Students gathered at our annual IV Christmas Party.

working with IV in various forms since college. I love working with college students as they tend to be particularly open to the radical call of Jesus. They are excited to be a part of a community that calls them to grapple with what it truly means to love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, and soul and to love their neighbors as Christ has loved them. It has been really exciting to continue to see the chapter I work with widen and deepen. We have many students who are excited about being challenged, building community with one another, and radically living out their faith on campus and beyond.

One of our favorite activities in the Pitt IV Undergrad chapter this year has been Hard Questions Cafés. They are evenings when students are invited to ask difficult questions of life and faith. Everyone then discusses these questions together. It's a rich experience where students learn how to address the concerns of their peers—an important skill in the post-modern culture in which they dwell.

For the last couple of years I have been on staff with **the Simple Way** (thesimpleway.org) aiding them with strategy, special projects, connecting people and communities, and helping form communities that flourish. Currently I'm focusing on the **Community of Communities** project (communityofcommunities.info) and **Conspire Magazine** (conspiremagazine.org) in addition to special projects and events as they arise.



My work with **the Simple Way** and beyond has provided the opportunity to foster effective community formation and help existing communities flourish. Last spring, I published *Community Living for the Long Haul* (goo.gl/unQFI) in Conspire Magazine. The article joins a group of essays (mattpritchard.com/community) I've written providing practical guidance to folks who are trying to start communities.

I serve on the board of the **House of St Michael the Archangel** (houseofstmichael.org), a community of people who read ancient church writings for the purpose of "total conversion." It's been one of, if not the, most formational experiences of my life. The work of the House is the deepest and most promising I've seen for helping the Church thrive in our post-Christendom culture. We'd love for you to join us at our Devotional Conference on January 13 and 14 (goo.gl/filid). You

could also become a part of our Intensive Cohorts (goo.gl/TiDkd)--four Saturdays over the course of the year that initiate



People praying during the first House of St Michael the Archangel Devotional Conference.

participants into the Church Fathers. This advent we've been reading Jacob of Serug's *On the Mother of God* which has greatly increased my appreciation for the ministry of Mary.

I convene **Pittsburgh Year** (pittsburghyear.org), an association of one-year programs dedicated to developing communities of young leaders to seek the peace of the city of Pittsburgh. When I arrived in Pittsburgh I learned that these programs existed in isolation, now they share best practices, market together, and connect their participants to change the world, starting with Pittsburgh.

In the fall I joined four other people in starting a new community in the neighborhood where I've been living for the last two years. Our household joins a strong relational network of Christians in our neighborhood who aren't exactly an intentional community, but definitely fall within that stream. It's been wonderful to live once again with people who are pursuing life together.

I've joined two church communities in Pittsburgh: **Pittsburgh Mennonite** (pittsburghmennonite.org) which is part of the Anabaptist peace-making tradition which I've self-identified with for many years, and **The Open Door** (pghopendoor.org) which is Presbyterian in polity and emerging in practice. This autumn I began the process to be licensed as a Mennonite minister.

I continue to travel frequently, to connect with communities, spend time with old and new friends, speak, take part in weddings, and accompany Shane Claiborne. Over the last year I've spent time in Chicago, Atlanta, North Carolina, St. Louis, Nashville, Milwaukee, New York City, all over Virginia, and Toronto. I regularly return to the D.C. area and remain connected with **Holy Grounds** (fairlingtonholygrounds.org) and **Casa Chirilagua** (casachirilagua.org). These travels continually affirm for me the exciting and complex time we find ourselves in and it's been encouraging to learn from so many of you during these travels. If we've not gotten to talk or see each other in the last couple of years, hopefully I'll be in your area soon. Of course, you're always welcome in Pittsburgh!



Some folks I grew up with and their significant others at our first annual rustic cabin trip last spring.

To support me in prayer, sign up for e-mail updates at mattpritchard.com/support or follow me on Facebook.

I raise support for most of the work I do.

If you feel led to support my work financially, tax-deductible donations towards income and ministry expenses may be made to:

Kingdom Experiments
PO Box 8194
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

To make a tax-deductible donation specifically towards training and ministry expenses associated with my work for InterVarsity at Pitt, you may give online through ACH (preferred) at donate.intervarsity.org/support/Matt_Pritchard or by credit card at donate.intervarsity.org/donate/to/Matt_Pritchard

I would be remiss not to tell you about the great work my **sister Laura** is doing in Atlanta. While she continues to recruit for **Mission Year** (missionyear.org), she's leading a project to start a gym in her inner-city neighborhood called **Urban Perform** (urbanperform.org). Learn more about her story and work with the fitness center at goo.gl/zvAyp



SOME THINGS I HAVE ENJOYED OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO...

- In November 2010 I coordinated over 150 release parties on six continents for **Common Prayer: Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals** edited by my friends Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Enuma Okoro. This remarkable collection of morning, midday, and evening prayers borrows from the rich prayer-tradition of Judaism and early church that has been continued in various forms throughout the history of Christianity.
- **The Undertaking** is both a collection of prose poetry by undertaker Thomas Lynch, and a PBS documentary featuring excerpts from the book provide amazing guidance on death and dying—a topic most Americans are deeply fearful of exploring. Their instruction is something everyone would benefit from receiving sooner rather than later.
- Rob Bell's latest and deeply controversial book **Love Wins** is a must read for everyone (while you're at it, check out his earlier works as well). While it certainly breaks with evangelical orthodoxy, Rob presents ideas that are part of a vibrant and orthodox dialogue that has occurred throughout church history and is deeply relevant to the post-modern culture of younger folks today.
- While at the Wild Goose Festival (where I spoke about why so few communities survive over the long-term), I got to experience a dramatization of **Story of God, Story of Us** by Sean Gladding. It is an extraordinary, compelling, and helpful resource for introducing people who grew up in a post-Christian culture to the overarching story of scripture.
- This autumn I helped lead a Sunday school class using the book **Practicing the Way of Jesus** by my friend Mark Scandrette. One of my friends from D.C. texted me to tell me she was reading it, "Wow, this book was made for you!" I have to agree. The framework that Mark provides is immensely helpful to communities seeking radical obedience to the Way of Jesus.
- A couple of folks from our neighborhood, Ken Jennings and Heather Hyde, just published **The Greater Goal**, which through a fictional story provides a five practice framework that can help you discover and deliver on your own purpose and passions, in alignment with many others, to accomplish something good and great.
- Another person from our neighborhood, John Stahl-Wert just published **The Serving Leader for the People of God**, a follow-up to the best-selling **The Serving Leader** which he wrote with Ken Jennings.
- Over Thanksgiving, inspired by the trailer and the desire for a change of pace, I read/listened to the entire **Hunger Games** series. They are wonderful.
- Check out the **Bossypants** audiobook, an autobiography written and read by fellow UVa alumnus Tina Fey. It is funny, irreverent, and absolutely brilliant!
- The new **Freakonomics** podcast joins my longtime favorites **RadioLab** and **This American Life**. You can hear them on their respective websites or on your local NPR station, or download them through iTunes, Stitcher, etc.
- A friend recently introduced me to a remarkable, yet tragically short-lived TV series. **Kings** is a modern retelling of the story of David that aired on NBC the summer of 2009. It's available to watch for free at hulu.com/kings
- **Folk Soul Revival** (folksoulrevival.com) is a band featuring a friend from high school that fuses bluegrass and country with bit of southern rock.
- **Left on Vermont** (leftonvermont.com) is a band comprised of a bunch of friends from the D.C. area including solo artist **Erin Anne Weston** (myspace.com/erinanneweston).
- While you're at it, check out Noah Gundersen's **Jesus, Jesus** from the album *Liars & Saints* for a beautiful, but notably raw, monologue to Christ.
- I recently discovered **Mumford & Sons** and their debut album *Say No More* is simply incredible!
- Over the last few years I have sampled cupcakes in many cities. Unfortunately, many fall short of having both decadent cake and tasty icing. The best I've found are in Nashville at **Cupcake Connection**. Second place goes to **Georgetown Cupcake** in D.C. A close third goes to **Babycakes** in Abingdon, Va. near my hometown. If you're in Pittsburgh, your best option for cupcakes is **Vanilla**, but the best all-around baked goods come from **Food Glorious Food**.
- I've gotten to know some wonderful people who really care not only about amazing cups of coffee, but the lives of the coffee producers in the countries where the coffee is grown. Share a cup with **CommonPlace** (commonplacecoffee.com)-- One of my students visited a coop in Nicaragua they roast for. How cool!--and **One Village Coffee** (onevillagecoffee.com).