

*All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.*

—Acts 2:44-45

One way we might live as followers of Jesus is to look to those who were closest to him: How did the earliest Christians live? How did those who knew Jesus live as his followers?

Acts tells us they sold all they had, held their money in common and helped those in need. Whatever its appeal, this model has not prevailed. Yet I think it's time to engage again the question of what we own and what we hold in common.

As I grapple with this, the refrain that echoes in my mind is not that we *should* hold all in common, but that we *do* hold all things in common.

Wendell Berry famously says: "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you." Our neighbors downstream depend on us to care for our part of the river, so the water is clean for them, too. Every person reading this is someone's upstream neighbor.

We care for the river in common. It belongs to all of us. In fact, it all belongs to all of us. Property deeds and car titles try to convince us differently, but they cannot hide the truth that we all must care for one another, and those with resources have a particular responsibility for those in need.

—Rosa Lee Harden