Practical non-anthropocentrism: Environmental values formation through intentional community

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PRACTICAL NON-ANTHROPOCENTRISM:
ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES FORMATION THROUGH
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

by

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Environmental problems are rooted in behavior which is informed by values. An alternate value structure is an appropriate response to the sources of environmental problems. This thesis proposes intentional communities (communes) as places ideally suited to the exploration of alternate value systems, specifically non-anthropocentric value systems.

Criteria and values that inform intentional community are presented along with an extended example of one intentional community, Jubilee Partners. This community is anthropocentric in its philosophy, however, an examination of this community provides insight as to how they put their values into action and helps illustrate how a non-anthropocentric value system might be applied to an intentional community. The members of Jubilee Partners have an agreed-upon value system (Christianity) that is the basis of their lives in the community, and they make decisions based on this value system.

As the members of Jubilee rely upon Christianity, could a group of people get together and rely upon an agreed-upon environmental tenet? Is it possible for an intentional community to be non-anthropocentric?

These questions are explored by applying non-anthropocentric values to intentional community. It is suggested that members of an intentional community can, through deliberate, thoughtful activities, create a practical, meaningful, non-anthropocentric value system they can use to guide them in their actions. Some possibilities for how a non-anthropocentric intentional community might be structured are discussed, and it is proposed that different intentional communities may come to different conclusions about how to practice non-anthropocentrism.

There has been much written about intentional community, but little specifically about non-anthropocentric intentional community. Such a community could serve as an example to the rest of society for how to be environmentally responsible.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The realization of community, like the realization of any idea, cannot occur once and for all time: always it must be the moment's answer to the moment's question, and nothing more. -Martin Buber

Environmental problems are rooted in our behavior, which is informed by our values. I propose that an alternate value structure is an appropriate response to the sources of environmental problems, and it is values that must be addressed in order to solve environmental problems. Our dominant value is anthropocentric. Real substantive change will not happen unless and until we specifically address anthropocentrism.

The "moment's question" then is how to bring about a change in values away from anthropocentrism. I propose intentional community as a way to do this. Based upon my personal experience with communal living, I suggest that intentional community is a forum ideally suited to the exploration of alternate value systems. (By "alternate," I mean different from the status quo). In Ariadne's Thread, Clark suggests we must develop new "modes of thinking" in order to deal effectively with environmental problems in today's world. By providing a place within which to explore different value systems, intentional communities offer a path toward new modes of thinking about the environment. Specifically, intentional community is a place within which to address alternatives to anthropocentrism.

In this paper, I will explore intentional community as a place within which a shift away from anthropocentrism can take place. In this chapter, I will define intentional community and provide a brief history of communal living. In chapter two, I will attempt

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1Martin Buber, Paths in Utopia (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 134.
to lay out some criteria and values that inform intentional community (non-anthropocentric and otherwise). Chapter three is an extended look at my experience in one intentional community. I will show how this community puts its values into action on a daily basis. This discussion will help illustrate how a non-anthropocentric value system might be applied to an intentional community. Chapter four concludes with an examination of what a specifically non-anthropocentric intentional community might look like. If such a community could exist, it would be a way to move away from our collective anthropocentrism. It would provide us with a path towards a non-anthropocentric future.

**Anthropocentrism**

First, a definition and short discussion of anthropocentrism would be helpful. An anthropocentric perspective sets humans apart from the natural world. Furthermore, it places humans at the top of a natural hierarchy and allows us to exploit the rest of the environment for our benefit, as a resource. It places greater importance on human survival than on non-human survival.³

Values inform our behavior. If people are anthropocentric, they will make decisions based upon this anthropocentrism. As long as people continue treating the environment as a resource for human use, as long as people continue thinking anthropocentrically, and as long as people attempt to alter environmental processes for human benefit, environmental destruction will continue, and our relationship with the environment will not significantly change.

If, however, individuals were to adopt non-anthropocentrism as a core value, they would start making decisions based on this non-anthropocentrism. How would a non-

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anthropocentric value system manifest itself in the larger society? What would such a society look like? How would it be structured? It would most certainly be different from what we see today. If we were to change our attitudes toward the non-human community, the way we operate economic, social and political systems would no doubt be different, and the structure of our daily lives would change. If we began to see ourselves as just one part of the ecosystem and not the most important part, our approach towards environmental problems would be more holistic, more considerate of our place in the environment.

I will not attempt a thorough examination of anthropocentrism here. A strict, systematic, logic-based rejection of anthropocentrism does not provide practical tools for determining individual or collective behavior. Devall suggests that "through practicing we test theories and perhaps develop further insights from which more sophisticated theories develop." A practice-based (not logic-based) rejection of anthropocentrism, then, might provide us with a working model of non-anthropocentrism. Devall continues,

It is not just that we learn from experience, but rather how we are experiencing the world. That is the basis for authentic statements of our environmental philosophy. .. Finding the right form of practicing helps us to cultivate our ecological self and makes a formal philosophy, or statement of environmental ethics, into a living, practical philosophy.

To address issues of anthropocentrism, then, I suggest the development of a practical non-anthropocentrism based upon practice and experience. Through deliberate, practical activities, a meaningful value-based non-anthropocentrism can develop. I propose intentional community as a way to come to such a model of non-anthropocentrism.

Members of a non-anthropocentric intentional community are developing a practical non-anthropocentric ethical system upon which to base community decisions.

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5Ibid.
When I speak of non-anthropocentric intentional community throughout this paper, I am suggesting an intentional community that is attempting to live less anthropocentrically, not necessarily one that is adhering to a strict, logic-based definition of anthropocentrism.

**Intentional community**

Being able to visualize a sustainable world is the first step toward building one. -Lester Brown

Michel Foucault identifies what he calls "points of resistance" or places within society where the control of institutions fails. It is from these points that a deconstruction of values can occur. This, to me, describes the potential role of intentional community. The creation of intentional communities can facilitate a very real and tangible deconstruction of civilization's views and policies, including those toward nature.

Foucault also discusses constructing what he calls an alternative politics of truth. This is done by describing an alternate system of thought and action that exists today, one that we can see operating in people's lives. We can look to intentional communities as existing alternatives. By studying successful intentional communities, we are studying alternate realities. These realities can guide our actions and help direct our search for "truth." We can examine their applicability to social, political, personal and environmental issues, and look to these realities as viable options.

**Definition of and introduction to intentional community**

Communes, intentional communities, rural cooperatives, sustainable communities - all of these terms are used to describe a social phenomenon found throughout history.

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Although cumbersome, I will use the term "intentional community" throughout this paper as I feel it best describes the phenomena and as it is widely used in the literature about intentional communities. I do, however, sometimes use the term "commune," which I take to have the same meaning as intentional community. In cases where the term is used extensively in the same passage I will simply use the word "community." A definition of intentional community is offered in the winter, 1993 issue of Communities, the magazine of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC):

An intentional community is a group of people living cooperatively, dedicated by intent and commitment to specific communal values and goals, with group members in continual, active fellowship around these mutual interests. Generally, intentional communities place high value on the shared ownership or lease of a common home place -- housing, land, business -- which often serves to demonstrate communal values and goals to the wider society.\(^9\)

Intentional communities are not like a tribe or village which has arisen or developed spontaneously over the years. Intentional communities have emerged as a result of a number of people consciously and purposefully coming together as a group in order to "realize a set of aims. . . These aims are not partial: they attempt to create an entire way of life, hence, unlike organizations or social movements, they are intentional communities."\(^{10}\) It is around ideology that the community's intentionality is constructed. The significance of intentional community is that it is a way to deal not only with the structural issues of our culture, the economic, political and social aspects, but it also directly addresses value issues. It is for this reason I want to look more closely at intentional community. If, as I propose, environmental problems are a result of our value system, and if intentional community is a place within which to explore value issues, it

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seems to me that intentional community is a good place to address specifically environmental values.

Brief history of intentional community

In western history, the earliest known intentional communities had a Christian base. The Essenes (ca. 105 B.C. - 135 A.D.) are an early example of a group of people choosing to live communally. They lived out the Biblical teaching that those who believe should hold all things in common.\(^{11}\) Monasteries are also examples of early communal living. Mercer (1984) describes monasticism as a withdrawal from society in search of an idea, attainable by giving up the self to the group's vision. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Anabaptist tradition spawned several attempts at intentional community, both in Europe and in the New World, some of which are still functioning today. The Hutterites come from this tradition.\(^{12}\) The Shakers are another example of communal living. They got their start in the early nineteenth century.

A second wave of intentional communitarians arrived in North America in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of religious and political persecution in Europe. The Owenites and Fourierists are examples of intentional communities that based their communal vision upon a social and economic foundation instead of a religious base, while the Oneidans, starting at about the same time, were religious in nature.

In the early part of this century, a group of villagers in Spain formed the Mondragon cooperatives. These communities based their cooperation on political, economic and social organization. They are what Erich Fromm (1956) calls "communities of work." Their focus is on working together for personal and collective fulfillment. The Kibbutzim also fit into this category and time period.

\(^{12}\)Intentional communities mentioned in the text are listed in the Appendix with a short description.
The nineteen-sixties marked another wave of North American communitarianism, with New Age, Christian, back-to-the-land, and other movements. This surge of "hippie communes," if you will, is the most recent example of a large-scale interest in intentional community in North America.

Some of these intentional communities from the nineteen-sixties have survived (though not many), and many more have started up since then. Today there are hundreds, if not thousands, of intentional communities in existence all around the world. The Communities Directory, published by the FIC, lists over 550 intentional communities that are thriving today, and there are doubtless many more out there that are not on this list. There is a long, rich history of communal living that still survives today.

Summary

Intentional communities are places where people intentionally gather and live, where people with common beliefs can live with other people who share those beliefs. They might be good places from which to explore alternate environmental values. Intentional community may be well-suited as a place to explore specifically non-anthropocentric value systems. In the rest of this paper, I will explore intentional community as a place within which a shift away from anthropocentrism can take place.
In this chapter, I want to take a closer look at intentional community. I will start this discussion by exploring what constitutes a "successful" intentional community, then move on to a discussion of the sociology of intentional community. There has been much research on intentional communities, both past and present, and a brief discussion of this research will help in the understanding of intentional community as a place within which an alternative value system can exist.

**Criteria for successful intentional community**

The criterion for success that immediately comes to mind is longevity; a community that has withstood the test of time may be considered successful. In addition, an intentional community may be considered a success if its values survive beyond the life of the community, or if it serves as an inspiration to others. I consider both criteria valid when considering the success of a non-anthropocentric intentional community.

**Longevity and other criteria**

Melville (1972) suggests that intentional communities are powerful not for their actions but for their ideas. According to this view, longevity is not the most important measure of success. An intentional community may have a short life, but it may have an impact on the larger society and therefore may be considered successful. The important question then is "whether or not the ideas that inspire such ventures are passed on and

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flourish amongst ever wider sections of the population."\textsuperscript{15} This may be a helpful measure of success especially looking at the possibility of non-anthropocentric intentional community. The question to ask then would be, how well do the (non-anthropocentric) ideas of the community live on after the community is gone?

Another, more personal criterion for success is proposed by Hostetler (1974), "A successful . . . commune . . . cannot be measured by longevity but by the personal rewards it brings to the individual participant and the larger societal functions it serves."\textsuperscript{16} I would add also, the degree to which the original goals of the community are fulfilled. An intentional community whose goal is the personal fulfillment of its members may be considered a success if it achieves its goal and then disbands. Also, a non-anthropocentric intentional community might serve a "larger societal function" simply by serving as an example of an alternate way of life. But the influence of such a community is difficult to measure. A community then may be a success, but may not be able to measure this success in any tangible way.

Welch (1990), in her discussion of responsible action, suggests that the success of an action be judged as much by the possibilities it creates as by its immediate results:

Responsible action does not mean one individual resolving the problems of others. It is rather, participation in a communal work, laying the groundwork for the creative response of people in the present and in the future. Responsible action means changing what can be altered in the present even though the problem is not completely resolved. Responsible action provides partial resolutions and the inspiration and conditions for further partial resolutions by others. It is sustained and enabled by participation in a community of resistance.\textsuperscript{17}

Intentional community allows for such communal work to happen. I find this model particularly helpful. Welch's definition of responsible action -- of laying a groundwork, of changing what can be altered, of serving as an inspiration to others -- could motivate a

\textsuperscript{17} Sharon Welch, \textit{A Feminist Ethic of Risk} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 75.
group of people who want to live non-anthropocentrically. This model may help in determining the success of such a communal venture.

The above viewpoints do not necessarily include longevity as a criterion for successful intentional community. However, I would hope that a non-anthropocentric intentional community could be long-lived. I believe that non-anthropocentrism, as a value, should be able to survive for a long period of time. An intentional community, then, which based itself on non-anthropocentrism should also sustain itself over a long period of time.

Keeping in mind that most intentional communities (non-anthropocentric and otherwise) do not last for a long time, it might be wise to consider some of the above criteria for success as being as important as longevity. I would consider a non-anthropocentric intentional community that survived for only a short time but whose non-anthropocentric vision lives on, a success.

*Lessons from nineteenth century communities*

There are many in-depth studies of nineteenth century intentional communities. A brief look at some of these studies informs the following discussion of my personal experience in an intentional community. These communities serve as models for communal living today. The nineteenth century, as mentioned earlier, was a prolific time of community-building in American history. The motivations to build community were either religious, e.g., Zoar, Harmony and Amana, or political/economic, e.g., the Owenists, the Fourierists and Modern Times.¹⁸

Writing over 120 years ago, John Humphrey Noyes (1870), the founder of Oneida, suggests that communities with a strong religious base fare better than those not founded

upon a specific doctrine: "If you mean to found a community for peace and permanence, first of all find associates that agree with you in religion, or at least in non-religion, and if possible bar out others."19 Charles Nordhoff (1875) in his study of intentional communities, writing five years later, says, "It is true that a commune to exist harmoniously, must be composed of persons who are of one mind upon some question which to them shall appear so important as to take the place of religion, if it is not essentially religious; though it need not be fanatically held."20 These statements are still valid today. Every successful intentional community that I researched had some commonly held beliefs. And many communitarians admit that their common belief system is the most important aspect of the community and that it is the primary aspect that keeps the community together.

Although many successful communities have a religious base, Kanter (1972) in her study of nineteenth century intentional communities, suggests that it is the characteristics of these religious communities -- not the religious nature itself -- that contributes to the success of the communities. These characteristics include a comprehensive value system, shared beliefs and ritual to support the beliefs. "It is these specific practices, available even to groups that resist a deliberate religious focus, which build commitment, not the presence of a formally labeled religion."21

Commitment mechanisms

Kanter distinguishes between short-lived and long-lived nineteenth century intentional communities by writing in terms of what she calls "commitment mechanisms." These commitment mechanisms include members' sacrifice of time, energy and, to a

certain extent, past identity; monetary investment by the members; renunciation of the outside world and of disruptive relationships within the community; fostering of a sense of communion through sharing and ritual mortification, or how the community dealt with deviance and intra-community status; and the ability of the community or its leader(s) to instill a sense of transcendence in its members.\footnote{Ibid., 75-125.}

Kanter looked at past attempts at intentional community to determine specifically what aspects of intentional community are conducive to success. "Long-lived communities tended to require certain sacrifices of their members as a test of faith, and full investment of money and property in order to give participants a stake in the fate of the community."\footnote{Ibid., 126.} This makes sense. If someone agrees with the values of the community and wants to participate, he or she will be willing to make sacrifices to the group. And conversely, if someone is invested, whether personally or financially, he or she will have more of a commitment to the community.

According to Kanter, group cohesion was enhanced by "communistic labor in which no jobs were compensated, everyone shared equally in the benefits, jobs were rotated, and some work was done by the whole community; by regular group contact through decision-making meetings; and by rituals emphasizing the communion of the whole."\footnote{Ibid., 127.} If members of the community are participating fully in the life of the community, they tend to be more satisfied with their life in the community. Attempting to value all work equally helps foster an atmosphere of equality among the community members, and including all members in the decision-making process serves to empower the community members and gives them a direct way to influence the direction of the community. This kind of participation, I think, is crucial for successful community.
Retreat and service communities

Kanter suggests that an intentional community will be strong if it defines itself by its values and by how those values become manifest. She also distinguishes between "retreat" communities and "service" communities. Many of the transitory "hippie communes" of the 1960's and 70's fit her description of retreat communities. Retreat communities tend to be temporary, with high rates of turnover. Often there is no (or little) attempt to create a community that will last over time. They tend to be more open in their membership policies. They also often lack a common ideology and are instead defined by their participants' rejection of society. Kanter defines retreat communities as having "negative boundaries," which encompass everything but that which the community rejects. Communities with negative boundaries generally allow for more individual freedom, sometimes at the expense of commitment and group cohesion.

Service communities, or those with "positive boundaries," are more involved in the larger society than those with negative boundaries. There tends to be more organization and an agreed-upon ideology. They tend to be longer-lived, with community members feeling more commitment to the community. Kanter points out, however, that there is the potential in communities with positive boundaries to be too strict, impose too much order, have too strong an authority and/or not allow for enough individual freedom.

I believe a non-anthropocentric intentional community would be a service community and would necessarily be involved in the larger society. Defining itself by its non-anthropocentrism and how this non-anthropocentrism becomes manifest, it would have positive boundaries and thus be more likely to succeed.

25 Ibid., 195.
26 Ibid., 169-190.
27 Ibid., 195-201.
Belief systems and group solidarity

Zicklin (1983), in his study of twentieth century communes, proposes a similar way to understand intentional communities. He suggests that the most important aspect of an intentional community is its members' common belief system. "The commune offered a space to do one's own thing truly, to live in a way one believed best with others who shared one's aspirations and to build this life almost from scratch."28 He explores the specific motivations behind the development of different communes and creates a typology according to these motivations. He distinguishes between Naturalist (back-to-the-land primitivists), Spiritual, Expressive (concentrating on the personal, emotional needs of community members) and Politically Motivated communes.

Zicklin suggests we may obtain a greater understanding of intentional communities by looking at groups of people not necessarily in intentional communities and examining what it is that creates and maintains group solidarity. In particular he points to Stephen Wilson, who, in his work Informal Groups, discusses specific elements of social organization necessary to group solidarity, including the development of group norms and how well the group sticks to these norms, the amount and depth of interaction, shared goals and articulation of these goals, and the extent to which group members are interdependent and how they understand their interdependence.29

On a structural level, Cornfield (1983) suggests that the success of urban intentional communities rests as much on practical matters as on their common ideology. These practical matters include "prior acquaintance, economic prudence, parental responsibilities, and perception of sufficient private time."30 In this analysis, the structure of the community -- how conflict is resolved, how work is structured, how resources are

29Ibid., 66.
allocated, for example -- must be worked out and agreed to by all community members if the community is to succeed.

Summary

The point I am trying to make through this brief discussion of the sociology of intentional community is that a successful intentional community is a complex social system requiring a solid foundation of shared belief by its members and some practical understanding of what it takes to maintain the community on a daily basis. This includes dealing with everything from structural considerations to interpersonal relationship issues. The members of a community must feel commitment to the community for it to be successful, but there need not be an explicit understanding of or attempt to develop specific ways of ensuring commitment. A community that is successful in dealing in these areas will most likely also be long-lived.

For a non-anthropocentric intentional community to be successful, it must deal with many of the same issues that other intentional communities have dealt with in the past. It seems that two of the most important questions any intentional community must ask itself are: "To what core group of values does the community agree?" and "How does the community put these values into action on a daily basis?" A non-anthropocentric intentional community would answer the first question by suggesting a non-anthropocentric value base. In answering the second question, I want to consider specifically what a non-anthropocentric intentional community would look like. In order to do this, it is helpful to look at one community in depth to see how an intentional community goes about putting its values into action. The community I will look at is anthropocentric, but seeing how this community lives out its values is helpful in considering how a non-anthropocentric community might do the same and informs the discussion in the final chapter of non-anthropocentric values and intentional community.
CHAPTER 3 Jubilee Partners

In the falls of 1989 and 1992, I lived on an intentional community in rural Georgia called Jubilee Partners. Jubilee is a Christian community in a rural setting in northern Georgia. Approximately 21 adults and 8 children live there. About half of these people are long-term resident partners, and half are volunteers who stay for periods of 3-5 months. I was a volunteer.

I want to look at my experience with intentional community to examine in depth how a community puts its values into action. The members of Jubilee have an agreed-upon value system (Christianity) that is the basis of their lives in the community, and they make decisions based on this value system. I will look at the practical aspects of life at Jubilee in detail in order to examine how the community members' values become manifest in their daily lives. If Jubilee is successful in applying their value system to their lives in a practical way (I believe they are), it would provide a model for an intentional community that wishes to base itself upon a non-anthropocentric value system.

At the start, I should stress that all the people at Jubilee do not agree on all issues. Individual partners have differing viewpoints on a variety of subjects. But they do agree on their common belief in Christianity and in using this belief system as a basis for decision-making within the community, and it is these aspects of their communal life with which I am most interested. Where generalizations are used, I am basing my statements on my experience at Jubilee, on conversations and correspondence with individual community members, and on material published by Jubilee.

History

Jubilee Partners was founded in 1979 by several members of another community in Georgia called Koinonia Partners. An understanding of Koinonia is helpful for a better
understanding of Jubilee. Clarence Jordan, a southern Baptist minister, founded Koinonia in 1942 as an experiment in Christian communal living.\textsuperscript{31} The word Koinonia comes from the New Testament Greek and refers to a fellowship and way of life in the early Christian church. As a Koinonia newsletter states, "We have come together seeking to express to the fullest in our daily lives the Kingdom of God as Jesus revealed it."\textsuperscript{32} This attitude manifests itself in their daily activity.

From the beginning, Koinonia has had a diverse membership. A 1971 newsletter emphasizes this point. "We have come from many denominations, occupations, and sections of the nation. . . . Some of us are whites, some [African Americans]. Our education ranges from illiteracy to PhD. Our economic backgrounds are from middle class to poor. . . . Old distinctions of race, caste or nation are given no consideration."\textsuperscript{33} Koinonia sees itself primarily as a church. Its members see God as Parent, and those who accept God's love become children of God who accept in love all other children of God. It is this love that is the motivation and guide for the entire life of the community.\textsuperscript{34}

The founders of Koinonia and subsequent members drew heavily on the Anabaptist tradition that arose in the 16th century. In the Anabaptist communities, daily life is worship, a life described by the sermon in the mount: a total commitment to Christ and the mutual responsibility of the members. Upon entering the community, a member pledges his life to Christ and to his teachings and to each member as his sister or brother. In practice this means that each member bears responsibility for the life of the community and participates in both governance and prophecy.\textsuperscript{35}

The founders of Koinonia believed in acting on the Christian communism found in the teachings of the sermon on the mount. "Because we share this deep spiritual faith and this love for one another, we accept complete liability for the economic needs of one

\textsuperscript{32}Koinonia Partners, Newsletter.
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34}See Lee, \textit{Cotton Patch}.
another. All property is owned in common by the community (except for small personal items). Each member relinquishes all property and earnings to the community and receives daily needs from the community. In a sense, the community is a church, separated from the larger society by its daily practice of Christianity.

From the time of its founding, the community has been persecuted for its stance on racial issues. The members of Koinonia were active in the struggle for Civil rights from the founding of the community, and non-violence is a central principle. They were the target of an economic boycott, legal harassment and direct violence for their attitudes towards African Americans in and around the community. They have survived the conflicts by developing a mail order business that provided them with wide-ranging support beyond the surrounding community. For this business, they employ people from the local area in their processing plant.

Koinonia started a housing program intended to build housing for the local community. Volunteers from Koinonia joined with volunteers from the local community in the building of houses for low-income families. The families who were to move into the homes would also help in the building of their particular homes. Koinonia acted like a bank, providing no-interest loans for the houses and placing the money received from the home buyers into a fund toward building more homes. From this program, Habitat for Humanity got its start. The community also runs a child care program and a general store. Koinonia aims these services at the surrounding community, which is largely poor and black. The members of Koinonia aim their ministries at the "outside world." They try to reach out and make a difference in the community around them. Habitat for Humanity is a good example of how the community of people living at Koinonia has a direct effect on the larger society.

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36 Koinonia Partners, Pamphlet.
In the late 1970's, there were more partners at Koinonia than at any other time in their history. Some members proposed that a new community be formed. With the help of Koinonia, three families started Jubilee Partners in Comer, Georgia, seventeen miles outside Athens.

**Mission**

Jubilee, like Koinonia, is first and foremost a Christian community. Their name comes from Jesus' sermon on "the Isaiah text about the year of Jubilee, . . . good news for the poor . . . release for prisoners . . . recovery of sight . . . freeing broken victims." Addressing their energies toward refugee issues, they decided, was a good way to act on Jesus' teachings:

> In the fall of 1980 we welcomed our first refugees to the new Jubilee welcome center. Little did we suspect what a great adventure we were beginning! Soon, Jubilee began to be a sign of hope and relief as hundreds upon hundreds of refugees from many countries accepted our hospitality. In return, we have received their love and the inspiration of their own faith and courage.

For the first two years, most of the refugees coming through Jubilee came from Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba. In 1982, increased awareness of the situation in Central America directed the partners' attentions south. They heard of Salvadorans and Guatemalans who were fleeing to the U.S. to escape the violence in their countries. According to U.S. law, people are not to be forced to return to their countries if they have a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, yet the partners learned that many thousands of people were being denied refugee status and were being deported. Jubilee therefore set up the Año de Jubileo program (the year of Jubilee) to help the refugees. Jubilee worked with the Canadian government to assist the refugees in becoming Canadian citizens.

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37Jubilee Partners, Booklet.
38Ibid.
As people were caught crossing the border in south Texas, they were placed in INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) detention centers. Jubilee would interview people who were in INS detention to see if they qualified for refugee status under UN guidelines. Jubilee accepted those who had suffered persecution in their countries and who would likely be sent back to their countries by the U.S. government. The refugees were mostly from El Salvador and Guatemala, with a few coming from Honduras. Jubilee then paid bail to release the refugees from detention and brought them to Georgia. While in Georgia, the refugees learned some English and prepared for life in Canada. The Canadian Consul then interviewed the refugees, and they became Canadian citizens. Nearly 2,000 refugees have come through Jubilee and legally moved to Canada.

The refugees have a profound impact on the community members. As a partner commented, "We've been tremendously enriched by having them here. Sometimes they make us feel like phonies. We thank God for the color of the leaves. They thank God that their little brother escaped when other family members were killed."\(^{39}\) The community members welcome this values clarification. The refugee program is an extension of their Christian beliefs. The presence of the refugees, and the help that the community can offer reinforce their Christianity. "While they are with us they have a profound impact on our understanding of suffering, courage and faith."\(^{40}\)

The partners seek to maintain a balance in their ministries. Their main mission is with refugee resettlement. Not only are they directly helping the refugees, they are also attempting to change the situation that the refugees face in their countries as well as at the U.S. border. The partners welcome the pragmatic effects of their work, i.e., directly helping individual people. They particularly enjoy the one-on-one work with the refugees. But other work that may not show direct results, e.g., outreach through the newsletter and


\(^{40}\)Jubilee, Booklet.
lobbying of public officials, is also important. The partners attempt to be witnesses to the injustices they see in our society and act to right these injustices when they can, however they can.

Today, the refugee program has taken on a different form. In 1990, the Canadian government modified their refugee policy. These changes forced Jubilee to shift its focus from Central America to Asia, since neither the U.S. nor Canada will take the Central Americans. Since then, Jubilee has been working with the Church World Service to bring over people from refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines. They are also currently accepting Bosnian refugees. Jubilee continues to appeal to the U.S. and Canadian governments to accept more Central American refugees.

The partners also paid attention to the situation in Nicaragua in the 1980's. The U.S. accepted more refugees from Nicaragua than from other Central American countries, so Jubilee focused on other issues in this country. They organized fact finding tours and helped to establish Habitat for Humanity there. In 1987, on a fact finding tour, they visited a hospital where they met 7-year-old Elda Sanchez, her father and her aunt, each of whom had just lost one or both legs in the explosion of a *contra* land mine. Jubilee decided to help these people and brought them to the U.S. This began their "Walk in Peace" campaign, which raises funds for the rehabilitation of war victims in Nicaragua. Through this program Jubilee helps as many Nicaraguan amputees as possible without regard for their politics, race, or religion. Walk in Peace has been highly successful from its beginning. Former president Jimmy Carter suggested that it was primarily Jubilee Partners' Walk in Peace program that led to the appropriation in March of 1990 of $17.7 million in aid for Nicaraguan children who are victims of the war.  

Refugee issues are a constant source of struggle for the partners. With the Año program, they helped Central American refugees get to Canada, directly affecting nearly
2,000 lives. But did this change the situation that forced these people to flee their country? If not, was Jubilee really helping these people, their families and friends who were still being persecuted in these countries?

The partners understand the interconnectedness of the refugee issue and have attempted to address the problem from several angles. Through a regular newsletter, the community exposes thousands of people in this country to refugee issues. The partners encourage people to learn more about the refugee problem, to visit Central America and to be active in their communities to raise awareness. The partners attempt to stay informed of any legislation that affects refugees, and, through the newsletter, urge people to support or oppose legislation. Jubilee encourages people to contact their representatives to demand changes in U.S. foreign policy and in our immigration policy.

Jubilee maintains its connection with Koinonia and has ties with Open Door, a Christian community working primarily with the homeless in Atlanta, and Metanoia, also a Christian community started by former partners at Jubilee, working mainly with prisoners on death row. The prison ministry is one shared by all four communities. The prisons in Georgia are crowded, and almost all the inmates are from poor families and racial minorities. This is especially true on death row. The communities feel there is a clear contrast between the teachings of Jesus and the incarceration and execution of a human being. The communities work together to offer transportation to the prison to poor families of death row inmates. Several community members have become qualified as chaplains; this way they can visit the inmates and provide companionship. Jubilee has also buried several executed prisoners in their cemetery at the request of the prisoners and their families. The community offers this service in an effort to "reaffirm in the name of Christ the essential humanity of every person and to bring about some degree of reconciliation when we can."42

42Jubilee, Booklet.
Some community members are also active in the local church, attending Sunday services and participating in activities. Currently, Jubilee is attempting to "build bridges" with the local African American community. The partners are becoming even more active in the local black church and are meeting with the elders of the church in an effort to create a stronger relationship. The partners do not know what will become of this attempt to make a connection, but in the spirit of the community they feel they must do something about the divisions that still exist in our society between blacks and whites. What better place to start than their local community? Another of their ministries that involves the local community is the fishing and swimming in the ponds on Jubilee property. Many local area residents take advantage of the ponds, especially during the hot summer months.

Jubilee is also active in their opposition to the U.S. military-industrial complex and the U.S. governments' emphasis on military solutions to foreign policy issues. The members of Jubilee are active in anti-nuclear activities, and the community supports members who want to get involved in peace and justice organizations outside the community. Jubilee Partners is a registered non-profit on the federal level but pays local and state taxes. Thus, Jubilee does not pay federal taxes. This is a deliberate policy on Jubilee's part. They choose not to contribute to federal spending. They are not against paying taxes, per se, but feel there is a direct conflict between their understanding of Jesus' teachings and the percentage of tax dollars going to the military. The community also supports individual community members who resist paying taxes. Two of the partners spent time in jail for withholding information from the IRS.

As mentioned earlier, Jubilee publishes a regular newsletter. This is an important ministry for the community. When Jubilee was just beginning, they borrowed Koinonia's mailing list, with the consent of Koinonia partners, and sent out a newsletter describing Jubilee and their hopes for the refugee program. The newsletter has continued to be one of their important outreach tools. They use it to educate about refugee issues, inform of
upcoming legislation, describe their working philosophy and encourage others to make responsible changes in their own lives.

In the newsletter, they also encourage people to come and visit or volunteer. Both visitors and volunteers are important to the community. Visitors and volunteers have the opportunity to experience an alternative lifestyle, and, as the partners say, "to experience a living faith." Volunteers have many opportunities to explore community issues, both with the partners and with the other volunteers. I will go into more detail about the volunteer program later, as it is relevant to the commitment mechanisms at work at Jubilee.

I am describing the specific ministries of Jubilee to illustrate the values of the community and to show the partners' willingness -- their need -- to express their values with actions. The partners see Jubilee as an end in itself not just as a means toward some end. The authority of the community is legitimated by the members' shared views of purpose. The extensive interaction with the larger community, both local, regional and global, illustrates a policy of non-isolation and demonstrates an awareness of local and global problems and the interconnectedness of the community with the "outside" world.

**Daily life in community**

**Land and physical structure**

Jubilee Partners is located on 256 acres of rolling countryside in north Georgia. The land was once a plantation. Trees now cover much of the property. The rest of the land consists of open meadows and ponds. A river borders one side of the land. A hike through the woods reveals terraces left over from the plantation days. The soil is generally nutritionally poor, degraded by decades of cotton farming. It has taken years of work in the garden to bring the soil up to even its original productive level.

Members of the community, some of whom had experience in construction and some of whom did not, designed and built the buildings on the property. With the
exception of one building, the designs all incorporate passive solar designs. Wood stoves are the only heat source; the wood for which is found on the property. There is one large building, the Koinonia house (K-house), where all the major gatherings take place. The community eats their common meals at the K-house. It also serves as housing for most of the volunteers and visitors. Scattered in the fields around the K-house are five other buildings that house the long-term partners and occasionally some volunteers.

Refugees live in their own houses. When Jubilee was just starting, the partners had not developed relationships with the outside community. Taking a lesson from Koinonia, they decided to make an effort to minimize conflict with the local community. They decided to build the refugee housing outside the city limits of Comer, the closest town. The border of the city runs through Jubilee property. If the buildings were placed within the city limits, Jubilee would have had to request a building permit from the city. The partners were concerned that the city council might not approve permits for refugee housing. Consequently, the refugees live together about a half mile from the K-house.

Jubilee also owns several vehicles as a community. There is a large bus that was used to transport refugees from south Texas to Georgia for the Año program. Now the community uses it for group trips. Jubilee also owns several donated vehicles. These are used for community business and for personal use for the partners. In an effort to live simply, the community uses the vehicles as little as possible. There is an attempt to consolidate trips, and they try not to drive into town more than once a day.

*Partners, novices, volunteers and refugees*

As mentioned earlier, partners are long-term members of the community, while volunteers stay only a short period. Volunteers participate in the life of the community just as the partners do, except in long-term decision-making and in a few administrative tasks.
The partners are mostly white, middle/upper-class, and college educated, ranging in age from early thirties to mid fifties. Among the partners, there are former engineers and ministers, a former carpenter, a teacher, and a refugee who came through Jubilee. The volunteers tend to have similar backgrounds. The age range of volunteers (19 to mid-70's) tends to be wider than that of the partners.

On my first visit, in 1989, there were seven women and five men among the partners and five women and seven men among the volunteers. Eight children of both partners and volunteers rounded out the community. Among the twelve partners in 1989, two were from Canada, one from Vietnam, with the rest from the United States. Of the nine from the US, five were from the midwest, two from the south, and one each from New England and the west coast. Geographical distribution among the volunteers was similar with four from the midwest, four from New England, and one each from Texas, the west coast and Europe. On my second visit, in 1992, although some partners had left while others had joined, and all of the volunteers were different, except for myself, the gender and geographical distribution were similar to that of the first group.

Jubilee has not advertised for volunteers in the past, so most people who come to volunteer have heard about the opportunity through word of mouth. But lately, there have been fewer inquiries about their volunteer program. Jubilee advertises in the publication Volunteer!, which lists volunteer opportunities worldwide, and the partners are considering advertising in other publications to increase the number of volunteers. In selecting volunteers, the partners do not discriminate based on sex, race, age, religion, or sexual orientation, unless they feel a person would have a negative effect on the community. For example, they no longer accept volunteers under age 19 as they have had several negative experiences with younger volunteers.

Volunteers visit for terms of three months or longer (Jan.-May, June-Aug., or Sept.-Dec.). They participate in all aspects of community life. The volunteers also meet
twice a week at scheduled times for workshops and "sharing." Partners organize and lead the workshops; topics include simple living, tax resistance, and community life. The sharing sessions are a way for the volunteers to build a community among themselves. This is a time for volunteers to share their thoughts and feelings in an open and caring atmosphere, and these meetings help to create a feeling of honesty and trust among the volunteers.

To provide exposure to other experiments in Christian community, volunteers take field trips to visit other communities, including Open Door, Metanoia and Koinonia. Volunteers also occasionally visit a Trappist monastery in Conyers. Other outside trips include trips to a prison. Volunteers sometimes help drive families of death row inmates to the prison for visits. Occasionally, volunteers have an opportunity to visit inmates on death row. These trips invariably spark discussions about all aspects of community, and the exposure to other communities' lives provides greater perspective from which to evaluate life at Jubilee.

Partners have separate sharing meetings along with their regularly scheduled business meetings. None of Jubilee's work could happen without a sense of community among the partners or without healthy relationships among the partners. They attempt to support each other through sharing meetings where they do not address business issues, but instead concentrate on cultivating their relationships with each other. Living in community can empower the members to act on their beliefs, but only if the members of the community feel a sense of equality and, well, community. Sharing meetings provide a means of support for each community member.

If a volunteer is interested in staying, and if the partners are interested in the volunteer staying, he or she becomes an extended volunteer and then a novice. A novice is someone who has shown an interest in becoming a partner and has given at least a one year commitment to the community. The novice participates in all aspects of the
community, just like the volunteer, except that he or she attends the partners' meetings and generally takes on more responsibility. The only difference between partners and novices is that the novices do not vote on issues facing the community. They can comment on the issues, but they do not have a vote, as they have not yet made a long-term commitment to the community.

During their novitiate, the novices meet regularly with a partner to discuss any problems and to ask questions. Some people remain novices longer than a year and become partners later, while some decide not to become partners and leave after their year. The time spent as a novice is a trial period meant to help both partners and the novice determine if the novice should be a partner or not. If novices do want to become long-term members of the community, and the partners agree, they are asked to give a commitment of at least two years.  

Volunteers can be from any religious denomination. To be a novice however, one must declare oneself a Christian. All the partners are Christian and are trying to live a life that they think Jesus would want them to live; they are attempting to be witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Someone who is interested in staying at Jubilee for a long time must agree with the partners on a common Christianity. I will go more in depth regarding the spirituality of the community later in this paper.

The refugees are considered part of the community while they are there, but they do not participate in the entire life of Jubilee. There are a variety of reasons for this. Refugees are only living at Jubilee for a short period, even less time than the volunteers. And, whereas the volunteers have chosen to participate in the life of this Christian community, the refugees have not come specifically to experience life in community. They are looking for a new home, and Jubilee is a stop along the way. Many refugees are not

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43For the purposes of this paper, I will generally group novices in with partners, as people who have given a higher degree of commitment to the community. Except where noted, I include novices in the phrase "partners and volunteers."
Christian, and therefore have ideological differences from the partners. The partners have a policy of openness regarding the refugee's beliefs. If the refugees want to participate in the life of the community, they are welcome to do so, in a limited capacity. If they do not want to participate, they do not have to. The only requirement for the refugees is that they must take the English classes. Since the refugee housing is separate from the partners, and they eat almost all their meals separate from the partners and volunteers, the refugees can choose the amount of interaction they want with the rest of the community members. Once a week, the entire community -- partners, volunteers and refugees -- all gather to eat a meal together.

*Work in community*

There is a definite division of labor at Jubilee. There are some jobs that require a commitment to the community that short-term members cannot give. These include administration of the refugee program, responding to correspondence, making decisions about and overseeing the garden (as this needs a multi-season commitment), and coordinating work for the entire community. Volunteers who live at Jubilee for a few months necessarily will not hold these positions. Short-term members can help with the administrative tasks, though, and the partners who hold positions of responsibility also do other work around the community. The partners rotate their jobs, so no one becomes entrenched in their position. Partners who have been there a long time have held a variety of positions.

Besides the administrative tasks, there is much work to be done in the daily life of the community. There is refugee work, child care, cooking, cleaning, gardening, vehicle maintenance, construction and general maintenance, among other things. Refugee work takes priority. This includes teaching English, giving classes on cultural issues, taking care
of health problems and assisting the refugees in filling out paper work. The volunteers are responsible for the refugee teaching duties.

For daily work, like cooking and cleaning, there are schedules posted, and everyone in the community participates fully in these more mundane tasks. There is an attempt to place all work on an equal plane; cooking and cleaning and child care have equal status with bookkeeping and other office work. There is an acknowledgment of the worth of all work. The members seek out socially meaningful work, e.g., refugee program and the death row ministries, while understanding that not all work carries great meaning and that work is not the only source of meaning in their lives.

One partner has the role of work coordinator. It is the work coordinator's job to allocate work to the volunteers and visitors. There is considerable flexibility with the nature of the work. If someone would rather do child care than teach English, for example, there is an attempt to accommodate that person. Even on individual days, if someone strongly wanted to get out in the garden, for example, that person probably would have that opportunity. The variety of work at Jubilee is partly a response to the specialization in society, and to the fragmentation and alienation that develops from this specialization.

The partners have tried to simplify the work process as much as possible so that the community can concentrate on the refugee work and on its other ministries. It is also important to the community that members have time to connect with each other on a level other than work. The general schedule allocates forty hours per week to work, though this is flexible. Sometimes there is more work than can be accomplished in forty hours, and some weeks considerably less than forty hours of work actually is done.

Among the posted schedules for cooking, dishes, and such is a schedule for "retreat day." Approximately once a month, each member of the community takes a day off from regularly scheduled activities. Everyone is encouraged to use this time for prayer
or meditation. The community has built a retreat shack, a small building set back in the woods, to provide a place for people to be alone. It has its own cot, wood stove, and desk. The community members value retreat days very highly and understand the need to balance individual needs for solitude within the communal setting.

**Decision-making**

Decision making at Jubilee is collective, participatory and democratic. The partners use consensus to make most large decisions facing the community, since this consensus decision making process shows respect for the individuals involved in the process.

The partners meet once a week to discuss community matters and to make decisions. There are general guidelines regarding work, e.g., how much time should be spent on work and what work is to be. There are also guidelines regarding individual behavior, e.g., limited travel, no illegal activity. But within the general guidelines outlined by the community, there is considerable flexibility. Many decisions facing the community are too small to go through any formal process involving the whole community. If the partners had to go through a consensus process for every decision in the community, they would have no time for anything but decision-making. As in many areas of life at Jubilee, the partners seek balance. Individuals are trusted to use good judgment regarding the smaller decisions at Jubilee.

Often, an individual can act on his or her own initiative, make a decision and follow through with the appropriate action without going through any formal decision-making process. Sometimes, there is minimal consultation with a partner on the appropriateness of the action or its relevance to the community. There can be difficulty in determining which decisions require the attention of the entire community and which do not. There will always be these issues. But with good communication, conflicts need not
be divisive. As long as the decision is indeed small and not in need of community-wide attention, this loose, slightly anarchic system seems to work.

There are not many strict rules. Many things have changed over the years with the change in partnership, and simply with the growth of the community. For example, partners initially strictly limited travel outside the community. They were very busy building and setting up the refugee program, so it was felt that their scarce resources could not be used for recreational travel. Once the program was up and running, they decided to send out a member to do direct outreach. One of the partners began taking trips to churches across the country, speaking about Jubilee and the work with the refugees. As the community grew older and more stable, personal travel became more acceptable. The partners eventually decided to take a month off every year. Moreover, the long-term partners are beginning to take year-long sabbaticals.

Through experience, the partners have come to understand the importance of balancing individual needs with the needs of the community, and their decision-making reflects this understanding. The community members come to decisions through careful consideration of specific situations. Over time some community policies, like those regarding travel, have changed. A successful community cannot be static. Jubilee's decision-making process allows them to change, while still maintaining community stability.

Food

Most of the food decisions are based on economics. This has led to a heavy reliance on the food bank and an inclination toward vegetarianism. As a non-profit organization working with refugees, Jubilee qualifies to receive inexpensive food from the food bank. At ten cents per pound, it is cheaper for the community to buy much of their food than it is to grow it in the garden. With the current population of the partnership at
only eight, the partners have decided to de-emphasize the garden so they can concentrate on the refugee program.

The lack of emphasis on the garden is a perennial issue with many volunteers and partners who would like to see more organic homegrown food. But there are not enough people living at Jubilee to justify spending more time on the garden. Most of the resources of the community go toward their ministries; greater emphasis on the garden would come at the expense of the refugee program and other social justice work. In making decisions such as this, the partners look to their Christianity to guide them. In this case, they decided it is more important to concentrate the community's scarce resources on their ministries rather than on the garden.

During the growing season, the garden supplies most of the community's vegetables. The garden is one area that requires varied levels of work. The garden demands more attention in the spring and fall, for example. Some work days are scheduled in which the entire community will spend the day in the garden. This type of work is valuable during harvesting and canning times. Not only is a great deal of work done on these days, but it is a good opportunity for the entire community to work together.

Partners and volunteers eat lunches and dinners together almost every day, except for Sunday lunch and "house nights" when individual households eat with their respective house mates. Common meals are a very important aspect of life at Jubilee. Meals are a time for people to sit and talk. It is a time to visit and discuss issues, to share feelings, etc. It is one of the few times that the entire community is together at the same time.

Each night two people cook dinner for the community and are given flexibility in determining the menu, within reason. There are guidelines describing what foods the community will and will not buy. There is also a list of food available from the garden. Meals are generally simple and vegetarian (with heavy reliance on beans and rice). Most
of the partners are vegetarian for a variety of reasons. There is one night a week in which
meat is an option, but there is always a vegetarian alternative. Lunches are mostly
leftovers, sandwiches or other simple food.

Worship
The partners and volunteers meet before lunch every day but Sunday for a half-
hour time of "devotions." This time is a group meditation that varies in style depending on
the leader. Some examples: everyone goes in silence outdoors and explores for the half
hour; someone reads poetry; a particular scripture is read and discussed; volunteers who
have just visited another community talk about their visit; people split into small groups
and talk about whatever they want; visitors talk about themselves; songs are sung; a
partner who has been to a conference reports on the experience; everyone sits in silence
for the entire half hour. This time is extraordinarily valuable to the life of the community,
because it is a time for the group to connect and because it is a constant in the life of the
community.

Music is an important part of the worship at Jubilee. From traditional hymns to
songs written specifically for Jubilee, the community celebrates their Christianity and their
communal nature. A song is sung before every communal meal. Occasionally a group of
people will get together and perform for the rest of the community. The community
values this kind of homemade activity over more passive activities like watching television.

Sunday nights feature a formal worship service. Some partners are ministers, but
the worship service is led by the worship committee, whose membership rotates among
the partners. The worship committee decides what form the service will take. Whereas
the devotion time is non-denominational, sometimes Christian and sometimes not, the
Sunday night service is a chance for the partners to celebrate their Christianity. Although
participation is optional, volunteers are encouraged to attend so there can be a common
understanding of what the partners mean by Christian community and what it is about Christianity that moves them to live a life in community.

Economics

When the original partners decided to start the refugee program, they sent out a newsletter describing their plans. In response, they received donations to help build facilities. Since this time, Jubilee has survived on donations for its livelihood. There were times when the community was seriously low on funds, but it managed to continue through the generosity of their donors. On those rare occasions when the community has rested upon solid financial ground, they have chosen to give the money away rather than keep it for future use. For example, in 1992 a donor willed $50,000 to Jubilee. Given the low cost of living at Jubilee ($7 per day per person) this is a considerable amount of money.

During the spring and summer of 1992, there was a hurricane and a tidal wave that devastated much of the coastal region of Nicaragua. Jubilee, although not working directly with Central American refugees, still keeps informed on issues involving this region of the world, and keeps close ties to the Nicaraguan relief organization CEPAD. The community decided to give the $50,000 to Nicaraguan organizations working on relief and rebuilding efforts in this area.

There is some debate among community members about the community's reliance on donations. As one of the partners says, "I'd like to see all of the people on our mailing list change their lifestyle so that they had no money to give us" even though this would mean no funds for Jubilee. Periodically, there is a suggestion that the community try to raise funds by selling something that is consistent with their values, e.g., organic vegetables or solar panels. In the fall of 1992, a volunteer brought a thousand strawberry
plants to Jubilee and suggested that much of their income could come from a pick-your-own business.

The partners understand that no matter how they support themselves, they will be compromising. If they accept donations from people who hold jobs in exploitative industries, they are indirectly supporting these industries. If they produce some product at Jubilee and sell it for a profit, they are simply supporting the inequitable market-based economy and the idea of private property (both of which conflict with their Christian beliefs). There is a grudging acceptance among the partners of this dilemma. It is difficult to live a pure life. They do what they think is best, and that includes making some compromises.

Children

The number of children at Jubilee varies. When I was there in 1989, there were four children three years old and younger. In 1992, there were six children four years old and younger. Some children were from partner families; some were from volunteer families.

Taking care of the children has equal weight with other community work, and almost everybody spends some time with the children. Unlike some intentional communities, there is no formal system for raising the young members of the community.44 Parents are largely responsible for their own kids. Sometimes the parents keep their children with them while they work; other times parents spend time with their kids without doing any work. Most days, time is set aside for someone other than the parents to do child care. Partners and volunteers both do child care, as it is one of the work assignments, just like teaching English or working in the office.

An exception is made for very young children, in which case child care is a full-time job for the parents of the infant. This is essentially the same idea as giving maternity or paternity leave. The parents are not expected to carry a full load of work in the community while the children are this young.

The issue of child care illuminates the importance of good communication in community. Different people have different theories when it comes to child-rearing. Since there is no systematic, community-wide policy regarding child-rearing, both parents and other care givers need to communicate regarding the children. This communication travels both ways: from the person taking care of the children to the parents regarding the children's behavior, and from the parents regarding preferred ways of dealing with specific problems or situations. This ensures some consistency for the children and also shows respect for different ways of raising children.

Child care is an important example of alternative values in action. The community sees the value in caring for the children, in allowing parents time to spend with their children, and in both men and women sharing responsibility for the younger members of the community. This is in contrast to life outside the community, where it is rare for both parents to have the opportunity to spend quality time with their children throughout their childhood.

Activities

Television, the most popular American pastime, is not a large part of life at Jubilee. The sexism and violence on the screen are not consistent with the values of the people of Jubilee. And by not watching television, the partners are refusing to participate in the major form of advertising for our consumer society. One partner believes that community members would watch television as much as the average American if there were not strict rules governing its use. This partner describes the rejection of television as an admission
of weakness: "It's such a powerful instrument and in so many ways in opposition to what we want to be spending time about that we simply don't want it around." The partners encourage all community members to participate in real-life activities rather than experiencing things through television.

There is a television at Jubilee, but the partners strictly regulate its use. It is never used to watch commercial television shows. For the community to consider watching a show, it must be seen as beneficial to the community. An educational show about a social justice issue, for example, might be acceptable. The partners also rent movies occasionally for the refugees. The decision to watch a show or rent a movie is made by the partners in their weekly meeting. If a partner thinks a show might be beneficial for the community, this person would bring the issue to the partner's meeting for a discussion and a vote. If a volunteer thinks a show might be worthwhile, they would approach a partner with the idea, and the partner would take the issue to the partner's meeting.

A variety of recreational options are available at Jubilee. One of the more popular activities is volleyball, which is a tradition brought from Koinonia. The community members built a court on the property, and most evenings after dinner people will play. Swimming in the pond is an especially important summertime activity, since summer in Georgia can provide oppressive heat. The community values other simple activities, like walking or biking. There is also a canoe available for use.

As mentioned earlier, the community limits trips into town. But if a group of people want to go into Athens (the nearest large town) to see a movie, or for another activity, it is generally allowed. If only one person wants to go, he or she would not use community vehicles for the trip. Occasionally, the community will go as a group with the refugees into town for a specific activity, e.g., roller skating, outdoor festivals, cultural events, or to sporting events at the University of Georgia.
Once a year, the entire community, including refugees, goes rafting in North Carolina. The community works for a day in exchange for a rafting trip. Camping trips also take place throughout the year. There are other opportunities for travel. Partners usually travel during their vacation time. Volunteers also have field trips scheduled throughout their stay.

Most evenings and weekends at Jubilee are free time. The abundance of daily free time allows people to pursue other interests. There is a shop with a variety of tools available for use. Some community members have sung in local community choirs in the past. There are usually some partners participating in social justice groups around the area. And small projects are constantly being planned or started at Jubilee (a volunteer once built a solar sauna, for example).

**Conflict resolution**

For most interpersonal conflicts, the community members attempt to use the "law of Sannerz." This is a method of conflict resolution found in the Old Testament. The idea, in theory, is simple. If a community member has a conflict with another community member, he or she is to approach that person about the issue and they should discuss the problem amongst themselves. Another aspect of Sannerz is that the people in conflict should not talk about their conflict with other community members without also talking to the person with whom they are in conflict. This prevents the problem from growing to include other community members while still allowing the people in conflict to discuss their problems with other community members, thus getting another perspective on the conflict.

These simple tools are valuable in maintaining healthy community relations. They foster an open and honest atmosphere between the partners. I say that the community members "attempt" to use the law of Sannerz because not everyone is always successful in
using this method of conflict resolution. Volunteers especially have a difficult time with
the law of Sannerz. They do not have as much invested in the community as the partners
and so do not have as much motivation to attempt a conflict resolution style that may
promote community cohesion. Most people in our society are not used to this style of
relating to others. Even partners sometimes find it difficult to confront each other with
conflicts.

If there is still conflict between two people after they have discussed the issue,
there are several options for dealing with the conflict. Another community member might
mediate a meeting between the two. If the conflict is too great, one of them might be
asked to reconsider his or her stay at the community. There have been several cases of
people either leaving voluntarily or being asked by the partners to leave. Part of
community life is understanding that not everyone belongs in any given community. As
one partner says, "Jubilee is not for everyone."

Other issues in the life of the community

-Insurance.

Jubilee pays no health insurance. The health care system as it exists today is
inequitable and unjust. It goes against the partners' Christian beliefs to deny people access
to health care simply because they have no money. They see support of the insurance
industry as supporting the unequal distribution of health benefits. Throughout much of
Jubilee's history, there has been at least one long-term member, either a partner or novice,
who has had experience in health care. This person generally takes responsibility for
health issues on the community.

The community pays the minimum car insurance allowed by law, and they pay no
liability insurance for the volunteers. The partners believe that a community of people
should be able to provide for and support its members. The existence of the insurance industry is an indicator of the poor state of our communities (not just intentional communities), and the partners participate as little as possible in this industry.

-Death in community.

Jubilee offers to bury death row inmates in their cemetery. Many of the inmates' families have no place to bury them and few resources to deal with the death. Jubilee also offers to bury people from the Open Door community in Atlanta. While I was at Jubilee in 1989, a resident of Open Door, John, died and was buried at Jubilee. I would like to relate the story of this funeral, as it is an example of how the community puts its values into action. It differed from other funerals in which I have been involved in that it was a celebration of his life, not a mourning of his passing.

The cemetery at Jubilee is tucked away on a remote corner of the property in a small open space among the trees. Community members and friends of the deceased dug the grave by hand over several days. After digging the grave, the community members of Jubilee and Open Door gathered at the K-house. We took turns carrying John's coffin the half mile from the K-house to the cemetery. During the walk, people related stories about John. At the gravesite, we made a circle, and people continued telling stories about John and how he had touched their lives. After people were finished, there was a moment of silent meditation and some singing. We lowered the body into the grave, and everyone took turns shoveling dirt onto the coffin.

I relate this story to illustrate the attitude that Jubilee and Open Door have toward human life and toward death. They believe in the inherent worth of every person, in the sacredness of human life. For the partners, death is simply a part of life, or rather a stage in life. During John's illness, the members of Open Door cared for him up to the moment he died. After his death, he was buried by those same people who cared for him and
whom at some point he also cared for. The way in which the communities dealt with John's death shows compassion and respect; there was personal involvement in a process from which most people in our society are removed.

-Simple living

The community attempts an ascetic lifestyle, "Our work with refugees and travel in Central America have made us more conscious of how much of the world's resources we consume in this country compared to the great majority of the human family. This has made us want to reduce our level of consumption and adopt a more compassionate lifestyle." For the partners, the primary advantage to pooling resources and living modestly is that it allows them to turn more of their energies toward the things that are more important to them, like their ministries.

-Self reliance

There is an attempt to rely as much as possible on each other, not on "experts." If something needs fixing, the community members attempt to fix it; if the community needs another building, the community members will build it, etc. For electrical and plumbing problems, car maintenance and repair, and building repair, there is usually an attempt by community members to deal with the problem before they consult an expert. There are, in fact, very few aspects of life at Jubilee that require the experience of an expert. It is empowering to accomplish a task for which most people living in our compartmentalized, specialized society would feel the need for a professional.

The use of appropriate technologies, e.g., passive solar and wood heat, is a successful attempt to gain power for the community by reducing dependence on large corporations. Food decisions have a similar effect; community support of the garden

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45Jubilee, Booklet.
involves almost no outside influence. Despite reliance on the food bank, purchases in
grocery stores are kept to a minimum -- mainly in an effort to reduce costs.

**Spirituality at Jubilee**

The new testament speaks of reconciliation, fellowship and mutual support among
persons in the early church. Christian writers have often defended the integrity of
family and communal life and the goal of cooperation rather than competition.
Interpersonal community assumes new significance today as an alternative to both
the isolation of individuals and the impersonal collectivism to which our society is
prone.46

At Jubilee, the partners have a strong Christian faith. This faith, the partners
argue, is the single most important aspect of Jubilee. It is the glue that holds the
community together. They, therefore, constantly explore their faith and examine their
actions in terms of their faith. Actions arise from each partners' relationship to God, but
decisions are made within concrete social contexts. Relationships are primary in the life of
the community. This can be seen in the person-to-person relationships in the community
but is also extended to a societal level. The partners explore their faith in terms of their
actions. It is their understanding of Jesus' teachings that directs them. The partners
interpret Jesus' teachings much as the early Christians did. The original Christians were
"living intensely together," as one partner says, "and the 'church' was understood in terms
of intense community. Community was an assumption of the time" in which Jesus was
teaching. The partners do not expect the Bible to provide easy answers to the complex
issues of today, but they try to identify in it some values that can guide them in their
choices.

As mentioned earlier, not all the partners agree on every issue in community.
Individuals work through their own issues as best they can through the mediation of Christ
as manifested in the community. Different community members interpret the scriptures in
different ways. The community members do not agree on the issue of abortion, for

example. But there is agreement on issues that directly affect the community. If there
were not, the community could not survive. A partner explains the process they have used
to come to decisions on difficult issues:

There have been many times when we have given time to prayer -- sometimes over
weeks or even months -- and worked slowly to a decision. During this kind of
procedure, it is clear to me that we are willing to let the ego step aside a bit and
allow the holy spirit to work in the circle. These are powerful moments . . . and
often bring results I had not thought possible and with care for one another.47

In my first visit to Jubilee, I was struck by the wide range of Christian beliefs, held
by the partners, including Charismatics, Southern Baptists and liberal Protestants. Several
times, the partners had major disputes that threatened to split the community. In the end,
the partners said, it was their common faith in Jesus Christ that kept the community
together.

**Environmental Ethics of Jubilee**

Compared to the partners' common belief in the truth of Jesus' teachings, a well-
defined environmental ethic is not necessary for the continued health of this community;
consequently, the environment is one area where different partners hold different beliefs.
Some members strongly believe in the moral superiority of humans and in the rights of
humans to exploit the non-human community for our use. Other partners attribute
mystical qualities to wilderness that go beyond aesthetics, and they believe in the inherent
worth of every living being. All the partners feel an obligation to future generations of
humans and recognize that we depend on the environment for our food, health and
personal fulfillment. The understanding of the importance of being good stewards of the
land is the argument for environmental action that is most accepted among the partners.

It may be easiest to interpret the ethics of the community by examining their
actions and the motivations behind them. It is clear that the priorities of the community lie

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47Personal correspondence.
with humans. They direct their energy toward their ministries, which are totally human-centered. When the non-human community benefits, the primary motivation is not the well being of the biosphere, for example, but the well-being of humans within the biosphere. In an effort to reduce costs and provide themselves with fresh food, they have a garden and do not buy much processed food. With an interest in reducing their exposure to toxic substances, the garden is organic. To save money, they try to make no more than one trip into town per day. In the interest of reducing their dependence on large corporations and reducing costs, the houses are passive solar. Their simple life, which is motivated by their understanding of the gospel and their experiences with refugees, has many positive environmental effects. Thus Jubilee shows environmental responsibility in many ways, even though it is not their primary motivator.

**Summary**

My experience with intentional community is limited to one place, Jubilee. But this brief exposure was enough to convince me of the power of intentional community. The partners at Jubilee feel empowered to act on their beliefs because of the support they feel from other members of the community and from what the partners would call the "spirit" of the community. Their beliefs and convictions are supported daily by a group of people who also hold the same beliefs and convictions.

Through their newsletter and their visitor and volunteer programs, the partners are exposing others to an alternative way of life and thus an alternative set of values. The partners show respect for each other through their conflict resolution style. They, as a group, have greater opportunity than they would as individuals in the larger society to live out their faith.

One important aspect of Jubilee is that there is an understanding of the consequences of one's actions -- in interpersonal relationships and in the work with the
refugees; in the garden and in relations with the local community; in energy consumption and in choices made about food. This characteristic is very different from modern American life. Typical Americans are removed from the consequences of their actions. At Jubilee it is impossible to remove oneself from the consequences of one's actions, since the community could not survive without an understanding of the interdependence between each member of the community and an awareness that one's actions do have consequences. Frequently, the consequences are directly visible in the life of the community. This helps the community toward a greater understanding of the community's interdependence with the outside world.

Each partner is an integral part of the community through the consensus decision-making process. The community values each members' work, whether it is working with the refugees or cooking the evening meal. The children are considered members of the community and are treated with respect. The partners value time with the children as they value time with the refugees as they value time in the garden and so on.

The members of Jubilee have examined their beliefs and acted on these beliefs. They have looked at virtually every activity in their lives and examined what their Christianity says about each activity. In short, they have created a structure within which a comprehensive value system exists, their own value system, a value system that stands in sharp contrast to the larger society, a value system that includes in it an alternative vision of the future. A brief exploration of other intentional communities shows that this is the nature of intentional community; that is, for an intentional community to survive, its members must agree upon a value system and attempt to live out this value system in a practical way. This value system, by definition, will be different from that of the larger society. This is why intentional communities exist, to be places where the values are different from those of the larger society.

Like most intentional communities, Jubilee as it exists today is definitely anthropocentric. As Jubilee relies upon Christianity, could a community rely on an agreed-upon environmental tenet? Is it possible for an intentional community to be non-anthropocentric? In the final chapter, I would like to examine which aspects of Jubilee can transfer to a non-anthropocentric intentional community and which cannot. I will also take a closer look at what a non-anthropocentric intentional community might look like by attempting to apply non-anthropocentric values to intentional community.
There has been much written about intentional community, but little about specifically non-anthropocentric intentional community. Of both present and past intentional communities, there are only two that might be considered non-anthropocentric. Spiral Wimmin's Community in Kentucky declares itself an ecofeminist community. They state, "Our actions on the land are to enhance the diversity and abundance of life forms, to preserve and build the soil, to work with the cycles and forces of nature."\textsuperscript{49} Monkton Wyld Court in England claims to be a deep ecology intentional community.\textsuperscript{50} There has been nothing written about these two communities, and my personal correspondence with them has yielded little understanding of how they are acting on their beliefs.\textsuperscript{51} Given the lack of resources regarding these communities, I will continue this discussion concentrating on the information laid out in the previous chapters.

In this chapter I want to ask the questions: Can a group of people get together and intentionally create a practical, meaningful, non-anthropocentric value system they can use to guide them in their actions? If so, what would a non-anthropocentric intentional community look like in practical terms? How would it be structured? How would it operate? How, on a daily basis, would a non-anthropocentric intentional community put its values into action? Keeping in mind the criteria laid out in the previous two chapters regarding what constitutes success in intentional community and what has worked at Jubilee, I want to explore if and/or how a successful intentional community can be non-anthropocentric.

\textsuperscript{51}I have not visited either Spiral Wimmin's Community or Monkton Wyld Court. A full exploration of these communities is beyond the scope of this project. But I would very much like to visit as they are at least attempting a non-anthropocentric life. Studying these specific communities would perhaps be a logical next step in research beyond this paper.
First, it might be helpful to explore the criteria that would inform non-anthropocentric intentional community. A community attempting to be non-anthropocentric could use social ecology, deep ecology and ecofeminist principles to determine how to operate on a daily basis. I will take a brief look at these schools of thought. Then, keeping the discussion of Jubilee from the previous chapter in mind, I will explore specific issues that intentional communities face and how a non-anthropocentric intentional community might go about dealing with these everyday issues in a non-anthropocentric way.

**Environmental ethics discussion: social ecology, deep ecology, and ecofeminism**

**Social ecology**

According to a social ecology position, it is equally important to understand the history of, to understand the current social and cultural reinforcement of, and to attempt to eliminate the oppression of man over woman, as human over human, as human over nature. Murry Bookchin, in Remaking Society states, "It is not until we eliminate oppression in all its forms . . . that we will really create a rational ecological society."52 Social ecology seeks a radical transformation of society as the way toward an ecologically sane future. A future society based upon the elimination of hierarchy is difficult to envision. We have little experience with such matters. But it is precisely this criterion that defines the future vision of social ecology, and that should determine our actions if we are to move toward this vision.

How can we think non-anthropocentrically without addressing issues of hierarchy and oppression? How can we attempt to redefine our relationship with the environment without also addressing our unequal relationships with each other? Intentional community provides us with a way to address issues of inequality within the community. An

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52Murray Bookchin, Remaking Society, Pathways to a Green Future (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 44.
intentional community can attempt a political and decision-making structure that seeks to eliminate hierarchy, giving equal participation to all members of the community. This provides the community members with a departure point from which to explore non-hierarchical ways of dealing with the non-human community, effectively redefining the community's relationship with the environment.

Deep ecology

We need to recognize that humans are subject to the same ecological limitations as other beings, that we cannot exist independent of nature, that interdependence is a natural condition of life: "We forget that nature is, quite simply, the universal continuum, ourselves inextricably included; it is that which mothered us into existence, which will outsurvive us, and from which we have learned (if we still remember the lesson) our destiny." For most of human history, we have lived within the limits of nature. Recently, we have started pushing those limits. We have forgotten our dependence on nature for our survival.

A perspective that may help here is Aldo Leopold's land ethic, which holds "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community; it is wrong when it tends to do otherwise." Adoption of Leopold's land ethic, which is very different from our current land ethic, would provide us with guidance in making decisions regarding appropriate action. There must be an effort to balance concern for the individuals within the community with the importance of giving our final commitment to the whole. As Leopold puts it, "A land ethic changes the role of Homo

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Sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for fellow members and also respect for the community as such.\textsuperscript{55}

The previous point applies as much to intentional community as to environmental concerns. People living in intentional community who are dealing with interpersonal issues must balance individual concerns with community concerns. For an intentional community to be successful, it must address such issues successfully. If a community can do this when it comes to interpersonal issues, its members are in a better position to apply the same methods regarding non-human members of the larger community. Thus, Leopold's land ethic directly informs non-anthropocentric intentional community.

Deep ecology considers "moral and aesthetic concerns beyond mere utilitarianism."\textsuperscript{56} It is concerned with "asking deeper questions and on cultivating ecological consciousness," a consciousness that provides "the insight that everything is connected."\textsuperscript{57}

One deep ecology viewpoint suggests the development of an "ecological self," of a sense of self-in-community.\textsuperscript{58} This sense of self expands beyond the individual to include other (human and non-human) members of the community, and even the community itself. Were we to develop this expansive sense of self, acting in our self interest would mean acting in the interest of the entire biosphere. It seems that the partners at Jubilee have an expanded sense of self that not only includes the other members of the community, but also the members of their sister communities of Open Door, Metanoia, and Koinonia, as well as the refugees and prisoners. This raises the possibility that human members of a non-anthropocentric intentional community could have an expanded sense of self to include the non-human community. As the partners at Jubilee partially base their decisions

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{57}Bill Devall and George Sessions, eds., Deep Ecology (Salt Lake City: Prergrine Smith, 1985) x, 8.
\textsuperscript{58}See Bill Devall, Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1988).
on their expanded sense of self, so could the members of a non-anthropocentric intentional community base their decisions on an expanded sense of self. This is a promising model for non-anthropocentric community.

Cultivating an ecological consciousness "encourages modesty instead of hubris."59 Deep ecology allows for an intellectual, emotional and spiritual basis for determining appropriate action. It includes the discovery of a sense of place or the development of a bioregionalist perspective. A deep ecology perspective requires us to consider our community as inclusive of non-humans, or what Naess (1979) calls a "mixed community." The future vision of a deep ecology perspective is alternative in that it is non-anthropocentric. Human interest is intimately connected with ecosystem health. Humans are not valued any more than any other member of the biosphere, or of the biosphere itself. Adoption of deep ecology as a guide in decision-making has profound implications on our actions and informs a non-anthropocentric vision as it applies to intentional community.

Ecofeminism60

An ecofeminist perspective shows a connection between the domination of women and the domination of nature. Both must be addressed if either is to be changed. The ecofeminist ethic suggests that there is no natural hierarchy. It celebrates diversity, opposes domination in all its forms, values intuition and emotion as ways of knowing and requires an understanding of our place in nature.

Ecofeminism stresses the importance of all relationships. Without healthy human relationships, we will not have healthy relationships with the natural world. The

59Ibid., 46.
understanding of interconnectedness that ecofeminism brings can inform our actions. Specifically, a successful intentional community must have healthy human relationships to survive. Members of such a community understand the importance of thinking relationally and can apply this awareness to their relationship with the larger non-human community. This awareness of our interdependence with the non-human community is a prerequisite for a non-anthropocentric intentional community; an intentional community may still be anthropocentric with this understanding, but it cannot be non-anthropocentric without it.

Ynestra King (1989) proposes an ecofeminist vision of "harmonious, diverse, decentralized communities, using only those technologies based on ecological principles." Questions of appropriate technology can be addressed from an ecofeminist perspective. A non-anthropocentric intentional community would use only those technologies that are based upon ecological principles.

Ecofeminism informs a non-anthropocentric vision by valuing community, considering relationship as primary and basing a sense of self within the context of community. A group of people employing an ecofeminist decision-making process might be moved toward intentional community, as this writer suggests, "We feel the need for hope, for possibilities in the midst of despair; for integrity and wholeness in the struggle against alienation; for nurturing and closeness based on equality and respect, not on obligation and exploitation. These needs dictate the journey, and many of us find what we seek in community."

Values in practice

The members of Jubilee have examined their values thoroughly and made decisions about their daily lives based on these values. A non-anthropocentric intentional

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community must do the same. There are hundreds of areas in which the community must consider what it means to live non-anthropocentrically. Some of the most important issues include energy use, food production, diet, work, technology, physical structure (including land issues), health care and relationship with the outside community (both human and non-human). How will the non-anthropocentric intentional community address issues of economic and political structure or decision-making?

There may be aspects of communal living that transfer from an anthropocentric intentional community directly to a non-anthropocentric intentional community. There may not be, for example, a specifically non-anthropocentric way of dealing with interpersonal conflict within the community; methods of conflict resolution that work for any community may be copied by a non-anthropocentric intentional community. Jubilee, for example, may provide a non-anthropocentric intentional community with the tools necessary for healthy conflict-resolution.

In this paper, I cannot address every issue facing a non-anthropocentric intentional community. Individual communities might have different ideas of what it means to live non-anthropocentrically, and it is for each community to decide what that is. What I hope to provide in this paper is a framework, a jumping off point for an intentional community to consider how it could express its non-anthropocentrism.

**Energy**

Jubilee is a good example of how a non-anthropocentric intentional community might consider questions of energy production. As mentioned earlier, the buildings at Jubilee are passive solar in design, and the only other heat comes from wood stoves, the wood for which is gathered from the forest on the community property. There is an effort to use as little energy as possible.
Reducing the need for energy would be a primary concern for a non-anthropocentric intentional community. Such a community would need to question the implications of everything that had to do with energy consumption; Transportation, for example, would raise such questions as, Would ownership of cars be non-anthropocentric? If not, what is the alternative? Public transportation? But this still requires the use of fossil fuels, not to mention the energy expended in the original manufacture of the vehicle, the use of land for roads, and all the other issues that go along with supporting our automobile-based society. What about bicycles? This may be acceptable, but there are still the issues of where the metal came from to make the bicycle and how it was manufactured. Walking would be the more obvious choice for ecologically sensitive travel. But as the primary mode of transport, this has profound implications for the structure of the community as it severely limits the mobility of community members.

This brief look at transportation shows the difficulty of considering what constitutes a non-anthropocentric life. Moreover, I only looked at this issue from the perspective of energy consumption. There are other issues regarding transportation as it relates to our values. What about using animals in a limited role on the community? Is there any room in a non-anthropocentric life for using animals for transportation? For that matter, is there room for compromise on other transportation issues while a community is attempting to move towards non-anthropocentrism? For example, a community might decide that it is a small compromise to use bicycles, but too much of a compromise to use cars. Or a community might decide it needs to use cars and trucks in the beginning, with the aim of doing without later in the life of the community. Or maybe they would decide that it is impossible to live a wholly non-anthropocentric life regarding transportation and are willing to compromise in this one area by using environmentally destructive modes of transportation while still trying to maintain a non-anthropocentric lifestyle regarding other aspects of their communal life.
This is but one small example of an issue that a non-anthropocentric intentional community must work out. For a community to succeed, its members must consider their non-anthropocentrism as they look at all the major issues facing the community, just as Jubilee has done with its Christianity.

**Economic considerations**

We must come to understand the nature of the productive apparatus . . . as fundamentally tied to the organization of society as it now exists, to the increasing isolation of individuals, both as producers and consumers, to the increasing turnover of commodities, styles and fashion, and to the maximization of waste or surplus which has a direct bearing upon the stability of the life support system. -Barry Weisberg

A non-anthropocentric intentional community would have to consider the economic situation within which it would exist. A non-anthropocentric economic system would be different from the market system that places instrumental value on individuals (humans and non-humans) and their relationships. An economic system based on the community level reflects the needs of the individuals within the community. "We can emphatically say that [the market based system] has external limits biologically." Industrial society is so harmful to the ecology that it is unsustainable. "When vital issues (e.g., the capacity of the earth to support life) have to be classified as externalities, it is time to restructure basic concepts."

The market is an excellent tool to perform certain functions. It is efficient in allocating resources, for example. But its persistent emphasis on the short-term, its assumptions about the individualistic nature of humans, and its inability to account for environmental costs signal its inappropriateness in dealing with environmental issues. A

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64Bookchin, *Remaking Society*, 94.
65Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb Jr., *For the Common Good* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 37.
non-anthropocentric intentional community would therefore do all it could to move away from the economic system as it exists today. How would a community do this?

Worster (1977) suggests that the values and institutions of "industrial capitalism," along with the accompanied reductionist views of traditional science, be subverted by ecology.\(^6\) If people who are active in creating an alternate economic system value cooperation, community and relationship in an ecological sense, they can create a system that reflects these values. I argue that this is necessary in order to move away from anthropocentrism.

A total alternative is necessary, namely "an outline to an entirely authentic model of production and consumption rooted in and motivated by democratically determined needs, on a scale capable of being defined in part by each of its participants, but together as well, as a whole."\(^7\) Intentional community can serve as just such a model. Kirkpatrick Sale (1980) and E.F. Schumacher (1973) both call for highly self-sufficient local communities. They consider a smaller "human" scale economy a viable alternative.

In this model, avoiding social alienation is as important as an environmental imperative. Communal ownership of economic activities and communal living go hand in hand. A sense of control over economic life will foster a greater sense of community. Intentional communities that attempt to be self-sufficient are deliberately moving away from the system of production and consumption that is in place in the larger society. Economic systems can exist in intentional communities where relationships have worth beyond their instrumental value.

In considering an alternate economic system, more questions arise; What does this mean in a practical sense for a non-anthropocentric intentional community? How would people support themselves financially? Should community members have jobs outside the


\(^7\) Gorz, André as quoted in Weisberg, *Beyond Repair*, 167-168.
community, or would it be better to find some way of supporting themselves by working within the community? In either case, what kind of work is non-anthropocentric? Should the community own land, or does this go against their values? Should they interact at all with the economy of the larger society if doing so means supporting an environmentally destructive, anthropocentric system?

Community of communities

Rudolph Bahro (1986) has a vision of a future that is a withdrawal from the world market to form self-sufficient local, regional and national economies. His is a vision of a market economy of basic needs, built from the bottom up. He explains, "I think these commune-type things are, so to speak, the germ cells of a new society." In them, people will return to a more rational system of production, which would include the natural world.

Bookchin (1990) envisions a future in which communes will network into bioregional confederations. These communities would trade amongst themselves whenever possible and would use barter when feasible. They would form a decentralized society that would be scaled to human dimensions and more in tune with natural processes.

Much as Jubilee does with its sister communities of Koininia, Metanoia, and Open Door, communities in a network could help each other by providing labor, expertise and other resources. And they could try to conduct as much business with other communities as they could and as little business outside the community of communities as possible. This would be a step toward building a larger societal and economic structure which is an alternative to the mainstream.

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Issues of scale

Small communities minimize impact on the environment. Cities are resource intensive. With small communities, industries that are now large and environmentally damaging can become decentralized and less damaging. A community of communities is a way towards regional self-sufficiency.

A bioregional perspective would be helpful to a non-anthropocentric intentional community, "The wisdom of Bioregionalism is in its holism, its understanding of the connectedness of all things in the web of life."69 A bioregional consciousness is cultivated by developing a relationship with the land, by knowing the land in which we live. That relationship is the basis for decision-making, and the community is the appropriate location of decision-making and of political and economic control.70 Intra-community affairs can be dealt with precisely because intentional communities exist on a small scale compared to the rest of society. Bioregionalism provides a framework that allows intentional communities to include their values in the decision-making process and provides a large degree of community-based economic and political control. This means that a non-anthropocentric intentional community could make decisions based on their collective non-anthropocentrism, informed by their knowledge of, and relationship with, the local non-human community.

Consumerism

A non-anthropocentric perspective would recognize the destructive nature of our consumer culture and would attempt to consume less. Jubilee attempts to live simply and consume as little as possible, but they do this so they can use most of their resources for their social justice work. A non-anthropocentric intentional community would attempt to

70Ibid., 94.
consume as little as possible because it is consistent with their non-anthropocentrism, and would most likely do more than Jubilee in this area.

Green consumerism is no substitute for consuming less, although it may be a starting point to something better. For those items a community needs, buying locally produced goods from people practicing environmentally friendly processes of production is undoubtedly better than buying a product from a large polluting multinational corporation. But ultimately a green consumer policy will not save the environment. It is the consumer culture specifically that needs to change, and a non-anthropocentric intentional community is a place to do this.

Food

Jubilee grows a small portion of their food. A non-anthropocentric intentional community would most likely attempt to produce as much of its own food as possible and would do this organically. Such a community would attempt to be less dependent on the environmentally destructive food industry as it exists today. This is a resource efficient solution as the food wouldn't travel as far from the field to the table. Organic techniques are better for the soil and people. A community that produces its own food also makes an intimate connection with the land. In an effort to move toward a more bioregional future, a community of communities may organize a regional food coop and share labor and expertise.

A non-anthropocentric intentional community would most likely adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet. However, a community might come to decisions that, on the surface, might seem to contradict their values but which, upon further examination, indeed seem to be non-anthropocentric. For example, a non-anthropocentric intentional community might decide that hunting is a viable solution to the food question. Non-anthropocentrism does not necessarily mean not eating meat, though it certainly means not
supporting the meat industry as it exists today. Hunting may be a reasonable response to the living situation of a particular intentional community depending on the local ecosystem and living conditions. The community might decide that wildlife is abundant in the surrounding community, and that it is an environmentally better choice to hunt than to buy lentils that were grown 2000 miles away. Community members must collectively make decisions like these with the aim of understanding what it means to be non-anthropocentric.

Activities

The specific work of the community is determined by the values of the members. Jubilee expresses itself through the refugee work and its other social justice work. A non-anthropocentric intentional community would instead put its energies into activities related to its non-anthropocentrism. As Jubilee supports other social justice organizations, a non-anthropocentric intentional community could support environmental groups (or social justice groups for that matter, if the community decided that social justice issues were central to their non-anthropocentric values). As Jubilee has an outreach program to educate others about its work, so too could a non-anthropocentric intentional community reach others about its work, through specific education courses, community outreach or a visitor program.

The members of Jubilee are active in the local community. They are aware of social justice issues in the surrounding area and are working toward solutions on a local level. Similarly, there is a tremendous opportunity for intentional communities to express a bioregional vision through their actions in the surrounding community. Such a community could be involved in education, or in other activities incorporating the surrounding community.

71 The members of the community must decide animal rights issues before coming to such a point.
Other aspects of community life

As mentioned earlier, every community would have to decide for itself what is non-anthropocentric and what is not. As shown in the extended look at life in Jubilee, the community must justify their value system with every aspect of their communal life. Here, I would like to give a short list of aspects of community that are, or can be, more non-anthropocentric than the larger society:

1. Sharing resources (communal eating, organizing as a cooperative).
2. Home-producing food and crafts -- moving toward a self-sustaining economy.
3. Using alternative medicine.
4. Employing non-polluting practices; e.g. eliminating use of harmful chemicals.
5. Using or developing alternative technology.
6. Reducing the division of labor (less hierarchy, which is consistent with social ecology, deep ecology and ecofeminist perspective).
7. Refusing the assumption that expertise and authority go hand in hand (as in Jubilee, where everyone is encouraged to do a variety of activities and not to rely on the opinion of experts).
8. Relying on democratic participative structures and processes; e.g. consensus decision-making. Emphasis on cooperation. Non-hierarchical.
10. Taking time for communal activities (as at Jubilee); eating, playing, working.
11. Taking time to focus on relationships (sharing meetings at Jubilee) to ensure the smooth operation of the community and the ability of the members to have healthy relationships with the surrounding community (both human and non-human).

Through thoughtful discussion, a non-anthropocentric intentional community would come to decisions about these and other aspects of their life in community, and in the process would be creating a working model of a practical non-anthropocentric value system.

Spirituality

Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. -Lynn White, Jr

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Spirituality, as I use the term, is a sense of connection with the transcendent, with something beyond our comprehension that transcends our individual sense of self. Advocates of increasing spiritual awareness suggest that without a spiritual understanding of our situation, we will not act rightly.

Some ecofeminists, along with some deep ecologists and others, suggest that an earth-based spirituality be the basis for our understanding, our decision-making. This spirituality includes an understanding of the inherent value of everyone and everything -- a belief in the value of diversity and in the interconnection of "all parts of the living body of the earth." Ecofeminist spirituality is a spirituality of empathy. It requires an expanded sense of self to include others -- humans, animals, plants, even natural processes and cycles. "Feeling the life of the 'other' -- literally experiencing its existence" -- is viewed as the proper stance to take in the world.

Approaches to spiritual issues include suggestions of discovering ecological perspectives in established religions. Lynn White Jr (1967) suggests adopting St. Francis as a patron saint of environmentalists. Many people have proposed an ecological interpretation of Christianity. Others have suggested a similar approach to Judaism.

I do not think that a specific ecological spirituality is necessary for non-anthropocentric vision to succeed; it may, however, be helpful. As mentioned earlier, a strong spiritual base can have a positive effect on the stability of an intentional community. In Jubilee, for example, the partners believe their common spiritual beliefs are the most

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74 Plant, Healing the Wounds, 1.
76 White, "Historical Roots," 1287.
important aspect of the community. It may be beneficial, then, for a non-anthropocentric intentional community to base itself on an ecological spiritual vision.

*Human nature issues*79

Nothing will change the effect of our choices on the collective outer landscape until we first change the cause in our inner landscapes. -Chris Maser80

Intentional communities are groups of people who gather together to attempt a different way of life. They are people who, in the process of working together and simply living together (living simply together?), learn to balance their personal needs with the needs of the community. As discussed earlier, living in community is not easy. It takes a great effort on the part of the members to make the community successful. Members must be willing to change themselves in order to live in the community. This process, I argue, addresses our "inner landscapes." It allows the members of the community to address issues of character. If, as Wendell Berry says, "the ecological crisis is a crisis of character," then intentional community, being a place within which to address issues of character, is also a place within which to address ecological issues.81

Intentional community allows for the opportunity to address issues regarding what Laszlo (1989) calls our "inner limits." These limits "are not physical limits due to the finiteness or vulnerability of this world, but psychological, cultural and, above all, political limits inner to people and societies, manifested by individual and collective mismanagement, irresponsibility and myopia."82 Until we understand these limits and attempt to break free of them, Laszlo suggests, we will make no noticeable progress.

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81Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1977), 17.
Ornstein and Erlich in *New World New Mind* suggest that we humans have developed in such a way that we do not notice gradual change. We notice small, sharp change. We notice the beginnings and endings, the dramatic events not the slow, gradual events -- even if these slow, gradual events are very large. We simply have not "evolved" to recognize and react to these large scale events or trends, so it is difficult for us to react to environmental crises, like global warming, that come about gradually. It will take a shock or tragedy to goad us into action. But we cannot wait for this crisis. What is needed, according to Orenstein and Erlich, is a new way of thinking: "The time has come to take our own evolution into our hands and create a new evolutionary process of conscious evolution . . . We need to replace our old minds with new ones."83 Intentional community provides a place for us to explore new ways of thinking, to understand our shortcomings and to address these shortcomings collectively.

A non-anthropocentric intentional community must not only address external forces, i.e., economic, social, political, but must also address our mind set, our dependence on the status quo, our individual resistance to change. Theodore Roszak (1972) also suggests a recognition of the limitations of our human nature and a transformation:

The great trick is to discover what it is that holds people fast to the status quo and then to undo the knots - perhaps even on a person-by-person basis. It is a matter of recognizing that the future grows out of the here and now, and that people who are not here and now free and eager for change will have nothing to do with inventing better futures.84

If we are to attempt to build a non-anthropocentric future, we must break free from the status quo, consider what it is that holds others to it, and attempt to "undo the knots" to help others change their present mind set. People participating in intentional community are "here and now free and eager for change" and are actively inventing better futures.

People in non-anthropocentric intentional communities are by definition attempting to change their mind set and are possibly in a position to attempt to change others' as well.

Summary

*Intentional communities as new social movements*

According to Scott (1990), "new social movements" are (or will be) the prime agents for social change. These movements are concerned less with political power than with values and lifestyles. These movements attempt to create "other relation networks which radically oppose the 'mass' and its atomization," and "bring about change through changing values and developing alternative lifestyles."85 Personal autonomy; the view that the personal is political; non-hierarchical structures; and grass-roots organization are further important principles.86 Scott believes that the effectiveness of new social movements is increased by the force of the collective consciousness they foster. An "alternative collective will . . . takes shape, which provides a basis of solidarity and self-identification with the movement."87

Intentional communities seem to fit this model for a new social movement. Intentional communities therefore may be effective vehicles for social change. They can do this by changing economic and social organization and through changing the ways people behave. Material economic activity, as well as ideas and consciousness, can be affected through community, as intentional communities provide an example to the larger society.

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86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 124.
Taking risks

When we look at the revolutionary task of reordering priorities, and the sheer power of entrenched, interlocked institutions, the challenge may seem utterly impossible. -Erich Fromm

In looking at environmental problems and attempting solutions, it is easy to despair, to concentrate on the negatives that we see all around us, and to see most solutions as inadequate. Maybe it is too late. Maybe we have already altered the earth's atmosphere too much. Maybe there is a bleak, hot, unpredictable future in store, and as Bill McKibben says, "there probably isn't much we can do about it." Environmental crises will occur. And we will attempt to find solutions to them. Most likely, we will look for technological fixes. Maybe technology will provide answers to environmental problems of the future: "It is possible that the breakdown of natural cycles will be dealt with by a completely synthetic substitute in which huge industrial installations will supplant natural processes." Today, we are addressing environmental problems with technology by engaging in reactive environmentalism. We just might be able to manipulate the earth's natural processes enough to ensure human survival, and it appears that we are headed toward just such a future.

For me, there is a realization that a widespread change in human nature will not come about (as Clark, Sowell, and Maser, among others suggest); we will not, on a large scale, alter our evolutionary path (as Orenstein and Erlich propose); we will not, on a societal level, remember the "old Gnosis," a sense of nature infused with meaning (as Roszak suggests); hierarchies will not disappear with or without the help of well-meaning humans (as the Social Ecology position asserts); there will not be sweeping changes in the economic system moving us toward sustainability; there will not be a great spiritual

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awakening that motivates people to act responsibly, just as a new earth-harmonious
religion will not develop in a widespread response to environmental crises; true
compassion for the non-human community is an interesting theory for some and a seeming
impossibility for others; a truly bioregionalist future is a very dim hope; a deep
understanding of our place in the natural world will not come soon enough for a majority
of the species on the earth, if it comes at all. I would argue that it is unlikely that there
will even be "widespread recognition that something is wrong, that present policies do not
work."91

I would agree with Orenstein and Erlich, who say that it will take a crisis -- that we
all perceive as such -- for us truly to change our behavior. But even if a crisis or many
crises occur, I think that we will work our way out of many of them, as Julian Simon
suggests.92 It is truly amazing what human ingenuity has brought about. And there is
incredible potential for us to find solutions to the environmental problems we will face in
the future.

Manes (1990) suggests he has a hope for change along with a realization that
change probably will fail, but that this "may be the only principled way to approach the
challenge of industrial ecocide at this point in history."93 In other words, we must be
faithful to our beliefs and our visions regardless of the effectiveness of our actions.

If we believe that it is right to act with respect for the environment, if we feel
strongly about the non-human community, we develop what some have called an "ethic of
care." Curtin (1989) extends an ethic of care to the ecology. This ethic is not a static
idea; she means for this ethic to motivate action: "The injunction to care must be
understood as part of a radical political agenda that allows for development of contexts in
which 'caring for' can be non-abusive. It claims that the relational sense of self, the

91Daly and Clark, For the Common Good, 355.
93Manes, Green Rage, 189.
willingness to empathetically enter into the world of others and care for them, can be expanded and developed as part of a political agenda so that it may include those outside the already established circle of caring for, "such as the non-human community." Matthew Fox (1990) introduces what he calls a "spirituality named compassion." His vision of compassion is a celebration of togetherness, a "letting go of ego, of problems, of difficulties, in order to remember the common base that makes another's suffering mine and in order to imagine a relief to that suffering." Just as an ethic of care should be understood in an active sense, this feeling of compassion, according to Fox, necessitates action. "Compassion is about doing and relieving the pain of others, not merely emoting about it." 

Sharon Welch (1990) provides an excellent vision of what she calls an "ethic of risk." This ethic speaks directly to environmentalists as it addresses the task of working toward solutions in the face of overwhelming odds: 

Such a situation calls for an ethic of risk, an ethic that begins with the recognition that we cannot guarantee decisive changes in the near future or even in our lifetime. The ethic of risk is propelled by the equally vital recognition that to stop resisting, even when success is unimaginable, is to die. The death that accompanies acquiescence to overwhelming problems is multidimensional: the threat of physical death, the death of the imagination, the death of the ability to care . . . the death of the ability to love . . . Failure to develop the strength to remain angry, in order to continually love and therefore resist, is to die.

Intentional communities have throughout history been places where people have taken risks, where people, grounded in community, redefine responsible action. A friend once said, "If you want a certain future to come about, you simply need to start living that future." Intentional communities are examples of this attitude in action. Based upon my

96Ibid.. 7.
97Welch, A Feminist Ethic of Risk, 20.
experience in community, it seems possible that a group of people could take an intentional non-anthropocentric risk that could serve as a model for the rest of society.

Through this paper, I hope I have provided a point of departure for further exploration into the possibilities of non-anthropocentric intentional community. The promise of intentional community is not only that it provides a place within which to address value issues as well as structural issues, but that there is also room for an "ethic of care", a "spirituality named compassion" and an "ethic of risk." Jubilee, with its vision of social justice and its attempts to see this vision fulfilled, offers hope that a non-anthropocentric intentional community could act on its vision of environmental justice. As Jubilee bases every decision facing the community on its collective Christian value system, a non-anthropocentric intentional community could base every decision on its collective non-anthropocentric value system. Through this process, a community would be actively forming a practical, meaningful non-anthropocentrism that can provide real-world leadership.

A non-anthropocentric intentional community would be a model for environmentally responsible living. Such a community could serve as an inspiration to other intentional communities which might start adopting similar environmental values. A community of non-anthropocentric communities could develop, moving us toward a truly bioregional future. If there are environmental crises in the future, a non-anthropocentric intentional community could serve as a model for an appropriate response. Through example, a community's non-anthropocentrism could spread from the intentional community to the larger society. Or perhaps a non-anthropocentric intentional community would simply be an oasis of sensibility, a place where relationships are valued, interdependence is understood and all life is respected, where an ethic of risk guides actions on our feelings of compassion and care.
Appendix
(intentional communities mentioned in the text)

Amana (various locales) - The vision of the Amana colonists was formed in Germany. The religious separatists began arriving here in 1842 and formed several settlements in the midwest; Amana, in Iowa, was the largest. They were prosperous, with about 1700 people in the early 1900's. In 1932, the community evolved into a corporation. (Diane L. Barthel, Amana: From Pietist Sect to American Community (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1984)).

Harmony (Pennsylvania and Indiana) - Harmony was founded in 1805 by followers of George Rapp as a place in which to await the second coming of the Lord. They started in Pennsylvania at Harmony, moved to Indiana in 1814 to start New Harmony, then moved back to Pennsylvania in 1825 to form a community called Economy. Economically successful, they gradually moved away from communal living and became an economic entity. (Anne Taylor, Visions of Harmony: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Millenarianism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)).

Hutterites (various locales) - The Hutterites are Anabaptist communities that arrived in North America in the late nineteenth century, after severe persecution in Europe. They settled mainly in the high plains areas of the U.S. and Canada. These agrarian communities are characterized by strict rules, especially governing gender roles and division of labor. Hutterites are strongly religious and continue many of their traditions today. (Oved, Two Hundred Years, 247-280).

Kibbutz (Various locales throughout Israel) - The Kibbutzim are Jewish communities governed by direct democracy. Their members "live in a spirit of close community and cooperation." Kibbutzim have been around since 1910. At one point in the 1960's, over 200,000 people lived on Kibbutzim, or about 4% of the population of Israel. At this time, 20% of the people in the Knesset, the legislative body, were living on Kibbutzim. Martin Buber once called the Kibbutz "the only socialist experiment that did not fail." It did not fail, Buber argues, because it has remained dedicated to the ideal of the emergence of a new community and society. (Buber, Paths in Utopia and Israel Sheper, The Kibbutz: An Anthropological Study (Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1983)).

Modern Times (New York) - Josiah Warren's vision was of an anarchist community where there would be "no organizations, no indefinite delegated powers, no constitutions, no laws or by-laws, 'rules' or 'regulations' but such as each individual makes for himself and his own business." At Modern Times on Long Island, he attempted to make his vision a reality. This was one of the longest-lived secular intentional communities of the nineteenth century, lasting 13 years, with 150 people at its
height. (Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992)).


Oneida (Pennsylvania) - John Humphrey Noyes founded Oneida in 1848 and was the spiritual leader of the community. Noyes believed that people have the potential to be morally perfect given the right atmosphere. Life in community could provide a place within which people could be perfect. There were no monogamous relationships. Noyes' idea was that "everyone was wedded to all the others in heart, body, and soul in a complex marriage." Oneida was one of the longest-lived communities in the nineteenth century, finally changing from a community to a corporation in the early 1880's. (Marie Lockwood Carden, *Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969)).

Owenism and Fourierism - Robert Owen and Charles Fourier were the inspiration behind several secular communal attempts in the 1800's. In the early 1800's, Owen's was the most widespread socialist vision. He founded a community at New Harmony after Rapp and his followers moved back to Pennsylvania. Owen's vision was of a secular, rationalist, socialist society. In the 1840's, there was a second wave of utopian socialism inspired by Fourier. Among the Fourierist communities was Brook Farm, a community in Massachusettes made up of intellectuals including Nathaniel Hawthorne. (Oved, *Two Hundred Years*).

Shaker (several settlements scattered across New England) - The Shakers came to America in 1774 with their spiritual leader, Ann Lee. They believed that Christ was manifested in male and female form and that the second coming would be in the form of a woman. They lived a celibate lifestyle. Shaker communities survived the longest of the communities mentioned here. The last of the Shakers died out within the past 25 years. (Oved, *Two Hundred Years*, 39-68).

Spiral Wimmin's Community (Kentucky) - This is a group of four women attempting to live an ecofeminist lifestyle on their 250 acres in the hills of Kentucky. They state, "We recognize that the land is a sacred heritage, belonging to herself - part of the complex web of life in which we play our part harmoniously with the rest of her creatures and plants." (FIC, *The 1990/1991 Directory*, 220).

Zoar (Ohio) - German immigrants whose beliefs closely matched those of George Rapp started a community in Ohio not far from Harmony and Economy in 1817. They were democratic in organization. Women held equal rights and took equal part in governance of community affairs. The community slowly declined after the founder's death in 1853. (Oved, *Two Hundred Years*, 81-87).
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