

Memories of Life in the Christian Faith and Life Community, the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs

Hilde (Smith) Betonte, 2019

I. Christian Faith and Life Community, Austin, Texas, 1959-1962

Fall 1959: New Beginnings: Joseph Wesley Mathews and Joe Slicker spoke at the University of Iowa Religious Emphasis Week. In attendance were Steve Smith and David Zhart. They were excited and invited Joseph Wesley Mathews to the Wesley Foundation (United Methodist Church) of the University of Iowa. The gentlemen invited their wives, Hilde Smith and Lynn Zahrt, both nursing students, to join them. They were all enlightened and enthused.

August 1960: When Steve and Hilde Smith graduated, Steve convinced Hilde to go to Austin to participate/live in the Christian Faith and Life Community in Austin, Texas. While in Austin, Steve also attended Austin Presbyterian Seminary and Hilde worked at the Austin Traves County Health Department. They lived in the couple's cottages with three other couples. In the community we attended worship services, meals, and the religious and cultural curriculum. We sang songs, did research and drew life symbols. At the Christian Faith and Life Community, among others, were Joseph Wesley and Lynn Mathews, Joe and Anne Slicker, Doris and Charles Hahn, David McClesky and Donna Wagner (who were later married), Charles Allen Lingo, Joe Pierce and Fred Buss.

August 1961-1963: Steve and Hilde went to Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, where Steve continued in seminary and Hilde was employed in nursing. They met with a cadre that included David and Lyn Zhart and Stan and Glenda Long. (Jean Long, Stan's sister joined the movement some years later.) David and Lynn Zhart's first child, Jay Zhart, and Steve and Hilde's first child, Kimberly Smith, were born during this time.

II. Ecumenical Institute, 1964-1975

1963-1964: Steve Smith was assigned as a youth pastor to a church in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The couple's second child, Lisa Catherine Smith, was born during this time. The family visited 5th City and the Ecumenical Institute on Chicago's west side. 5th City, the Institute's first neighborhood demonstration project, was started in 1963. In Kenosha, the Smiths started a small cadre at Kenosha United Methodist Church. Next Steve was assigned to the Chapel Hill United Methodist Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin, as a full-time pastor, where the couple started another cadre with several couples. They were then assigned to Milwaukee parish and developed a cadre. In 1966, the Smiths adopted their third child, Steven Carlos Smith.

1965-1968: Along with many families, the Smiths participated in summer training programs in 5th City for three summers. "Summer '65" was the first of 20 annual Global Research Assemblies held from 1965-1984. In 1968, Steve decided to separate from the family and he drove Hilde and children to 5th City and they were accepted by Amy Hillard and moved to a one-bedroom apartment. Hilde worked as a registered nurse at Mile Square Health Center. In 1970 Hilde worked at the 5th City Health Outpost with Helen Eskridge and the 5th City team, including Neil Vance, Lilly Fox, Lela Mosley, and Ruth Carter. Kim

attended first grade at the neighbourhood Leif Erickson Elementary. Lisa attended Kindergarten at 5th City Kinder School. Carlos attended the 5th City preschool fulltime. In the summer of 1971, Hilde went on the Global Odyssey with Mike and Nancy Vosler and others, visiting 17 cities in one month. The children attended the Ecumenical Institute's summer camp during that time, as they did every summer while living in 5th City.

1971-1972: The family moved to the Religious House in Boston, Massachusetts, and then Portland, Maine, where Hilde continued to work as a registered nurse. She helped to set up the Portland House with Doug and Doris Rettig. At the end of 1972, Hilde and family moved back to 5th City to lead the Health Outpost.

1973: Hilde met and married Anthony Betonte in 1973. During 1971-1972, Anthony had participated in a West Virginia cadre with his uncle, Reverend Harry Jenkins, and then moved to 5th City to teach at the 5th City Head Start. Anthony and Hilde's marriage was conducted by Reverend Charles Moore in the 5th City Chapel, with many from 5th City in attendance, including Lela Mosley.

III. The Institute of Cultural Affairs: 1976-2019

1974-1975: Baltimore Religious House

Anthony and Hilde Betonte and children moved to the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Baltimore Religious House in Baltimore, Maryland. The Ecumenical Institute had incorporated the ICA and begun formalizing its planning methods in 1973. At Baltimore House, Anthony worked on in-house programming and Hilde worked at John Hopkins Hospital. The priors of the Baltimore House at the time were Ed and Mimi Shin followed by Bill and Helen Newkirk. The Baltimore House's activities were focused on conducting Town Meetings. It also experimented with methods of the ICA's Training, Inc. program (which opened in DuPage County, Illinois, in 1975). The Baltimore House was hosted at the Washington, D.C. house on many occasions. Anthony and Hilde's daughter, Christannia Cora-Desi Betonte, was born in Baltimore, in December, 1975.

1976: Rome (7 months)

Anthony and Hilde and children were then posted internationally to the Rome Religious House in order to assist with establishment of the Termine Human Development Project (one of the ICA's 24 Global Human Development Projects). The ICA had launched its 24 Human Development Projects, one in each global time zone in 1973. And, it had established ICA International (ICAI) in Brussels, Belgium, in 1977. At the Rome House were David and Margaret Lazear and their two daughters (Esther and Naomi), Desmond and Anne Avery and their daughter, an American couple, a single American woman, and a single Dutch man. For a month that summer, Kim volunteered at the Isle of Dogs Human Development Project in London. After living in Rome for 7 months, and difficulties with Hilde finding nursing positions, it was decided that it was not economically feasible for the family to remain at the Rome Religious House. Setting up Termine was taking longer than expected and it was difficult to find employment.

1976-1980: Australia (4 years)

In September, 1976, the family was reassigned to the Religious House in Darwin, Northern Territories, Australia, with Kim being assigned as a youth at the Religious House in Adelaide, South Australia. At the

Darwin House, Anthony worked in-house and Hilde worked out as a registered nurse. After a few months, the family's second daughter, Lisa, moved as a youth to the Sydney Religious House.

After about six months, Anthony, Hilde and their two youngest children moved to the Brisbane Religious House, in Queensland, Australia. At the Brisbane House were Mike and Nancy Vosler, who were priors, and John and Julie Mieson, John Radar. After the Voslers left, the Betontes became priors. Hilde was one of the "Blue Nurses", community home health nurses. After about a year, Carlos moved to Adelaide house with Kim. In 1977, Hilde represented the Brisbane Religious House at Joseph Wesley Mathews funeral in Chicago.

Maybe in 1978 the youth in Australia, including Kim, Lisa, and Carlos, gathered for a summer program at the Adelaide Religious House and raised money for a trek the following summer to the Ombulgurri Human Development Project in Northern Territory, Australia, one of the first of the 24 Human Development Projects. Hilde remembers hearing a presentation several years earlier from an Aboriginal from Ombulgurri who Joseph Wesley Mathews had invited to Chicago. He played the digeridoo, a traditional Aboriginal musical instrument.

In 1978, Anthony joined John and Elaine Telford and their young daughter at the Ombulgurri Human Development Project. Unfortunately, the project was closed soon thereafter. It was speculated that this was due to the discovery of gold on the property.

Also, in 1978, Anthony and Hilde lived at Adelaide house for several months. At Adelaide house were, John and Glenda Reese and their son; Stewart and Mary Hampton; Tim and Sue Wegner and their two children, Ian and Judith; Mike and Judy Tippett and two of their daughters; John Radar; a single Australian man; a single Australian woman; and several youth, including Neil Reese, Kim Smith, Cathy Oakely, Elizabeth, and Kit and Brooke Tippet. Most of the youth attended Adelaide High School.

In 1979, Anthony, Hilde and youngest daughter, Christannia, moved to Murrin Bridge Human Development Project in New South Wales, Australia. At Murrin Bridge were also John and Elaine Telford, and Ken Otto. Anthony worked in-house and Hilde was responsible for implementation of a health grant. She did home visits in the Aboriginal community. There was a homegarden, sports for the youth, and cooking and sewing classes for women. Anthony developed an Aboriginal-English dictionary and local library. Hilde worked on the night shift at the hospital in the nearby town. Christannia went to the neighbourhood school with the Aboriginal children.

Other Memories:

1980-1981: Anthony, Hilde and their two youngest children were assigned to the Winnipeg Religious House in Manitoba, Canada. With them at the house were Gaye and her young son, Evangeline and Roy Philbrook. Hilde worked at City Hospital Palliative Care. Kim and Lisa moved to California to live with their biological father, Steve Smith, and attend the University of California San Diego. Kim went first and enroute visited the ICA's Hong Kong Religious House and explored Hong Kong.

1981: Anthony, Hilde and their two youngest children were assigned to the Pittsburgh Religious House in Pennsylvania. At the house with them, among others, were Carol and youth Mark Whitney. Later, Carlos moved to California to attend high school and live with his adoptive father, Steve Smith.

1982: Anthony, Hilde and their youngest child moved to West Virginia where Anthony completed a degree at West Virginia University and Hilde completed a masters in public administration degree at West Virginia College of Graduate Studies.

1983: During the summer, while attending the University of California San Diego, Kim and Lisa participated in an Academy at the Brussels Religious House in Brussels, Belgium. The first Academy opened in Chicago in 1968. It was then 13 weeks long. The ICA had established ICA International (ICAI) in Brussels, Belgium, in 1977. The participants of the Academy in Brussels came from all over the world, including many university students. After the completion of the program, Kim and Lisa traveled with a group to Munich, Germany, where they were hosted by ICA friends, to the ICA Religious House in Vienna, Austria, and to Venus, Italy. From there, Kim visited Spain and Lisa visited France.

1984: In 1984, the ICAI held the International Exposition of Rural Development in New Delhi, India. The same year, ICA reorganized and paved the way for developing decentralized offices.

1985: The ICA received Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Category II) and with UNICEF.

1985: While a US Peace Corps Education Volunteer in Kenya, Kim visited the Kwangwari Human Development Project in Nairobi, Kenya. During a visit from Lisa, Kim and Lisa visited the Vevwesi Rural Development Project in Coast Province, Kenya, and Lisa attended the UN International Women's Conference. The next year, Lisa returned to live in Vevwesi for 3 months doing a college independent study course. While there, she met the ICA's Rosemary Albright, and she lived with the head of Vevwesi's women's group responsible for development of the community center, Mama Paulina. (As it happened, one of Mama Paulina's sons was a business student of Kim's ("Miss Smith") at Mariakani Secondary School where he boarded.) After completing university in political economy, Lisa volunteered with child weighing with an ICA program in Ivory Coast. There she met ICA's Ken and Ruth Gilbert.

1988: In 1988, Anthony and Hilde participated for a time with a study and worship group in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with Mike Harvey and his wife and Bob Little, MD. In the same year, ICA regional offices launched partnerships throughout the US with local communities, public agencies, and private sector organizations. In 1989, the ICA launched its innovative Earthwise Learning Series with research and curriculum development.

1997-2005: Anthony and Hilde worked for nine years as a teacher and a public health nurse respectively on an Apache Reservation in Arizona. In 2000, Hilde attended the ICA's Global Meeting in Denver, CO.

2005-2018: When Anthony and Hilde moved to Maryland, they attended House Church once a month with Bill and Nan Grow, Cliff Stocking, among others. They started contributing to the ICA directory and receiving the ICA Newsletter. Hilde also started supporting Gene and Joyce Marshall's Realistic Living group in Texas and receiving their publications.

2019: Steve Smith died at the age of 80 in February 2019. Hilde and Kim attended the ICA Global Archives—2019 Spring Sojourn at the ICA Greenrise in April 2019. Hilde continues in her role to facilitate spiritual and physical health for everyone she encounters in order to promote longevity and active participation in the new world. Anthony continues contributing his language skills to promote multi-cultural communication as a Spanish teacher and lecturer at West Virginia University and Pennsylvania State University. Kim is mother of four, including 2 adopted daughters from Kenya, and is

an independent consultant in international development focusing on sustainability governance and equity. Lisa is mother of two, including an adopted daughter from Mexico, and is an independent consultant working in international development focusing on nutrition. Carlos is father of three and a house painter. And, Christannia is mother of one and an art therapist.