



# Harvest Time

*Christians of wealth engaging with money as a doorway to spiritual transformation.*

## Just Beyond What Feels Possible

A message from Rose Feerick

August 1st, 2011

Dear Friend,

On June 29, I left California and stepped into a time of summer pilgrimage.

I have been dreaming about this summer for years. It started as a playful fantasy of stepping out of the ordinary in order to visit several National Parks with my children. Our family's annual summer camping trips are a source of joy and nurture for me. I have dreamed of an extended period to step into that kind of delight before my children become teenagers. The only problem was that it seemed just beyond what was possible.

Even so, I said the idea out loud to a few people. It was always something I was going to do *someday*. But I did not actually make plans.

Last year, my friend Chris asked me how my plans for a cross country adventure were coming. "Oh, I let it go," I said. "I could not imagine how it could happen in the context of my life."

"That's funny," he responded. "The Rose I know never lets things go just because she cannot yet see how they can happen."

"Right," I agreed, challenged by his words to remember what I know.

In February, I took some time to open up the dream of a summer pilgrimage and to draft a budget for it. When I looked at the bottom line, I laughed. Again, it seemed like a great idea, but beyond what was possible.

Then, a few months later, Harvest Time entered into a time of low tide. As the organization discussed how to work with that, it became clear that one way we could stretch our available funds would be to "lay back" our employees over the summer and reduce their hours.

As we were inside of that conversation, my parents came to visit me in California and told me they were thinking of getting a new car. Knowing I get a kick out of driving old cars for more miles than seems possible, they asked me if I wanted their old Camry. The one problem was that the car was in New York. As I listened to my mother, I thought of the one way train ticket to New York my children and I had bought for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. We had not yet figured out our return.

In May, Harvest Time decided to reduce staff salaries and hours and I worked with how to reduce my personal expenses. It occurred to me that one way I could do so was to pull my kids out of camp, head to New York for the summer to enlist family support with childcare during my work time, and rent my home.

One afternoon, as I was taking a break, the wheels in my head started to turn. In my imagination, it was as if the aforementioned pieces of information were floating around. Then they all came together and formed

a unified whole. There – right in the center – was the door to a pilgrimage summer.

I shared this with Harvest Time’s Board of Directors. “What if I left California for the summer, worked on the East Coast in July, and worked reduced hours on the road in August? That would allow me to work with the personal impact of our low tide financial realities in a way that is life giving and restorative.” Together we listened for whether this idea made sense.

“Of course it does not,” one board member said. “The organization is in ‘low tide’ and needs its director’s full attention.”

“Of course it does,” another offered, reminding us that the practice of sabbath is about trust and remembering that God is in charge of our work.

We sat with both points of view, carefully looked at the work of the summer, and then together decided that August could be a time for my sabbath, reduced work time and a cross country road trip.

I spent the month of June preparing. Part of that included meeting with my spiritual director to focus my intentions for the summer. In the course of that conversation, I remembered that pilgrimage is about being with whatever happens, trusting and looking for grace.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, a few hours before we were to leave home for two months, Amtrak called and said our train had been cancelled between Denver and Chicago due to flooding in Omaha. The next few hours were filled with a flurry of activity and an incredible wave of support from family and friends who helped me re-arrange our itinerary to include a train ride to Denver, a plane trip from Denver to Chicago, and a connection with another train in Chicago. I realized that the pilgrimage had begun.

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There are any number of stories I could tell you about all that has not gone according to plan and how my children and I have had a wonderful time anyway. For instance, I could tell you about our arrival into the Denver train station eight hours late at 3 am and the angel taxi driver who took us under her wing, gave us a pre-dawn tour of Denver, and made sure my children had breakfast before dropping us at the Denver airport. Or I could tell you about the man who picked up one of my bags in Penn Station and carried it down a flight of stairs to the Long Island Railroad as I was trying to figure out how to negotiate so many steps with all my camping gear and two kids in the midst of the weekend rush. Or I could tell you about the friend who decided to join us for the South Dakota leg of our journey after I confessed that I was feeling afraid of that part of the trip because I knew nothing of that part of the country. I could tell you a lot about how my children and I have many times been faced with situations that felt just beyond what we are capable of and the amazing ways we have been supported by grace.

I mentioned earlier that we left on June 29<sup>th</sup>. That was a day before Harvest Time’s first matching grant expired. I wrote to you about that in June and shared my sense of awe about the gifts that had begun to come in right after Pentecost. On June 25, we were still about \$15,000 shy of our goal of \$50,000, but it was hard for me to feel anything but gratitude because so many gifts had come in and they were sent with an outpouring of encouragement and blessing. Even though I did not see how it was possible to get to \$50,000, I did not feel a sense of failure, but instead felt grateful.

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, as my children and I traveled over the Sierra Nevada mountains, I received several emails and calls from friends offering \$100, \$1000, and even \$10,000. In the end, we surpassed \$50,000.

The fact that we did so means that a second matching gift from an anonymous donor has now been offered to Harvest Time! This second matching grant, also in the amount of \$50,000, is in effect now. That means that all gifts that come in from the end of the last grant forward, up to \$50,000, will be matched, dollar for dollar.

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It is now July 28<sup>th</sup>. I have just completed a Harvest Time board meeting in Massachusetts. Our time together was filled with great appreciation for the wave of support that came to Harvest Time during our season of low tide. That support allowed us to keep moving forward and to listen for clarity about our next steps. I want to share with you some of that clarity.

At the board meeting, we decided that during this next year, we will shift our outreach to focus on sharing stories and experiences from our network. We are aware that it is often hard for people to “get” what Harvest Time does, precisely because we have such a different way of working with money than is the cultural norm. At the same time, we are aware that one of the best ways we can help people to see what we do, is by giving examples and sharing the wisdom of the wealthy people who have been on spiritually transformative journeys with money for the past ten years.

We will do that in a variety of ways – via email, audio and our regular newsletter. We will also follow up our written offerings with invitations to conference calls, so that we can be in conversation with others about the issues mentioned in the writings we will share. This will begin in September.

Another key decision that we made was to consolidate our offices from two (one in California and one in Wisconsin) to one in California. We also decided – amidst much sadness – to consolidate our staff from three to two. At the end of August, we will say goodbye to Greg Rasmussen who has offered incredible service to Harvest Time during the past eight years.

We also see beyond this next year. At the board meeting, we talked about a “miracle factor.” That is, we see a time when our words and what we have to offer will be scattered widely, reaching people who are struggling to figure out how to manage their wealth faithfully; people who are trying to respond to increased need in the world; and people who want to be part of what God is in doing in this period of shifting economic realities. We also see our words reaching people who are involved in partnerships across difference and who are seeking friends and companions with whom they can reflect on that work.

We cannot see exactly how that will happen or when. It feels beyond what is possible given our current cash flow and staffing. But we are not worried about that. Because our experience is that just beyond what is possible is where God lives.

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The road trip with my children has begun.

That is to say, I will not be checking emails during the month of August. If you need to be in touch about Harvest Time during August, please contact Noa Mohlabane at [Noasnew@gmail.com](mailto:Noasnew@gmail.com) or 510-551-6043.

I would also appreciate your prayers for my children and me as we make our way across the country. If you have an interest in hearing about our journey, you are welcome to visit the blog my children and I are keeping as a creative exercise. It is at: [www.summercoasting.com](http://www.summercoasting.com).

Many blessings for your summer. May you know in your own life the grace that is present just beyond what is possible.

Much love,

Rose

For more information about Harvest Time go to our website [www.harvesttime.cc](http://www.harvesttime.cc)

