I, Mark P. Killian, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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Everything in Common: The Strength and Vitality of Two Christian Intentional Communities

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Everything in Common: The Strength and Vitality of Two
Christian Intentional Communities

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ABSTRACT

Although most contemporary religious organizations are experiencing decline in adherence and institutional vitality, Christian Intentional Communities (CICs), a set of Christian organizations in which participants live in close proximity so as to achieve religious values, experience growth. Research using the Fellowship of Intentional Communities’ Online Directory indicates a dramatic increase in the number of CICs that have either been formed or are in formation over the last ten years. Yet researchers have not examined why CICs are growing. Therefore, this research aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of the growth and vitality of CICs. To conduct this exploration I employed a multi-method approach, which included a national survey of contemporary CICs, as well as participant observation and community member interviews in Philadelphia and Berea, two CICs located in a Midwestern City.

Based on the National Survey of Contemporary Christian Intentional Communities, CICs generally align with one of two cultural ideologies: freewill individualism or expressive communalism. These cultural ideologies, and their accompanying behaviors, attract individuals who experience various types of alienation from American social institutions, such as the media, economic culture, political system, and, particular to CICs, religion. Once established, factors, including charismatic influence, worship service cultures, and inter-organizational cultures, strengthen CICs in terms of members’ commitments. However, there are other factors that have a greater effect on members’ commitments in some CICs as opposed to others. For example, in Philadelphia, a freewill individualistic community, I observed the use of ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires, creating a cultural identity that appeared constantly under threat by outside influences. Thus, Philadelphians rallied around their subculture, strengthening
adherence to the community. Furthermore, Philadelphia employed strict theological and behavioral expectations, which, as mediated through commitment mechanisms, demanded that members sacrifice desires, time, energy, and money in order to maintain their membership. Such sacrifices amounted to a substantial personal investment, which was unrecoverable if an individual was to leave Philadelphia. Additionally, although both communities benefited from resource configurations offered in the urban environment, Berea, an expressive communalist community, utilized the religio-cultural ecology of their neighborhood, creating, what I label, a “parish consciousness,” in which members were completely enveloped by a place-based system of thought and action. As a result, Bereans reinforced their commitment to the community by investing their time, energy, money, and desires, particularly through home purchases, to live a life predominately within their urban neighborhood (e.g., their parish).

The results of this research are significant for three reasons: (1) the National Survey of Contemporary CICs provides a much needed update to the body of knowledge surrounding intentional communities; (2) ethnographic findings confirm and/or challenge the ways in which sociologists explain the strength and vitality of religious organizations; and (3) the study’s outcomes offer practical information for the growth of religious organizations.
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PREFACE: WHY THIS DISSERTATION?

Starting in the late 1950s, secularization theorists determined that religious adherence would decline as modern epistemologies flourish (Swatos and Christiano 1999). Although there are religious organizations that have waned in membership, particularly mainline denominations, research has shown that religious adherence in the United States and the organizations that facilitate that adherence have not declined as expected; rather, in some cases, they have experienced tremendous growth and vitality.

I personally witnessed such growth and vitality as a church planter, a term commonly assigned to people who start churches. One church plant, an affiliate of the Vineyard Association (USA), was situated in a suburb of a large Midwestern city. As with many other American suburbs, the plant entered a religious marketplace (Finke and Stark 1989, Hatch 1989) containing multiple churches with similar worship and inter-organizational cultures. Consequently, I was nervous that the plant would not be able to compete with more established congregations for adherents and ultimately fail.

However, on launch Sunday, the first Sunday we met as an official church, 400 people attended and within two years the church plant had more than doubled in size. Given that the average congregation has between 100 and 200 regular Sunday morning attendees, the church plant was a tremendous success.

On the one hand, I attribute this success to the manner in which the church planting team, which consisted of me and two others, engaged the religious marketplace. For example, we hired a part-time worship leader who came from a locally known musical family, supplying us with a central charismatic figure – magnetic, charming, and appealing to audiences.
Additionally, despite conventional wisdom our first full-time hire was not the pastor, rather a worship director who produced a multi-media based worship service targeted toward a white suburbanite audience. In other words, using market oriented terms, we turned our church plant into a religio-cultural good that our attendees chose over the myriad of other options available to them in the religious marketplace.

I believe, however, that the religio-cultural good we offered was amplified by our location, a popular movie theater (rented to us before Sunday matinees) that was situated in a large commercial development with easy access to a busy interstate highway. In this sense, the church plant successfully utilized resources available in, what Ammerman (1997) labels, the “religious ecology.” Building on religious marketplace theories, religious ecologists stress the importance of market resources available to religious organizations in the place they locate. The essence of this argument lies in the notion that religious organizations must extract resources, such as membership, money, legitimacy, and information, from the local environment in order to thrive (McRoberts 2005). For example, viewing a particular demographic as a religious resource, Ammerman (1997) states, “Where there is a pool of white, middle-class, home-owning families with children on which to draw, Mainline [as well as Evangelical] churches are likely to grow, no matter their theological orientation” (p. 5). Adding, “In an urban region, one can choose, for instance, among the “high church” Methodists, the “pro-life” Methodists, the “charismatic” Methodists, and the Methodists with the woman preacher” (Ammerman 1997:35).

Religious ecologists tend to ignore, however, the reasons why the “pro-life” Methodists thrive in comparison to the “high church” Methodists, and why the Methodist church with the
woman preacher is stronger than all other Methodist churches in the region. In other words, although religious organizations utilize resources in the religious ecology, some benefit more from their location than others. My church plant, for example, demonstrated much more vitality than the fifty member Christian Reformed Church located only a quarter of a mile away, causing me to ponder why my church thrived while the Christian Reformed Church lingered despite locating in virtually the same religious ecology.

I believe the answer has to do with the relationship between religio-cultures and the religious ecology, or, more precisely, the ways in which religio-cultures are augmented by particular religious ecologies. In the case of my church plant, Sunday morning suburban church attenders could receive their spiritual fill in a well-produced worship service (much like a well-produced movie), eat lunch at an adjacent restaurant, and then spend the afternoon shopping. In this sense, the plant’s worship service became an anchoring event for a day of conspicuous consumption, illustrating how the culture of our church worked interdependently with the religious ecology of our location to make us strong. Consequently, we did not rely on other conventions thought to produce vitality in religious organizations -- such as strict theological teachings (Kelley 1972) and demographic changes (Hout, Greeley, and Wilde 2001) -- rather our strength was a product of, what I call, the “religio-cultural ecology.”

In order to examine these ideas further I decided to explore the religio-cultural ecologies of two Christian Intentional Communities (CICs), a set of Christian organizations in which members live in close proximity in order to achieve their religious values. I chose to research CICs for three reasons: (1) CICs are growing numerically; (2) since CICs must reside in an area that can house members and provide meeting space for their congregation, location is vitally important;
and (2) because congregants live in close proximity to one another CICs would be more likely to develop a distinct religious culture. Thus, I reasoned that if there is validity to my religio-cultural hypothesis I would find it within the interplay between location and culture as demonstrated by CICs.

Although, the theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the exploration of the religio-cultural ecology, I do not ignore the application of other theoretical propositions that pertain to the strength and vitality of religious organizations. Furthermore, because CICs are intentional communities, I also consider literature that discusses the formation of historic intentional communities and, since many CICs tend to choose urban locations, literature examining the vitality of urban religious organizations. Thus, this research brings together four bodies of literature: (1) intentional community formation; (2) commitment mechanisms of intentional communities; (3) urban religiosity; and (4) strength and vitality of religious organizations.

As I came to discover, the two CICs examined in this dissertation, reflected theoretical propositions from each of these four bodies of literature, at times demonstrating how these theoretical propositions intersect one another. As you will see, I attempt to address each of these bodies in detail, showing their connectedness. Moreover, although I conclude that one community does not utilize the religio-cultural ecology to strengthen members’ commitments, it is evident that the other does, adding to the body of research that addresses why, in an age of secularization, some religious organizations continue to remain strong and thrive.
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Chapter 1: An Introduction

PHILADELPHIA

September 16, 2012 marked a special moment for many people who live in Emeryville\(^1\), a small white, working class, urban neighborhood situated between a wealthy white suburb and a lower income African American community of a large Midwestern city. The celebration spanned two street blocks and encompassed four residences each offering a different food station and guest event. When my family and I arrived there were roughly 100 people mingling between the various residences. We parked on the street and headed over to a food station that offered an assortment of dips, including hummus and homemade salsa, chips in a bowl, and a tray of vegetables. Several unopened jars of salsa, which were made completely from produce grown in the residences’ gardens, sat waiting on the corner of the table. Not far away, in the front lawn of an adjacent residence, another table presented coolers of Tang, Ice Tea, Lemonade and stacks of party sized Dixie cups. Four card tables surrounded by chairs lined the driveway shared by the two residences (Appendix A: Picture 1.1).

Mary, a preschool teacher in her mid-twenties, immediately caught the attention of my three year old son, Calvin, whom she had met at prior events. Calvin, taking Mary’s hand, followed her down the block and across an intersection to another residence that sat on the corner of Maynard Avenue and Crosby Rd. On the front lawn was a Root Beer Float Station, which displayed several two-liters of A&W root beer as well as a giant tub of vanilla ice cream positioned in the center of a cooler filled the ice (Appendix A: Picture 1.2). At the base of the table were two metal tubs filled ice cold IBC root beer. By the time my family caught up with Calvin and Mary, he was already slurping a fresh-made root beer float. Without much self-
restraint, my wife, two year old daughter, and I decided to join them and prepared our own floats. By this time the crowd had grown to about 175 people and somewhat resembled a large family reunion as party-goers greeted one another with hearty hellos and bear hugs. Mary’s attention was taken up by a friend, leaving us with a three year old on a sugar high. Attempting to find a distraction for my kids, I looked across Maynard Avenue and saw Marissa, a four year old girl, playing games in the front yard of another residence. As a family, we went to investigate.

The yard contained games for children with cheap prizes as rewards for victory (Appendix A: Picture 1.3). The first game was a penny toss. A large blue plastic bin filled with water had three recycled sour cream containers floating in it. About two feet away on the sidewalk was a line of tape and directions written on a gold poster board. Next to the directions was a glass jar full of pennies. The directions indicated that children were to stand behind the line and toss the pennies into the floating recycled sour cream bowls. However, none of the children were playing the game correctly. Some, as in the case of Calvin, went to the jar, picked up a handful of pennies, and then dropped them in the floating containers. Others, like my daughter Lydia, splashed their hands in the water causing their clothes to get soaked (Appendix A: Picture 1.4). Marissa, having played with Calvin at other events, enticed him to try a second game. On the sidewalk a little further away from the penny toss was a set of recycled plastic bottles of various shapes and sizes. They were lined up in a triangle like pins at a bowling alley. Two feet away was another line of tape and a large ball. Although there were no written directions, Marissa directed Calvin to stand behind the line and roll the large plastic ball into the empty bottles. He did so several times, never fully knocking all the bottles down. Nevertheless,
Marissa rewarded Calvin for his effort and allowed him to take a small prize from a box located on a table not far from the makeshift bowling alley (Appendix A: Picture 1.5).

However, Calvin’s attention was never fully directed to his prize, instead he eyed the homemade cotton candy which was also offered freely on the table. I gave Calvin a stick of cotton candy and picked up one for me and Lydia to share. While I fed my daughter the tasty treat, Travis approached me and asked if I wanted to be in the cornhole tournament. He pointed to the cornhole court across street, but I politely declined Travis’s offer citing the need to supervise my children. By that time attendance at the celebration had reached its peak at around 200 people (Appendix A: Picture 1.6).

After finishing the cotton candy my wife suggested we get dinner as our children desperately needed some protein to counter their large sugar intake. We walked back to the residence with the drink station. The food, which was to be served in the backyard of the house, was not yet ready. So we mingled, talked with acquaintances, and chased our kids through the various homes which were open for people to walk through.

At about 6:30pm the hosts announced that the food was ready to be served. We stood in line and made our way through the three buffet stations. At one station was a bowl of broccoli salad, several bags of hot dog buns, and two heating trays of hot dogs, Polish Sausage, and Chicken Sausage. A second station was labeled, “Mashed Potato Bar,” and contained a variety of mashed potato dishes. The third station hosted an arrangement of deserts including cherry pies, cookies, breads, Rice Krispie treats, and cakes. All of the food at the celebration was prepared by the people who lived in the hosting residences.
Once we made it through the food line my family sat in a circle on the driveway. Several other groups, each with their own unique style sat around us. There was a group of young hipsters who wore skinny jeans and, if they were female, had bangs squared on their foreheads. Not far away was a group of Thrashers distinguished by their black tee-shirts, multiple tattoos, ear gauges, and chain wallets. Directly around us sat other families with young children who lived in the neighborhood. We allowed our children to play as we got to know one another.

In front of a neighboring garage were several microphones, a drum set, a table for a sound mixer, and several chairs. This was a contrived stage for a neighborhood band that would be playing later in the evening. Although it was close to our children’s bedtime we stayed for three songs: “Space Oddity” by David Bowie, “Babel” by Mumford & Sons, and “The Trumpet Child” by Over-the-Rhine (Appendix A: Picture 1.7). At 7:45 dusk was falling and our children were exhausted, so we packed them into the car and left the event. As we drove away I reflected on the numerous interactions I had with Emeryville residents over the past year; in particular my conversations with Tony, a college dropout in his mid-twenties who struggles with a severe emotional disability. He moved to Emeryville because he thought living with his friends would help him control his disability while allowing him to deepen his spiritual commitments. Over the approximately two years Tony has lived in the neighborhood he has been able to accomplish both. However, although Tony’s story is fortunate, it is not altogether unique when compared to the stories of the other residents who we talked with that evening. Much like Tony, they too moved to Emeryville to achieve physical, emotional, and spiritual fulfillment.

You see, this celebration was not a street festival or a block party; rather it was to mark the fifth anniversary of the formation of Philadelphia, a Christian Intentional Community whose
members live in close proximity to each other in order to achieve a set of values that they deem unachievable in society-at-large. In this case, Philadelphians attempt to live out the values of the early Christian Church as described in Acts of the Apostles 4:32⁴, in which first century Christians are said to have “had everything in common,” implying that they shared all material possessions⁵. In the same way, members of Philadelphia share everything they own including houses, food, clothing, and finances (referred to throughout this dissertation as a “common purse”). Considering the fact that community members surrender their entire salary, financial gifts, and monetary savings to the common purse, one would think that such a set of counter-cultural values would prevent typical Americans from joining this organization. However, starting with four men and one house, Philadelphia has grown to 48 members and 12 houses⁶ in Emeryville (Appendix A: Map 1.1⁷). Thus, the four residences that hosted the celebration are all owned by members of Philadelphia, each of which accommodate four to eight community members, as well as the community’s prayer room, business office, laundry, and common area.

Although you will learn more about Philadelphia in the coming pages, I want to call attention to some of the major themes illustrated in this vignette that will reemerge throughout the rest of the dissertation: The sharing of resources, such the community garden that produced vegetables for the homemade salsa and the collection of recycled materials that were used for children’s games; the utilization of space, as exemplified by the multiple food stations and events at various residences; hospitality, as shown through the open nature of the celebration; and, as demonstrated by Tony’s story, the quest for individual fulfillment.
Approximately six miles to the west of Emeryville is West Sharpsburg, an urban neighborhood that has experienced 40 years of decay after General Motors closed an auto plant in the area. Situated in the heart of West Sharpsburg is Berea, another Christian Intentional Community in which its 40 members live within several blocks of each other and attempt, as they would say, “to do life together” by worshipping, socializing, and even working in the neighborhood (Appendix A: Map 1.2). In the early months of 2011 the members of Berea decided to go through a yearlong process, which I call the “Year of Discernment,” to determine whether or not the community should continue to exist. However, by the time I started ethnographic fieldwork in September of 2011 there was a consensus amongst the members that the community should continue operating, albeit with organizational changes that instituted much needed changes in leadership. Having been delivered through this time of instability, Berea felt comfortable hosting seminars that educate others on the virtues of communal living. The following vignette illustrates my experience at one of these seminars.

The day preceding the start of a large conference on emerging religious practices, which was organized by the regional Episcopalian Diocese, Berea hosted a seminar for conference attendees who were interested in Christian intentional communities. The seminar was to be held at the Spotted Canary Café which is located on the northeastern corner of the intersection between Endicott Drive and Onley Avenue in West Sharpsburg. As I drove through the neighborhood to my destination I noticed a number of houses and commercial businesses that had peeling exterior paint jobs, unkempt lawns, and boarded windows. In contrast, the Spotted Canary was well kept and its deep purple exterior made it stand out in an environment.
dominated by neutral tones. On the northwestern corner of the Endicott/Onley intersection, directly across the street from the café, sits St. Seton, a monumental deconsecrated Catholic church, which, despite its decay, was bought by Berea in 1995. A small piazza extends from the curb to the front steps of the church and contains several outdoor tables and chairs spread unevenly throughout the space. Together, the Spotted Canary, St. Seton, and piazza constitute the social center of Berea where the majority of community meetings and social interactions occur.

I parked my car and walked into the café. There were six tables in a sitting area approximately 20 feet deep and 30 feet wide. A small kitchen dominated by a large professional espresso machine was located opposite the entrance on the far wall. The café was at one point a working coffee shop; however, the inability to cover the operating costs and the lack of willing managers caused it to close. Since that time it serves as a place to host meetings, programs, and seminars like the one I was attending. Present were about 20 people from all over the United States, including Seattle, Portland, and Western Michigan, only 6 or 7 of which were under 40 years old. Except for one African American participant, the majority of attendees were white.

Evan, the former bi-vocational pastor of Berea who recently stepped down from his position, opened the event with a liturgical prayer and a word of encouragement. We were then served a meal prepared by Shawn and Heather, a married couple who, although not official members of Berea, are considered the parish farmers for the community. Combining both their ministry and occupation, Shawn and Heather manage gardens planted in the yards of community members and, with permission from the city, in public parks. They also harvest fruit
from trees that were planted decades prior when the neighborhood was still farmland. The food they harvest is given to Bereans or offered to neighborhood residents in exchange for an apartment and financial support. However, today they were preparing food for the seminar, all of which was harvested in West Sharpsburg. Heather introduced the plates: vegetable kebabs complete with cabbage, tomatoes, onions, and pears picked from the only remaining pear tree in the neighborhood; purslane salad with spinach greens, millet, and an apple pizza for dessert. Heather mentioned that the cabbage looked a little worn because the cabbage worm had nibbled parts of it, but reassured us that it would have no effect on our digestive systems. She also mentioned that millet is a consumable grain used around the world, but in the United States one could typically find it only in the bird seed isle. Shawn explained that purslane is an edible weed that grew accidently in their gardens, but instead of throwing it out they use it for salads. This food seemed quite exotic for a meat-and-potatoes type of guy like me; nonetheless, I found the meal tasty and was appreciative of the dedication that Shawn and Heather put into its preparation.

As attendees were finishing their meals, Shawn led the group in a discussion about twenty-first century food production. Starting with the question, “Where does iceberg lettuce come from,” he illustrated the transnational process to grow, harvest, transport, and consume lettuce. During the conversation that followed, Shawn stressed the negative impact that this process has on labor and the environment. He then turned the discussion toward local food production by asking, “Where did the purslane come from?” Shawn made the point that purslane is grown and harvested in relationship between the land, farmer, and community; arguing that the negative impacts of the production process are minimized due to the visibility
of the process by those who will consume the end product. Shawn then shifted the discussion from food to religion by paralleling the relational aspect of local food production with the relational aspects of religion, stating that God (the farmer) was in relationship with nature (the land) and community (humankind).

After his presentation Shawn introduced Nicholas, a seminary graduate and member of Berea who started a local non-profit organization that serves the needs of West Sharpsburg residents. Much like Shawn, Nicholas shared with the attendees his relational vision of community work, which is the weaving together of church, residence and vocation in one specific location to make that location stronger. He shared that his non-profit organization was birthed out of Berea because the community is structured on a “parish model,” in which, much like historic Catholic parishes, members are expected to reside, work, worship, and recreate in West Sharpsburg. Consequently, Nicholas stressed that community participants are highly discouraged from commuting to Berea, even noting that he advises people who live in the suburbs to attend church in their own neighborhood not in West Sharpsburg. Having established the unique residential expectations of the community, Nicholas turned the program back over to Evan who took us on a tour of the various projects that Berea has sponsored in the neighborhood.

Our first stop was the Priory, which is located on the St. Seton property and once served as a convent for the church’s nuns. Having been restored, it currently operates as an urban retreat and spiritual counseling center (Appendix A: Picture 1.9). We then traveled north a block to Lower Park, a large city park. There we met a member of a Berean Bible Study who explained that her group, under the conviction to do something of value in the neighborhood, sought
permission from the city to renovate the park (Appendix A: Picture 1.10). They drew up plans to update playground equipment, create picnic areas, spaces for Shawn and Heather to garden, as well as make the park handicap accessible. The city happily agreed in principle, but when we visited only the garden and picnic areas were complete; the playground and handicap access were stalled in city administrative processes. The garden, which took up half of an unused tennis court (the other half was still a paved surface), was well kept and stocked with plump vegetables. Wild grapes grew on vines that canvassed the tennis court fence, which Shawn and Heather were going to use to make wine (Appendix A: Picture 1.11)

The picnic area was situated in a shade of large trees and included four octagon shaped picnic tables and several three foot round planters with pansies. However, park visitors turned the planters over to use them as stools; thereby leaving heaps of flowers and potting soil in different parts of the picnic area. During the tour Evan made a point to show how West Sharpsburg had been abandoned by numerous entities creating a depressed economy and aesthetic decay, but that Berea was attempting to redeem the neighborhood by reversing this cycle of abandonment. Thus, he noted the importance of continuing to seek prevention methods for the vandalism that occurred in park; if not to solve the issue at hand then to demonstrate the commitment that Berea has to West Sharpsburg.

This sense of locational commitment was also evident at our next stop, a coffee purchasing collective and training center for local coffee shops. Although the proprietor of the business was a friend, but not a member of the community, the business exemplified the mission of Berea – to create a long-lasting presence in a neighborhood in great need. We were treated to lattes and told about the utility of starting a business in West Sharpsburg. Unfortunately, I had
to leave the tour to attend to other business outside of the community, but returned for a neighborhood dinner on the St. Seton Piazza. As with the party at Philadelphia I brought my family to the meal. There were approximately 50 adults in attendance, most of whom were members of Berea or individuals associated with the community in some manner, but also present were a small minority of neighborhood residents who partook of the food and camaraderie with the rest of us. The meal was served in a pot-luck style in which Bereans supplied various types of dishes for everyone to share including with a large vat of tamales, bought from a Latina immigrant who lived in the neighborhood (Appendix A: Picture 1.12).

Upon our arrival we were greeted by Andrew and Sarah Daniels, a married couple in their late fifties who my wife and I met several years prior. The Daniels have lived in CICs since the early 1970’s when they were participants in the last wave of CIC formation associated with the Jesus Movement; however, despite being older than many others in the community, they found a home as members of Berea. Together we went through the food line and sat down at an empty table enjoying the meal and company. After some time, while my wife continued to catch up with the Daniels and our kids played with the other twenty children who were present, I observed the interactions between Bereans and their neighbors. Although the bohemian clothing style of Bereans contrasted to the well-worn sweatshirts and jeans of the West Sharpsburg residents, there was a conscious effort on part of Bereans to welcome, share food, and build relationships with their neighbors. Unfortunately, my observations were interrupted by a loud shriek and accompanying wail, which I identified as my son’s. Having fallen from a chair to the cement, Calvin bit through his lower lip. I was the first to get to him, but community members were fast behind offering their assistance. One member quickly ran to The Commons,
the community’s communal living residence which was only yards away, and came back with an ice packet. The care and concern shown to my son was generous; however, given the injury, we quickly said good-bye to the Daniels and departed. Calvin settled down as we drove away from West Sharpsburg and I was glad, not only because his crying stopped, but more importantly, because I received a foretaste of life in Berea through my experiences that day.

As with Philadelphia you will learn more about Berea in the upcoming pages, nonetheless I want to highlight the major themes illustrated in this vignette that will resurface as you continue reading: The value placed on being organic, as exemplified by their emphasis on food production processes that are dependent only on the local environment; commitment to place, as demonstrated by the use of a parish model to structure the community; spiritual embodiment, as represented by their religious conviction to improve the physical aesthetics of the city park; and, as witnessed by dinner conversations with their West Sharpsburg neighbors, the emphasis on relationships.

BACK TO THE PARTY

Now that I have introduced Philadelphia and Berea, I’ll leave you with one small vignette to show how the two are linked before continuing with the rest of the dissertation. I was not surprised to see Andrew and Sarah Daniels at Philadelphia’s fifth anniversary party, although it was the first time I saw them interact with Philadelphians. Due to their longevity as communitarians the Daniels have built relationships with various leaders of Christian Intentional Communities around the country; thus, when I saw Steven, who, at 26 years old, is one of the three elders (leaders) of Philadelphia, talking to Andrew I couldn’t help but interrupt
their conversation. I told Steve that he needed to mine Andrew’s experiences in Christian communitarianism, to which he gave a little chuckle and said he would.

Although the conversation between Andrew and Steve seemed to be a trivial, it was symbolically significant. Most intentional communities have a life span of two to four years (Zablocki 1980); thus, to see a forty year communitarian celebrating with one in his fifth year represents a “passing of the guard” from one generation to the next and symbolizes the rebirth of Christian Intentional Communities (CICs). Although most contemporary religious organizations are experiencing decline in attendance, adherence, and institutional vitality (Roozen 2011), CICs have grown over the past decade. An analysis of data taken from the Fellowship of Intentional Communities’ online directory indicates a 70 percent increase in the number of CICs established between 2005 and 2009 compared to CICs established between 2000 and 2004 (FIC). Furthermore, there was a 291 percent increase in the number of CICs in- formation between 2005 and 2009 compared to CICs in-formation between 2000 and 2004. Given these findings Berea and Philadelphia represent examples of a wave of CIC formation and establishment.

At Philadelphia’s fifth anniversary party I examined a large rock placed in the front yard of the house which was renovated by the community to serve as their central meeting space and community office. Inscribed on the rock were several verses taken from Psalm 145 (Appendix A: Picture 1.13),

“The Lord is trustworthy in all He promises.

And faithful in all He does.

The Lord upholds all who fall.
And lifts up all who are bowed down.

Thank you Lord for 5 years of Your faithfulness.”

Although, to me, the monument seemed awkward in contrast to much smaller ornaments and lawn gnomes that populate front yards in Emeryville, it nonetheless is an apt testament to the strength and vitality of Philadelphia, as well as to Berea, and the numerous other CICs emerging on the American religious landscape.
Chapter 2: What are CICs and Why are They Important?

It is important to gain an understanding of what separates Philadelphia and Berea from other religious organizations as well as their value for academic research. In technical terms an intentional community can be defined as a group of three or more individuals, some of whom are unrelated by blood or marriage, who live in a single household or interrelated set of households, and engage in attempts at value achievement not available in society-at-large (Hall 1978, 1988). The value of this definition is found in the last phrase, “engage in attempts at value achievement not available in society-at-large”, as it is necessary to separate cohabitating individuals from intentional communities. For example, several college roommates, assuming they are unrelated through blood ties, who cohabitate for the purpose of thrifty living technically live intentionally in community. However, thrifty living is a value present in society-at-large; thus, cohabitating college roommates are not considered an intentional community. In this manner, careful attention has to be given to what defines “value achievements”. In some cases ‘value achievements’ could be based on political philosophy, alternative family arrangements, vegetarianism, feminism, as well as theology (Bader et al. 2006). Accordingly, Christian Intentional Communities (CICs) focus explicitly on Christian values that are not commonly accepted in the mainstream culture. Thus, for the sake of clarification, CICs in this research will be defined as: A group of three or more individuals, some of whom are unrelated by blood or marriage, who live in a single household or interrelated set of households, and attempt to engage in orthodox Christian theological values not available in society-at-large nor within long-established institutionalized traditions.
Two phrases in this definition need further explanation. The first phrase is “orthodox Christian theological values,” which exclude cults from this research. Although many operate as intentional communities, cults lack ties with other established religious bodies due to their unorthodox theological beliefs and religious practices (Stark and Bainbridge 1985). In this sense it is hard to call a cult “Christian” if their religious values are deviant enough to be considered, broadly speaking, outside of Christian theological traditions and have no connection to established Christian organizations. I should note here that both Philadelphia and Berea ascribe to different Christian theologies, but these theologies are well within orthodox Christian traditions\(^2\). Furthermore, both communities are connected to large Christian bodies. Philadelphia has a strong relationship with a local evangelical church and is associated with the International House of Prayer (IHOP)\(^3\), a large Charismatic association of churches centered in Kansas City. In contrast, Berea is an active participant in the Vineyard Association, a neo-charismatic denomination that emerged from the Calvary Chapel movement of the 1960s (Jackson 1999)\(^4\).

The second phrase that needs explanation is “nor within long-established institutionalized tradition,” which excludes from this analysis monastic orders (Goffman 1961), and centuries old religious communities, such as the Amish (Nolt 1992), and Hutterites (Sutton 2009). Long-established CICs are institutionalized to the point where they have created their own social structures and operate only within those structures. In other words, for the Amish, the Hutterites, and Monastic orders, ‘society-at-large’ is the very society in which they live. This is not to say that organized forms of intentional communities, such as Catholic Worker and Catholic Charismatic Communities (Duin 2009), are included in this group; rather just those
communities that are so old and well established they have their own social world. Thus, although they started out in much the same way as Berea and Philadelphia, over centuries the institutionalization of these long-established communities demand that they be placed in a separate category and, therefore, do not fall under the definition of CICs used in this study.

Based on this definition Philadelphia and Berea are representative of contemporary CICs located throughout the United States, despite maintaining different theological traditions within Christianity. On the one hand, Berea practices expressive communalism, a set of Christian rituals based on collective ideologies rather than individual efforts. Christians who practice expressive communalism do not seek individual fulfillment, rather they embody their spiritual commitment publicly in the larger community through various types of service activities and cultural engagements (Flory and Miller 2008). As illustrated in the dissertation’s introduction, this practice is evident in the way that Berea expresses their faith through various projects in West Sharpsburg. On the other hand, Philadelphia practices freewill individualism, a set of religious rituals that stresses individual effort as the basis for spiritual growth and civic engagement (Emerson and Smith, 2000). Accordingly, as illustrated by Tony’s story in the previous chapter, Philadelphians seek individual fulfillment but view communal living as a vehicle to achieve such fulfillment.

The difference between Berea and Philadelphia is also exemplified in the religious vows members take in one community as opposed to the other. Although only a small minority of members in each community commit to vows, members of Berea made vows of stability, pledging never to leave West Sharpsburg no matter how deleterious an environment it becomes; whereas members of Philadelphia made vows of chastity, pledging to never marry
nor experience sexual relations⁶. In the case of Berea, the vow of stability is a commitment made by individuals to prioritize residency in their local urban neighborhood over possibly more comfortable living arrangements in safer suburban neighborhoods. Accordingly, the vow of stability is framed as a public commitment, driven by convictions of faith, to provide financial, social, and emotional resources to Berea’s neighbors. In the case of Philadelphia, the vow of chastity is a commitment made by individuals who view marriage and sexuality as a distraction from their personal spiritual growth. Hence, a pledge to chaste living is framed as a private commitment, driven by convictions of faith, to protect individuals from perceived metaphysical harm. In either case, the communities of Berea and Philadelphia help facilitate these vows by espousing a theology based in expressive communalism or freewill individualism respectively.

Berea and Philadelphia are also representative of CICs nationally because they chose to locate in urban as opposed to suburban or rural environments. Data collected from a national survey of CICs conducted in this study⁷ reveals that 59 percent of all established CICs exist in urban areas; whereas 22 and 20 percent exist in suburban and rural areas respectively. In contrast, 18 percent of Ecovillages, the only type of intentional community more numerous than CICs, reside in urban areas while 72 and 9 percent reside in rural and suburban areas respectively (Appendix A: Table 2.1)⁸. This pattern changes slightly if we examine only CICs established after 2004. As shown in Table 2.2 (Appendix A), 50 percent of all CICs established after 2004 chose to reside in urban environments; whereas 31 and 19 percent chose to reside in suburban and rural areas respectively. These results indicate that, like Berea and Philadelphia, CICs are increasingly likely to locate in urban areas, particularly when compared to other types of intentional communities.
Although striking, the data reported above are, nonetheless, solely descriptive and therefore does not explain why these patterns are emerging or how they are lived. We know very little about why individuals join CICs, how CICs produce member commitment, why they choose residences in urban areas, and, primarily, why CICs are growing numerically. Thus, the specific aim of this research is to conduct an in-depth exploration of CICs that the following questions:

1. Why do people join CICs?
2. How do CICs keep members committed to the community?
3. Why do these communities, more often than not, choose to reside in urban neighborhoods?
4. Why are CICs growing numerically?

This work is significant for several reasons. First, the last substantial ethnographic and quantitative research on CICs was published in 1971 and 1980 respectively (Zablocki 1971; 1980). Although there have been examinations of intentional communities between 1980 and the present, most of this research has either been a critique of Rosabeth Kanter’s (1972) work on commitment mechanisms in intentional communities (Hall 1988), social psychological aspects of intentional communities (Aidala 1983; Bradley 1987; Carlton-Ford 1992; Latkin 1990; Sundberg et al. 1990; Latkin et al. 1994), or the stabilizing effect of general religious behaviors in intentional communities (Bader, Mencken, and Parker 2006; Latkin et al. 1993; Vaisey 2007). Thus, my research provides a much needed update and refinement to this body of knowledge.

Second, this work builds on the prior theories of urban religiosity by illustrating how religious organizations can thrive in urban environments. Most theoretical work concerning
urban religiosity developed out of secularization theses (Wirth 1938; Lenski 1963; Demerath and Williams 1992), which argue that that religious adherence declines as modern epistemologies flourish (Swatos and Christiano 1999). However, more recent research has challenged this perspective by demonstrating that religious practices and expressions are still vibrant in cities, contrary the postulates of secularization theorists (Fischer 1975a, 1975b, 1982, 1992, 1995; Chalfant and Heller 1991; Rabinowitz, Kim, and Lazerwitz 1992; McRoberts 2005; Williams 2006). Yet, none of this research describes the ways in which religious organizations grow numerically and create commitment to values that contrast society-at-large while living in an urban environment. My research addresses this gap in research by attempting to explain why CICs thrive in cities.

Third, my study provides valuable information for congregations as they decide how to adapt to changing resource configurations in the neighborhoods where they locate. As noted earlier, very few religious organizations are experiencing growth and vitality, yet CICs are. Hence, religious institutions that have declining attendance and member commitment may be interested in the results of my research as it will generate information that can be applied to strategies for organizational growth and vitality.

The rest of this chapter is organized in three sections. The first provides a theoretical background concerning four bodies of knowledge related to the research questions stated above: (1) Formation of intentional communities; (2) The strength and vitality of religious organizations; (3) member commitment in intentional communities; and (3) urban religiosity. The second section explains the methodology I employ in this research and, in the third section, I provide a brief description of each chapter contained in this dissertation.
THE CONFLUENCE OF FOUR BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE

This study incorporates four bodies of knowledge. Although I expand on these bodies of knowledge in various chapters throughout the rest of this dissertation, in this section I provide a brief introduction to each literature in order to supply a theoretical backdrop to this research.

Formation of Intentional Communities

The most cited researcher in this discussion is sociologist, Benjamin Zablocki, who concludes that there are two reasons for the emergence of intentional communities: Alienation and Charisma (1980). Both are analyzed in relation to CICs following the underlined headings.

Alienation. Zablocki contends that both ideological and personal alienation develops in a society with a perceived inability to make collective decisions (Zablocki 1980) and that alienated individuals are attracted to communitarianism because it is a form of social organization whose major locus of action tends to be the consensus seeking process (Zablocki 1980:2). Studying eight types of intentional communities Zablocki demonstrates that in five of the types (Eastern Spiritual communities, Christian communities, psychological communities, rehabilitative communities, and political communities) more than 75 percent of community members agree on religious and political issues (Zablocki 1980). Given this finding, the process of intentional community formation occurs when individuals who feel alienated from society form like-minded groups and decide to support their ideological or personal convictions by living in close proximity to one another (Aidala 1983). Thus, for some individuals the reason for joining an intentional community can be traced to the breakdown of the decision-making process in larger scale collectivities, such as government or religious institutions, under the strain of rapidly multiplying choice alternatives (Zablocki 1980). Consequently, the growth of CICs may be
directly related to the measure of alienation individuals feel in relation to the institutions with which they interact.

_Charisma._ Charisma is another factor that could cause intentional communities to emerge. Zablocki claims that when alienated individuals gather together to form an intentional community they first develop a “communion” relationship in which participants invest their financial, social, and human resources for the benefit of other participants (Zablocki 1971, 1980). However, communion relationships are unstable as participants’ investments are unequal, creating tension and resentment in the community between members who invest more of themselves compared to those that do not. Such inequality, if unresolved, could potentially cause the dissolution of the community. Therefore, as Zablocki (1980) argues, groups in communion relationships often institute authority structures that produce equity and stability in the community. These authority structures tend to be charismatic in that they reflect a system of shared beliefs, typically of a supernatural nature (Weber [1922] 1946), which causes members to perceive physical, spiritual, even psychological benefits for adhering to the charisma of the leadership; consequently, providing a justification for their investment in the community. Accordingly, Carlton-Ford (1992; 1993) finds that participants in communes with charismatic leaders, a small membership, and few rituals report high levels of self-esteem, indicating that community members may increase their allegiance to charismatic authority as they have a greater sense of their own worth. Thus, intentional communities may institute charismatic authority in order to produce group stability, justify members’ commitments, and increase the self-esteem of individuals who experience some form of alienation.
The Strength and Vitality of Religious Organizations

The “strength and vitality” debate in the sociology of religion centers on explanations for why some religious organizations grow in terms of church membership and individual commitment to the organization’s mission while others do not⁹. There are four general approaches to understanding this question: strictness theory, religious ecology theory, cultural theories, and demographic perspectives. Below I provide a summary of each approach and propose ways in which they could independently and interdependently relate to the growth of CICs.

Strictness theory. Originally espoused by Kelley (1972), the main argument of strictness theory is that social strength and social leniency do not go together, such that religious communities that are lenient, in terms of ideology and behavior, will gradually become weaker, while communities that are strict will continue to grow stronger. Kelley (1972:95) succinctly sums up his theory as, “The stricter, the stronger.” Iannaccone, Olson, and Stark (1995) amend the strictness thesis by incorporating elements of rational choice theory. They argue that strictness increases member’s commitment to a religious organization, which in turn produces a perceived value amongst parishioners as well as increased recruiting activities, consequently resulting in growth. Thus, if members of CICs subordinate their will to the community’s theological and communal beliefs they increase their perceived value of the CIC which, in turn, results in evangelistic efforts and numeric growth. In other words, strict theological and communal beliefs cause members to feel as though they are part of something valuable that ought to be shared with other individuals; hence, the recruitment of new members.

Religious Ecology theory. Religious ecologists build their argument on religious marketplace theories (Finke and Stark 1989, Hatch 1989). These theories, generally, argue that religious
pluralism has created a religious market where some religious organizations succeed and others suffer. However, in a break from religious marketplace theories, religious ecologists stress the importance of market resources available to religious organizations in the places they locate. The essence of the argument lies in the notion that, in order to thrive, churches must extract resources, such as members, money, legitimacy and information, from the local environment (McRoberts 2005; Ammerman 1997). Thus, CICs may have adopted an organizational model that attracts people, money, and social capital from the local environment causing their growth.

However, in her study of religious change in suburban Atlanta, Eiesland (2000) refines Ammerman’s work by employing an ecological metaphor adapted from Hannan and Freeman (1977): like biological species, organizations do not simply adapt to changes in the environment as though they are isolated organisms, instead organizations respond in ways that highlight their interdependence. Accordingly, Eiesland argues that religious organizations do not necessarily compete for resources, but grow in strength and vitality when they can share resources within the religious ecology. Therefore, CICs may operate in local organizational exchange networks that promote the sharing of members, financial resources and social capital; thereby causing their growth.

**Cultural theories.** In response to the previously stated rational-choice oriented theories, several studies developed that specifically examined church cultures as an explanation for religious strength and vitality. Although there is no one specific study that exemplifies the cultural perspective of religious strength, there are three variations of cultural studies which give primacy to religious culture rather than material resources as the source of institutional
vitality. However, each of these variations theoretically pulls from Geertz who promoted the cultural dimension of religious analysis. Geertz (1973a) defines culture as,

>a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (P. 89).

When cultural symbols achieve a level of sacredness, the symbols function to synthesize a group’s ethos, which are the evaluative elements of a moral culture, such as the group’s tone, character, quality of life and aesthetic style (Geertz 1973a). Sacred symbols are religious symbols and form congruence between a particular style of life and a specific metaphysic. The metaphysical attachment to a particular lifestyle lends the lifestyle legitimacy and vice versa (Geertz 1973a). Thus, Geertz (1973a) defines religion as,

>a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (P. 90).

Given Geertz’s understanding of religion, these three variations examine (1) congregational interpersonal culture (Becker 1999); (2) church service cultural repertoires (Chaves 2000); and (3) macro-level cultural distinctions between religious orientations, particularly Evangelicalism, Fundamentalism, Mainline-liberal Protestantism and Catholicism (Smith et al.1998). Although the variations of the cultural approach are broad in that they encompass organizational culture as well as cultures of sub-populations, when applied to CICs the basis of the argument remains consistent – the strength and vitality of a CIC is a product of its culture.

*Demographic perspectives.* However, researchers unsatisfied with the three previously stated approaches began employing demographic tools to explain why some religious
organization grow while others decline. This literature is exemplified by Hout, Greeley, and Wilde (2001) who explain the strength of conservative Protestant denominations using the demographic imperative, which states that, in a population made up of two groups, the one with the higher rate of natural increase will increase its proportion of the population at the expense of the group with the lower rate of natural increase. They claim that, when examining the entire Protestant population, conservative denominations grow at the expense of mainline denominations because they have higher rates of fertility (Roof and McKinney 1987, Wuthnow 1993), and because members of conservative denominations switch less to mainline denominations than vice versa (Hout et al. 2001). Thus, under the demographic perspective, strength and vitality are simply products of higher natural growth and switching rates within denominations. Accordingly, CICs may be experiencing growth because members who were born into CICs are now branching off to start their own communities, which, if accurate, may mean that CICs are an organizational continuation of already existing communities across successive generations.

*Interdependence of the approaches.* Most likely these four approaches explain the strength and vitality of CICs in one way or another; thus, a challenge for this research is to determine the extent to which these approaches apply. Even more challenging, however, is the examination of how these approaches possibly interact with one another to produce strength and vitality in CICs. In other words, it may be that these approaches are not independent from one another; rather their effect may be a product of their interdependence. For example, as some researchers have noted, organizational vitality may increase when the cultural conventions of CICs are enabled in particular religious ecologies (Davie 1990; Chaves 2004; Cimino 2012). If this
is the case, then the effect of organizational culture and religious ecology work in relation to the other, not exclusively as previous literatures have indicated. Accordingly, this research considers the ways in which these approaches relate to other theoretical perspectives concerning intentional communities, such as the literature on alienation and charisma already described as well as member commitment summarized in the next section.

**Commitment to Intentional Communities**

As noted in the first chapter, CICs can promote behaviors that are highly counter-cultural, such as mandating that members surrender all personal wealth and income to a common purse, yet individuals still commit themselves to the community. Given this phenomenon, previous research has developed an understanding of how intentional communities maintain member commitment while espousing values contrary to mainstream society. The defining work in this body of knowledge is Kanter’s argument (Kanter 1968; 1972) that intentional communities can increase member commitment when community participants feel as though their material and social needs are met by the social organization of the community. To do this, however, communities must employ commitment mechanisms that influence participants’ perceptions of the community. Kanter argues that these commitment mechanisms are employed as a “social management of experience” (Kanter 1968: 501) and ultimately could be manipulated to keep participants committed to the values and mission of the community. Thus, CICs possibly employ commitment mechanisms that produce participant commitment and, in turn, vitality in the community.

However, Kanter’s thesis is not without critique. Hall (1988) notes that the communities with a high degree of ethnic homogeneity, a defined spiritual hierarchy, and confession rituals
experience greater social cohesion between members. Accordingly, revisiting Kanter’s original research, Hall discovered that ethnic homogeneity, spiritual hierarchy, and confession rituals accounted for 67% of variance between successful and unsuccessful communal groups. Given this finding, CICs may be growing because they are ethnically homogeneous, have a defined spiritual hierarchy, and/or engage in confession rituals.

**Urban Religiosity**

Historically, the city has been perceived as “godless;” a perception driven by theorists who hypothesize that the secularization and segmentalization of life in cities reduces religiosity (Lenski 1963). However, in reaction to this perspective, Claude Fischer argues that religious behavior persists in urban areas, albeit in a different form when compared to religious behavior of nonurban areas. Based on his subcultural theory of urbanism, Fischer contends that urbanism strengthens religious involvement particularly for minority religions and for individuals to whom religion is important (Fischer 1995). He demonstrates that Catholics, religious non-attenders, and individuals who say religion is most important to them all named more co-religionists if they lived in urban communities as compared to non-urban communities (Fischer 1982). In other words, urban residence does not reduce the involvement of individuals in religious subcultures, and in some cases, actually facilitates communal religious ties.

Therefore, urban areas will support communal affiliation with co-religionists while undermining conventional religious doctrine and practice (Fischer 1995). Consequently, co-religionists can maintain their subcultural identity while, at the same time, constantly interacting with the religious “other” (Williams 2006), constituting a religious heterogeneity unmatched in non-urban areas. As a result of this dynamic Williams concludes, “Thus, the
defining characteristic of urban religion may be its necessary pluralism, fostered within the conditions of social and religious diversity” (2006: 32). Hence, CICs may be a manifestation of urban religious behaviors – they find greater acceptance in the city as a religious “other” while simultaneously facilitating communal religious ties.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: MULTI-SITE ETHNOGRAPHY AND “FOLLOWING THE CONCEPT”
Considering that research on CICs encompasses four bodies of knowledge careful attention had to be given to the way in which this study would be performed. Originally I envisioned this research along the lines of Zablocki’s Urban Communes study (1980) – a broad based survey of CICs throughout the United States. A survey of this magnitude would have provided excellent descriptive data on CICs and could have been arranged to answer the research questions posed in this study. However, a survey of this type would not be sufficient as the sole method of analysis for two reasons.

The first has to do with level of analysis. This study poses questions that span two levels of analysis. On the one hand there are questions, such as, “Why did your community locate in an urban neighborhood?” that could be answered by a single key informant who has the authority to speak for the entire community. Data collected about the community as a whole exists on an organizational level of analysis. On the other hand, there are questions, such as “Why did you join a CIC?” that are best examined on an individual level of analysis as each member of the community has his or her own unique story pertaining to why they joined. Unfortunately, a lack of funding prohibited extensive travel to CICs across the country as a national survey would require; thus, I needed to employ other methods to capture individual data. This problem was
resolved by incorporating member interviews from two CICs, which provided me a platform for
an individual level of analysis.

Second, some of the answers provided in a broad based survey need to be triangulated. For
example, in my interview if I were to ask an individual member, “Why do you think your
community is growing?” he or she could supply the answer, “Because God has blessed us.”
Although such an answer is phenomenologically relevant, it is epistemologically problematic as
there is no empirically derived theory describing what is and is not divinely blessed. Therefore,
in order to make sure that religious idioms do not obscure concrete realities, I expanded my
methodology beyond a broad-based survey and member interviews to include multi-sited
ethnography as well as a secondary analysis of neighborhood statistics.

Given this expansion I developed a three phase research process, described in more detail
below.

Phase I: National Survey

The first phase was an 82 question survey completed by key informants from 51 CICs. Since
there is not an umbrella organization for CICs I pieced together a calling list from multiple
sources including the Online Directory of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (2010), the
Online directory for the Community of Communities (2010), and internet searches for unlisted
communities. In total the calling list contains 207 CICs that were in operation at some point
between August and December 2011. Thus, the survey captured about 25% of identified CICs
operating during the late summer and fall of 2011. Compared to the other CICs on the calling
list, the 51 surveyed are representative of the geographic distribution of communities across
the United States, which includes concentrations in the industrial Midwest, the New York metro
area, the Philadelphia metro area, the West Coast, and southeast Appalachia. Although open-ended questions were frequently asked, the questions on the survey were preset and covered eight topics: Community history, neighborhood characteristics, communal behaviors, communal beliefs, demographic characteristics, as well as power, family, and economic structures. Key informants were participants in the community who were either in a leadership position\(^{13}\) or had the authority to speak on behalf of their community\(^{14}\). The data collected through this survey provides an up-to-date general context for understanding the nature of CICs\(^{15}\).

**Phase II: Multi-sited Ethnography**

For the second phase of the study I conducted a multi-site ethnography by participating in the daily operations of Philadelphia and Berea and interviewed 20 members of each community, totaling 40 interviews. Unlike previous ethnographic work on CICs, such as Zablocki’s *Joyful Community* (1971), that takes a traditional narrowly focused single site approach, multi-sited ethnography “moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space” (Marcus 1995:96). This methodology is derived from anthropological research on macrotheoretical concepts that cannot be adequately examined at a single site. Hannerz (2003) summarized multi-sited ethnography as, “being there...and there...and there!” where at each site, each “there,” the researcher laces a connection, a narrative, or an association together. Marcus (1995) notes,

Multsi-ted research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or
He frames these chains, or paths, across sites under the title of “following,” such as “Follow the People” where migration researchers literally track the movements of a particular group of individuals over multiple locations under the guidance of a theoretical theme (1995). Nadai and Maeder (2005) adapt multi-sited ethnography to sociological research by stating that, in sociological research, the object of the study does not necessarily have to be a single field that includes both people and their culture, rather some theoretical concept that is composed of a collection of cultural practices found in different yet complexly connected sites. Thus, according to this adaptation, I employed multi-sited ethnography to “follow the concept,” Christian communitarianism – which is a set of religio-cultural practices that, although defined by space, can be traced across multiple spaces.

The major critique of multi-sited ethnography is the loss of detail that accompanies doing research, often simultaneously, at different locations (Nadai and Maeder 2005). According to these critics, multi-site ethnographers cannot establish deep descriptions of life in the field and therefore are unable to provide a “thick description” of their object of study. In the spirit of Geertz, multi-sited ethnographers do not “explicate explications” nor determine what “winks upon winks upon winks” means contextually in their field (1973b). Although these critiques are warranted they make two assumptions that multi-site ethnographers repudiate.

First, they assume that the object of study is the field, the people, the organization, that requires an intensely-focused attention. Multi-site ethnographers view the object of study not as the field, rather the important social phenomena that occur in the field, or fields. Accordingly, multi-site ethnographers need to analyze, understand, and describe the specifics
of a given field as long as it contributes to an adequate comprehension of the phenomena under scrutiny (Nadai and Maeder 2005). Thus, in my case, thick description is only needed if it adds to the understanding of Christian communitarianism. For example, I do not need to know what types of eating utensils members of CICs use, but, as evident in the vignettes in chapter 1, I need to know when they eat, who is invited to eat with them, the behaviors associated in serving food, what type of food they serve, and whether food becomes an organizing symbol for the community, as the examination of these phenomena helps us understand life in a CIC.

Second, critics of multi-sited ethnography assume that ethnography is rigidly defined by the number of years a researcher spends in the field and the amount of infiltration that a researcher is able to accomplish. In this case, William Whyte’s Street Corner Society ([1943] 1993) is held as the archetype of sociological ethnography because Whyte spent three years living in Cornerville and successfully infiltrated the social system of young men in the area. However, we often miss the fact that Whyte’s tenure in Cornerville was split between two different populations – the Nortons (College Boys) and the Italian Community Club (Corner Boys). Although Whyte was physically in a single site, he ultimately examined two different fields, which meant that his focus was never truly singular in the first place. Using an example when his two groups were in the same physical location, Whyte (1993 [1943]) remarks,

If the researcher is trying to fit into more than one group, his field work becomes more complicated. There may be times when the groups come into conflict with each other, and he will be expected to take a stand. There was a time in the spring of 1937 when the boys arranged a bowling match between the Nortons and the Italian Community Club. Doc [Whyte’s key informant] bowled for the Nortons of course. Fortunately, my bowling at this time had not advanced to a point where I was in demand for either team, and I was able to sit on the sidelines. From there I tried to applaud impartially the good shots of both teams, although I am afraid it was evident that I was getting more enthusiasm into my cheers for the Nortons (P. 306)
The point of mentioning Whyte’s research is to show that traditional single-site ethnography is much more fluid than some ethnographers claim. As a multi-site ethnographer I view participant observation on a continuum. On one end is a participant observer who is fully immersed in the field by achieving full membership status. On the opposite end, is an observer participant who clearly states to members in the field that he or she is present for the sole purpose of observation. In the middle are active participants, who assume functional roles in the field yet never obtain complete membership, and peripheral participants, who exist on the edges of a field due to methodological limitations, which can be self-imposed, such as time or financial allowances for research endeavors, or situationally imposed, such as a researcher’s obligation not to participate in felony crimes (Singleton and Straits 2005).

Philadelphia and Berea were chosen because they best represent two types of communities, which I label, “freewill individualistic” and “expressive,” analyzed in the results of the national survey of CICs17. Before discussing my level of involvement in Philadelphia and Berea I should note that I gained entry to the communities through various personal relationships. In the case of Philadelphia, I acquired access through a former student, Timothy, who is a founding member of the community. In the case of Berea, I obtained access through Sarah Daniels, introduced in Chapter 1, who is my wife’s message therapist. Prior to entering the communities I obtained written permission from both elderships, the decision-making body of each community, and kept them updated on my research during the eleven months I was in the field. Upon starting this phase of research I experienced minimal language, cultural, and idiomatic barriers. Besides fitting the demographic profile of both communities – white, middle class, and educated– I have 20 years’ experience in evangelical culture and therefore could
speak with evangelical idioms as well as follow expected evangelical behaviors, such as praying out loud, taking Eucharist\textsuperscript{18}, and referencing scripture when appropriate.

In both communities I situated myself as an active member; never fully immersed in the life of the community, yet never existing on the communities’ periphery. For eleven months I participated in the weekly events of both communities\textsuperscript{19}. Although I was never a complete participant who lived in the communities, signed community covenants, or took on leadership roles\textsuperscript{20}, I did regularly attend religious services and community events, as well as participate in several community administrative meetings. I also volunteered in several contexts, including praying in the prayer room at Philadelphia and aiding the toddler Sunday school teacher at Berea.

Several experiences illustrate the depth of my participation in the communities. In December I was invited to go with the Philadelphia community on their fourth annual Christmas tree outing. This is a big event in the community as anyone who is not working on that particular day is expected to participate. The community ate an early breakfast and then I joined them, caravanning 45 minutes to a rural tree farm. When we arrived the group milled around a large barn that marked the public entrance to the tree farm. Homemade Rice Krispie Treats and popcorn balls, baked by some of the women in the community, were passed around. Including myself there were 42 participants who split up into housing groups to find, in the rows of Balsam Firs and Frasers, a tree that everyone in their house could agree on. I attached myself to the guys in a house named The Crosstrainer, and followed them as they sought their perfect tree. They took some time deciding between several trees, but eventually decided on the one they wanted – small yet filled in. Several of the house members sawed the trunk of the
tree until it was fully separate from its base and then transported it back to the barn that marked the entrance. Some of the other community houses were having their trees wrapped and tied to the roofs of their vehicles. As a service to patrons, the farm operators took photos of the trees next to their owners and then immediately printed the photograph on a portable digital printer. So, once all of the community members were present the farm operators organized everyone together for a picture. Community members were positioned in three rows; one row kneeling on the ground, another sitting on a hay cart, and a third row standing on the hay chart. Two unwrapped trees were placed in the photograph as accents. Everyone from the community was in the picture; I, however, was not, instead I stood off to the side of the photographer, alone. This event was definitely isolating and, despite being around the community for several months, reminded me of my place as an active participant, yet not a complete member.

Several months later I arrived at Philadelphia for their Thursday night Bible Study, a time they refer to as “Group.” As I walked up to their meeting place, aptly entitled “119,” which is taken from the street address of residence where they meet, Cindy shouted to me, “I was just thinking of you yesterday and wondered how you were doing.” I answered her kindly and let her know that I appreciated her comment. In this case, Cindy’s greeting indicated that I was not just a peripheral participant, rather a person whose absence was noticed. This acceptance stands in contrast to the isolation I felt on the tree farm. Taken together, these two experiences demonstrate that during intimate communal events, such as an annual tradition like Christmas tree cutting, I was not completely integrated in the life of the community; yet, for events that were open to the public, such as Group, I was an anticipated active participant.
This is also true for Berea, where I was never asked to fulfill roles traditionally held by community members, such as reading scripture or serving Eucharist during church services. Nonetheless, I attended church regularly, volunteered as an aid in the toddler Sunday school, served food at a neighborhood luncheon, and helped on a community workday. However, as opposed to Philadelphia, my active participation in Berea was seen as a movement towards complete membership; consequently, although Bereans knew I was doing research, some confessed their sadness when they found out that I would not be joining the community. These confessions illustrate that I was not perceived as a peripheral participant lingering around the edges of the community, rather someone whose active participation could have led to complete membership, yet never did.

Two social barriers that needed to be carefully negotiated were age, in the case of Philadelphia, and relational embeddedness in the case of Berea. When I entered Philadelphia the median age was approximately 25 and most members were relationally single. I, on the other hand, was 34 and married with two children. Consequently, Philadelphians were cautious of my presence as they were not sure why an older, married man (whose spouse was rarely with him) would come to community events. I felt the age difference was especially awkward for Philadelphian women who may have questioned my relational intentions and therefore avoided conversations with me. My response to this barrier was not to act younger or hide my wedding ring; rather I brought my children, ages 24 and 12 months, into the field with me and presented myself as a dedicated father. As with other ethnographers who entered into research with their children (Cassell 1987), my children became “little wedges” (Wylie 1987) that provided natural entrée into community life and made conversing with female community
members much easier (as exemplified by Mary and Calvin’s interaction noted in the introduction to this chapter). Phrases such as, “How old are they?” “What are their names?” “They are so cute,” became starting points for conversations, even when my kids were not physically present. However, when present in the community my children acted as typical toddlers, curious about the world around them and in need of constant supervision, which, although at times prevented me from fully participating in community events, also reduced the community member’s anxiety over my participation.

I brought my children to Berea for a different reason. Unlike Philadelphia, thirty-something families who have lived together for multiple years constitute a large portion of the Berean membership; thus, because I was not embedded in these long-standing relationships my children were given less attention than the other toddlers in the community. However, bringing children to Berea permitted me to partake in discussions and services vital to the operation of the community. For example, I volunteered as a teacher’s aide for the toddler’s Sunday school class which my children attended. This service allowed me to meet other community members, but more importantly, situated me as an active participant in a dialogue concerning parenting and child-rearing, two issues intimately tied to community membership. Thus, I was welcomed at community meetings to discuss strategies for children in the church service and, at one point, was even asked to share my impressions on this topic as a “regular visitor”. Compared to singles who attended Berean church services and events, I do not believe I would have embedded myself in the community as quickly as I did without the presence of my children. Additionally, I should note that, although not acting as a fellow researcher, my wife attended a mother’s discussion group hosted by Berea and maintained previously established relationships
with Bereans, such as Sarah Daniels, during the eleven months I participated in the life of the community.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 members from each community (40 interviews total). The interview included pre-determined questions pertaining to theoretical explanations for CIC growth, member commitment, and location choice. Although synonymous, I use the term “consultant” instead of “interviewee” throughout this dissertation (Bielo 2011). In my opinion, the term “interviewee” infers a question-answer dialogue, instead of conversation between me and those who, literally, consulted me on life in a CIC. Semi-structured interviews are shaped much like conversations in that, although some questions are pre-determined, the flow of the questions was not fixed and pedantic. Thus, although I started asking questions on page one of the interview form, it was possible that I quickly jumped to page five depending on where my consultant was willing to take the conversation. Therefore, although the interview had some structure, the information from the interviews extended beyond answers to the predetermined questions. Table 2.3 (Appendix A) records the correspondence between the theoretical explanations for why CICs grow and the types of observations I made as an active participant in the communities as well as interview questions I asked consultants.

Interviews lasted anywhere between 30 minutes and two hours and were audio recorded. Based on the relationships and observations I made during my fieldwork, I selected 10 men and 10 women from each community to interview. This sample includes community leaders as well as members who have no leadership position, those who work in the community as well as outside the community, new members, long-tenured members, husbands and wives, members
in dating relationships as well as members who are single, members who are over 50 years in age, and those who are in their early twenties. In other words, as best I could, I tried to capture a cross-section of individuals who constitute the membership of these communities. The only demographic characteristic that has virtually no variation amongst my consultants is race, as out of the 88 individuals who constitute the membership of both communities (48 members belong to Philadelphia, whereas 40 belong to Berea) only one is non-white – an adopted Korean who grew up in a predominately white suburb\textsuperscript{23}. I sought interviews by personal invitation and in accordance with patriarchal social norms of evangelical culture asked husbands if I could interview both them and their wives\textsuperscript{24}. Interviews were conducted in member’s homes, in local coffee shops, or in common areas shared by community members (119 in the case of Philadelphia, and the St. Seton Piazza in the case of Berea). Only one potential consultant refused an interview due to scheduling difficulties. All interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service and were coded for common theoretical themes.

Phase III: Ecological Data

The third phase of the study investigated ecological data. In particular I examined neighborhood data sources, such as the 2010 census and real estate listings, for demographic factors (population size, density, heterogeneity), social factors (level of education, and level of income), as well as resource factors (available sites for worship, levels of rent, and vacancy rates). Data gathered in this phase provides information needed to examine the religious ecology of Emeryville and West Sharpsburg, the neighborhoods in which the communities are located.
Confidentiality is maintained in this study to protect the communities from both external and internal tension. Although neither community is a cult they do practice counter-cultural behaviors, such as home-schooling and complete sharing of finances. Neighbors of both communities interpreted these behaviors as cultish\(^2\); causing tensions to run high between the communities and their neighbors. Thus, I chose to keep all identifying information confidential in order to protect the communities and their members from any individuals or organizations that might manipulate the accounts of this research against them. Furthermore, during interviews consultants talked, both positively and negatively, about other community members. Since both communities are consistently working through internal tensions of one type or another, a process that relates to the strength of member commitment, I feel it is prudent not to create new tensions based on what was shared in the interviews. Therefore, pseudonyms are used in place of individual’s names and personal descriptions of consultants are limited to non-identifiable information. Pseudonyms are also applied to the names and location of the communities in this research. Although they represent real places, Emeryville and Sharpsburg are fictional labels given to the neighborhoods where Philadelphia and Berea reside.

To that point, Philadelphia and Berea are also pseudonyms used in place of the actual names of these two intentional communities. Philadelphia was assigned its pseudonym based on a prophecy that community leaders received early in their tenure. While attending an International House of Prayer conference the leaders were told that they “will lead people out of the church of Laodicea and into a church of Brotherly Love.” This prophecy is a reference to The Book of Revelation 3: 7 – 22, which contrasts the early Christian churches of Philadelphia
and Laodicea, both of which were located in ancient Asia Minor or present day Turkey. According to these passages of scripture Philadelphia, which translates into “Brotherly Love” (in Greek, *philos* means “love,” and *adelphos* means “brother”), was a church of deep commitment to their faith; whereas, Laodicea was a church of “lukewarm” commitment, or, in other words, a shallow faith displayed through nominal religious practices. Thus, based on this prophecy and my observations of Philadelphian’s deep faith commitments I felt this name was appropriate. Berea, on the other hand, is a name I derived from *The Book of the Acts of the Apostles* 17:10-15. In this account St. Paul finds refuge in Berea, an ancient Greek city, after fleeing an angry mob in Thessalonica. Similarly, Berea, the modern-day intentional community, offers members a refuge from previous church experiences without having to forsake religious beliefs or practices. In fact, several members refer to the community as a “hospital” where the spiritually wounded can be healed. Thus, given the analogous nature of the Biblical reference and the modern CIC, I think Berea is a fitting label.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOU READ ON

The results of this research are revealed in the next seven chapters. The following chapter discusses the results of the national survey, which provides a context for contemporary CICs. After summarizing a brief history of CIC expansion and contraction, I argue that previous typologies of intentional communities are inadequate to categorize contemporary CICs; consequently, I develop a new typology based on two religious ideologies: freewill individualism and expressive communalism. Although I stress the similarities between freewill individualistic and expressive communities, I also contrast their differences in terms of
construction of reality, manner of time organization, historical foundations, community size, age of membership, choice of location, neighborhood relations, governance, religious beliefs, and community programming. I conclude the chapter by establishing Philadelphia as an example of a freewill individualistic community and Berea as an example of an expressive community.

Then, in the fourth chapter, I examine the first aim of this project by exploring the ways in which societal and institutional alienation is a determining factor in individuals’ decisions to join intentional communities. In this chapter I examine Mannheim’s theoretical work on generational units and utopian mentalities as well as previous empirical work in order to provide a backdrop for investigating alienation amongst Philadelphians and Bereans. I also critique and adapt previous conceptualizations of alienation to better understand the experiences reported by my consultants. Using this adaptation, I illustrate the alienating experiences of Philadelphians and Bereans in terms of the American media, economy, culture, and political system. Additionally, I describe the religious aimlessness that many Philadelphians and Bereans experience and the ways in which both communities frame these experiences. Throughout this chapter I demonstrate how alienation plays a role as to why some individuals joined these communities.

The fifth chapter examines the charismatic influence found in Berea and Philadelphia and the effect that this influence has on member’s commitment to the community. To complete this examination I first review previous work, focusing on how theorists have defined charisma, the relationship between charisma and alienation, as well as a typological description of charisma applicable to this research. Then, I explore charismatic influences on Philadelphia
giving particular attention to their use of prophetic charisms, leadership succession, and
decision-making processes. After which I investigate the charismatic influences on Berea and
argue that the scope of charisma be broadened beyond individuals or official positions, as is
traditionally held, to include non-animate objects. I conclude this chapter by commenting on
previous research that analyzed the benefits members receive by adhering to charismatic
influences as well as the relevance of other concepts concerning member commitment other
than charisma.

Based on the work of Chaves (1994), Becker (1999), and Smith et al. (1998), Chapter 6
applies the cultural theories of religious strength and vitality to explore the culture of worship
services as well as the inter-organizational cultures of Berea and Philadelphia, illustrating how,
in both cases, community culture strengthens members’ devotion. I also detail the ways in
which discursive repertoires are used by Philadelphians, but not Bereans, to build cultural
identity and, as a consequence, deepen members’ commitment.

In Chapter Seven I argue, in accordance with Kelly’s (1972) strictness theory, that
Philadelphia has strong member commitments because it is strict, demanding that members
sacrifice desires, time, energy, and money in order to maintain their membership. These
sacrifices amount to a hefty personal investment, which is unrecoverable if an individual leaves
the community. However, building on strictness theory, I claim that such investments must be
facilitated through, as Kanter (1968; 1972) notes, “concrete social practices.” I identify these
social practices as Kanter (1968; 1972) and Hall’s (1988) commitment mechanisms. Although I
illustrate how Philadelphia and Berea employ commitment mechanisms, particularly
membership covenants, financial sharing (e.g., the Philadelphian common purse), and
confession rituals, I note the varying levels of strictness between the two communities, contending that Philadelphians, as compared to Bereans, must invest more of themselves to maintain their membership; thereby deepening their commitment to the community.

Chapter Eight reveals that Philadelphia and Berea’s residential choices were not based on urban populations’ acceptance of unconventional religious groups, as previous research has indicated. Rather, using literature on religious ecologies as a theoretical backdrop, I claim that Philadelphia and Berea thrive in their neighborhoods because they can utilize resource configurations available in urban environments. Then, building upon religious ecology theory, I argue that Berea, as opposed to Philadelphia, espouses a cultural ideology that works interdependently with the urban religious ecology; consequently, adopting, what I call, a “parish consciousness,” in which members are completely enveloped by a place-based system of thought and action. In this sense, I further develop a concept only briefly examined in other research, which I label, “the religio-cultural ecology,” providing a better understanding of why particular religious organizations thrive in certain locations.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, I review the major themes of the dissertation, explaining why CICs are growing. Additionally I comment on limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research as well as discuss ways in which religious organizations can apply the findings of this work.
I first contacted Timothy, a member of Philadelphia, in the spring of 2011 and arranged a meeting with him to learn more about the community. He happily agreed and we scheduled a lunch at a restaurant located in a busy suburban commercial area. I looked forward to the meeting not only because it was my first “official” research encounter, but, more importantly, it allowed me the opportunity to reconnect with Timothy, a former high school student of mine. I arrived early but was alone only for a short while as Timothy and Stefan, one of the newest members of Philadelphia, arrived several minutes later. They were dressed in tee-shirts, jeans, work boots, and had several dirt stains on their clothing. Timothy noted that they were on lunch break but, since he is self-employed, we had all afternoon to discuss the community. When I inquired as to his line of work Timothy told me that he had started a small handy-man service and was installing a fence around a suburban residential property about 20 minutes away.

We bought our lunches and sat down to discuss Philadelphia. During our hour long conversation I gained a preliminary understanding of how the community started and the evolution of its organizational structure. I was also able to share some of my research plans, in particular a year-long participant observation study within Philadelphia, to which Timothy responded enthusiastically. However, the highlight of our conversation came at the very end. I turned to Stefan who, except for telling me that he was a new member, remained relatively silent during our conversation and asked, “So, why did you join?” Stefan took a moment to think and then said, “Love. All I felt was love.” I probed his answer a little and found that upon meeting Philadelphians for the first time and then building relationships with them over several
weeks, Stefan experienced a genuine care for his emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being that he had not experienced elsewhere.

About a year later I visited at Berea on a beautiful summer afternoon to interview Penny on the St. Seton Piazza, a large open courtyard that functions as the geographic center of the Berean community. Penny is a young female artist who has been with Berea for five years and was an integral part of the Year of Discernment\(^2\), during which the community decided whether they would continue operating or dissolve\(^3\). When I asked her why she stuck with the community despite its instability during the Year of Discernment, Penny remarked, “But I love it, and um, yeah. I feel like that love is tested…”

I interrupted with a reassuring, “Mm-hmm.”

Penny continued, “…by the difficulties that we…[pause]…that we faced [referring to the Year of Discernment], but I’m…”

Penny paused, and although her face was directed toward the ground, I could tell tears were forming in her eyes.

Chocking on her emotion she persisted, “…I love it, and I feel love by…”

She paused again. As she made eye contact with me, I noticed the reddening of her eyes which expressed complete sincerity. She lifted her glasses, wiped her eyes, placed her glasses back on her cheek and steadfastly continued,

…I love the people of this community. I shouldn’t say it uh, because really, that’s what I mean, the people of this church, the people of this community. And I…[pause]…I know I am loved by them. That’s not something that just comes and…[pause]…comes and goes. It’s something you have to work towards, and yeah. I don’t feel like there’s much that would convince me that that’s just gonna go away.
I am not surprised at the similarity between Stefan and Penny’s statements. Previous research has demonstrated that experiencing “love” in an intentional community is rather typical. In his study of the Bruderhof, a set of German Christian Intentional Communities (CICs) established in reaction to the rise of the Nazi party and the Hitler Youth Movement, Benjamin Zablocki argues that a stable society can be structured around the capacity to love (1971). He notes however, that the love experienced by members of the Bruderhof is not based on attraction to personal attributes of other members, a form of love he labels *eros*; rather the love experienced by members of the Bruderhof is based on shared feelings that binds individuals together as a whole people, a form of love Zablocki labels *agape*. Within agape love, if one person suffers, then the whole group suffers; conversely, care for one member translates into care for the entire group. In this sense Stefan and Penny experienced agape love when interacting with their fellow community members because the members recognized that if Stefan and Penny were not cared for then the entire community would not be cared for.

Ultimately, Stefan and Penny’s experience of agape love strengthened their commitment to their respective communities. This response to agape love is also echoed in Zablocki’s Urban Communes Study, a follow up to his ethnographic work with the Bruderhof, when he theorizes that love helps determine why individuals stay or leave communes, a specific type of intentional community (1980). He argues that the probability of an individual staying in a commune is greater when that individual feels more love relative to the amount of love offered in the communal setting. In other words, if an individual participates in an intentional community and feels loved when there is not a lot of love going around, he or she is more prone to stay. However, if an individual feels loved but recognizes that everyone else also feels
as much (or more) love as he or she does the probability of that individual staying in the community decreases. Thus, Stefan, relative to everyone else in the community, must have felt really cared for - enough so that he felt compelled to join; while Penny directly ties her communal commitment to the love she experienced during the Year of Discernment, a period of uncertainty and instability.

Although Stefan and Penny’s responses reflect the nature of Philadelphia and Berea as intentional communities (at least in regards to agape love) in other, mostly subtle ways Stefan and Penny are members of two vastly different communities. During the summer and fall of 2011, which was prior my ethnographic fieldwork in Philadelphia and Berea, I conducted a national survey of contemporary CICs. This survey served two purposes: (1) It provided a much needed update to Zablocki’s (1980) research which was conducted with a set of intentional communities that were situated within a particular time (mid-1960’s to mid-1970’s) as well as socio-political environment (the Hippie Counter-Culture; and (2) provided a backdrop to understand contemporary CICs. As I started analyzing the data from the survey it was clear that contemporary CICs fall loosely into one of two types: freewill individualistic or expressive, which are represented by Philadelphia and Berea respectively. Although I will explain how I developed this binary typology later in the chapter, I should note that these categories characterize ideologies, organizational structures, and behaviors that, on the average, are found in one set of CICs (e.g., freewill individualistic communities) as opposed to the other set (e.g., expressive communities). Nevertheless, one must be cautioned that there are individual communities which, in various ways, transcend the boundaries of this categorization. Thus, Philadelphia and Berea will sometimes share similar ideologies, organizational structures, and
behaviors to the same extent, as illustrated by Stefan and Penny. While, as you will see by the end of this chapter, in other instances the communities will demonstrate similar ideologies, organizational structures, and behaviors in varying extents, such as Berea’s deep commitment to West Sharpsburg versus Philadelphia’s modest commitment to Emeryville. Yet, on other occasions the communities’ ideologies, organizational structures, and behaviors will stand in contrast to one another, as exemplified by how governance is instituted in the two communities. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to provide a broad understanding of contemporary CICs in light of the types of communities that Philadelphia and Berea represent.

To accomplish this aim I have organized this chapter into four sections. The first section presents a brief history of communitarian movements to illustrate the context from which contemporary CICs have emerged. The second section reviews typologies that provide a structure to understand the ideological, organizational, and behavioral patterns of historic intentional communities. In both of these sections I widen the focus to examine religious and non-religious intentional communities because, although religion, especially Protestantism (Kanter 1968, 1972; Stephan and Stephan 1973; Kraushaar 1980b), plays a crucial role in the establishment of many historic communities it by no means defines the history or, as you will see, the typology of intentional communities. Thus, focusing solely on historic CICs only captures a portion of the context from which contemporary CICs have emerged. Accordingly, I also provide a critique of these previous typologies and demonstrate how they fail to situate contemporary CICs within a sound theoretical framework. However, in the third section I construct the freewill individualistic-expressive typology to gain a broad understanding of ideologies, organizational structures, and behaviors in contemporary CICs. The fourth section
presents the results of the national survey within the new typology explained in section three.

This chapter concludes by summarizing the ways in which Philadelphia is an example of a freewill individualistic community, while Berea exemplifies expressive communities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

Generally speaking communitarian movements have experienced peaks and valleys throughout history; however, these peaks and valleys are not random, rather they tend to emerge in specific eras. Zablocki (1980) states:

If it were possible to graph the incidence of communitarianism as a function of time down through the centuries, and if it were also possible to graph, in similar manner, the divergence of beliefs and standards of moral evaluation from a common source, a strong positive association would likely be found between these two variables...Each forced leap [in society] to greater plurality of values and fragmentation of roles brings with it a renewed longing for Gemeinschaft as well as the appearance of temporary cultural interstices in which significant numbers of people find themselves with the resources and the freedom to pursue this longing. (P. 25)

In other words, as societal values change, particularly those affecting morality, some individuals feel the need to band together in order to maintain socio-emotional connections with others. Often such banding results in reform movements, or even revolution; however, if a group does not have the resources to start a reform movement, nor the drive to revolt, then they will choose a third way – retreat⁵. Thus, as societal values rapidly change, groups of individuals will retreat into intentional communities to maintain a degree of socio-emotional consistency⁶.

Examples of intentional community formation during periods of social change go back as far as sectarian Jewish movements in ancient Palestine. The Qumran, which is located close to the Dead Sea, is hypothesized to be the home of a community of Essences, a Jewish sect that formed as Hebraic customs and traditions become increasingly influenced by Hellenistic values
during the Roman Occupation (de Vaux 1973). In the 12th and 13th centuries the rise of Catholic societies such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustinian hermits are thought to have been a reaction to the influx of new wealth to Western Europe during the Crusades (Zablocki 1980). Then, following in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, Anabaptist communities, such as the Hutterites and Mennonites, developed in an area of Europe that was known as the “commune belt,” an expanse of land which separated Protestant Northern Europe from Catholic Southern Europe (Zablocki 1980). However, most historic research on religious communitarianism has focused on the periods of intentional community expansion and subsequent contraction in American history, which, I argue, occurred in four waves.

Although religious communities were present in colonial America, most were exiles from Europe with well-established social institutions, such as the Amish and Moravians. I attribute these American communities to the period of community formation in response to the Protestant Reformation noted in the previous paragraph. Thus, the first period of intentional community expansion originating in the United States occurred immediately following the American Revolution and was dominated by the proliferation of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, otherwise known as the Shakers. Starting as a small sect of Quakers in Bolton, England who practiced glossolalia, also called “speaking in tongues” or just “tongues,” and were known for their violent physical paroxysms (e.g., “Shaking” from whence they received their name), Shakers didn’t start developing intentional communities until 1780 when Ann Lee, an illiterate convert known as Mother Ann, successfully convinced a Baptist revivalist to move his congregation into communal living arrangement with her family (Sutton 2009). Known for their celibate practices and simple lifestyle, Shakers, and other communities
such as the Rapp Harmonists, grew in number, particularly on the American frontier, providing housing and food to converts in areas where local governments were unorganized.

However, as local frontier governments developed many of these communities stopped operating; even the Shakers, despite their popularity, were in decline by the mid-nineteenth century. This decline occurred prior to the second wave of intentional community formation which surfaced in conjunction with the American conquest of Western lands and the moral vision of Manifest Destiny. A unique aspect of this wave of community formation was the emphasis placed on unorthodox Christian beliefs, such as the Oneida Community’s concept of “complex marriage,” which taught that polyandrous relations was a practice of heaven and therefore allowable amongst community members (Miller 1998). Similarly, The Community of True Inspiration, which started the Amana colonies of Iowa, believed that God revealed his word through an inspired overseer called a Wekzeuge (Sutton 2009). Alternatively, this period also brought about the development of utopian socialist communities, the most famous of which were Fourierist Phalanxes. Started by Albert Brisbane a student of Frenchmen Charles Fourier and aided by New York newspaper magnate, Horace Greeley, Phalanxes were created to offer a utopian alternative to contemporary society which, according to Fourier, was mired in fraud, waste, exploitation, unhappiness, climatic excesses, and unprecedented abundance (Guarneri 1991). By 1852 nearly 30 Phalanxes were formed across the country; nonetheless, nearly as quickly as they were established they also dissolved. By the start of the Civil War no Fourierist communities existed with only one experiencing a revival from 1869 to 1892. As with the first wave, intentional communities of the second wave contracted as the West was
conquered and a moral equilibrium returned after the Civil War; consequently decreasing the need for communities of these types.

Then, just prior to the start of the 20th century a third wave of intentional community expansion occurred. Much like the preceding period, intentional communities during this time developed out of socialist values and unorthodox Christian practices. However, unlike previous periods intentional communities began to develop in and around urban areas (Zablocki 1980), particularly Chicago (Sutton 2009). Given the massive industrialization of Chicago in the late nineteenth century as well as the tremendous influx of immigrant labor, some individuals sought refuge in communities that offered clear value systems and material equality. The most noteworthy of these communities was Zion City, a planned intentional community located several miles north of Chicago that, at one point, had approximately two thousand members. Started by John Alexander Dowie, who came to fame by demonstrating faith healings during the 1893 Columbian Exposition, Zion was to be a place for those who were dissatisfied with the moral decay of Chicago (Sutton 2009). Other communities that formed during this period included the House of David, the Spirit Fruit Society, and in Los Angeles, Llano Del Rio, all of which were established in response to increasing moral variability due to social pressures caused by urbanization. However, financial mismanagement, internal power struggles, sexual misconduct (three areas that often create conflict in intentional communities) eventually led to the contraction or, in most cases the dissolution, of communities in this wave.

After the third wave intentional community formation experienced a long dormant period, until counterculture movements of the 1960’s emerged and along with them a fourth wave of community formation. In comparison to previous waves, intentional communities in this fourth
wave shifted focus away from communitarian ideologies to ideologies that promote the interests of the individual through communal forms (Zablocki 1980). For example, religious intentional communities placed more emphasis on self-actualizing experiences than collective expressions of faith, such as emotional healing through religious counseling (Jackson and Jackson 1974; Jackson 1978). Likewise, non-religious communities focused on the psycho-social well-being of individuals with particular emphasis on emotional, mental, and physical health.

Concerning counterculture intentional communities Kraushaar (1980a) notes:

The prevailing society is seen as forcing people to live an unnatural, competitive, de-personalized, and alienated existence that destroys the truly human potential in them. The critique of “the establishment” sees it as sick and essentially dehumanizing, forcing people into roles that lead too often to neuroses, desperation, and suicide. [Contemporary] communes undertake to start afresh by creating a new physical and social environment, one that attempts to eradicate the barriers to untrammeled human development and fosters a life of greater social intimacy and individual fulfillment. (P. 6)

Examples of CICs that stressed social intimacy and individual fulfillment during this wave includes communities formed out of the Jesus People Movement, a complex mix of counterculture hippies, charismatic worship practices, such glossolalia and prophetic visions, as well as fervent evangelism. One such community, JPUSA (Jesus People USA), which is located in urban Chicago, was formed by individuals who, after Christian conversion, desired an intimate community of people that would help others escape harmful behavioral patterns, such as involvement with drugs and alcohol, as well as relief from feelings of alienation, and despair (Sutton 2009). Similarly, Catholic Charismatics also formed intentional communities during this period. Developed in the wake of Vatican II when Catholic intellectuals crossed paths with Pentecostal preachers, Catholic Charismatic communities shared many of the same practices as the Jesus People yet tied their religious expression to Catholic Doctrine and willfully submitted
themselves to the authority of the Catholic Church (Duin 2009; Westley 1983). These communities, which incorporated parishioners, priests, and nuns, became concentrated around Ann Arbor, Michigan, South Bend, Indiana, and Montreal, Quebec (Duin 2009). Nevertheless, like previous waves, counterculture communities eventually contracted or dissolved due to internal leadership crises that plagued communal efforts, but also because of challenges not faced by communities in previous waves, such as zoning regulations that prohibited communal living arrangements (Miller 2010).

However, a handful of fourth wave communities still survive; albeit, in some cases, with evolving emphases. Whereas surviving Catholic Charismatic communities continue to stress individual fulfillment, other surviving communities, such as JPUSA, have shifted their emphasis to service work within their local neighborhood (Sutton 2009). This dichotomy between communities that have an inward focus, such as Catholic Charismatic communities, and those that have an outward focus, such as JPUSA, sets the stage for the fifth period of intentional community formation, which we are now in the midst of. Given this historical legacy, in the next sections I will review the various ways in which intentional communities have been classified and the reasons why these classifications fail to give adequate structure to the results of the national survey employed in this research.

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATIONS

Previous research tended to classify intentional communities based primarily on sets of dichotomous variables. Starting in 1968, Kanter classified communities as either successful or unsuccessful measured by the longevity of their existence. If a community lasted for more than
25 years it was deemed successful, if less than 25 years it was unsuccessful (Kanter 1968, 1972). Stephan and Stephan followed Kanter’s classification with their own binary typology – religious or non-religious (1973). A community was considered religious if it had a single established faith practiced by all members and non-religious if members recognized a plurality of religions or no religion at all (Stephan and Stephan 1973; Bader, Mencken, and Parker 2006). More recently Maxey has created a dichotomous classification system based on community formation (2004). He argues that there is a difference between communities that have an organic origin, where a community forms when residents mobilize in response to various challenges through individual and collective acts, versus those that have an intentional origin, where a community forms from an explicit commitment to social, cultural and economic values (2004).

Unfortunately, the preceding classifications either have faced substantial scrutiny or are inapplicable given the results of my national survey of contemporary CICs. In terms of success, researchers following Kanter warn that longevity is not an accurate measure, citing other factors that relate to community survival, particularly religion. Stephan and Stephan argue that longevity is solely a function of religious ideology (1973). They state, “The success of communes, measured in terms of length of time they survived, seems to depend upon whether or not their ideological foundations included adherence to a single, established religion” (Stephan and Stephan 1973:93). Bader et al., who collected data from the Fellowship of Intentional Communities directory between 1995 and 2000, demonstrate that, in addition to a community’s longevity, two other factors significantly relate to community survival: land ownership, and size of community membership (2006). Thus, as is clear from the debate
concerning “success,” Kanter’s dichotomous typology will be inadequate for this research. Furthermore a religious/nonreligious classification system is inapplicable because the results of the national survey reported in this chapter represent only Christian communities. Lastly, results of my national survey reveal that only one CIC developed organically, as defined by Maxey (2004), while all other communities have intentional origins; thus, rendering Maxey’s binary classification irrelevant.

Hall produced a non-dichotomous typology of intentional communities that describes five ideal types (1978, 1988). Situated in Mannheim’s theory of utopias (1936) and Schutz’s conceptualization of phenomenology ([1932] 1967), Hall identifies communities in terms of two phenomenological dimensions: Orientations toward time and modes of social enactment in relation to the symbolic construction of reality. Hall argues that intentional communities demonstrate three orientations toward time:

1. **Diachronic** - Communities view time as a commodity where the clock determines social action, such as work, eat, sleep, etc.

2. **Synchronic** - Communities view time in the “here and now,” having flexible schedules to meet the community’s needs.

3. **Apocalyptic** - Communities believe that time on earth eventually ends and a post-apocalyptic time begins in a place separate from earth, such as heaven. Thus, for these communities time on earth is spent preparing for an existence beyond this world.

Likewise, Hall argues that intentional communities demonstrate three symbolic constructions of reality:
1. **Natural modes of social enactment** - Communities forego utopian goals and act as an association of individuals unified to achieve rational goals that sustain life.

2. **Produced modes of social enactment** - Communities actively engage in the construction of a new social reality within the community, such as complete financial equality amongst members, which stands in contrast to society-at-large.

3. **Transcendental modes of social enactment** - Communities “break out” of ordinary reality through some medium such as collective drug experiences or celebrations of heightened collective effervescence.

Given these two sets of phenomenological dimensions there should be nine different types of communal groups; however, Hall only identifies five ideal types based on his analysis of historic intentional communities (1978; 1988). The five ideal types are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Phenomenological Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communes</td>
<td>Relatively individualistic, pluralistic and egalitarian associations of family-like solidarity that lack goals of utopian perfection or even institutional longevity (Hall 1988:680).</td>
<td>Natural and Synchronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional association</td>
<td>A rationalistic association that promotes principles of pluralism, individual freedom, equality, and justice (Hall 1988:681). This system based on clock and calendar time is then subject to rational and universalistic administration and democratic planning. (Hall 1978: 205)</td>
<td>Diachronic and produced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As with the aforementioned dichotomous classifications, Hall’s typology fails to provide an adequate structure to categorize CICs for two reasons. First, according to Hall, communities with a natural mode of social enactment reject a unifying system of values that provide a social boundary between the community and society-at-large, instead social boundaries are determined by rational associations between participants. Thus, any intentional community that espouses an ideology, particularly a religious ideology, can only be categorized as exhibiting a produced or transcendental mode of social enactment. However, when asked in the national survey to rank three statements that represent Hall’s modes of social enactment, almost three out of four CICs report having a “natural” construction of reality where they mostly likely talk about what is occurring in their lives, community, or society when they gather
together, as opposed to talking about what they want their lives to be (e.g., produced mode), or talking about ways in which they can envision themselves separate from the physical world (e.g., transcendental mode) (Appendix B: Table 3.1). In other words, the ways in which most CICs actually enact reality does not fit Hall’s conceptualization of produced or transcendental modes of social enactment. This unexpected result could be due to one of three possibilities: (1) the questions in the national survey concerning social enactment of reality are invalid – they don’t measure what they should measure; (2) Hall’s typology is unreliable – it can’t be reproduced in studies beyond his own; or (3) the questions are invalid and Hall’s typology is unreliable. Whichever of these possibilities is correct, the fact remains that I cannot use Hall’s typology given the information provided through the national survey\textsuperscript{12}.

Second, Hall’s theoretical assumptions are questionable. Perhaps relying too much on phenomenology, Hall uses communal practices and behaviors as the determining factor for a community’s social construction of reality and orientation toward time. In this sense, communal actions determine the phenomenological classification of intentional communities, such that, in the case of the “Commune” ideal type, “lacking utopian goals” results in a “natural” mode of social enactment. Alternatively, keeping in line with Mannheim’s theory of utopia, I argue that social construction of reality is not determined by the behaviors and practices of communities, rather reality construction is determined by the community’s ideological convictions. In other words, as described in the next section, it is not necessarily what the community does that determines goals; rather it is the ideology of the community that determines goals and, in turn, influences the community’s behaviors and practices. Given these practical and theoretical problems I cannot apply Hall’s typology to the results of the
national survey. Instead, as I detail in the next section, I argue for a new dichotomous classification system based on ideological orientations.

A NEW APPROACH FOR CLASSIFYING CICS

As stated earlier we are now in a period where some intentional communities emphasize individual fulfillment and are inward focused, while others stress community service and are outward focused. This inward/outward dichotomy is true for CICs due to the ideological underpinnings for their actions. As Weber has clearly demonstrated in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([1920] 2002), there are varying ideological positions within Christianity that determine behaviors and social practices. Given the twentieth and twenty-first century American religious landscape the most dominant of these ideologies is freewill individualism\(^1\) (Emerson and Smith 2000), which has found a stronghold in Baby Boomer religious organizations\(^2\) (Bellah et al. 1985; Roof 1993; 1999). However, Flory and Miller (2008) have identified a new ideology emerging over the last twenty years amongst post-boomer\(^3\) Christians which they label “expressive communalism”\(^4\). These ideologies (freewill individualism and expressive communalism) are relevant to our discussion of contemporary CICs as they are the root of the inward/outward dichotomy which marks the present wave of community formation.

Below I provide a detailed explanation of freewill individualism and expressive communalism as applied to Christian intentional communities. However, before continuing I want to caution that this dichotomous classification is based on ideal types of freewill individualistic and expressive communities. Thus, the differences between actual communities,
although significant at times, are also quite subtle as common social patterns occur in all communities simply because they are intentional communities. Consequently, these classifications should be thought of as fluid, as opposed to static, since communities will tend to display behaviors toward one side of the binary compared to the other, yet rarely without some behavioral overlap with communities of the opposite type.

Freewill Individualistic Communities

Starting with the Reformation, extending through frontier religious awakenings, and mirroring Baby Boomer America in general, many religious organizations adopted an ideology based in individualism (Wuthnow 1988; Emerson and Smith 2000). Flory and Miller (2008) provide the following summary of a large body of research concerning religious individualism:

Taken together,…studies suggest that, particularly since the 1960s, spirituality has become decoupled from religion, with many people pursuing their own private, individualistic, and noninstitutionalized form of spiritual fulfillment where the individual quest for meaning takes precedence over membership in, or commitment to, the religious community. (P. 11)

In this sense, individuals “must ultimately decide for themselves to follow God or not; [and believe] that truly meaningful moral actions cannot be forced, but must come voluntarily from the heart,…” (Smith et al. 1998:211), or, in other words, individuals have freewill, apart from religious organizations, as to the depth and adherence of their religious commitments. Within an Evangelical context, this notion is best represented by the trope, “A personal relationship with Christ,” which connotes that faith is not a product of adherence to a moral community (i.e. a church or denomination) rather it is a function of an individual’s choice and achievement.

Nonetheless, the emergence of freewill individualism did not make moral communities obsolete; instead, in line with shifting ideology, moral communities reorganized to empower
individuals in their religious commitments. Wuthnow (1988), in his examination of the restructuring of American religion after WWII notes:

> Descriptions of the religious body often paid little or no attention to such vital aspects of its functioning as fellowship, mutual caring and sharing, the collective enactment of religious rituals, or the cultivation of moral obligations through actual experiences of bonding and reconciliation. In place of these, emphasis was placed primarily on the spiritual growth of individuals. The corporate body became subtly transposed into a service agency for the fulfillment of its individual members. (P. 55)

In this case Wuthnow is talking about churches and congregations; nevertheless, I argue, in the same vein, that a portion of CICs which still exist from the fourth wave as well as some that formed in the current wave act very much like the religious bodies in Wuthnow’s description — communal behaviors and practices are for the purpose of individual fulfillment. I label these types of CICs, “freewill individualistic communities,” and find that they emphasize inward rituals, such as “personal worship experiences”, physical separation from society in order to prevent sinful temptation, and religious counseling for past traumatic events. Consequently, freewill individualistic communities tend to associate either with Charismatic movements, such as the Catholic Charismatic renewal or the International House of Prayer Kansas City (IHOP), or independent, non-institutionalized, monastic orders.

**Expressive Communities**

In their analysis of Christian practices amongst Post-Boomer populations, Flory and Miller (2008) remark:

> Post-boomers have embedded their lives in spiritual communities in which their desire and need for both expressive/experiential activities, whether through art, music, or service-oriented activities, and for a close-knit, physical community and communion with others are met. These young people are seeking out different forms of spirituality in response to the short-comings they see as inherent in these [individualistic] forms. They are seeking to develop a balance for individualism and
rational asceticism through religious experience and spiritual meaning in an embodied faith. (P. 189)

As opposed to Boomer freewill individualism, Post-Boomers are adopting expressive communalism, a set of collective ideologies that emphasize concrete, physical acts of spiritual commitment in the larger community through various types of service activities and cultural engagements (Flory and Miller 2008). These concrete, physical acts constitute an “embodiment” of faith that stands in contrast to private, inward, spiritual ritualization of freewill individualists.

Others have confirmed Flory and Miller’s findings through their research of emerging evangelical practices. For example Bielo (2011) examines the widely-used emerging category “being missional,” which is employed by post-boomer evangelicals to define evangelism within local contexts. Unlike previous types of evangelism, which stressed individual gospel presentations or large revival events, “being missional” includes ways of speaking (e.g., using local dialects), everyday acts of service (e.g., moving into underserved neighborhoods), as well as the significance placed on the aesthetic presentation of religious symbols, buildings, and institutions. Essentially, “being missional” is a way of life that is meant to embody the sensual Kingdom of God in that others are to feel, hear, touch, and see the gospel. Thus, in many ways, “being missional” is an outward manifestation of expressive communalism.

Additionally, in his research about churches that have adopted emerging practices, Packard states that being “missional, for people of the Emerging Church,” means to be involved in the day to day life of a community (2012:43). He continues by noting how Emerging Church members conceptualize “community” as a specific neighborhood, or a particular part of a neighborhood, in which members reside individually, as a family, or in some cases, as a
collection of families. Often when a collection of families come together to be missional in a neighborhood they end up forming intentional communities. These missional communities, or what I call “expressive communities” (keeping in line with the ideology of expressive communalism), have begun to form national associations to aid in their development. David Janzen, who wrote a handbook for contemporary CICs, notes several of these associations, including the Nurturing Communities Project, Shalom Mission Communities, and Catholic Worker Communities, most of which promote the adoption of twelve behavioral principles known as “The 12 Marks of New Monasticism” (2013). These twelve principles are listed below with accompanying explanations:

1. **Relocation to the Abandoned Places of the Empire** – Physical relocation to underserved neighborhoods that are largely ignored by government services (e.g., policing) and commercial business (e.g., grocery stores). The term “Empire” is used by New Monastics to refer to the influential position of the American government and economy in global affairs and the ethical dilemmas that develop when given such influence (e.g., the destruction of local retail economies due to the development of large multi-national corporations such as Wal-Mart).

2. **Sharing of economic and material resources** – Sharing, in this sense, occurs at varying levels. On the one hand, in some communities all finances and material objects, including underwear, are the property of the entire community and anyone has access to these resources equally. On the other hand, in other communities resources are maintained as private property but sharing occurs freely between members of the
community as well as their neighbors on an as-need basis; for example, when someone needs to borrow a community member’s vehicle to drive to the grocery store.

3. **Open Hospitality** – the opening of homes to visitors or anyone in need of shelter.
   Although restrictions typically do apply (e.g., no drug use), such hospitality often includes, but is not limited to, meals, sleeping arrangements, use of showers, use of internet services, and recreational activities.

4. **Lament for racial divisions and active pursuit of reconciliation between races and ethnicities** – In this case, “reconciliation” refers to the active deconstruction of racialized structures and the reconstruction of new structures that facilitate racial and ethnic equity. An example of racial and ethnic reconciliation would be the establishment of a multi-cultural worship service which is led by individuals of varying races and ethnicities who share power equally.

5. **Submission to a church body** – Although New Monastic communities generally develop independent from a church body, they will pursue active membership or partnership in an organized church body in order to provide emotional and financial support, as well as leadership accountability. Examples of church bodies include the Mennonite Church (USA) and the Episcopal Church.

6. **Development of membership processes and intentional mentoring of potential members** – Many New Monastic communities have learned to develop a novitiate process where prospective members are vetted for a period of time before being allowed to join the community. After they have joined, an older member is assigned to mentor a new member for the purpose of guiding the individual through the transition
to communal living, as well as aiding in the individual’s emotional and spiritual development.

7. Nurturing of communal behaviors and practices – Such behaviors and practices include sharing of resources, eating meals together, collective worship, and creating a rhythm of life in which members of a community maintain similar daily schedules of religious devotion, work, recreation, and sleep. “Nurturing,” in this sense, refers to the intentional, yet gradual, development of these behaviors and practices as communal living can be difficult to achieve for individuals who matured in non-communal living situations.

8. Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children – In this case “support” includes the elimination of family-only programming (e.g., family movie night), equal emphasis given to singleness and marriage in community teachings, and the incorporation of non-partnered individuals in community leadership.

9. Geographic proximity of community members that supports a common rule of life – The phrase “a common rule of life” refers to the coordination of daily schedules that facilitate common times of religious devotion, work, recreation, and sleep amongst members. New Monastics believe that if members live in close proximity with one another, a common rule of life has an increased probability of being maintained. Thus, New Monastic communities encourage members to live, work, worship, and recreate in the neighborhood in which they reside.

10. Sustainable environmental practices and support for local economies – As in other arenas, “sustainable” refers to the development of systems that allow for continual
reuse; for example, New Monastic communities often plant gardens to create a sustainable food production system. Furthermore, New Monastic communities view consuming goods produced and sold in the local economy as “sustainable” as such actions contribute to the viability and vitality of local businesses.

11. Practice of pacifism, peacemaking, and conflict resolution based on Biblical doctrine – In this case, New Monastic Communities cite a process for conflict resolution and peacemaking presented by Jesus of Nazareth in The Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 18. This process involves four steps: (1) present a grievance to an individual on a dyadic basis; (2) if the individual does not repent, then present the grievance to the individual with the support of one or two other individuals; (3) if the individual still does not repent, then present the grievance to the individual with the support of a corporate body; (4) if the individual still does not repent, then the individual should be disassociated from the collective. The lack of violence presented in the aforementioned process, as well as throughout the Christian Gospels, leads many New Monastics to value pacifism in regards to armed conflicts.

12. Commitment to monastic disciplines that lead to a contemplative life – In this sense, “monastic disciplines” refer to traditional religious practices that help individuals develop their spiritual lives, such as prayer, fasting, and silence. These practices are meant to develop a faith that is self-reflective, sincere, and deep (e.g., “contemplative). Thus, many New Monastic communities include prayer rooms in their facilities, incorporate liturgy in their worship services, and offer programing that promotes spiritual disciplines (e.g., retreats, and conferences). (The Rutba House 2005)
In accordance with expressive communalism, the principles of New Monasticism are embodied in and through collectivities. Accordingly, many, but not all, expressive communities tend to self-identify as New Monastic or practice New Monastic principles.

Thus, I argue that there are two types of contemporary CICs: (1) freewill individualistic communities, which emphasize personal spiritual development and an inward focus; and (2) expressive communities that stress communal forms of religious expression and an outward focus. Based on this typology I coded the 51 communities in the sample as either freewill individualistic or expressive given their answers to open ended questions. This coding produced 18 freewill individualistic communities and 33 expressive communities. Responses between the two community types were tested for statistically significant differences through chi-square and t-tests. Additionally, due to the small sample size and subsequent lack of power in the analysis, substantial differences that do not result in statistical significance are also noted. Results are recorded in Appendix B as percentages or mean scores and organized by theme. In the next section I review the results, emphasizing the significant differences between freewill individualistic and expressive communities.

RESULTS

As illustrated in Table 3.2 (Appendix B) freewill individualistic communities, when compared to expressive communities, tend to be organizationally older and founded by prior organizations, although these results are not statistically significant the differences are substantial. However, there is a significant difference between the average size of membership (Appendix B: Table 3.3) of freewill individualistic communities when contrasted to expressive communities. Even if
the four outlying freewill individualistic communities that have over 179 members are ignored, freewill individualistic communities, on average, have 13 more members than expressive communities.

This size difference may be a function of two interacting phenomena. First, freewill individualistic communities, as opposed to expressive communities, have a higher number of blood related members, which, particularly through fertility, naturally increases populations. Second, and in support of the first phenomena, there is a significant difference in the presence of members who are aged 51 to 69 between freewill individualistic and expressive communities. This is not the case for members who are aged 18-50 or over 70. Table 3.4 (Appendix B) reports that two-thirds of freewill individualistic communities have a high presence of members who are 51 to 69 years old; whereas expressive communities have a low presence of people of the same age. Inferred in these results is the notion that freewill individualistic communities, when compared to expressive communities, include more families (thus, more members) of which the parents are of the Boomer generation (e.g., aged 51-69). These results are consistent with the argument that some, if not many, contemporary freewill individualistic communities are holdovers from the fourth wave of community formation. Unfortunately, these data alone cannot validate such an argument; nevertheless, these results do tell us that freewill individualistic communities tend to be older, both in terms of organizational age and membership, as opposed to expressive communities.

Given the significant differences in membership age and blood relation between the two sets of communities, one could infer that there is a demographic shift occurring; in that expressive communities are younger because they are comprised of individuals who were
raised in freewill individualistic Boomer communities. This inference would be in line with the demographic perspective of religious strength and vitality posited by Hout, Greeley, and Wilde (2001). Applying the demographic imperative (which states that, in a population made up of two groups, the one with the higher rate of natural increase will increase its proportion of the population at that expense of the group with the lower rate of natural increase) Hout et al. argue that the strength of conservative Protestant denominations is a function of fertility more than any other convention. Those who favor the demographic perspective ultimately reason that conservative Protestant (e.g., Evangelical) congregations are thriving simply because they are growing faster than other Protestant orientations. Accordingly, the communities of the current wave could be a function of natural growth rates of communities that lasted through the fourth wave and its subsequent contraction. In other words, children who lived in communities during the fourth wave have simply grown up and started their own communities that, in some cases, accompany a shift in ideological orientation from freewill individualism to expressive communalism.

Although theoretically reasonable, there is no evidence that a demographic shift has occurred in CICs as argued by Hout et al. It is true that, particularly in freewill individualistic communities, membership represents multiple generations of blood relatives; however, in the national survey, there was only one instance where a community formed in the current wave was founded by children who grew up in a fourth wave community. In this case, a Catholic Charismatic community planted a new community in a nearby town under the leadership of their children, both of which, based on their answers in the survey, were coded as freewill individualistic. Four other communities reported that they evolved from a prior intentional
community; however these situations were described as either (1) a reorganization of a present community or (2) the reformation of a failed community, not the formation of a new one. Furthermore, in my interviews with members of Philadelphia and Berea only two, a brother and sister pair, of the 40 individuals interviewed had a father who lived in a Catholic Charismatic community for a short period of time. The other 38 individuals had no generational connection to intentional communities; rather they became involved in Philadelphia and Berea through personal relationships with other participants. These results indicate that communities formed in the current wave have very little generational connection with communities of the fourth wave; thus, Hout et al.’s demographic perspective of strength and vitality does not apply in this case.

Nonetheless, apart from age, other demographic characteristics of freewill individualistic and expressive communities tend to mirror each other. For example, both sets of communities tend to be all white or have a low racial and ethnic minority presence\(^{29}\) (Appendix B: Table 3.5). Only 28 percent of the 51 communities surveyed report that racial and ethnic minorities constitute more than 20 percent of their membership\(^{30}\). Likewise, members of both sets of communities tend to be educated. Although expressive communities have more members, on average, who completed post-graduate degrees, approximately 50 percent of both freewill individualistic and expressive communities have memberships where more than 75 percent or more of the members have a college degree of some type (Table 3.6). Similarly, in terms of gender, a majority of communities in both sets report a general mix of males and females (Table 3.7). However, although not statistically significant, 20 percent of freewill individualistic communities note a disproportionate presence of males\(^{31}\) compared to expressive communities.
where this occurs in only 9 percent of the cases. Thus, except for the presence of members between the ages of 51 and 69, freewill individualistic and expressive communities tend to exhibit similar demographic profiles.

Similarly, however, is not the case in terms of residential choices. Two-thirds of expressive communities chose to reside in urban areas and nearly 58 percent of expressive communities include members who live on the same piece of property (Appendix B: Table 3.8). Both of these results are significantly different from residential choices of freewill individualistic communities, which choose to locate in urban, suburban, and rural areas generally equally and report that only 16 percent of communities have members who reside on the same piece of property. In keeping with the concept of “being missional,” approximately a quarter of expressive communities specifically chose their location due to the perceived material and spiritual needs of the neighborhood. This result stands in stark contrast with freewill individualistic communities, none of which chose their location based on perceived needs of the neighborhood (Appendix B: Table 3.8). Additionally, 61 percent of expressive communities have an explicit goal to improve the neighborhood in which they reside, again reflecting “being missional”; whereas, only 39 percent of freewill individualistic communities report the same (Appendix B: Table 3.9). Nonetheless, in terms of external relationships, both sets of communities tend to know more than 10 of their neighbors and report having no to some conflict with them (Appendix B: Table 3.9).

Likewise, in terms of internal relationships, communal and family behaviors are generally similar in both sets of communities (Appendix B: Table 3.10 and 3.11 respectively), except that expressive communities tend to gather at times other than meals when compared to freewill
individualistic communities (Appendix B: Table 3.10). The higher frequency of gathering in expressive communities may be a result of three phenomena. First, if freewill individualistic communities include more families than expressive communities the likelihood of gathering at times other than meals would decrease as these families would have to juggle schedules and privacy issues in relation to the other members of the community. Second, since expressive communities tend to choose to reside on the same piece of property, it is logical to infer that, since they live together, they are more likely to meet together outside of conventional meeting times, such as meals. Moreover, the frequency of meeting in expressive communities may be a reflection of expressive communalism, which stresses the practice of rituals within a collective body. For example, when an expressive community has to make a big decision, or for that matter any decision, they might gather together as a collective to engage in the decision-making process; hence creating a greater need for meetings outside of meals. This inference is supported by the fact that less than half of the expressive communities in the survey report not having a defined leader or subordinate leader positions, while an overwhelming majority are governed by consensus decision-making processes (Appendix B: Table 3.12). These collective forms of governance stand in significant contrast to freewill individualistic communities that, in almost 90 percent of the cases, have a defined leader and engage in a variety of decision-making processes other than just consensus (Appendix B: Table 3.12).

The difference in decision-making processes between the two sets of communities extends into financial decisions as well. Seventy-two percent of freewill individualistic communities allow the leadership of the community to make financial decisions compared to only 42 percent of expressive communities (a statistically significant difference), which typically prefers making
financial decisions based on consensus (Appendix B: Table 3.13). Although these results are most likely a manifestation of ideological differences, they also could be an indication that freewill individualistic communities have financial structures which need a greater amount of directive decision-making. Freewill individualistic communities tend to produce more income for themselves and have a significantly greater number of members who are employed in medical services and engineering fields compared to expressive communities, which have significantly more members employed in human services, such as social work (Appendix B: Table 3.13). Furthermore, it should be noted that, although not statistically significant, freewill communities, on average, have more communities which completely share finances (e.g., a common purse) as opposed to expressive communities (Appendix B: Table 3.13). Inferred in these results is the impression that freewill individualistic communities generally have larger organizational budgets than expressive communities, which, if true, would more easily be managed by a concentrated leadership (e.g., a single leader or a small group of leaders) to ensure efficient financial execution. Hence, as opposed to consensus, directive decision-making found in freewill individualistic communities may be a pragmatic solution either than, or in accompaniment to, ideological orientation.

As in forms of governance, essential beliefs are another area where significant differences occur between these two sets of communities. Expressive communities allow a higher degree of variation in essential beliefs than freewill individualistic communities. Whereas only 66.7 percent of expressive communities note a high degree of unity in essential beliefs, 94.1 percent freewill individualistic communities note the same (Appendix B: Table 3.10). This difference, which is statistically significant, is reflected in fact that close to 80 percent of freewill
individualistic communities prohibit some individuals from joining, which is significantly greater than the 45 percent of expressive communities that prohibit some individuals from joining (Appendix B: Table 3.10). Such emphasis on exclusive membership may be an indication of the strides that freewill individualistic communities take to protect their essential beliefs; whereas the inclusive nature of expressive communities allows for much more variation.

Accordingly, this exclusive/inclusive dichotomy is reflected in the significantly different ways that the two sets of communities engage greater society. Table 3.14 (Appendix B) shows that a large majority of freewill individualistic communities either do not engage in society (e.g., are separatists) or maintain their essential beliefs while fully engaged with society. On the other hand, almost 40 percent of expressive communities note that their essential beliefs are influenced by societal culture. This difference in engagement with society is echoed in the different ways in which the two sets of communities provide educational programs for their community and their neighborhood. In terms of community programming, a significantly larger number of freewill individualistic communities, as opposed to expressive communities, provide educational as well as religious programs for members and require prospective members to complete a class before achieving full membership (Appendix B: Table 3.15). However, in terms of neighborhood programming, expressive communities offer significantly more religious and outreach programs than freewill individualistic communities. Thus, these results indicate that programs offered by freewill individualistic communities tend to be exclusive and inward focused while programs offered by expressive communities tend to be “missional” - inclusive and outward focused.
Given the ideological orientation of both communities such results are not surprising, nor are the consequential effects that exclusivity and inclusivity have on belief systems. Since expressive communities allow a greater degree of cultural influence they tend to adopt a pluralistic theology that tolerates much more variation in religious thought and practice when compared to freewill individualistic communities. While both freewill individualistic and expressive communities are inclined to view human sin in the same way, there are differences, both substantial and statistically significant, between the communities' views of Biblical inspiration, man’s relationship with Christ, and whether or not Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for humanity (Appendix B: Table 3.16). First, in terms of Biblical inspiration, 100 percent of freewill communities state that they view the Bible as the inspired word of God; whereas approximately 75 percent of expressive communities state the same. Although this difference is not statistically significant, of those communities who view the Bible as the inspired word of God, 82 percent of freewill individualistic communities report that the Bible is true in all ways, which is significantly different when compared to 44 percent of expressive communities that report the same. Likewise, expressive communities describe man’s relationship with Christ differently than freewill individualistic communities. Where 100 percent of freewill individualistic communities affirm that members have, “a personal relationship with Christ,” only 63 percent of expressive communities agree (a statistically significant difference), while another 30 percent would not describe member’s faith as a “personal relationship with Christ.” Lastly, expressive communities report a significantly larger amount of variation than freewill individualistic communities in terms of viewing Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation (e.g., faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven). Although 82 percent of freewill
individualistic communities believe that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation, this is true for only 37 percent of expressive communities, with another 37 percent claiming that there are ways to salvation other than Jesus Christ and the remaining 27 percent of communities reporting too much variation between members, or the community’s inability to make a definite statement on this issue.

Ultimately these results demonstrate that expressive communities tend to be more pluralistic in their religious beliefs than freewill individualistic communities, which accompanies the inclusive-outward and exclusive-inward perspectives of these communities. On the one hand, if a community’s ideology demands “being missional”, thereby allowing porous boundaries that permit individuals of varying religious beliefs and depths to enter into community life, then it is reasonable to expect ideological pluralism, as is the case with expressive communities. On the other hand, as is the case with freewill individualistic communities, if a community’s ideology demands a primary focus on an individual’s personal development through practices available only in the community and led by community leaders then it is sensible to expect tightly maintained boundaries around beliefs systems that prohibit variation, consequently limiting outside influences on community life.

SUMMARY

The results of the national survey of CICs reveals two sets of communities whose practices and beliefs appear to be influenced by their respective ideologies. Generally older and larger, freewill individualistic communities focus inwardly on the spiritual development of individuals through communal practices. These practices are established and maintained by directive
decision-making which provides rigid symbolic boundaries that protect the unity of communal beliefs. Younger and smaller, expressive communities facilitate actions through the collective, such as consensus decision-making, while placing heavy emphasis on “being missional” to their local neighborhood. For many expressive communities this outward focus is assisted by residing in urban environments that provide a platform for neighborhood programming and inclusive personal relationships resulting in pluralistic religious beliefs.

Given these two types, I have chosen Philadelphia as a representative of freewill individualistic communities and Berea as a representative of expressive communities. In many ways Philadelphia and Berea fit the molds of these sets of communities. Philadelphians share a financial common purse, have several community businesses, chose their neighborhood out of convenience rather than mission, employ a hierarchical form of governance with major decisions made by a non-elected leadership, focus on individual’s inward spiritual development, and tend to be exclusive in their religious beliefs. In contrast, Bereans have a high number of advanced degrees amongst their membership, chose their location with the explicit goal to be a resource to the underprivileged people of the neighborhood, tend to work in many human service occupations, share possession but not a common purse, employ a consensus-seeking governance that provides all members power in the decision-making process, focus on an outward embodiment of faith, and tend to be inclusive in their religious beliefs.

However, Philadelphia and Berea break the expectation of their respective categories when considering organizational and membership age. As noted in the introductory chapter, Philadelphia began five years ago and many of its members are under 30 years old; whereas, Berea started approximately twenty years ago and, while Bereans are generally younger than
50 years old, they are, on average, older than Philadelphians. Consequently, Berea tends to have more families than Philadelphia, which, as with age, contradicts the national sample. Nevertheless, in terms of other demographic characteristics, such as race and gender, both communities reflect expectations. This discordance between the dichotomous categorization argued for in this chapter and the communities’ organizational age, membership age, and number of families, do not make Philadelphia and Berea poor examples of freewill individualistic and expressive communities. On the contrary, they illustrate a point I have tried to make clear – Philadelphia behaves like a freewill individualistic community in most ways, yet displays some conventions expected of expressive communities; likewise, Berea behaves like an expressive community in most ways, yet displays some conventions expected of freewill individualistic communities. In either case, I have no problems framing Philadelphia and Berea as examples of freewill individualistic and expressive communities respectively. Therefore, the rest of this dissertation examines the life of Philadelphia and Berea with particular focus on what makes these communities thrive.
Chapter 4: “We live in a land of complacency”: Alienation in Philadelphia and Berea.

Having established a general understanding of contemporary Christian Intentional Communities (CICs), it is prudent to pause and review the aims of this project. While Chapter 1 introduced Berea and Philadelphia and Chapter 3 discussed the results of the national survey of CICs, Chapter 2 laid out the four research questions examined in this research:

1. Why do people join CICs?
2. How do CICs keep members committed to the community?
3. Why do these communities, more often than not, choose to reside in urban neighborhoods?
4. Why are CICs growing numerically?

This chapter focuses on question one, while the other three are addressed in later chapters.

A trivial answer to question one is that community members use their personal networks to recruit friends and family; hence, individuals join CICs because they already know someone embedded in the community. Although there is merit to this answer (a majority of Philadelphians and Bereans knew someone else in the community prior to joining), it does not address why some people in a personal network join while others do not; there must be reasons beyond personal networking. Previous research has focused on one particular concept – alienation – as the primary determinant for why an individual would join an intentional community (Kanter 1972; Abrams and McCullough 1976; Hall 1978; Zablocki 1980; Aidala 1983). Accordingly, in my research I found that alienation, or in simple terms - an estrangement from some object¹, was a determining factor for why many Philadelphians and Bereans decided to join their communities. However, the alienation reported by members of both communities...
was not only in response to American society (e.g., mainstream media, dominant cultural ideologies, and the political system) on which previous research has concentrated, but also from Christian institutions, including many churches. In this sense, the alienation experienced by Philadelphians and Bereans was both societal and institutional. The latter has been relatively ignored in previous research.

I should note that I feel the same way about society and religious organizations as many of my consultants; therefore, I sympathized with their alienating experiences. Nevertheless, unlike my consultants, I have no desire to join a CIC. I am an alienated non-communitarian and I suspect that there are many members of society who would identify similarly. Accordingly, I recognize that alienation alone does not fully explain why or why not an individual would join an intentional community. Yet, in accordance with previous research, I demonstrate that alienating experiences are part of how Philadelphians and Bereans understand themselves - how alienation is a part of their joining narrative. Consequently, the task of this chapter is to demonstrate the ways in which societal and institutional alienation played a role in Philadelphians’ and Bereans’ decisions to join their communities. To accomplish this task the chapter is organized in four sections. The first section explains how alienation relates to individual explanations for joining intentional communities as established in previous research. This section will provide a theoretical and empirical justification for examining alienation amongst Philadelphians and Bereans. In the second section I critique existing research and argue for adaptations in our understanding of alienation when related to intentional community growth. Then, in the third and fourth sections, I discuss the ways in which Philadelphians and Bereans demonstrate alienation from society as mediated through
dominant institutions, such as the media, the economy, culture, the political system, and religion. Finally, I conclude this chapter by summarizing my argument and directing attention to the second aim of this project, exploring how members stay committed to CICs, addressed in Chapters 5 through 8.

ALIENATION AND INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY FORMATION

Before discussing the ways that Philadelphians and Bereans describe being alienated, we should first establish theoretical and empirical connections between alienation and reasons for individuals joining intentional communities. Marx is most famous for developing the concept of alienation in *The German Ideology* ([1845] 1978), but it was Mannheim who, despite never explicitly using the terms, established a theoretical connection between intentional community adherence and alienation (1936, 1952). He infers the connection when explaining his concepts of a “generational-unit” (1952) and “utopian mentality” (1936). Mannheim argues that during times of rapid social change, the experiences of younger generations become primarily contextual. He claims that the social conventions of the older generation may seem irrelevant to certain “units” of newer generations. These units bind together individuals who respond to the social dynamics of that time period in the same way. While some generational-units share the same social attitudes and perspectives of previous generations, others do not. Accordingly, these latter generational-units become estranged from prior generations. Mannheim (1952) argues that these estranged generational-units form concrete groups:

> ...where mutual stimulation...inflames the participants and enables them to develop integrative attitudes which do justice to the requirements inherent in their common [generational and social] ‘location.’ (P. 307)
In this sense, concrete groups form from individuals who share similar socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, even religious characteristics, but who also share a certain degree of alienation, in that they are estranged from the social attitudes and behaviors of previous generations. As these groups of alienated individuals gather together they form ‘integrative attitudes,’ which, Mannheim contends, culminate in utopian mentalities (1936). He defines utopian mentalities as ideological states of mind which are incongruous with the state of reality, and asserts that when utopian mentalities are implemented they “tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time” (Mannheim 1936:192). It is these ideological states of mind that become the foundation of intentional communities. Thus, in theory, intentional communities are formed by collections of individuals who, because of the differing social attitudes and behaviors between generations, feel alienated from society and find relief in groups that espouse a utopian ideology. CICs, then, become an option for individuals who desire their group’s utopian ideology to reflect Christian theology.

Given this theoretical backdrop, empirical studies have supported the idea that alienation is a determining factor for why individuals join intentional communities. In her study of historic American communes, Kanter (1972) claims that alienation occurred in one of three forms: (1) religious and spiritual communities that attracted individuals alienated from the sinfulness of the established order; (2) communities that are created by individuals who were alienated from the injustice and inhumanity of society; and (3) psychosocial growth communities that are inhabited by individuals who feel estranged and isolated from the social order. Although Hall notes that not all alienated individuals join intentional communities, there are some who
“entertain the utopian wish – of living in a new and meaningful world with others who share their dream” (1978:20). He continues,

Thus, those who want to move beyond alienated existence tend to seek out others with whom they can share a deviant perspective. For some, it is a matter of discovering a new, prophetically revealed way of life; for others, the impetus is simply the possibility of salvation from bleak possibilities in a world experienced as gone awry. (P. 20)

Abrams and McCullough (1976) are much more direct in making a connection between alienation and reasons for joining intentional communities. They state, “The impulse to communal living springs from a sense of personal estrangement, from feelings of threatened or frustrated individuality” (p. 93). Likewise Aidala (1983) concludes:

Communitarianism represents a quest for the discovery or creation of a well-integrated, circumscribed consensual community in response to the unraveling of prior social and cultural coherence. The great majority of communitarians were alienated or uncertain about conventional patterns in major institutional spheres. (P. 136)

As these accounts demonstrate, previous research has come to a consensus that people join intentional communities (both Christian and non-Christian) due to feelings of alienation. However, until Zablocki (1980), this research was lacking a deep exploration of the relationship between alienation and individual’s adherence to intentional communities. In his examination of 120 urban communes, Zablocki argues that, due to the inability of society to make collective decisions (e.g., the perceived ineffectiveness of the political process), some individuals will experience ideological and personal alienation; consequently, turning to alternative collectivities, such as intentional communities, that value the consensus seeking process (1980). Inferred in this argument are two claims that need further explanation. The first is that alienation occurs when a collectivity is unable to achieve consensus in the decision-
making process. Critiquing Seeman (1972; 1975), Zablocki (1980) contends that alienation is defined by three postulates:

1. [Alienation] has to do with estrangement from something to which one had a prior connection.
2. [Alienation] has to do with action and with the individual in his or her role as an actor, not wholly with metaphysical, spiritual, or emotional states.
3. [Alienation] is always a relationship between individual actors and a collective actor of which they are a part, or between an individual actor and himself or herself. (P. 258)

Given this conceptualization of alienation, Zablocki (1980) continues (emphasis added):

In these terms, we may consider an individual to be alienated from a collectivity when either the collectivity has taken action to which he or she cannot consent or the collectivity is unable, because of disagreement among its members, to take any action at all. An individual will be considered alienated from himself when he finds himself taking actions against which his conscience rebels or when he is unable, because of inner conflicts, to take action at all.

Because collectivities, unlike individuals, can rarely act without the mediation of self-conscious deliberation, my definition of alienation becomes closely tied to the process of collective decision making and hence to consensus. In fact, we can say that an individual will be alienated from a collectivity if and only if he perceives himself to be outside of the prevailing consensus or if objectively that consensus itself has been lost. (P. 258)

Zablocki further develops his argument by asserting that individuals operate on a hierarchical continuum of alienation. Depending on one’s increasing level of alienation, particular estrangements from a collectivity will be experienced. Below is a summary of Zablocki’s (1980) hierarchy of alienation with accompanying summaries and examples. The italicized examples are adapted from my interviews with Berean and Philadelphian consultants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alienation Category</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaninglessness</td>
<td>Dissensus between the individual and the collective in terms of the value of actions.</td>
<td><em>An individual is disgruntled with television networks because he or she finds television shows meaningless and void of substance.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation Category</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Aimlessness</td>
<td>Dissensus between the individual and collectivity in terms of the prioritization of behavioral preferences.</td>
<td>An individual is frustrated with the perceived complacency of Americans, who seek comfortable suburban living. He or she believes Americans have the wrong “aims” in life. Hence, because society’s aims, do not match his or her own, he or she feel aimless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>Since rational strategies of action cannot produce beneficial outcomes, the individual perceives the collective decision-making process as ineffective and therefore withdraws from the process.</td>
<td>Citing the brokenness of the American political system an individual stops exercising his or her right to vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normlessness</td>
<td>An individual no longer understands expectations about how to live because, due to the perceived lack of accountability and enforcement, collective decision-making is unpredictable.</td>
<td>Upon graduating from college an individual is expected to find a job and contribute tax dollars to society. However, in a poor economy with minimal government intervention on the behalf of entry-level workers, the graduating student cannot do what is expected of him or herself, causing the graduating student to feel tension between societal expectations and his or her lived experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-estrangement</td>
<td>The individual does not know how to maintain his or her own sovereign rights, or how to withdraw from the collectivity; thus the individual represses his or her feelings of alienation and submits to the collective’s dominant practices and ideologies.</td>
<td>Despite a deep distrust in the American political system and a perceived ineffectiveness of the democratic process, an individual feels forced to vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Alienation</td>
<td>Collectivity makes decisions that reflect the interests of the individual. The individual and collectivity are in consensus.</td>
<td>Societal values do not conflict with the values of the individual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this sense, alienation builds in individuals over successive categories until the individual withdraws from society, or becomes alienated from his or her self (e.g., self-estranged), eventually submitting to society’s dominant practices and ideologies.

To support his argument, Zablocki (1980) employed two alienation scales, the 1974 NORC Measures of Anomie and the 1974 Harris Poll, which allowed for a comparison of reported alienation scores between the general population and communitarians. His results demonstrate that commune members experienced just as much powerlessness and normlessness as the general population, but communitarians reported much lower levels of self-estrangements, indicating that “precommunal alienation is frequently expressed in the inability to determine one’s preferences, and thus to make decisions, under such cognitively kaleidoscopic conditions” (Zablocki 1980:100). Furthermore, although this is not the case for non-religious communes, Zablocki (1980) found that members of religious communes joined primarily to achieve ideological goals, which indicates that such goals were unachievable in society-at-large. Inferred in this result is that members of religious communities join because they have experienced an ideological dissensus (e.g., meaninglessness or aimlessness) with another collectivity. However, Zablocki (1980) does caution that not all community members have experienced alienation; rather, intentional communities are populated by an “alienated majority” (p. 102). Thus, given these results, I can expect some members of Philadelphia and Berea to reveal lower levels of alienation, such as meaninglessness and aimlessness, with fewer consultants describing higher levels of alienation, such as powerlessness, normlessness, and self-estrangement, while others will report experiencing no alienation at all.
The second claim that needs further explanation is that intentional communities provide a collective in which consensus can be achieved. Although the process for consensus making will be examined in more depth in Chapter 5, the actual presence of consensus in intentional communities can be established here. Zablocki (1980) demonstrates that, of the eight ideological types of intentional communities, five (Eastern Spiritual communities, Christian communities, psychological communities, rehabilitative communities, and political communities) have memberships in which more than 75 percent of participants share similar ideas in religion and politics. This result indicates that, typically, most communities (particularly, for our interests, Christian communities) have a membership with similar ideas about these topics – ideas that possibly formed in reaction to similar feelings of alienation. In this sense, intentional communities develop a subject of ideological consensus (e.g., the stuff that people agree on) that is inversely related to a subject of ideological dissensus (e.g., the stuff that people do not agree on), which individuals experience in an opposing collectivity. For example, an individual feels a degree of aimlessness in society because he or she strongly believes diplomacy is the proper course of conflict resolution between two nations; whereas the general population believes that armed conflict is the proper course of resolution. This individual has a choice: continue to be aimless, or form a group with others who experience this same dissensus so as to develop a consensus concerning diplomacy as the proper course of conflict resolution. In view of that choice, I expect that Philadelphians and Bereans will share similar alienating experiences because they have sought out a collective whose ideology speaks directly to those experiences. Ultimately, I find that Zablocki’s argument confirms Mannheim’s theoretical proposition - the process of intentional community formation occurs when
individuals who feel alienated from society form like-minded groups to build consensus around their ideological or personal convictions. However, Zablocki’s argument, and by extension the claims of his predecessors, must be subject to criticism. In the next section I offer two critiques of Zablocki’s argument as well as subsequent adaptations that will help us better understand the ways in which alienation plays a determining role in individuals’ decisions to join CICs.

CRITIQUE AND ADAPTATION
The first critique concerns Zablocki’s notion that alienation is structured as a hierarchy in that an individual cannot experience normlessness unless they first experience (in consecutive order) meaninglessness, aimlessness, and powerlessness. Although theoretically plausible, empirically this claim is hard to support. In one sense, we could set up several scales that measure each level of alienation and hypothesize that an individual who experiences normlessness will also score high on scales of meaninglessness, aimlessness, and powerlessness; however, obtaining these results seems very improbable and does not demonstrate hierarchical alienation, only that various categories of alienation are occurring simultaneously. Moreover, as happened in my interviews with Philadelphians and Bereans, when an individual shared his or her experiences he or she often talked about his or her present state of alienation and not necessarily the process by which he or she became alienated. Even as I pressed Philadelphians and Bereans about their levels of alienation they mostly referred to their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in response to their present state of
estrangement. Consequently, I am not convinced that alienation is hierarchical as Zablocki
claims.

Nevertheless, I think Zablocki’s categorization of alienation is concise and well-developed;
thus, I will not completely disregard his conceptualization. Instead, I will refer back to Seeman
(1972) who notes that alienation can be experienced at one or several levels simultaneously,
but not necessarily in a hierarchical pattern. In this case, an individual could feel aimlessness
without feeling meaninglessness\textsuperscript{11}. For example, Dwayne, a consultant from Philadelphia
reported that, although he values civic responsibility, he thinks the behaviors of Americans are
not benefitting society:

Mark: Do you pay taxes? Do you vote? Do you [support public] education?
Dwayne: I love civil responsibility.
Mark: Okay. [Laughter]
Dwayne: I love it. Everybody should vote, follow the rules, pay your taxes. Love it.
Mark: Okay….
Dwayne: But, um, yeah. The Bible says that, you know, God puts all the authorities in
place.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Dwayne: And we're supposed to honor those authorities even if they're not great ones.
Uh, we're supposed to do that, so definitely all for it. I mean, I don't like our
society, and I think it's really bad. But I think that there are a lot of things
we're still responsible for doing. So learning for sure, I think to a degree just
being aware of current events and stuff like that is important. I mean, I think it
leads to teaching [inaudible] spiritual side of things….
Mark: …Yeah. Um, what, what do you, you said you think society…
Dwayne: Sure
Mark: …is bad. What are the, the bad parts?
Dwayne: Uh, we're just talkin' about American society?
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: Um, it's just so selfish and it's just, I mean, anything that's not like the obvious
evil. Uh, I think if you just step back and look at our society nobody's like,
“[it's] goin' in a great direction”, you know?
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Dwayne: Uh, yeah, just look at the news. Um, just people killing each other and hurting
each other. Nobody believes a politician, like that's sad.
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: They're all liars, people say. So, you know, we're voting for the least evil one, you know, the lesser of two evils. But I don't think anybody would really say we have a great culture or society.

In this case, Dwayne agrees with the established ideology that citizens of the United States need to be civically engaged; thus he is not experiencing meaninglessness. However, he is experiencing a degree of aimlessness in that he believes that American society has wrongly prioritized behavioral preferences. According to Dwayne American society prioritizes selfishness, lying, and violence (e.g., killing and hurting); consequently our behavioral preferences are “going in the wrong direction” (e.g., American society is aimless). The point here is that Dwayne experiences aimlessness without experiencing meaninglessness, contradicting Zablocki’s assertion that he should experience both in consecutive order. However, I am not suggesting that Zablocki’s approach is invalid because of this single case. Rather, since many of my consultants framed alienating experiences similarly to Dwayne, I cannot confirm that alienation is hierarchical and, therefore, do not treat it as such in this research.

My second critique focuses on the ways in which previous research refers to alienation primarily in regards to society-at-large, a fairly amorphous object, as opposed to specific social institutions, such as the government, economy, and religion, in which individuals’ interactions are defined more precisely. There are two exceptions: (1) Zablocki (1980) notes that an individual can be alienated from any generic collectivity, including society, social institutions, and, even intentional communities which were developed to resolve issues of alienation. However, Zablocki's (1980) framing of alienation apart from a generic collectivity is relatively weak. He does not provide depth as to the differences that may occur between an individual
who experiences societal alienation and one that experiences institutional alienation; (2) Only Aidala (1983), who uses the same data as Zablocki, examines alienation on an institutional level. She refutes claims that individuals join communes only because they feel alienated from their families, concluding that “individuals in communes were estranged from dominant cultural frames in all major institutional spheres, not simply with regard to the family” (Aidala 1983:136).

In accordance with Aidala, I found that my consultants would frame responses in terms of their interactions with social institutions, as opposed to society-in-general. Although I would ask consultants, “What are your thoughts on American society?” most, like Dwayne, would talk about their views of the American political process (“politicians are liars”), media (“just look at the news”), or, as I will show in other cases, economic culture (often mentioning consumerism), general culture (critiques of individualism), and particularly relevant to this study, religion (especially evangelicalism). In fact, when I asked consultants their impressions of evangelicalism, they often shared alienating experiences directly related to why they joined a CIC. Thus, although I cannot reject the analytical importance of societal alienation, I contend that experiences of alienation amongst members of CICs are framed in response to social institutions, primarily religion, not primarily to society-at-large.

Therefore, this project extends previous research in two ways: (1) individuals can experience one or several different types of alienation simultaneously, but not always in a hierarchical manner; and (2) experiences of alienation are framed primarily in response to social institutions. Although I reference only a few consultants in the next two sections, those
that I cite are representative of multiple accounts witnessed or shared with me during my ethnographic research.

INSTITUTIONAL ALIENATION AMONGST MEMBERS OF CICS

In many ways the institutional alienation experienced by Philadelphians and Bereans is quite similar. For example, several consultants in both communities felt a degree of alienation from media sources. Jonathan, a Berean, addressed his alienation in terms of media content:

Like...I hate these reality shows...I mean I can’t stand them, but apparently they’re really popular because, like, more, and more, and more, and more [Laughter]...All day and night...It’s like fake drama.

Darrell, a relatively new Philadelphian, referenced how much influence media has on American culture:

I believe that society is being drastically influenced by the media now. As I’ve said, I think people, after they get home from work, they go home and they just turn on the TV. At night you can drive around the neighborhood and you see blue screen, after blue screen, after blue screen\(^1\)....So I think, I think our culture is extremely sick.

In these cases, Jonathan and Darrell report experiences of meaninglessness and aimlessness respectively. On the one hand, Jonathan shares that he values authenticity in media content as opposed to the inauthenticity of popular television; indicating that, for him, popular media content is, for him, meaningless\(^1^7\). On the other hand, Darrell laments his neighbors’ preferences for television and assumes that such preferences beget cultural afflictions, suggesting that he feels aimless in a culture that is “drastically influenced by the media.”

However, Jonathan and Darrell do not reveal how, or whether, their experiences of media alienation led them to join a CIC. Yet, an account from Stephanie, a Berean thirty-something mother of two, sheds partial light on this connection:
Stephanie: Um, American society. I am an old person in a young person’s body.
Mark: [Laughter]
Stephanie: I’m not kidding you. I am 90 years old.
Mark: Okay.
Stephanie: I think that everything has gone to hell in a hand basket. We are so consumeristic….I can’t stand technology. [Laughter]
Mark: Okay.
Stephanie: And it’s, it’s worshipped, you know, the constant putting of oneself on Twitter and Facebook updating and just the constant way we can, just what’s the right, [pause] instant gratification, like I’m so against instant gratification…
Mark: Uh-huh.
Stephanie: For myself, for my children. I think it’s, I don’t know. [pause] Yeah, there’s something wrong with it, and our society worships it. So I am very skeptical and in general like to stay a little isolated from it in that we don’t own a television. I do not like to be advertised to. I don’t want my children feeling the need to use technology to fill in the gap for a moment if they don’t know what to do. You know, I want them to behave other ideas besides what media is constantly feeding into them, so.
Mark: Yeah.
Stephanie: Anyway, I don’t hate it [Society] because I like Starbucks. [Laughter]
Mark: [Laughter] So it’s not everything, but it’s…
Stephanie: I don’t hate everything.

Here, we see that Stephanie’s disgust with instant gratification, particularly in response to media sources such as Twitter, Facebook, and television, influenced her to implement a household policy of television abstinence. As opposed to surrounding her family with individuals whose values do not reflect such behavior, Stephanie’s austerity can be achieved with much greater ease if she lives with individuals who also practice television abstinence, as is the case with many Bereans. Hence, living in a community with ideological consensus helps individuals achieve values that are more difficult to achieve in society-at-large.
As with Stephanie, approximately half of my consultants (18 out of 40) from both communities discussed the consumerist nature of Americans. When I asked a Berean named Ann her thoughts of American society she remarked:

I think we have, uhm, we’re very, very privileged, and I, [pause] the word ‘consumerism’ pops into my mind. I think we are just ingraining ourselves with consuming things and information ex-exponentially faster than, and resources, faster than the rest of the world.

Consultants who responded like Ann typically cited what I have labeled as, “econo-cultural alienation,” a type of alienation that intersects culture and the economy. For example, Ann’s comment is framed as a cultural behavior (e.g., Americans consume things), yet juxtaposed to the material abundance that is an outcome of economic growth (e.g., Americans consume resources). Included in these accounts of econo-cultural alienation are mentions of greed and entitlement. For instance, Jane, a Philadelphian in her late twenties, commented:

Um, American society as a whole I think is overindulgent. I think it’s, um, very geared toward the addictive mindset: “I need it now,” “give me my fix now.” Whether that be with fast food, alcohol, drugs, um, television, internet, technology, anything. Um, I feel like Americans today have the mentality that, excuse me, it’s the younger generation [that has] the mentality of, “I’m entitled.” “I am, I should have a good job.” “I should have a nice car.” “I should not have to work for half of the stuff that I have.” “And my parents owe me half of what they’ve gained,” um, and “things should just come easy.” Well no, that’s not how life works.

As with Ann, Jane frames her cultural alienation in economic terms (e.g., work, material possessions, and inheritance), signifying that American economic culture, although subjectively perceived, is meaningless to her.

Again, as with Stephanie it is important to note how, or whether, econo-cultural alienation relates to why an individual would join a CIC. Grace, a stay-at-home Berean mother, provides this link:
Mark: ...And so what’s your, how would you, how do you view American society?
Grace: You know, I mean, I think that’s exciting to see, um, people living, working hard to do things, but I mean, I also think that overall, the society is kind of like one big, um, consumeristic machine....And it’s like, what place in the cog are you gonna be?...And if you’re not, then you kind of try and eke out a living doing something else, you know, like kind of the whole starving artist or, you know...they're gonna do something different. They're not gonna, you know, they're not gonna do the...
Mark: Not gonna conform.
Grace: Yeah, they're not gonna conform to that, like, societal machine, so they're gonna, you know, be this enclave of poets or artists or, um...
Mark: Intentional
Grace: Intentional communities. Intentional communities, um, we're gonna do something different. We're gonna try and live different...

Likewise, Rebekah, a Philadelphian, shared,

And, uh, America’s is, has a very selfish focus...And I think a lot of the ideals that America has are not physical ideals. Um. Cuz I mean this is just one thing that I, that we, as a community have been talking about and praying about, and even seeking the Word [the Bible] on, in our own life. Is that in America, you know, like it’s actually considered a really good thing to have an American Dream. And to want to do better, and have a good job that’s gonna pay well, and have a good retirement fund. But actually from a Biblical viewpoint that’s a selfish ambition, and that’s bad. [Chuckles]

We see in Grace and Rebekah’s accounts how the community works in relation to their ideological dissensus from society-at-large. Philadelphia and Berea act as a refuge from the established econo-cultural ideology exemplified in the American Dream – work hard to achieve financial security. A member of a CIC will receive emotional, financial, material, and spiritual support if he or she chooses to reject the American Dream by doing “something different.”

However, I should note that many members of Berea and Philadelphia work in professional, service, or blue-collar occupations, which demand that they operate as a “cog in the machine.”

In fact, Philadelphians are required to work forty hours a week¹⁹. If a Philadelphian is unemployed they are expected to be actively seeking a new job while fulfilling their forty hour
work commitment either on a community work crew\textsuperscript{20} or through a community-associated business\textsuperscript{21}. Nevertheless, despite the reality of living in a capitalist society, a reason why some Philadelphians and Bereans joined their communities was the ability to gather with like-minded individuals who share similar econo-cultural values.

One last set of culturally alienating experiences are shared by both Philadelphians and Bereans. In interviews several of my consultants framed American culture as too individualistic, and individually isolating. Jane, who was introduced earlier, had this to say:

\begin{quote}
Jane: And our society has become so independent driven that they forget, “oh wait, no that’s not what we’re supposed to be.”... “And we’re not supposed to be enmeshed either,” and somewhere along the lines we’ve forgotten the middle ground of being interdependent upon one another....Um, I’ve had to learn that personally because I grew up in [a rural area] I’m going to work for what I’m, I’ve got.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Mark: Uh-huh.
Jane: I’ve had a job since I was, I don’t know, 15 and younger. Um, granted I didn’t make a lot of money at that point, and my parents still provided for me.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Mark: Uh-huh.
Jane: But I was working....
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Mark: So being in community, learning interdependence.
Jane: Okay, yeah so it’s, it’s, well part of it is my, my education. Part of it is wanting to be interdependent with my husband....That was the first relationship that I really learned how to do that....Um, and being in community it has grown my world view and my, um, my realization that no it isn’t just a one-on-one relationship of interdependence. It’s community interdependence, it’s saying, “Oh my gosh the sister in the community can go pick up my kids from school.” Um, um, it’s, “I don’t have a washer and dryer accessible to me that I have, that I don’t have to pay for.” So it’s going to other people’s houses to do my laundry.
\end{quote}

Similarly, Josiah, a member of Berea, shared the following:

\begin{quote}
Josiah: Um, I think that, um, as an American society in general, that we tend to be isolated people, that many of us are locked in our rooms, on the computer, watching television, uh, we’re very disconnected from one another. And I very much believe that community is the antidote for that. You know, I think because of that, there is a lot of rampant
loneliness. And I think a lot of that stems from the whole self-made persona image that, that, um, that a lot of, that a lot of us have bought into.

Mark: Kind of you achieve for yourself.
Josiah: That’s right, that’s right. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps and, you know, you can, you know, uh, rags to riches stories. I did it all on my own, you know. Um, and as I’ve gotten older, I have just realized the fallacy of that, and how important that your dependence is.

Since these consultants live communally it would be hard to determine if these experiences led individuals to join their CIC, or if, on the other hand, living in community caused individuals to reflect on society creating this sense of alienation. Nonetheless, these accounts illustrate that Philadelphians and Bereans understand themselves in light of these experiences of alienation.

As with media, econo-cultural, and cultural alienation, members of both communities reported alienating experiences from the American political system. For example, Darrell, like many other consultants, referenced the corruption and brokenness of the political process.

Continuing Darrell’s previous conversation:

Darrell: As I’ve gotten closer to God, I really can’t stand the motto God Bless America. I really don’t like people that think America, I think people are crazy who think America is the best country on the planet.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Darrell: I think they’re naïve and ignorant. I don’t trust our political system....It’s gotten very corrupt as of late. I don’t believe our politicians support the common man. I don’t think they answer to us anymore.

Additionally, Grace adds to her previous comments by noting the brokenness of government systems:

I mean, it’s just, it’s a broken. I mean, broken people make broken systems. You know, and you look at all the broken systems in America and it’s, just the fact that, I mean, you look at the broken systems around the world, you know, but from the, the foster and adoption system to the welfare system to, I mean, it’s just, it’s sad....I mean, there’s a lot of need, there’s a lot of brokenness, there’s a lot of generational sin\(^2\). There’s no easy, quick fixes. I mean, you take away something like welfare and you’ve got people that have depended on it, and it’s
not necessarily their fault, it’s all they’ve ever known, you know. People kind of treat it with this crass sort of like “Well, you just get rid of it, you get rid of those people.

At this point Grace shifts her tone and approaches this topic with much more introspection:

You know, and it’s like, well, those people are my neighbors. Those people are me when I needed it, you know?...Those people are, you know, yeah, so it, it just becomes not so abstract any more. It becomes “These are people.” This is not, you know, so, um, I don’t know. That’s a really, that’s a complicated question.

Although Darrell and Grace reported similar experiences of political alienation, in general Philadelphians’ political estrangement did not extend as far as Bereans’ estrangement.

Seventeen of the 20 interviewed consultants from Philadelphia indicated that they vote in national elections, compared to only nine of the 20 interviewed consultants from Berea. When I inquired as to why Philadelphians continued to participate in the political process despite feeling alienated from the American political system, many responded by stating a religious obligation to “honor authority,” which, in this context, means to actively engage with governing powers even if one does not agree with them. For example, when I asked Lillian, a Philadelphian, if she was a good citizen, she replied:

I, uh [laughing,] I do vote, I do pay taxes. Um, I think the Lord has called us to obey the government. Like that’s what he’s called us to pray for them and to support like, I think, one of the biggest thing[s] I’ve learned in community is like the Lord has a high view of, a high view of authority. And whereas [I] disdained it in the past, like it’s actually meant for our protection or our good and we’re meant to pray for our leaders and to, and to ask for the Lord’s help in that, other than just politically fight them. But to actually like pray for them cuz that’s just, that’s what’s actually gonna make a difference. [pause] Um, yeah. I think that there’s a lot of things wrong with American society as a whole but that’s because we have sin and that’s like, uh, where like I’m part of that issue. I’m part of that problem and they, it says that you turn, like repent and turn from their wicked ways that he’ll heal our land. Like [God] said that we’ll pray for them and he’ll be able to heal them, so. I think that, yeah, well, we’re doing a lot of things that are counter-culture I don’t think it’s like things that are necessarily, we don’t wanna disobey the government [laughing].
Julia, a consultant from Philadelphia, went as far to report that:

The whole question [on tax forms] of did you buy off the Internet and not pay sales tax to [a Mid-western State], and it used to be no, I didn’t. And, now, it’s like I’m totally convicted if I don’t say yes, and write down what I did. I mean, half the time, I don’t even know what I bought by that point, so I’m just like, oh, I’ll guess at it and I’ll put something; “Lord, you know me. I’m trying here. I didn’t keep track of it.” Um, so, yes, I pay taxes. And it is what it is.

Thus, in relation to the American political system, most Philadelphians feel that they experience a degree of meaninglessness (e.g., Darrell doesn’t agree with the customary meaning of the phrase, ‘God Bless America’) and aimlessness (e.g., the common man is aimless since politicians’ preferences no longer support the preferences of the common man). Yet, as demonstrated by Lillian and Julia, Philadelphians do not feel powerless or normless; rather, due to their religious devotion, they feel empowered to participate in the political process with the hope (e.g., “…we will pray for them..”) that such participation, combined with a little Providence (e.g., “…God will…”), will resolve their alienation (“…heal our land.”).

On the other hand, Bereans not only reported experiences of meaninglessness and aimlessness in relation to the American political system, but also powerlessness and, as one Berean consultant shared, normlessness. As previously noted, a majority of Bereans do not vote in national elections. Stephanie, the Berean mother I introduced earlier, shared with me her reasons for not voting:

Mark: Are you a good citizen?
Stephanie: Well [laughter], well, I think I’m a good citizen, yes, because I pay my taxes. I don’t litter. I follow the rules. I’m a big rule follower, but I don’t vote. I’ve never been registered to vote....We [including her husband] choose not to be because I don’t, I can’t speak for him. I see voting as a way of saying I trust this system to save us, and I don’t, and so abstaining from voting is my way of just saying God’s in charge anyway, so not that it doesn’t matter, but God’s in charge.
Although Stephanie does not explicitly cite the brokenness of the American political system as her refusal for participating in the political process, her comment implies that rational strategies of action (e.g., the political process) cannot produce beneficial outcomes, or, in her words, “save us.” Consequently, Stephanie, justifying her political abstinence as an act of faith, refuses to participate in the political process. Other Bereans focus all of their energy on local political systems as a substitute for the powerlessness they experience when interacting with highly bureaucratic national systems. For example, Nicholas shared the following when I asked him his thoughts of American society:

I think the church is called to be involved and to be engaged and to be, um, actively seeking the good of the city, um, and so that's my encouragement to [Berea]. And, you know, even in conversations with my family, I think I try to advocate starting small, starting local. So there can be a lot of disillusionment when you think on a national level, but if you start thinking on a local city level or a local block level, like, how do we bring about change locally, how do we be a voice locally, that kind of tends to change the conversation.

And even for us, being able to support Sarah McGillicutty running for local city council last year, I think that was an encouraging affirmation to me of the power of a local focus, that when you move it out of the abstract of these national debates and whatever and say, well, what can we do here at a local level, it makes it more tangible and doable.

And again, whatever happens nationally is gonna have to happen on a local level, you know? I mean, whatever change people want in Washington is gonna have to change locally. So I mean, again, the whole top-down, trickle-down, whether that's politics, economics, I don't think it's a wise default. I think it's gotta be grassroots. It's gotta be, um, we have to be involved and have skin in the game, um, for things to change.

When comparing the responses of Philadelphians (Lillian and Julia) to Bereans (Stephanie and Nicholas) we see differences that characterize the two communities. On the one hand, for Philadelphians, political participation is an act of religious devotion, which is also true for some Bereans like Nicholas, who believe the church should be active in political systems, albeit on
local levels; however, for other Bereans like Stephanie, refusal to participate in the political system is framed also as an act of faith with the justification that humans cannot reconcile the dissensus of the American political system. Thus, generally speaking, a large majority of Philadelphians continue to participate in political systems despite experiences of meaninglessness and aimlessness; whereas, a large majority of Bereans either adapt their participation to levels where they are empowered, or out of their sense of powerlessness, refuse to participate at all.

Unlike all other interviewed consultants, Esther, a twenty-something Berean, indicated that societal expectations seemed ambiguous to her. When I asked her what she thought of American society she stumbled over her words in an attempt to express her emotions [emphasis added]:

Yeah. Um, I am, yeah, I think, like, rage, is kind of my, um, where I got when I think of it, like, in general, where we’re at. And, uh, confused about how, how to live...I don’t know the way forward with what I believe. Like, who, in terms of the presidential election coming up, and who I’m gonna vote for. Like, “Ah!” I voted for Obama last time, but some things have been said and I just, like, I can’t, you know, and I don’t like, I don’t know. I feel like at an impasse. Like, I’m pretty typical with a lot of, like, situations, youth or whatever, young adults do. Yeah, so.

Esther’s “rage”, “confusion’, and “impasse” directly relates to her perception of mixed societal expectations (e.g., about “how to live” and “the way forward”). Although she does not feel powerless in that she participates in the political process by voting, she feels normlessness as she finds it hard to determine the societal norms that ought to guide her life. When I asked if living in community resolves her alienation²⁴, Esther stated:

Um, I felt like it was a container for my confusion. I feel like it didn’t give me, like, it’s not structured enough to give me path [laughs], I know, but it’s a place to be loved while I’m trying to find the path, I think....I feel like, I feel like a lot
more rooted and secure and trusting with him [God], like, from before I came to the community....So, yeah, I guess that would be a fair description.

Thus, as with other accounts, Esther’s experience as a member of Berea confirms previous research that stresses the ways in which intentional communities help resolve individual’s alienation by providing a place where one can find “security” and “rootedness” in terms of how to live. For Esther this security and rootedness is aided by the love she receives from other Bereans. Consequently, since members of CICs have withdrawn from society in some regard, they rarely experience self-estrangement by submitting to dominant social practices and ideologies while repressing feelings of alienation. For example, Jonathan did not report watching reality television after noting its meaninglessness, nor did Stephanie, after describing her lack of trust in the American political system, tell me that she votes. The self-estranged are individuals who comprehend their alienation and yet feel compelled to act contradictory to it.

Since Philadelphians and Bereans find sanctuary in a community of individuals who have similar experiences they do not feel the need to inhibit their alienation nor acquiesce to dominant social practices and ideology; hence, in agreement with Zablocki’s previous research, none of my interviewed consultants reported self-estrangement.

Although I have illustrated examples of how Philadelphians and Bereans experience alienation from media, the economy, culture, and political systems, the institution that was referenced the most in regards to types of alienation was religion, particularly -- in the context of CICs -- American Christianity. In the next section I explain the various ways in which Philadelphians and Bereans were alienated from religion in terms of organizational priorities.
Before illustrating the ways in which Philadelphians and Bereans experience religious alienation, I should outline the general religious backgrounds of my consultants. A large majority of Philadelphians and Bereans reported attending church, both as children and adults, on a regular basis prior to joining their communities. Philadelphians typically attended a number of evangelical churches, in particular a large non-denominational suburban church and a nearby independent mega-church, while Bereans generally attended both mainline and evangelical denominational churches. Very few consultants had no, or minimal, religious experiences prior to joining the communities, indicating that conversions to Christianity rarely occurred in Philadelphia or Berea. Furthermore, both communities maintained active relationships with other religious organizations. As referenced in the dissertation’s introduction, Philadelphia works very closely with a nearby evangelical community church and Berea maintains their membership with the Vineyard Association (these relationships will be expanded upon in later chapters). Thus, one should understand that despite the forthcoming accounts of religious alienation, both communities continue to engage with other religious organizations and, although they do not conform in praxis (e.g., by living communally), they do adhere to theological traditions well-established in American Christianity.

Even so, when I asked Philadelphians their opinions of evangelicalism, the dominant orientation of American Protestants (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2010), half of the interviewed consultants needed clarification. After providing such clarification, two common experiences of alienation emerged amongst Philadelphians. The first, which was reported by 13 of the 20 interviewed consultants, involved the preference for charisms in worship, especially
the practice of glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophetic visions, and bodily expressions of worship (e.g., bowing, laying prostrate, lifting hands, closing eyes). Errol summarized most members’ comments when he reported:

Mark: ...What’s your view of the evangelical culture or evangelicalism?
Errol: Um, I mean, I definitely, I definitely believe that there is a significant chasm between the charismatic and the evangelical movement.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Errol: ...I think that it’s, it’s sad that people feel like you can, you can either choose to operate solely in the Holy Spirit or solely on the basis of doctrine.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Errol: And that they don’t recognize that you can’t have one without the other, um, so I definitely started out being in the evangelical movement....Um, and then having been introduced to the Holy Spirit I think it was good because I recognized, I mean, my analogy of the Holy Spirit has always been that it’s like nuclear power.

Errol continued to share that, like nuclear power, charisms can be used for good or for evil, therefore charismatic practice must always be balanced by Biblical precedence and the discernment among fellow practitioners as to the practice’s authenticity. Additionally, Kevin, a member of Philadelphia since 2008, shared with me his experiences of charisms while attending Philadelphian Bible studies compared to his experiences at an Evangelical college:

Kevin: So, it started for me in 2007. I went to Suburban High School and one of my friends, her older sister was leading a college group. We had all been to Suburban Evangelical Church in Mount London. Her older sister was leading a college group with her husband, actually, soon-to-be husband, and two other guys that I didn’t know at the time where Paul and Steven [the Philadelphian elders].

And, so, she invited me to come to her sister’s college group because we had both graduated that year, that summer. So we were like, I mean I was kind of resistant to it at first because I was involved with student ministry and I loved it and I just didn’t really, I just was not interested.

But, one night I decided to come and she brought me and two of my other friends and we just loved it. It was in an old apartment in Emery Place. 
and there was probably 15-20 young adults there, college age, all over, I mean people I had never met....I loved it and thought this was so, it was just unlike anything I’d ever encountered....

...I kept coming and I had a lot of profound encounters with the Lord that summer...then I kinda left for college.

And I actually, they did some prophetic ministry over me one night and I’d never been exposed to that, and that profoundly, I mean, it just opened my eyes to a lot. And, I went to college with kind of those things and it was, I don’t know, kinda just very new to me. It was interesting. It was challenging and I loved it.

Mark: Where did you go to college?
Kevin: I went to [Evangelical College]...was majoring in youth ministry...and loved it. I, you know, when I was in school I, I basically loved every bit. I mean I excelled in youth ministry. I loved it. I loved the program. It didn’t feel like school to me because it was like, I just loved it. I have a passion for this so I excelled in it.

...And every time I’d come home for break I would come back to group [Philadelphian Bible Study] or hang out...And, okay, so, fast forward. I graduated from, or not graduated, I finished my first year of school and I left very frustrated....I had the opportunity to travel a lot, mainly Iowa, east to different churches...from really small, like ten people is their max, in coal mining rural Pennsylvania, to you know, a huge church right outside of [College Town] that had like 10-15,000 [members].

So, [I had] a lot of different experiences, a lot of different exposure, talked to a lot of different pastors about lots of stuff.... I guess, after the compilation of all that stuff I got very frustrated with the church. I had done a research project for my, really it was just for myself, it wasn’t for school, about discipleship. And I interviewed professors on campus because everyone at, every professor on campus was a Christian, was supposed to be.

So, I interviewed people from the math department, science, the Bible department, all over, just to see, “You’re a Christian, how does this fit into your life discipleship?” So, long story short, the answers I heard, I didn’t, they were incongruent with what I saw in the Bible, that Jesus’ model was and what I saw in the early church.

So, I was disgruntled and frustrated and really drove home thinking, like, why did I become a Christian because I don’t want the typical Christian, American, get married and have kids and raise them to fear God and then just, you know, all that stuff. I just didn’t see any truth and I didn’t want
that. So, I was kind of like, I mean my heart was turning bitter towards all of that stuff.

Went home, got connected back to [Philadelphia] [inaudible] “Hey we just moved into this new house on Maynard Dr., I think you should come check it out.” Came by, that was in...late April 2008. Came by, saw it, went to group, and it was just awesome. I loved it again. There was more people that time; probably it had grown to about 40 or 50. Then the house, crammed a bunch of people that night. I loved it.

It was good to see everyone. At the same time, I was filled with the Holy Spirit a lot^{32} ....Long story short, at any rate, I ended up, the Lord basically, the second time I came to group the Lord sat me down on one of their couches after group and basically said, Alex, you need to drop out of school, move into community, withdraw from all your ministry obligations this summer.... And, long story, I signed covenant^{33} the end of June, moved in at the end of July, and I think the rest is history.

Notice that Kevin specifically reports that it was a charism, a divine interaction, which convinced him to join the community (e.g., “the Lord sat me down”). Such interaction did not occur while researching evangelicalism, in fact it was just the opposite. In this sense, due to the lack of priority given to charisms in evangelical organizations, Errol and Kevin, as well as many other Philadelphians, felt aimless. However, their aimlessness was resolved when they joined Philadelphia, a community that prioritizes charismatic practices.

Another common experience of aimlessness amongst Philadelphians was framed as an issue of church’s organizational priorities. For example, when I asked Miriam, a member of Philadelphia for the past four years, about her thoughts of evangelicalism she stated:

I think that what makes me unsettled is the discipleship of it. Yeah, it’s great like go have these outreach ministries where like you know 2,000 people come to hear the Lord, but then what? What’s next? And I think, um...it unsettles me. I’ve been to Evangelical Megachurch several times over the last few years, and I know a lot of people who currently go there and have fun there...um [inaudible] it’s hard for me because it’s very showy....
Miriam continues by discussing the “light show” worship experience of Evangelical Megachurch and her dissonance between this aesthetic and her understanding of scripture. Similarly, Kathy, a new member of Philadelphia who had a conversion experience at the Evangelical Megachurch referenced by Miriam shared the following:

Um, so yeah, I think Evangelical Megachurch worked for me, but only to a certain point. Then, it got to the relationships really weren’t deep. Um, and I was starting to find Jesus and God a little more deeply than a lot of people I was around, and my convictions were starting to get me a lot more. How I lived my life, what I did with my time, what I felt about just hanging out with people. Even though we are a Christian community within Evangelical Megachurch, like we really didn’t look that much different than people out there [referring to individuals who do not attend a religious organization].

Kathy continues by describing the ways in which she attempted to find depth at Evangelical Megachurch:

Um, and so I had tried, you know, getting into small groups with other people when the large…Thursday night thing didn’t work out, and that still wasn’t going into depth at all. And I’m sure it’s probably because it lacked the Holy Spirit.

After I inquired as to why she started hanging around Philadelphia, Kathy responded:

Okay. Um, when we started going there, it was like, wow, there was something different. There was like so much depth and so much truth and so much, like, intention and just, you just went, Wow! So, Evangelical Megachurch just came to be where it was a very surface level thing, so I think it’s good for that purpose, but without any [inaudible] or without any real and true intention to actually progress somewhere down the line and be a disciple, you pretty much, you bring all these people in, they sit in their auditorium, they do all these good things and drink a lot of coffee...but where do they go after that?

Miriam and Kathy’s accounts are very similar to accounts of many Philadelphians who felt that churches were prioritizing spiritual shallowness over depth. This sense of aimlessness (e.g., the churches’ aim did not match the aim of my consultants) drove many, like Kathy, to Philadelphia where these priorities were reversed.
In summation, the following vignette effectively frames the religious alienation of Philadelphians. On our way to the annual Christmas Tree Cutting described in Chapter 2, I rode with Julia and three other Philadelphians. Julia discussed a gathering she had with some friends who lived outside the community and who did not share her same faith convictions. In spite of the fact that Julia told her friends that she “has never been so happy” since joining the community, her friends were skeptical of Julia’s joyfulness. Julia took offense to her friends’ assessment and started to tell them that she could no longer repress her convictions - she had to either choose “eternal death” or “eternal life.” Perhaps because the other Philadelphians were reflecting on similar conversations with past friends, a silence descended on the car. After a couple of seconds Julia finished by stating, “We live in a land of complacency,” to which she received several nods and voiced agreement from the other passengers. These agreements illustrate that, for Philadelphians, the community stands in contrast to religious organizations that exist in the “land of complacency,” as it rightly prioritizes charismatic practices and spiritual depth.

Although approximately one-third of Bereans noted positive attributes of American Christianity, most shared some type of alienating experience. These accounts were similar to Philadelphians in that they demonstrated a sense of religious aimlessness amongst community members, yet, they were framed somewhat differently. For example, several Bereans were quick to describe members of their community as “victims” of religious organizations. When I asked Stephanie, who was introduced earlier, to describe Berea she stated:

What is our community all about? Well, the first thing I would say is we’re all about healing. We’re a place where people come when they’ve really had damage done by church or religion, and I don’t know why we seem very attractive to those people. They come and are able to feel trust again, and it
seems like they’re able to be healed and either they stay or they move on to the
next step in their spiritual life, um, and, and move out of our community. But,
uh, that’s, you know, the first thing I would probably say about, that we’re a
place of real safety.

Interestingly, these descriptions of victimization rarely had anything to do with physical harm;
rather they tended to focus on feelings of disillusionment in light of behavioral preferences
found in contemporary mainline and evangelical churches. For example Gabrielle, a married
mother of two, shared:

Gabrielle: I think the church has done a lot to harm itself. I mean, not
necessarily just evangelicals but, you know, we've parodied
ourselves in any number of ways on, you know, television and
through really, really harmful theology, really, um, I think, I forget
the name. There’s some Baptist church that, you know, will go picket
gay pride parades or they'll picket HIV clinics and abortion clinics and
you know[^37], those whole “churn and burn” and “Hell is for fags,”
kinda people are just, again, you know, my theology looks at the
word of Jesus, like the Beatitudes[^38].

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Gabrielle: You know, the way He would interact with the Pharisees, people He
elevated and associated with, and then I look at that church and I
feel, you know, “What part, where, what is your Gospel? Because if
you read the Gospel I’m reading from, I, I don’t know how you're out
there doing that and calling yourselves a church.”

Mark: Yeah.

Gabrielle: So I think that that’s what, um, and maybe it’s just that evangelicals
are, you know, more out about it with their weirdness, but, um, I
don't know. I mean, we used to have a little bit of family stuff on [my
husband’s] side of the family where it’s been probably a little more
in our faces just about how we're not, not necessarily us, but how
some folks are very committed to there, whatever their way,
whatever their way of being Christian they decided is the,
underlined, way. [Laughs]

Mark: Yeah.

Gabrielle: And that’s, I don't get it. Um, and then I think of all the people, you
know, I know who don’t have, uh, relationships with Jesus and I
really kinda can’t blame them.

Mark: Mm-hmm.
Gabrielle: You know, my brother, who was raised in the Lutheran Church right alongside me, um, has spent the last, you know, 20-some years kind of with his [inaudible 45:33.6] on the hypocrisy of it all.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Gabrielle: And there’s a part of me that says “Well, you’ve gotta kinda, you know, decide for yourself at some point,” but on the other hand, he’s right. So, I mean, the fact, yeah. I think the, I think the Church just doesn’t do itself any favors and, and, um, folks are more likely to want, want to be a part of their thing than to, uh, you know, concede or embrace other churches, other expressions of faith as being, as being just as valid.

Although Gabrielle reports some tension with her husband’s family, her conceptualization of harm had more to do with the displeasing actions of specific religious organizations, rather than actual maltreatment. Likewise, Penny, who first appeared in the previous chapter, clarified this perceived victimization when I asked her to describe Berea:

Um, [we are] a community of folks, who decided to, to make roots in the neighborhood, and um, have done so because of their um, commitment to, to live out the gospel and um, in a very practical, somewhat radical way, living day-to-day life together, and um, [we] are a group of people, who um, some who have become disillusioned with the idea of church, and are wanting to experience something different, um, in terms of how, how church is done....

Although Penny had been a member of Berea for only five years, her response echoed the historical narrative surrounding Berea.

Having started as a successful Vineyard Church plant approximately twenty years ago, Nolan, the founding pastor who is still a member of Berea even though he is no longer the community’s leader, felt this same disillusionment. When I asked him to share some of the early history of Berea, Nolan noted that it originally started in 1993 with a heavy emphasis on creating a Sunday morning worship experience with a “cool vibe,” passionate preaching, great worship, and “cracker-jack” child care. They even had a local chef prepare a meal once a month for the entire congregation, which Nolan described as “killer.” Despite being located in West
Sharpsburg, a marginalized neighborhood, attendance grew to 150 people. However, although congregants felt inspired, Nolan did not feel right about Berea’s success because he perceived his congregation as lacking in spiritual depth. Consequently, citing that the Sunday morning worship service would not benefit congregant’s long-term spiritual growth, Nolan started promoting small group Bible studies. The congregation’s response was marginal as only 25 to 30 percent of congregants joined a small group, causing Nolan to feel alienated from the very church he started. He shared:

Nolan: Uh, so, um, that [lack of small group participation] was frustrating to me. And, and so if we, if we, um, sort of rewind a little bit by January of 1994, I was feeling, uh, I was starting to feel pretty burned out and unhappy. And I was dealing with, uh, sometimes a lot of anger inside. I would go home after a Sunday service, by all accounts, people would say, “Well this was, this was great. I mean our, our giving is up. And we got new people coming, and people are loving this,” and I would just be pissed off.

Mark: Right.

Nolan: Uh, and I remember those were days that I would get in our Volvo station wagon, and Sunday evenings I would tell [my wife], “I’m, I’m going away for a few hours. I’ll be back later.” I’d go by a convenience store and buy some Swisher Sweets cigars.

Mark: Okay. [Laughter]

Nolan: And I’d drive for two hour sometimes….Go out to, uh, go find some lonely place along the River and smoke a pack of cigars...and just wonder about my life and pray.

Mark: Yeah, yeah.

Nolan: And I think I took some time, I think in February to begin just to pray about this issue, or what’s going on....And during that time, um, I began thirsting for a community. I don’t know any other way to put it.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Nolan: But I, I felt like in my conversations with the Lord, that what I was hearing back consisted, it was, “I, I want to show you what real community is.”...You know, “You understand community with a little ‘c.’ I wanna show you what community is with a capital ‘C.’”

Not long after this sense of disillusionment manifested, the church was given notice that the community center in which they met was condemned and they would have to find another
venue for their worship service. After conferring with a group of church leaders, Nolan felt like it was time to reorganize the church into a community.

The Sunday after Berea received the news that they had to vacate the community center, Nolan told the congregation to divide into four groups based on the location of congregants’ residences in the metropolitan area. People who lived in the northwest side of the city gathered in the northwest side of the worship space, likewise people who lived in the southwest side of the city gathered in the southwest corner. Groups also gathered for those who lived in the northeast and central sections of the metropolitan region. Nolan then gave the groups 45 minutes to organize a leadership structure (group leader, assistant leader, host family, worship leader, and child care coordinator) because, as he told them, these groups were to meet in congregant’s homes and, starting the following week, constituted the church’s Sunday morning worship service. Although there were periods of time when the groups met together regularly, over the next couple of years Berea no longer offered a typical Sunday morning service; instead it became a network of house churches located throughout the metropolitan area. Each house church would offer child care, worship, and pastoral care, but a centralized teaching component continued as Nolan distributed his sermons to each house church via cassette tape. Within six months attendance at the house churches dropped from 150 to 60 congregants. However, the house church that served people who lived in the center of the metropolitan area continued to meet in West Sharpsburg and became the nucleus of the network. By 1995, congregants, who originally lived in various parts of the city, started to move into the neighborhood, particularly to a four block radius around Saint Seton, the deconsecrated Catholic Church introduced in the first chapter, which Berea purchased in July of
that year. In 1996, Nolan and several others transformed the former St. Seton rectory into a communal house, in which participants shared a common purse and practiced New Monastic principles. Known as “The Commons,” this communal house became the impetus for the Berean intentional community that currently resides in West Sharpsburg. Since 1996 the format of Berean worship services has changed several times, but the intentional community that grew out of the house church network has remained constant. In 2011, after the Year of Discernment, members of Berea jettisoned the house church structure in place of a liturgical Sunday morning worship experience located at St. Seton.

Stories, like the one about Berea, are used by intentional communities to provide a collective identity (an account of ‘who we are’), which, as Hall (1978) argues, has two important consequences: (1) it provides a basis for gathering together with likeminded individuals; and (2) it provides a boundary that denotes the common experience of individuals who joined the community.

Therefore I am not surprised that a majority of Bereans (12 of the 20 interviewed) shared similar stories of disillusionment. In this case, Bereans who are hurt (disillusioned from) by religious organizations gather together and form a collective story which signifies their membership in the community. The same could be said of Philadelphians whose collective story centers on the misprioritization of charismatic practice in evangelical churches. Thus, although the frames of the stories are different between Berea and Philadelphia (being “hurt” versus lack of charismatic practice), the consequences of the stories are similar – they provide a central narrative that attracts individuals who have similar experiences of alienation from a social
institution, in this case American Christianity, and define the consensus that individuals can experience in the community.

One set of alienating experiences, however, are framed similarly within the two communities. As with Philadelphians, Bereans often referenced experiences of aimlessness in light of the perceived consumeristic, shallow culture of evangelicalism. For example, after leaving a strong, loving Episcopal parish in another city, Frank and his wife Beatrice searched for another parish when they moved to the metropolitan area. Unfortunately, Frank and Beatrice could not find an Episcopal church that could satisfy their desire “to be known,” implying a value for deep, intimate, personal relationships. Although Frank grew up in a church-going family, graduated from a Christian university, and visited megachurches as a college student, attending an evangelical church was out of the question. When I asked him his thoughts on evangelicalism Frank stated:

Um, [evangelicalism] is really, really simple, and it’s, but it’s also something that could be easily marketed, and you, uh, can brand it, and then it starts to go right back to all this American stuff of, like, you can control it; you can make money off it; you can profit from it, and it, uh, there’s no life. So when I think of, like evangelicals, it’s generally, um, it’s on the surface.

...It’s a circus. That’s, that’s, at which, even also, um, um, I also want to look impassively upon them, and like, maybe some people were duped or, um, this is what they were told. Um, I also have sympathy, and think that there’s not a fullness or a depth or a breadth of, of, of life to be there, and so it’s like a circus...

Extrapolated from Frank’s statement is his disillusionment from evangelical preferences, such as the consumeristic ethos and surface-level attention. Yet, perhaps more relevant to the idea of disillusionment is his comparison of evangelicalism to a circus, which suggests that, according to Frank, evangelicals are not substantive, rather they provide an illusion, they are simply
entertaining. But out of this experience of aimlessness, Frank expresses sympathy for those who are victims of shallow, consumeristic evangelicalism (e.g., those who are duped); thereby, as with other Bereans, Frank connects his disillusionment to victimhood.

When I asked Frank why he and his wife joined Berea twelve years ago, Frank commented:

Frank: So, basically, there was that type of an aspect, so we showed up to, um, a service, and um, just like we found it was a little different, cuz there was a guy singing his heart out, acoustic guitar in the front. People would raise their hands, and these two people, you know, do have something in spirit, but it, um, it didn’t leave a huge impression on me, but what did leave an impression was the people, who seemed that they truly desired to live life together, uh, physically, honestly, um, artfully, um, visibly, to the floor, and I’m like, “I like these people.”

Mark: Yeah.
Frank: And I’ve been there ever since.

In this case, Frank, as with many others, found in Berea a group of people that preferred to live life together “physically,” “honestly,” “artfully,” but “visibly.” In contrast to the evangelical “circus,” Berea provides a place where an individual can engage with others in genuine interactions, stripped of pretense. This sort of authenticity, according to Bielo (2011), is an organizing value for emerging evangelicals, such as those that practice New Monastic principles (described in Chapter 2). He writes, “As they seek authenticity, Emerging Evangelicals seek freedom – from loneliness, convention, unwanted authority, dominant paradigms, the prevailing social climate, and impersonal bureaucracies” (2011:46). For Bereans, I argue that such freedom is found in community as they share, and attempt to resolve, their experiences of alienation.
CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction the task of this chapter was to demonstrate the ways in which societal and institutional alienation played a role in Philadelphians’ and Bereans’ decisions to join their communities. To accomplish this task I linked Mannheim’s theoretical work on generational units and utopian mentalities with previous empirical work, particularly Zablocki’s research on alienation, to provide a justification for examining alienation amongst Philadelphians and Bereans. I also critiqued Zablocki’s conceptualization of alienation as being hierarchical and too broad in its level of analysis. Thus, although I kept Zablocki’s categories, I eliminated the notion of an alienation hierarchy and emphasized the institutional nature of alienation in order to better understand the experiences reported by my consultants. Using this adaptation of alienation, I then illustrated the ways in which Philadelphians and Bereans shared experiences of meaninglessness and aimlessness in terms of media, econo-cultural, cultural and political alienation. Furthermore, I demonstrated the ways in which Bereans also reported experiences of political powerlessness and, in one case, normlessness. I then described the religious aimlessness that many Philadelphians and Bereans experience and the ways in which both communities frame these experiences. In each of these cases I attempted to demonstrate how experiences of alienation played a role in influencing why some individuals joined these communities.

The question now becomes: How do Philadelphia and Berea keep individuals from leaving? Or, in other words, how do these communities maintain member’s commitment now that individuals have joined? These questions will be discussed in the following four chapters, the
next of which focuses on previous research that demonstrates the ways in which charisma overcomes alienation to create collective consensus. We will now turn to this discussion.
Chapter 5: Prophecy, Egalitarianism, and a Beautifully Broken Building: Charisma in Philadelphia and Berea.

St. Seton dominates West Sharpsburg with its imposing grandeur and once served as the center of a thriving Catholic parish (Appendix A: Picture 5.1). However, as with most buildings in marginalized urban neighborhoods, it has experienced decades of decay. The tile on the front steps is chipped and crumbling. Bees visibly crowd around a hive located in an exterior window sill. Years of smog, automobile exhaust, and water damage have discolored the sandstone walls. The copper crosses that sit atop the bell towers are tarnished, one missing its right arm. The stained glass windows, at one point the glory of the old church, are worn and missing panes, even despite their protective layers (Appendix A: Picture 5.2).

The interior of St. Seton reflects the same decrepitude of the exterior. Water damage from leaks in the roof has caused much of the original plaster to crumble leaving the exposed the brick sub-wall (Appendix A: Picture 5.3). Large plywood sheets cover areas of the warped wood floors that had rotted through. Birds fly freely around the large sanctuary, which since its official Catholic deconsecration, is void of accruements typical to a Catholic church such as pews and a confessional. Instead eight rows of detachable church chairs and several plastic folding tables attempt, but fail, to fill the enormous space. Due to the expense, the sanctuary is rarely heated and two large industrial sized fans serve as the cooling system, which on humid days does very little to stop one from sweating. Because the estimated cost of restoration is over $1 million many of the imperfections remain unfixed.

Yet, in the center of the sanctuary ceiling, sixty feet from the floor, is a beautiful stained glass cupola that, on sunny days, lights up the entire sanctuary and, with the refraction of sunlight through the broken stained glass windows, makes you forget about the decade’s wear
on the building (Appendix A: Picture 5.4). For Bereans, who bought the church from the Catholic Dioceses for a small portion of its worth, those moments transform St. Seton from a decomposing liability into a sacred object around which they substantiate their presence in West Sharpsburg. Although a financial burden, St. Seton is a vehicle in which Bereans embody their faith by “practicing resurrection²,” literally taking a building, and by extension the neighborhood, left for dead and bringing it back to life. For an outside observer the building is decrepit, an aesthetic blight, but for Bereans it is sacrosanct, a gift from God, from which, like St. Seton who watches over West Sharpsburg from her perch above the front entrance (Appendix A: Picture 5.5), Bereans can care for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the neighborhood.

In this sense, St. Seton serves a vital role for Bereans – it binds them together by providing a stabilizing force around which members can gather. As we examined in the last chapter, Berea, as with many intentional communities, tends to be populated by individuals who experienced some form of alienation. However, when alienated individuals gather to form an intentional community there is no guarantee that they find the consensus that they seek. In fact, given that 50% of communities dissolve within the first two years of establishment with another 50% dissolving within the next two years (Zablocki 1980), community stability is unlikely. This is particularly the case when participant investment in the group is unequal, creating tension and resentment between members who invest more of themselves and those who do not. Such inequality creates instability in the group and, if unresolved, could potentially cause its dissolution. Therefore, as groups of alienated individuals coalesce they often institute structures that produce equity and stability. As is the case with Christian Intentional
Communities (CICs), when these structures reflect a system of shared beliefs, typically of a supernatural nature (Weber [1922] 1946), they are considered charismatic. Hence, like the charisma that St. Seton holds for Bereans, many CICs develop charismatic structures, albeit with varying degrees of power, with the expectation that such structures will create consensus amongst a group of alienated individuals.

The goal of this chapter is to examine the charismatic influence found in Berea and Philadelphia and the effect that this influence has on members’ commitments to the community. To accomplish this goal I have organized the chapter into three sections. The first section reviews previous work on charismatic influence, focusing on how theorists have defined charisma, the relationship between charisma and alienation, as well as a typological description of charisma applicable to this research. In the second section I explore charismatic influences on Philadelphia giving particular attention to their use of prophetic charisms, leadership succession, and decision-making processes. Likewise, in the third section, I investigate the charismatic influences on Berea and argue that the scope of charisma should be broadened beyond individuals or official positions, as is traditionally held, to include non-animate objects, such as meaningful edifices like St. Seton. I conclude this chapter by commenting on previous research that analyzed the benefits members receive by adhering to charismatic influences as well as the relevance of other concepts concerning member commitment other than charisma.

CHARISMATIC INFLUENCE IN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

Before describing the charismatic influences on Philadelphia and Berea, I first establish a general understanding of the subject as it relates to intentional communities. In keeping with
most previous research, I start this discussion with Weber ([1922] 1946), who frames charisma as a type of authority that is distinct from bureaucratic forms of rational authority and customary forms of traditional authority. He states:

As a permanent structure with a system of rational rules, bureaucracy is fashioned to meet calculable and recurrent needs by means of a normal routine. The provisioning of all demands that go beyond those of everyday routine has had, in principle, an entirely heterogeneous, namely, a charismatic, foundation; the further back we look in history, the more we find this to be the case. This means that the ‘natural’ leaders – in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress – have been neither officeholders nor incumbents of an ‘occupation’ in the present sense of the word, that is, men who have acquired expert knowledge and who serve for remuneration. The natural leaders in distress have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody (Weber [1922] 1946:245).

Here, Weber is borrowing the concept of charisma from church historian Rudolf Sohm who uses the term literally, which means “a gift of grace” (Gerth and Mills 1946).

However, Weber expands Sohm’s understanding of charisma from solely the “gifts of grace” bestowed on an individual, to ‘gifts of grace’ ascribed to certain positions of authority, such as kingships and caliphates. In this sense, Weber distinguishes “pure” from “routinized” charisma. Concerning pure charisma, Bradley (1987) comments:

Weber’s model of pure charisma rests on two postulates: (1) That there exists among followers some need, goal, or aspiration that is unfulfilled by the existing order; and (2) that the followers submit to the leader, based on a belief in his or her possession of charisma [‘gifts of grace’], expecting realization of their unfulfilled wants (P. 33)"

Hence, with pure charisma a leader’s power is legitimizened by a devoted following who recognizes the leader’s charisms, a term I will use synonymously with ‘gifts of grace,’ as a way to fulfill unrealized aspirations. Consequently, for the followers to continue legitimizing the leader’s power, the leader must demonstrate charisms time and time again (Weber [1922]
Therefore, in order to ease this burden and yet maintain power, a leader who exudes pure charisma may transfer his or her individual charisms to their leadership office, proclaiming that anyone who holds his or her office is automatically ascribed charismatic power. In this case, charismatic power is no longer ‘purely’ legitimized by an individual’s charism, rather by the actual position that an individual holds. Weber ([1922]1946b) calls this latter form, ‘routinized charisma,’ explaining:

Charisma, as a creative power, recedes in the face of domination, which hardens into lasting institutions....We must now return to the economic factors,..., which predominantly determine the routinization of charisma: the need of social strata, privileged through existing political, social, and economic orders, to have their social and economic positions ‘legitimized.’ They wish to see their positions transformed from purely factual power relations into a cosmos of acquired rights, and to know that they are thus sanctified. These interests comprise by far the strongest motive for the conservation of charismatic elements of an objectified nature within the structure of domination....Routinized charisma thus continues to work in favor of all those whose power and possession is guaranteed by that sovereign power, and who thus depend upon the continued existence of such power (P. 262).

Thus, given Weber's conceptualization of pure and routinized charisma I can now turn to the ways in which charisma works within intentional communities.

Although there have been many theorists who have adapted, built upon, and critiqued Weber’s construction of charisma, in terms of examining intentional communities, Zablocki’s (1971; 1980) research is most applicable. He starts by broadening the definition of pure charisma to include leaders, “whose authority is based on the widely shared belief that he or she is an embodiment of the collective self” (1980:10). In this sense, a charismatic leader is a person who personifies the zeitgeist of the group, which may or may not, depending on the group’s beliefs, involve special charisms as theorized by Weber. Accordingly, as argued by Zablocki (1980), charisma is better defined by its reflection of collective identity rather than the
supernatural qualities typically associated with it. Through this extended understanding Zablocki (1980) connects charisma to alienation, claiming that:

Charisma overcomes alienation by allowing people to identify their own interests with those of the collectivity [as represented in the charismatic leader] to a sufficient degree that consensus can be reached on important collective decisions (P. 10-11).

However, this relationship between charisma and alienation does not develop in a vacuum; rather there is a process of intentional community formation during which charisma has a profound influence. This process, which I outline below, exists on a continuum where every community is somewhere in the course of formation, yet proceeds at varying paces and levels of success. In other words, the actual process of intentional community formation is vague and not as categorical as my outline communicates. Nevertheless, grasping this process is important to understanding the ways in which charisma influences intentional communities. To summarize, I condense the process into four stages (I include Appendix A: Figure 5.1 as a graphical reference):

- **Stage 1:** As supported by the accounts detailed in Chapter 4, some, but not all, alienated individuals (those who experience dissensus with a large collectivity) may gather together to find consensus. In this stage these individuals connect with others who also experience alienation, yet, collectively, take no meaningful action to resolve their estrangement.

- **Stage 2:** As alienated individuals coalesce into a group they may begin to act upon their alienation by forming an intentional community. However, to do so they must invest their own financial (e.g., income), physical (e.g., land, housing), and human resources (e.g., domestic labor), as well as forfeiting their individual interests to achieve the
consensus that they seek. This stage involves an enormous personal investment, or what Zablocki (1980) calls the ‘Investment of Self,’ which is lost if the communal experiment dissolves.

- **Stage 3:** If individuals can invest of themselves into the coalescing group they will come to a point of “communion,” which Zablocki (1980) defines as:

  ...a shared altered state of consciousness in which the problems of autonomy and inequality are temporarily solved. There are no roles and no directed relationship. The group is experienced as more real than the individual (P. 323).

  In other words, despite the fact that there is no organized structure, communion is achieved when community participants are so devoted to one another that no participant feels alienated; consequently, participants may start identifying as “members” of the community.

- **Stage 4:** Over time the communion relationship stabilizes due to the routinization of power allowing the community to perpetuate, possibly over multiple generations.

  Given these stages, Zablocki (1971) points out that, in contrast to Stage 4, communities in Stages 2 and 3 of formation are primarily held together by emotional attachment, particularly a sense of love. However, these emotional bonds tend to be unstable as participants may perceive inequality between those who invest more and those who do not; consequently, leading to feelings of resentment and group tension, which if unresolved, could potentially cause the dissolution of the community. Therefore, as Zablocki (1980) argues, in order for a community to resolve its instability, a charismatic influence can be employed at any one of these stages to channel the emotions of the participants into meaningful action. Zablocki (1980) claims:
the primary function of charisma is to provide structured opportunities for the investment of self. The primary function of the charismatic leader is to provide values that evoke in each follower the desire to invest self and, having invested, to refrain from withdrawing self again (P. 274).

As Zablocki (1971) noted in his study of the Bruderhof, a set of intentional communities that were formed by alienated German youth in the 1920s under the charismatic leadership of Eberhard Arnold, communion persisted for six years until Arnold developed a structure for participants’ investments that shifted the tone of the community from anarchy and spontaneity toward organization and constraint; thereby stabilizing the membership. In this sense the relationship between charisma and alienation as applied to intentional community formation can be summarized as:

Alienation, charisma, and investment of self are mutually related. Alienation consists of an inability to participate in collective decisions. Investment of self is an action that can be taken by an individual in an attempt to overcome this collective inability. Charismatic influence can then be looked at as the process whereby the collectivity makes use of the “self” that its members have invested in it, to bring the various opinions, preferences, and judgments into sufficient coherence for collective decision making and action to occur (Zablocki 1980:269).

However, it is important to note that charismatic influence varies between communities in terms of form and intensity. As Zablocki (1980) claims, some communities do not have charismatic leadership, but all communities have charismatic potential in that, depending on several factors, particularly ideology, charismatic influence will have a greater effect on some communities than others. Building off of Weber’s concepts of pure and routinized charisma as well as Bendix’s (1960) terminology, Bradley (1987) developed a four-tiered typology of charismatic forms. In the table below I summarize Bradley’s typology and provide an adaptation of each tier based on Zablocki’s (1980) construction of charisma:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Charismatic Forms</th>
<th>Bradley’s (1987) Description</th>
<th>Adaptation according to Zablocki’s (1980) construction of charisma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low Charismatic Potential</td>
<td>Little evidence that an individual possess charisms</td>
<td>The community does not recognize any individual as having embodied the collective-self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High Charismatic Potential</td>
<td>An individual is recognized as having charisms, but he or she is not placed in a leadership position.</td>
<td>The community recognizes an individual as representing the community’s identity, but he or she is not in a leadership position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charismatic Leadership</td>
<td>An individual is recognized as having charisms and is placed in a position of leadership.</td>
<td>The community recognizes an individual as representing the community’s identity and he or she is in a leadership position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Charismatic Authority</td>
<td>Charisms are ascribed to a leadership position rather than an individual.</td>
<td>Representation of a community’s identity is ascribed to a leadership position rather than an individual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas charismatic forms in tier 1 are relatively non-existent, pure charisma is applicable to charismatic forms represented by tiers 2 and 3, while routinized charisma is applicable to charismatic forms represented by tier four. For communities that have incorporated charismatic leadership or authority (e.g., charismatic forms represented by tiers 3 and 4), Zablocki (1980) further develops a hierarchical sub-typology to describe the intensity of that charismatic influence on decision-making. Below I outline Zablocki’s (1980) five levels of charismatic intensity and provide an accompanying example (I also include Appendix A: Figure 5.2 as a graphical reference):

- Exemplar Intensity – Leadership exemplifies shared meanings of the community and is free to define which values are significant.
Example: Leader of Community X begins teaching environmental sustainability, which community members follow without much concern because they believe the leader best exemplifies the mission of the community.

- Policy Intensity – Leadership has the power to define values as well as roles, set goals, and make policies governing the community.
  - Example: Members of Community X accept a policy written by their leader which states that divorce is disallowed for married members.

- Executive Intensity – Leadership is free to make all organizing decisions, but is unable to establish norms for community members.
  - Example: Leader of Community X appoints a member to be community treasurer, which is accepted by other members without protest.

- Normative Intensity – Leadership is free to make all organizing decisions and can establish norms for community members.
  - Example: All male members of Community X are required by the leadership to grow beards.

- Absolute Intensity – Leadership makes all decisions for community members eliminating any independent individual judgments.
  - Example: Members of Community X are placed in arranged marriages based on the discretion of the leadership.

Zablocki (1980) argues that charismatic intensity is primarily dependent on two conventions. The first is the amount of autonomy individuals are willing to surrender in light of the perceived “real” force of the charismatic figure. In other words, if members truly believe
that a charismatic leader or authority exudes the collective identity, perhaps because he or she is blessed with supernatural charisms, the level of charismatic intensity might be high (e.g., normative or absolute intensity). On the other hand, if members believe that a charismatic leader or authority represents the collective identity to a limited extent than the level of charismatic intensity might be low (e.g., exemplar or policy intensity). Additionally, affecting the amount of autonomy individuals are willing to surrender is ideology, the second convention identified by Zablocki (1980). If a community’s ideology tends to be more egalitarian the charismatic form may only exist as a potentiality (e.g., low or high charismatic potential) or, in cases where charismatic leadership or authority does exist, at lower intensities. On the other hand, if a community’s ideology is predicated on strong central leadership, then the probably of having a charismatic leader or authority is much higher as well as, possibly, the charismatic intensity. Accordingly, the influence of ideology on charismatic form and intensity is particularly important when considering Berea (an expressive community) and Philadelphia (a freewill individualistic community).

As illustrated in Chapter 3, freewill individualistic communities tend to have centralized leadership structures that make most of the decisions, whereas expressive communities often share decision-making equally amongst their members. Although I referenced several possible structural explanations for these phenomena, most likely the governing practices of the two sets of communities reflect their ideologies. The emphasis on the individual in freewill individualistic communities allows for charismatic leadership and authority to develop as members submit to a central authority in order to achieve consensus instead of allowing the community to spiral into anarchy as each member attempts to develop their own spiritual self.
Expressive communities emphasize the public embodiment of faith, which prioritizes collective space, and the freedom to act within that space, over centralized governance. In this sense, the collective space has more capability of projecting charisma as opposed to a leader or position of authority. As we will see in the next two sections, Philadelphia and Berea reflect their respective community types as Philadelphia employs charismatic leaders to achieve consensus and Berea exhibits high charismatic potential, not reflected in its leadership structure, but rather in the space that they occupy.

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP IN PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia is similar to many other freewill individualistic communities in that they have a strong centralized charismatic leadership; the foundation of which was laid in January 2007 when Steven and Paul, two twenty-something males, decided to live together in an apartment and host a weekly Bible study. The study incorporated charismatic worship practices and focused on deep devotion to Christian scriptures, which, as explained in the previous chapter, resolved feelings of alienation that many participants experienced in other religious organizations. Paul describes this period of Philadelphia’s development:

..but uh, we opened up ourselves to whoever, kind of, came through our Bible study and we saw it wasn’t just, “Hey, that’s nice you treat someone that way.” It was, “God was in it,” and He was bringing people to be taken care of....

And the whole nature of it was let’s get them [Bible study participants] connected to God. Let’s get them out of the stuff they’re in and let’s m(make them a man or a woman of God’s thrall, to be able to follow Him and love Him. The end!...

And it wasn’t just caring for people on the practical level of like four or ten people to go after what they’re passionate; it was actually bring them under discipleship in Jesus. And that was - we caught a lot of heat for that, too, because
it conflicts a lot with the culture, of go[ing] after your passion - and, you know, if you delight in God, it will give you the desires of your heart...

And what we had seen from the Word [the Bible] was the entrance message to the Kingdom is you must first deny yourself. Pick up your cross. You lose your life and Jesus is your leader. So um, yeah.

Cited in this account are several key concepts in the intentional formation process: alienation (e.g., religious passion conflicts with American culture); and Stage 1 - gathering (e.g., “we opened up ourselves to whoever, kind of, came through our Bible study”). During this time of gathering Steven and Paul, along with Ed and Timothy, two single men of the same age who were introduced in previous chapters, began to contemplate the possibility of imitating the communal living arrangements of the early Christian church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Once the group of four ran out of excuses, Ed and Timothy moved in with Steven and Paul with the purpose of spurring each other to deeper levels of religious devotion; hence beginning Philadelphia. Steven described this time in their formation as:

Uh-huh, so nothing that we were looking at doing was solidified at that point. We didn’t have a plan or anything. We just were kind of looking at the early church and just thinking hey the four of us are just gonna try our best to live this way together. And we didn’t know anyone else was gonna wanna join in with us, I guess.

Since at this point in their development there were no rules or plans, the four original members invested themselves based solely on affective bonds, particularly a sincere care for each other and an expectation that everyone wanted to see this experiment succeed. However, given the nature of these bonds, if one member felt as though they were contributing more to the communal cause than the others, they could easily depart; the primary costs of which would be the money lost on rent and the broken relationships that might manifest from such an event. Nonetheless, for the original participants investing themselves into the communal
arrangement was relatively easy as they believed that their emotional attachment to one another was divinely mandated. In this sense, Steven describes how participants had to sacrifice their own desires in order for the community to remain viable.

...I would say the foundations of the community were laid there even though I didn’t realize it, which was a sort of mutual sacrifice and devotion to each other. Not out of just loyalty to each other, but the important key that I think that separates it from sort of human, humanistic communes and stuff - God was involved. You know it wasn’t just because I was so devoted to Paul, I was. But it, it was, it was a devotion that came through God...God was telling me to be devoted to him....And so that was one of the, that, I think that, that, those kind of actions sort of laid that foundation for what God was building, which was sacrificing your desires and dreams and things that you think that they’re so important and things you want so badly for the benefit of someone else, because of God just doing something.

Like Paul, Steven refers to stages of the intentional community formation process in this account: Stage 2 - investment of self (e.g., Steven surrendered his own “desires and dreams” as he invested himself into communal relationships); and Stage 3 - communion (e.g., the devotion of participants to one another). Moreover, perhaps because of the apparent communion between the four members, other Bible study participants sought to join the community. Sensing that group expansion would create too much relational instability, nine months after forming, the four original members developed a codified agreement, called the “Covenant,” which stated the values of the community and expectation of community members. This event effectively pushed Philadelphia out of their communion stage of development (Stage 3) toward routinization (Stage 4).

Not long after the Covenant was created the four members moved to Emeryville, and, as the membership grew, more houses were added. During these early years the community continued to host the original weeknight Bible study, but commuted to a suburban evangelical
church for Sunday services. However, due to the burgeoning number of Philadelphians, commuting to the suburbs eventually became prohibitive; thus, the community began to host their own Sunday morning service. The suburban evangelical church blessed this initiative and helped establish a leadership structure that included a group of three elders who held most of the decision-making power. Since they were original members, Steven and Paul filled two eldership positions. The third, however, was given to Richard, a middle-aged business owner who had mentored Steven and Paul after they took a class he taught on charismatic gifts.

Although Richard had two children of his own, he treated Steven and Paul as though they were his adopted sons, nurturing them spiritual and emotionally, as well as providing them with jobs through his business. Together the three elders developed a decision-making structure that created a stable environment in a community, which, due to its explosive growth, was beginning to experience volatility in its membership. In one sense, this stability was partly due to skillful leadership, but, based on my observations and conversations with consultants, it was the invocation of charismatic powers, unmatched by other community members, that ultimately caused Philadelphians to recognize the legitimacy of the eldership and, consequently, their policies.

When I asked consultants how they perceive the gifts that Steven and Paul possess their answers were similar. Both are described as having prophetic charisms, which, as noted in the previous chapter, is an integral part of the community’s culture. Although many Philadelphians receive prophetic charisms, the most significant prophetic accounts were attributed to the elders and recorded in a book of prophetic history that any member can access in the community prayer room. When I asked Paul about his prophetic charisms he timidly shared
some of his experiences, noting that for people outside of Philadelphia, and by extension the charismatic movement, such charisms can be misconstrued as fantasy. In fact, after sharing one prophecy with me, Paul stated, “Wow, that sounds so charismatic,” indicating that he was aware how someone who does not view prophecy as legitimate may excuse it as illusory fiction. However, for Philadelphians prophecy is substantially meaningful; thus, as I share one of Steven and Paul’s prophetic charisms, I ask that you treat it with reverence, keeping in mind that such charisms are an organizing trope for Philadelphians. Here is an account of the “River Prophecy,” which was received by Steven in a vision and shared with Paul over an email:

Paul: Yeah, the river word. That’s a pretty significant one.
Mark: Is it? Yeah.
Paul: Yeah…. the starting sentence that we heard from the Lord: don’t live for the community, but [be]come [a] support to the local church. And it really called us back to—it—well it didn’t call us back to—it, I think, widened our vision, per se....
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Paul: - and now I want you to have a bigger vision....You’re becoming a church, you’re a part of that church, and you’re meant to love the church. Where it’s popular in this day to say everything is wrong with them, denounce them. What should I do? The right thing. And say oh, pity them, brother, sorry. We’ll go do one thing and the, yet [be] another independent, you know, antisocial, self-centered church...
Mark: Mm.
Paul: Really not after the things of God’s heart...So that—that message came to us and we—it was the perfect timing and, uh, it essentially was don’t—don’t live for the community, but [be]come [a] support to the local church, but [be]come fathers to those without ones, but [be]come brothers to those without a friend. And then He said some very specific things: if you teach them, “Watch my ways.” If you—if you do this I’ll send water on your stream.
Mark: Hmm.
Paul: And He said the stream that flows faithfully into the river of my Kingdom I will call the water to always come upon it, and you [will] overflow your banks. And He said, um, this will keep you from the traps that the enemy laid in your path. And I think the last part was, um, He essentially, “I’ll cause your banks to overflow.” If this is—this would be if you devote yourself to not living for your comfortable living, if you live for building up
the church in this area, laying down your life for them, teaching them, being brothers with them, not-not—we’re not the Apostolic church in the area that’s gonna take over. We come up and serve, get in relationship, care about them, lay down our lives in the individual way that we can, ...and fast and pray. Do all that kinda stuff, serve. You do that and you take care of those who I—who I send you who don’t have fathers, who don’t—or maybe they have fathers but don’t really have a father, you know...

Mark: Uh huh.
Paul: ...those without friend, we become brothers to those without, that piece of loss. Oh, and He said this is important: if you supply your enemies with what they need—there was a couple stipulations and there was many—there were plenty ifs....If you do this, if you supply your enemies, I’ll cause water to come upon your stream and your banks will overflow. And when [Steven] told me that I remember, I didn’t think water or river or anything. I thought money...

Mark: Mm-hmm.
Paul: ...but for whatever reason I had revelation. I’m like, oh my gosh, God if you just overflow banks with money would you like—when you’re with him, and I thought that’s amazing.

Mark: Hmm.
Paul: Wow. And I didn’t catch any of the river aspect, and I think that was on purpose because a month later, uh, I’ll finish with this. A month later I was—I had been out with a friend and we went up, uh, [Emory Place Park], and uh, we’re lookin’ around and I-I could see that [the River] had flooded all of that area...and we were saying oh wow, this is crazy, and I thought man, I got a sense, try and prayer later today. Turned over, came—came back and we went up to the [Emery Place] Concourse and [the River] runs down, obviously, to there.

Mark: Yeah.
Paul: I’m looking at all of the overflowed water and I’m like man, and it’s like the banks overflowed, and I thought wait a sec, is there something with that? I pulled out my phone and I had my phone and I was like did I get an email? I feel like that word sounds familiar. And I typed in banks and up popped what [Steven] wrote me, the prophetic word he—he received and gave it [to] me in the email. And I read it and was like, oh my gosh, this is a sign to us.

Mark: Mm, mm-hmm.
Paul: This is like a physical, I’m not kidding, I want you to pay attention and I want you to take that to heart. And it was like this is more—this is not just—it’s bigger than us. It’s bigger than us in this little community and wow, we really gotta pay attention. This was to get our attention and say our God’s in this.

Mark: Yeah.
Paul: It’s not just, you know, uh, I—and I’m—the timing of it was what was so miraculous. Of course, to me it’s miraculous. To God, it’s like we all know the base is gonna flood and it’s [cross talk 14:19] [Laughter]. So, but there, that was foundational, too.

Mark: So y-you’re-you’re not quite sure what the water is...but you think it might be money?

Paul: Yeah, well I—I found out later He was using that. Th-th-there’s something really interesting about that. I don’t really think it’s money.

Mark: Sure.

Paul: I just—I—it was funny that I thought wow, that’s definitely money. It’s [a] bank [as in financial institution].

Mark: [Laughter]

Paul: But it was the banks of a river, so when I...

Mark: Ah.

Paul: ...connected all that there, it like went into my heart, like this is actually from God. This isn’t some humpty dumpty prophecy, like...this is—He’s trying to get our attention and get us into what He wants so we don’t fear and begin to live for ourselves like it’s so—it’s so easy to, you know?

Mark: Yeah.

Paul: And so yeah, I-I knew then this isn’t about money. This is about doing what actually is on the heart of God and...not being a cool Christian community for our sake.

Mark: Sure.

Paul: Yeah.

As illustrated in this account, the prophetic charisms that Philadelphians receive tend to be, on the one hand, vague visual images that can lead to misinterpretation (e.g., Paul thought that the “bank” in Steven’s vision referred to the financial institution), yet, on the other hand, they are typically attached to a concrete object or event (e.g., the flooding river). Other community prophecies related to member’s futures, purchasing of houses in Emeryville, starting the community garden, support and connection to local churches, and outreach to at-risk teenagers. Nevertheless, despite the fact that these prophecies are meaningful to community members, they pragmatically serve to legitimize charismatic leadership. Philadelphians view Steven and Paul as special vessels with a supernatural anointing; thus, if an individual does not feel a deep sense of spiritual connection in other religious organizations they can come to
Philadelphia where God speaks prophetically through Steven and Paul into individuals’ lives. In this sense, Steven and Paul display characteristics of Weber’s ‘pure charisma,’ in that individuals unsatisfied with the lack of charismatic practice in contemporary churches find satisfaction in, what they perceive to be, Steven and Paul’s gifts of grace.

Furthermore, beyond prophetic charisms, Steven is described as an extraordinary teacher who has been given divine gifts of insight, while Paul is portrayed as a pastor who extends prodigious friendliness. Joseph, who became an elder during my ethnographic fieldwork, described Steven and Paul in the following manner:

Joseph: Um, well, uh, both [Steven] and [Paul] [are] heavily in the prophetic and in knowledge, which is often coupled with, um, prophecy.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Joseph: Um, I think [Steven] has an excellent ability to teach beyond what I’ve seen from most people his age.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Joseph: And, um, [Steven] is definitely gifted with wit. A lot of the advice he gives in hard times, it’s excellent advice that lines up scripturally, and not stuff that he’s planned ahead of time to say. Stuff the Lord moves and gives advice through him….
Mark: His is all scriptural?
Joseph: Yeah. It is…It’s like, wow,…
Mark: Right.
Joseph: I think [Paul] is very gifted, too, in, uh, basically, hospitality…And his ability to, to be kind, and welcoming, and encouraging…It’s, I think he’s one of the most encouraging people I’ve ever met…You know, he just has an ability to see, uh, [inaudible 33:07] qualities in people, and to call them out. [Like] ‘em, “Hey, I see this in you, and I think it’s excellent.”

Similar to nearly half my consultants, Joseph notes the instrumental role that Steven fills – problem solver, advice giver, teacher – in comparison to the expressive role that Paul fills – hospitable, kind, welcoming, encouraging. Although Philadelphia is patriarchal in that they prohibit women from being elders, these roles take on the appearance of traditional gender
roles, the active masculine figure as reflected in Steven and the passive feminine figure as reflected in Paul\textsuperscript{13}.

Given these gendered roles, community members granted more power to Steven than to Paul, but never enough to supersede Paul’s own charisma. Although I saw the scope of Steven’s power on several occasions, one particular event stands out. Since its beginning, Philadelphia has hosted Group, a Thursday evening Bible Study, which usually includes community announcements, prayer, an extended period of teaching, and a concluding time of worship. Steven typically teaches; however, on occasion he will recruit a guest to lead the study. This was the case for one Group, when Gerard, the pastor of Evangelical Community Church\textsuperscript{14} who serves as a mentor to Steven and Paul, was invited to teach. In a break from the traditional format, Gerard divided his teaching into three sections, each of which was followed by a period of worship. It was during this first period of worship that I realized the power Steven held over the community. After Gerard had taught for about twenty minutes he moved into the audience so that worship could start. Despite the fact that everyone, including Steven, was sitting, Gerard stood. His arms were extended out in front of him, his palms were facing up, his eyes were closed, and he was singing in accordance with the worship band. However, after several minutes no one had joined Gerard, therefore, perhaps feeling awkward that he was the only one standing, Gerard sat down. Two more minutes passed. Then, for whatever reason, Steven stood up and, much like Gerard, extended his arms in an act of worship. Within five seconds several others stood up following Steven’s lead, including, Gerard, who only moments earlier sat down. Several minutes later most of the congregation was standing and remained that way.
until Steven sat down at the end of the worship set. In other instances, when Paul was the first in the congregation to stand for worship he, unlike Steven, was rarely followed en masse.

Martin, Zablocki, and Van Gunten (2012) note that, generally speaking, charismatic leaders do not like serving under other charismatic leaders. However, this was not the case with Steven and Paul, who, despite their power disparity, shared charismatic leadership of Philadelphia. This arrangement was managed peaceably because of the instrumental-expressive roles that were reflected in their leadership. I never saw Paul teach and it was rare for a consultant to describe Steven as a warm personality. More importantly, in accordance with Zablocki’s conceptualization of charisma, the combination of Steven’s charismatic ying and Paul’s charismatic yang best represent Philadelphia’s identity, allowing their power dynamic to thrive.

On the other hand, in keeping with Martin, Zablocki, and Van Gunten (2012), when power roles are not well defined and too much charismatic power exists within a leadership structure, tension is bound to form. This was the case with Richard, who, in spite of their close relationship, clashed with Steven and Paul and, in an attempt to assert his dominance, told them that they needed to submit to his authority or leave the community. Steven and Paul felt as though they needed to do neither; instead, they gathered support amongst community members and “rebuked” the accusation against them. Richard, feeling the pressure of the community against him, fired Steven and Paul from their jobs at his company, resigned his post, and withdrew his family from the community.

Once Richard no longer served in a leadership position, Steven and Paul were able to solidify their control over the community. This is evidenced when I surveyed consultants as to
the charismatic influence of community members. During interviews I asked consultants to answer the following five questions:

1. Who has new ideas for the community?
2. Who is able to help resolve relationship problems which emerge between members from time to time?
3. Who best fits reflects this statement: Something important seems lacking in the community when he or she is not present?
4. Who seems to have an inexhaustible supply of love?
5. Who is the person whose advice you generally seek when making an important personal decision?

I placed no restriction on the consultants’ answers; thus, some provided several names for each question, answered with their own name, or responded with a generic grouping, such as ‘no one’ or ‘everyone.’ Since each of these questions represents a possible characteristic of a charismatic leader, the purpose of this exercise was to see if certain members of the community are named more often than others. Hence, if Member X is named more often than other members by a substantial margin than we can infer that Member X has a high degree of charismatic influence on the community. This exercise provided a sense of who has charismatic influence on the community and who does not. In terms of Philadelphia, Steven and Paul were identified 36 and 37 times respectively as answers to the above questions. In contrast, the next highest member, Joseph, was identified only 19 times.

Although it is evident that charismatic leaders do not like competition, Steven and Paul have developed a succession plan that, on the one hand, provides the required leadership structure,
but, on the other hand, does not threaten their charismatic influence. This was the case with Joseph, who, approximately two years after Richard’s departure, was confirmed as the third elder of the community. However, Joseph, as demonstrated by the results of the survey described above, was not perceived to have the same amount of charismatic power as Steven and Paul; thus, because Joseph was not a threat to their influence, he was eventually accepted by Steven and Paul as an elder. The key word in that last phrase is ‘eventually,’ as the process by which Joseph became an elder is indicative of the intensity of Steven and Paul’s charismatic leadership.

This process started when Miriam, who was introduced in the last chapter, revealed to Steven and Paul that she believed God was directing the community to appoint Joseph to the position vacated by Richard. At that time Steven and Paul were not persuaded by Miriam’s suggestion, however, they offered to pray for direction concerning the matter. Then, approximately six months later, Paul approached Joseph, who also served as the community treasurer, to ask him to pray about becoming an elder. As with most intimate communities, word spread and other members joined in the process through prayer. Nevertheless, several months passed, until the community gathered together for a one particular Sunday evening community meeting in August 2012. Typically, community meetings are reserved to discuss the practical arrangements of communal life, such as weekly work schedules and upcoming community events; yet, at this specific meeting Steven broke from the typical and asked Joseph to leave. Steven then revealed to the community that he and Paul were thinking of installing Joseph as a third elder and, instead of stating that the decision was final, opened up the floor for any member to share concerns or encouragements as to whether or not Joseph should fill
this role. Rebekah, also introduced in the last chapter, described this meeting in the following manner:

...[Steven] let anyone who wanted to speak on it, and like, why they think [Joseph] is going to be a good leader and someone, that as a community we will submit to, and as, um, leaders, [Steven] and [Paul] will submit their lives to as well, um, just mutually. And, [clears throat] so that was, that’s just really cool....

When I asked Rebekah if people shared encouragements or concerns, she responded:

Yeah. Yeah a lot of people did. I’d say more than half of the community ended up sharing, um, thoughts or encouragements that they felt about [Joseph] assuming leadership in that role. And, um, a lot of people get, had really good stuff to say. Um. It was just really encouraging. It was, it was really good to hear people’s perspectives too because it wasn’t like, “Oh he does this for me,” or “He’s really great,” and stuff. It was like, “He’s...essentially what a [stable] elder should look like.”

Supported by a consensus amongst Philadelphians, Steven and Paul told Joseph that he had one month to accept or reject the position. Within three weeks Joseph accepted the role and, after a Sunday morning community church service, was brought to the backyard of 119, where approximately twenty Philadelphians laid their hands on Joseph while Paul anointed him into leadership.

Although this process was initiated by a member of Philadelphia who carried no leadership position, Steven and Paul retained veto power and, at any point, could have ended the process. With this power, Steven and Paul dictated the pace at which this decision was made and demonstrated complete control over leadership succession. Despite the fact that Philadelphians submitted to Steven and Paul in this manner, they, nonetheless, did not feel comfortable just appointing Joseph to the eldership, instead they sought the blessing of the membership before making the appropriate request. Accordingly, Steven and Paul had the power to determine the process for leadership succession, but did not feel free to make this
organizational decision on their own. Hence, according to Zablocki’s hierarchy of charismatic intensity, Steven and Paul’s charisma allowed them to define roles (e.g., policy intensity), but not unilaterally (e.g., not executive intensity).

Additionally, Steven and Paul’s charisma granted them the ability to implement policies with nominal feedback from community members. For example, given that Philadelphia is composed of many single adults entering their mid-twenties, a life stage usually associated with marriage, there was a lot of discussion amongst members about whether divorce and remarriage is sanctioned by the Bible. To resolve this issue, Steven and Paul sought to establish a community policy on divorce. They told members to research scripture pertaining to divorce and remarriage while they did the same. Steven then hosted a voluntary forum during which he shared a preliminary policy and answered members’ questions. The preliminary policy was also presented to the community during a Sunday evening community meeting. Unlike the case with Joseph, however, consensus was not the goal of these forums; rather the goal was to provide feedback for Steven and Paul to consider as they wrote the policy. Although I finished my field work prior to its completion, as is the case with other policies, when Steven and Paul are finished it will immediately become effective. At that point Philadelphians are expected to submit to the policy, which they most likely will do without protest. Thus, as this situation illustrates, despite eliciting feedback from members, Steven and Paul retained power over the development and implementation of policies, indicating that their charismatic power extends to the policy level of intensity.

Steven and Paul’s charismatic intensity is justified through religious ideology. For Philadelphians, spiritual growth occurs as one submits to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and since
Steven and Paul serve as God’s vessels, as evidenced by their charismatic powers, one should submit to them as one would to Christ. Hence, as referenced in Rebekah’s comment above, Philadelphians heavily emphasize submission to the elder’s leadership. Nevertheless, in this case, submission does not translate into absolute control over members’ lives⁵⁰. Steven and Paul constantly have to keep in mind that Philadelphians are willing to submit to their leadership as long as such submission is perceived to be of more benefit than the freedom presented outside the community. Thus, the elders constantly negotiate a balance between ideological justification (e.g., submission as an act of religious devotion) and member’s self-determination. Consequently, Steven and Paul can only exert their charismatic power to the point where consensus is maintained (e.g., to the level of policy intensity), knowing that community dissensus, as well as its outcomes (member instability and community dissolution), could develop if they extend their power too far. Perhaps, as the community persists, the charismatic leadership of Philadelphia will precede through a process of routinization, providing charismatic authority to anyone, such as Joseph, who becomes an elder. If routinization of charisma does occur, Steven and Paul would personally be relieved of the challenge to maintain their charismatic influence at a level of intensity that constantly maintains community consensus, instead such maintenance would be the responsibility for whoever is an elder. However, this routinization did not transpire while I was in the field; thus, the responsibility of building consensus in the community rests completely on Steven and Paul’s shoulders. As we will see in the next section, this challenge is not present in Berea, which experiences charisma differently than Philadelphia.
CHARISMATIC POTENTIAL IN BERE

Nicholas, who I quoted in the previous chapter, was first introduced to Berea through the *Community of Communities*, an online directory of CICs. While a student at an east coast evangelical seminary, Nicholas studied New Monasticism and developed a passion to pastor an intentional community. After visiting Berea several times, Nicholas turned down more lucrative pastoring positions and, with his family, moved into West Sharpsburg. They arrived at the beginning of the Berean Year of Discernment, through which, given his passion and education, Nicholas became an important figure in the community. Unknown to them at the time, Nicholas and his family entered into a new period of communion for Bereans. Although the community had organizational structures that provided stability since their establishment, during the Year of Discernment, these structures were heavily scrutinized; thereby, creating a high degree of communal instability. Strong affective bonds between members, particularly an intrinsic sense that other Bereans were equivalent to one’s own familial relations, were the only thing holding the community together. Even then, these emotional attachments were not enough to keep all members committed as several families, who were previously integral to the community, left during the Year of Discernment. However, those who endured were able to reestablish organizational structures that moved Berea from the communion stage back into the routinization stage of community formation (Stage 4).

One of the structures examined during the Year of Discernment was leadership. Since the beginning of the community Nolan, who was introduced in Chapter 4, as well as Evan and Atticus, two previous pastors, served as community pastors with support from the Pastoral Council, a committee comprised of appointed members. However, despite the presence of the
Council, these leaders generally led through their charisma; albeit at low intensities. Moreover, unlike many other charismatic leaders, the previous Berean pastors knew their personal limits and, when they felt their time in leadership was complete, sought healthy transitions to new pastors. However, having experienced charismatic leadership for many years, during the Year of Discernment Bereans debated, sometimes contentiously, as to whether or not they should have an official community pastor. Nevertheless, as the community processed through the issue, it became clear that they needed a defined leader. Therefore, they ultimately decided to have an elected eldership of five members, who shared power equally, with one of these members acting as community pastor. Although he did not campaign for the position, Nicholas became the obvious choice to serve as the community pastor in this new structure. Thus, during a Berean Sunday morning service in January 2012, Nicholas and four others, three of whom were women, were anointed as elders, officially marking the end of the Year of Discernment. Then, approximately two months later, Nicholas was commissioned as the official Berean pastor.

As a result of his position, Nicholas has significant influence on the community. Consequently, when I gave Bereans the charisma survey mentioned earlier, Nicholas was identified 29 times as an answer to the five questions. However, 45 percent of those answers were in response to question #1 (Who has new ideas for the community?), while the remaining 55 percent of answers covered the last four questions. As opposed to ‘gifts of grace’ typically associated with charisma, this disproportionality is a reflection of Nicholas’s status as Berea’s pastor as well as an educated outsider who brought new ideas with him when he joined the community. In fact when I asked Berean consultants about Nicholas’s gifts, some specifically
concentrated on this sense of pastoral innovation. For example, Ann, who was introduced in the previous chapter, remarked:

I appreciate that, and I appreciate that he views a problem as some, I think he sees things, problems as like opportunities to, to think of something new, do, even try this or that, is not daunted by problem solving; uhm, kind; nurturing; takes time. I don’t feel rushed with him, and I certainly appreciate that.

In the same way that Nicholas’s pastoral ability was connected to the ideas he brings to the community, Bereans tended to also reference the ways in which Nicholas uses his pastoring skills to connect with their neighbors. Beatrice, also introduced earlier in the dissertation, responded this way:

Um, it probably sounds cliché, but I think he has that pastoral heart...that, um, cares for the people around him, you know, concerned with what’s going on with his neighbors and, um, you know, even with what other churches are involved in, and being connected with other people in [West Sharpsburg].

Likewise, Lois, introduced in Chapter 1, remarked:

Lois: Um, [Nicholas], I, I see as, um, he has uh, a really, a really strong um, education, like a biblical education, theological, biblical education, um, that isn't, like I, I don't see it as that he is blind to other theologies, um, but he's, he's very, he's very committed to what he believes, and what he sees as God's leading for our community. Um, though I've, I mean I've been part of conversations where people ask him tough questions, and challenged him on what, like where he stands on certain topics and ideas.

Mark: Mm-hmm.
Lois: And um, he's always open to conversation and to listening to people and um, is, is very, I see that he is very much in a place where he's also willing to learn and develop.

Mark: Okay.
Lois: Um, but he's also not wishy-washy.
Mark: Okay.
Lois: Um, he's a very good listener. Um, he, he really wants, and he does this, um, and he's very present in this neighborhood um, intentionally meeting with people and talking with them and, and um, counseling them, praying with them, um, but also he's available for those unintentional moments where um, he just has uh, a conversation with somebody that he has
never planned, but um, I really, I see how much he loves the neighborhood and, and the people in it.

Given these accounts, Nicholas clearly leads Berea with a pastoral persona, which he extends to his neighbors as well as through his innovation, but this persona is only nominally connected to divine charisms. Lois made the most direct reference when she stated that Nicholas is “committed to...what he sees as God's leading for our community.” However, neither this statement, nor any statements made by Berean consultants, makes mention of how God reveals his plans for Berea through Nicholas, as Steven and Paul’s prophetic charisms do Philadelphia; rather this statement simply notes Nicholas’s belief that, without any illusory evidence, his convictions are in accordance with God’s convictions. In this sense, divine experiences that are emphasized by Philadelphians tend to be deemphasized by Bereans. Accordingly, when Nicholas preached a reflection on Pentecost Sunday he contended that the Holy Spirit is the medium of seeing the Kingdom of Heaven, which he referred to as “living life in a different way” (e.g., The Kingdom of Heaven is living life in a different way). During the reflection Nicholas cited 17th century Carmelite monk, Brother Lawrence as an example of how to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading by actively thinking about the Spirit in every small task we accomplish. He also admitted that he was often worried about being “baptized in the Spirit,” but could grasp the concept if he thought of it as “plunging into God’s love,” rather than the acceptance of charismatic gifts, such as glossolalia. I suspect that such a teaching would be heretical to Philadelphians, who, as I’ve pointed out, require physical charisms as evidence of their baptism in the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, for Bereans, physical charisms are insignificant compared to the other values that they hold.
One such value is egalitarianism. As referenced in several accounts Nicholas was praised for his ability to listen to other’s opinions, and adapt his thoughts in response. Even during his Sunday morning reflections, which served as the dominant time of community teaching, Nicholas would open the floor for other Bereans to share their ideas and impressions. For example, during his reflection on Pentecost Sunday, Nicholas asked the congregation to share their views on how Christians can actively follow the Holy Spirit. Several congregants relayed their opinions on the subject, exposing divergent views within the community. Nicholas listened reflexively and clarified each comment for the benefit of the entire congregation. After this period of open discussion, Nicholas shared his own understanding of the Holy Spirit as reported above, noting that congregants did not have to agree with him on the subject. Unlike Steven and Paul, Nicholas never demanded that Bereans submit to his teaching simply because he was in a position of leadership; instead, reflecting the value that Bereans place on egalitarianism, he sought to include as many voices as possible when considering spiritual issues.

This sense of egalitarianism was also present when the community had to make big decisions. Although the eldership was empowered to govern Berea, when faced with large decisions the elders pursued community consensus prior to their rubber stamp. Such was the case when the eldership was trying to figure out what to do with the number of children under the age of five present during the Sunday morning worship service. When I started my field work children were allowed to sit with their family for more than half of the liturgy before being excused to Sunday school, which lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. Families were then reunited at the end of the liturgy for Eucharist and the benediction. This format worked well while the worship services were held in St. Seton’s classroom space, which confined children to
chairs and, due to the lack of an echo, acoustically minimized children’s interruptions. However, when the services were moved to St. Seton’s sanctuary, the children, including my own, found ample space to run, jump, and test the echo of the enormous room. Frustrations mounted amongst a handful of Bereans who felt that two-year olds running around the sanctuary, screaming, distracted from the sacredness of the liturgy. Hence, the eldership called the community together for a weeknight meeting to discuss the “children’s issue.” Below I provide excerpts from my fieldnotes:

Nicholas opened the meeting by reading from the Epistle to the Ephesians 4:11-16, followed by a short commentary in which he stressed the idea of speaking in love so as to build up the community. He also stated that the purpose of the meeting was to give everyone an opportunity to share in love so as to build, not tear down, the community. Nicholas then gave some context to the issue citing that people were concerned with the noise and behavior of children during the services. He also brought up comments concerning a reflection that he had recently given, during which he held his four year old daughter because she refused to go to Sunday school.

Nicholas went on to say that the elders discussed this issue prior to the meeting. They felt there were three options: (1) keep the service as is with some minor changes, (2) operate a childcare room for children three and younger throughout the service, or (3) create a space in the rear of the St. Seton sanctuary made out of Plexiglas, where parents can take their children when they get unruly. In support of the third option, Nicholas stated that parents would then have the ability to participate in the service, while congregants would not be affected by interrupting noise.

Nicholas then moderated the meeting by calling on people as they raised their hands. Here is a general list of concerns/thoughts that were brought up (organized by theme):

A. Parents need to do more. They can train their children at home. They can be stricter with children in the service. However, children should be with their parents during the service in order to learn how to be part of the church service itself.

B. The sanctuary is the cause of the distraction. Moving from the smaller space to the sanctuary has disrupted the children’s expectations. Their screeches carry more in the sanctuary; thus, they are more likely to scream. The acoustics in the sanctuary makes it hard to hear someone speaking; therefore, when kids are loud they drown...
out the speaker. If we made the space smaller and more intimate the children would be less likely to cause disruption.

C. The worship service doesn’t contain enough for children to do; thus, they do not feel incorporated into the service. Perhaps giving children banners to wave, or drums to beat at appropriate times, would better incorporate the children into worship. Also, having one worship song for children might be better than not having any. Children need procedure, they need to know how to proceed, and currently this isn’t the case. Thus, the community needs to teach children how to proceed.

D. It is worthless to have kids under the age of two in the service because, no matter what you do, developmentally they cannot participate. Thus it’s just better for parents with toddlers to show up at 10:45am when the kids are sent to Sunday school.

E. The movement across the stage takes away from the sacredness of the sanctuary. In other words, when we send parents to Sunday school with their children, they have to trudge across the stage, which is distracting. The same is true for those who have to use the bathroom as well. Perhaps reorienting the space so that the pulpit and altar are in an alcove, rather than the stage, would make it space more sacred and reverent.

F. Community members need to do more in order to help watch over kids, particularly if the community member is single (non-partnered) and one parent is playing in the worship band. Community members could be “adopted” by families (e.g., build a relationship with them) and help out with childcare issues.

By the end of the discussion consensus seemed to be that children were to remain in the service and that keeping families together for worship was valued by the community. Thus, except for those who had children under two years old, no one championed operating a service-long childcare room. However, Bereans suggested that more elements be added to the service which will help train children how to be reverent. Also, it was clear that the eldership needed to discuss the space issue and, if need be, change the setup of the sanctuary in order to make childcare easier.

At that point the conversation shifted to other community business. I should note that I was asked to participate in this conversation since I brought my children to the service. Agreeing with the consensus, I remarked that the emphasis on family worship was a unique characteristic of Berea.
The following Sunday worship service incorporated some of the suggestions offered during the meeting. For example, I noticed that the elders changed the format of the service to include a children’s worship song and implemented procedures to control children’s behavior, such as marching in line to Sunday school. However, I also observed an increased emphasis on children’s discipline by the adult community members, reflecting their desire to see the policy succeed. To follow-up on the matter, the community reconvened several months later to review the issue. Unlike the sense of urgency of the first meeting, the tone of the second meeting was celebratory; Bereans were generally happy with the response of the eldership, community members, as well as the children to the changes.

As illustrated in this account, as well as other instances I observed, Bereans achieved consensus by engaging in a form of participatory democracy, a decision-making process that ensures members a stake in a community-wide decision and, thus, a stake in the decision’s success or failure (Polletta 2002). Accordingly, in comparison to Philadelphian elders who were responsible for both legislating and administering community policy, the Berean eldership and membership governed in unison, the eldership administering the policies that the membership legislated. Therefore, since Nicholas’s policy making power was limited, his preferred solution (Plexiglas enclosure) was not given much credibility as most Bereans dismissed, if not laughed at, the proposal. In this sense, despite his position, Nicholas could not unilaterally stipulate community values (e.g., he did not say, “We will be a community that values families in worship); rather, while Nicholas moderated discussions, values were established through community consensus. Hence, since Nicholas was not allowed to determine values for the community, Zablocki’s definition of charisma is inapplicable, as is Weber’s conceptualization,
given that the Berean leadership is void of divine charisms. Consequently, I must conclude that neither charismatic leadership nor authority exists in Berea.

If this is the case, the following questions must be asked: What keeps people invested in Berea? If charisma channels members’ investments into meaningful action, what convention accomplishes this in Berea?

I argue that the answer to these questions is St. Seton, the broken, yet beautiful, building I introduced at the beginning of the chapter. This is not to say that the actual structure has been blessed with divine charisms that cause unexplained healings or mysterious alchemic transformations; rather, St. Seton was thought of as a physical representation of Berean values, serving as a reminder of what members invested into. Although an inanimate object, such as a building, can never objectively lead a group, it acted as a stabilizing force—a totem—around which Bereans united. Durkheim ([1912] 2001) explains the totemic principle:

> Religious force is the feeling the collectivity inspires in its members, but projected outside and objectified by the minds that feel it. It becomes objectified by being anchored in an object which then becomes sacred, but any object can play this role. In principle, none is predestined by its nature to the exclusion of others, any more than others are precluded. It all depends on the circumstances that cause the feeling generating religious ideas to alight here or there, in this place rather than that. Hence the sacred character that garbs a thing is not implicated in its intrinsic features, it is added to them. The world of the religious is not a particular aspect of empirical nature: it is superimposed (P. 174).

To outsiders, in particular city officials who would like to see it condemned, St. Seton is a decaying building with little intrinsic value. However, as I described in the chapter’s introduction, Bereans view St. Seton as a symbol of their own spiritual lives as well as their mission in West Sharpsburg (e.g., “Practicing Resurrection”); thereby superimposing on the building a sacredness that tangibly represents the community’s values.
Although Durkheim never uses the term, Carlton-Ford (1993) connects Weber’s conceptualization of charisma with Durkheim’s study of religion by arguing, “Charisma prior to routinization...is, in Durkheimian terms, the symbolic representation of the sacred in the person of an individual – the charismatic leader (p. 34).” Even though Carlton-Ford frames charisma as a human expression, Durkheim claimed that sacredness can extend to anything, including plants, animals, and inanimate objects (Durkheim [1912] 2001; Carlton-Ford 1993). Accordingly, Sarbanes (2009) illustrates how Shaker communities viewed drawings, dances, and songs as “gifts of God,” attributing to such items a charismatic quality. After the death of Mother Ann Lee, the charismatic initiator of the movement, Shakers created a “gift economy,” in which inanimate “gifts of God” were passed between members with the expectation that such gifts would be reciprocated by other members. Thus, in relation to charisma, Sarbanes (2009) remarks:

Though during her lifetime the especially talented Lee may have functioned as “first among equals” in the Shaker gift-economy, after her death it [the gift economy] continued to supply members with a profound connection with community and the means actively to realize that connection for themselves, two key features of any charismatic association (P. 127).

Therefore, as with Shaker drawings, songs, and dances, I argue that charisma is a quality that extends beyond humans – it is ascribed to many different objects, including a building such as St. Seton.

When I asked Edmond, one of the elders, about his thoughts on St. Seton, he responded:

Edmond: “What are we gonna do with it?” Uhm, but I think lately especially there’s a real sense of [with inflection] “What are we gonna do with it?” This is something God has given to us, so what are we going to do with that? How are we gonna take this and be good stewards of it? Uhm, and, you know, there’s always been, you know, ideas of how to use the space: turning it into a community center; turning it into an
arts kind of place, and things like that. Uh, but it feels a little more focused now....

Mark: Yeah, sure.

Edmond: But that building for me, we talk about sacred spaces, and that’s a sacred space to me, and, and people that I bring, uh, into the building, there’s just this sense of awe....

Reflected in Edmond’s response are two important elements for understanding St. Seton as a totem: (1) a religious force anchored in an object (e.g., St. Seton as a “gift from God”); and (2) a sacred character (e.g., it is a “sacred space”). An overwhelming majority of Berean consultants echoed Edmond’s comments in one way or another, even despite the fact that the building is a resource-consuming burden. Henry, a stay-at-home father of two, shared the following when I asked him his thoughts on St. Seton:

It depends I mean sometimes it has been where, it has been a thing that has been holding us back. Because you have this building that’s aging, and constantly it needed repair, and constantly, it needed work. And we’ll always take in more, so there’s money and resources and time....And it puts a burden on you, even besides the financial, it puts an emotional burden on you. Cause you to where you’re like, “What are we gonna do?” Oh we gotta go down and clean for a while, like a janitor....

However, half way through his comments, Henry slowed down and changed his tone:

Henry: And so, I don’t mind, I mean it’s a joy to work there, but at times it’s hard....We haven’t had the bells rung for a long time. But we used to occasionally and it was beautiful and it was nice to think about ... you can imagine when it was built, cause it was a parish church. This whole community went to the church. The bells would ring and people would just walk to church. And our neighbors next door used to go to church in fact they were married in the church, and they’re older now and their sister also went to church there. So we talk to our neighbors that are going to church. They tell us stories about going to church, and they were baptized, and you just start learning about the history of the community that’s connected to the building. And when you have those thoughts and you’re like, “Well, maybe we should just get rid of the building.” Then you start to realize well maybe the building is something more than that, cause it’s more than just this financial drag, it is this ray of hope to some people....
Mark: I’ve seen that as well.
Henry: Yeah, it’s a beautiful amazing scene. We’ve had a number of Hispanic people who have stopped. And who have, one guy, I mean, I wish I spoke better Spanish, but my Spanish is horrible. And [he] was asking when mass was. And I said, we don’t, telling him we were a [inaudible] church,...But it’s that kind of, I mean. There’s so much even for new people in the community. There is a connection, [in] that connection to the community, which is kind of neat, I mean it’s pretty amazing.

Although Henry recognizes the work that St. Seton needs just to maintain its status quo, he also sees the building as a way to connect with the neighborhood; not only in terms of sharing the space that St. Seton occupies, but also the history that accompanies the church. The framing of St. Seton as a special place not only for Bereans, but also for neighborhood residents, was echoed in many interviews. Synthesizing both Edmond’s sentiments and Henry’s thoughts on St. Seton, Josiah, who as introduced in Chapter 4, shared the following:

Mark: Great. And then, what are your, what’s your take on [St. Seton]?
Josiah: [Inaudible] absolutely. I know people are going to talk about, you know, what do we do with it? Do we [inaudible 50:53] keep it?
Mark: Yes.
Josiah: Absolutely. I never for [inaudible] had the desire to sell. Um, one of the, um, I think [inaudible], but I know that one of the, the principles of [Berea] was expression of beauty. And I very much see [St. Seton] as an expression of that expression of beauty. And it’s just such a statement and, um, I think it’s, I think it’s a [statement] for the Kingdom [of God]. Uh, I think there, there are people who grew up in the neighborhoods. You know, lots of Appalachian families that grew up, their grandparents went there, their parents went there. Um, and that’s their connection to [West Sharpsburg]. And, you know, I think some folks said that if that were to ever go, that they, they don’t know what they’d do. I, I suspect we’d see a little bit of an exodus of the residents of [West Sharpsburg]. Uh, not necessarily [the Berean] community, but, uh, uh, and I, I think it has the potential to, um, really be a key in engaging community as a place for gathering, a place for interacting with community.

Given that Berea is an expressive community, ideologically driven by physical embodiments of faith, such descriptions of St. Seton are not surprising to me. Much like Philadelphians who
justify Steven and Paul’s charismatic intensity through freewill individualistic ideology, Bereans validate the charisma attributed to St. Seton through their ideological values. As revealed by the accounts above, St. Seton is a special vessel provided for Bereans to demonstrate that God has not abandoned West Sharpsburg, but, in accordance with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is alive, active, and moving in the neighborhood. Thus, as I experienced, the building was used no matter how uncomfortable the conditions. For example, warming the sanctuary through the church’s furnace system during the winter was cost prohibitive, yet congregants, including myself, came to Sunday morning worship service when the temperature in the sanctuary was not much higher than the temperature outside. Likewise, on hot humid summer mornings, congregants would sweat through the worship service, our only relief was two large industrialized fans that never cooled the air, just stirred it. However, Bereans justified these burdens by declaring St. Seton sacred; thereby, placing a charismatic quality on the physical edifice, which, although has no leadership or authoritative power, serves as a representation of the community’s values. As we will see in the forthcoming chapters, this relationship between cultural ideology and place (e.g., geographic location) becomes all the more important for Bereans when considering the conventions that provide strength and vitality to the community. However, before I get too far ahead of myself, allow me to make a comment on the relationship between charisma and its psychological effects as previously studied.

CONCLUSION

There is ample research that examines the consequences of charisma on the psychological well-being of intentional community members. In some cases, this research demonstrates that
members of intentional communities receive psychological benefits for adhering to charismatic leaders under certain conditions; therefore substantiating the member’s participation (Latkin 1990; Sunberg et al. 1990; Carlton-Ford 1992; 1993; Latkin et al. 1994). Since my research is focused on the strength of Christian Intentional Communities as organizations, rather than psychological strength of individual members, I cannot confirm nor reject these previous findings. However, anecdotally, I did notice that, in comparison to Bereans, Philadelphians often expressed their inadequacies by making self-condemning statements, typically along the lines of, “I’m too sinful,” or “God is not pleased with me.” Although more research would have to be done on this subject, these accounts do not contradict Carlton-Ford’s (1992; 1993) findings that members of communes with charismatic leaders and a larger number of Western (e.g., Christian) rituals have lower levels of self-esteem. In this case, Philadelphians may feel inadequate, spiritually and emotionally, when they consistently participate in rituals that Steven and Paul lead. In comparison to the giftedness of Steven and Paul, Philadelphians may feel much more inadequate, causing them to have lower levels of self-esteem. Nevertheless, since I did not examine this particular dynamic in depth, I do not feel comfortable providing a solid conclusion.

However, I can conclude that charismatic influence is present in both Philadelphia and Berea, albeit in different forms and at varying intensities. On the one hand, Philadelphia has two charismatic leaders, Steven and Paul, who, with complimentary roles, demonstrate a policy level of intensity. On the other hand, Berea is influenced by the charisma of St. Seton, a church building regarded as sacred because it embodies Berean values. In both of these cases, charisma serves to stabilize the community as it progresses through stages of development and
is supported by the group’s respective ideology. However, no matter how powerful charisma can be, there are other theories as to why members stay committed to intentional communities. In the next chapter we will examine the cultural conventions of both communities. As we began to see in this chapter, Philadelphia and Berea diverge in terms how they remain organizationally strong; one thriving under traditional commitment processes, the other drawing strength from the place in which they locate.
On May 24th, 2012 I attended a typical Philadelphia Thursday evening Bible Study, called “Group.” Steven, the Philadelphian elder who I profiled in Chapter 5, opened the service with a couple of announcements. He then asked Kevin, who was introduced in Chapter 4, to lead the congregation in singing the hymn, Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee. Singing a song before the teaching was unusual and some congregants responded with surprise, nevertheless, we sang four verses of the hymn. Steven then began teaching from the Epistle of Jude. Finishing thirty minutes later, he transitioned the community into a period of singing praise songs. Kevin, accompanied by a bass, mandolin, piano, and djembe, led the singing while playing a guitar. We sang four praise songs, one of which included the following chorus:

“We bow before you holy one
You’re the one who makes us whole
  In you we live
  In you we move
  In you we have our being.”

As a congregation we sang through the chorus twice. The second time the praise band sped up and crescendoed over the last three lines causing many Philadelphians to stand from their sitting position, most raising their hands high into the air. Then, as was my experience during Philadelphian worship services, the band kept playing at the same volume and speed while individual congregants provided their own words, some in songs, some in spoken voice, some in prayer, and some in tongues. Rebekah, a beautifully-toned soprano, repeatedly sang, “We praise your holy name, Lord. We praise your holy name, Lord. We praise your holy name, Lord.” while, Ed, eyes closed and head down, prayed in a soft voice, “Jesus...Jesus...Jesus...Jesus.”
Others watched, while some more sat in silent prayer, and I, in the midst of this, closed my eyes and listened. The cacophony of everyone singing their own words faded and, as individual voices became indistinct, a beautiful collective harmony surfaced. I was moved at that point, not necessarily to emotion, but I felt inspired, as beautiful music will do to a person from time to time. I opened my eyes five minutes later when Kevin began to sing the chorus again. The congregation followed. The band then slowed down, decrescendoed, and transitioned into a new praise song. Steven concluded the service soon after with a short prayer.

This style of praise singing, commonly known as “Harp and Bowl,” seems fitting for a freewill individualistic community like Philadelphia, each member singing their own individual chorus to a collectively shared melody. As reported in this vignette, Harp and Bowl praise incorporates antiphonal singing with participants reciting scripture, prayers, or practicing glossolalia while a praise band plays a repeated tonal phrase (visualize a jam band, such as Phish or the Grateful Dead, constantly repeating a melody while concert goers add their own distinct chorus lines, no two alike). The praise band controls the congregation with various speeds and volumes, dictating when congregants can ‘cut loose’ in praise or when the group needs to surrender their individual leadings to the collective chorus.

Less than two weeks later I sang the same chorus printed above during a Sunday morning worship service at Berea; however, the manner in which Bereans’ sang the chorus was very different from Philadelphians. Following a liturgical format, Ann, who was introduced in Chapter 4, accompanied by a backup vocalist, a banjo, a djembe, a backup guitarist, led the congregants, who were already standing, in several praise songs while playing her guitar. When we started singing the chorus the band maintained a steady beat and volume, repeating the
phrase three or four times as one or two congregants raised their hands. After the chorus was finished, the congregation stood in a reverent silence - solemn - most with their eyes closed. Some swayed gently. Recognizing that this was a significant time of worship for them I too closed my eyes, although I did not feel inspired as I did in Philadelphia. After about three minutes of silence Ann prayed for the offering and we continued with the liturgy.

These vignettes reveal the cultural distinctiveness of Philadelphia and Berea in terms of worship - Philadelphia’s ecstatic praise stands in contrast to Berea’s contemplative style. Yet, these distinctive styles of worship are just the beginning of the cultural differences between the two communities. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, based on their respective ideologies, Philadelphia and Berea are culturally distinct, which, according to previous research, affects members’ level of commitment. Thus, like Chapter 5, which illustrates how charisma aids in members’ commitment, the aim of this chapter is to examine how culture, in particular the culture of worship services, inter-organizational cultures, and cultural identity, influence members’ commitment. To accomplish this aim I have divided the chapter into three sections. The first section examines the culture of worship services in Berea and Philadelphia; whereas the second section investigates the inter-organizational culture of both communities. Then, in the third section I explore the ways in which discursive repertoires are used by Philadelphians, but not Bereans, to build cultural identity and, as a consequence deepen members’ commitment. I conclude by noting the inclusive-exclusive dichotomy between expressive and freewill individualistic communities as echoed in Berea and Philadelphia respectively.
Continuing the descriptions from the chapter’s introduction, in this section I illustrate how Berean and Philadelphian worship services reflect the cultural ideologies of both communities; consequently, deepening members’ commitment. Since I already described a Philadelphian worship service in some detail, I will start with an experience from Berea.

On January 8, 2012 I attended a Berean worship service that took place in one of St. Seton’s classrooms. Having just completed the Year of Discernment, part of the service was reserved for the installation of the new Berean elders (see Chapter 5). I picked up a liturgy program (Appendix A: Picture 6.1 – 6.3) and sat down. A set of windows lined the Southern and Western walls allowing for an extravagant amount of natural light to brighten the room. Chairs were set up in four rows of 14 with a center aisle that extended from the door to an altar. The altar was a four legged wooden table draped in a white tablecloth, to the right of which was a cross made out of tree branches collected from a local park. Four giant poinsettia plants were arranged in an asymmetrical pattern around the cross; only one of them looked healthy while the other three had wilted considerably. To the left of the altar were two chairs and music stands. A guitar was displayed on a rack next to one of the chairs while an upright piano was positioned in the Southeastern corner of the room.

There were about 50 people present, including children. Ethan, who was wearing glasses, a stocking cap, jeans, and a wool sweater, stood directly in front of the altar and began the Call to Worship as printed in the liturgy program (Appendix A: Picture 6.1). In a loud, low voice, Ethan said authoritatively, “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones.” Several, but not all, responded
with the words printed in the program, “Give unto the Lord glory and strength.” Ethan continued the Call to Worship while the rest of the congregation joined in.

Ethan then sat down at one of the chairs to the left of the altar and picked up the guitar. He greeted everyone. Josiah, who I introduced in Chapter 4, who was wearing a beige wool sweater and green army pants, sat down next to Ethan and picked up an auto-harp. They started to play the first hymn listed in the program, *Holy, Holy, Holy*. At first the congregation sang off key, and the worship seemed lifeless to me; however, by the fourth verse, the tempo increased and I felt momentum building as the congregation started singing more on key.

Ethan then led the Prayer of Adoration, another call-and-response liturgical prayer, after which he led the congregation in singing *Wonderful Counselor*, while Josiah made a beat on a djembe and cymbal (Appendix A: Picture 6.2). We continued through the liturgy, singing a song followed by a call-and-response element. After the congregation twice repeated the song, *Praise is Waiting* (Appendix A: Picture 6.2), Ethan, who had switched to the banjo, changed the phrase, “Praise is” to “I am”, such that, the third time through the song, the congregation sang, “I am waiting for you O God, I am waiting for you.” He did it again for a fourth repetition by changing the phrase “Praise is” to “My heart is.” Everyone followed.

When it was time for the Miserere* (Appendix A: Picture 6.2 and 6.3), Ethan provided direction for the congregation. He told us that we would sing the words, “Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy,” after which individuals could vocalize prayers while the instruments kept playing. Once the prayers were complete, we would sing the chorus again, followed by another set of prayers. As we began, congregants were hesitant to pray, but, within a short amount of time, several individuals offered prayers for marriages, children, West
Sharpsburg, and the Berean community. As congregants engaged in the Miserere I sensed a collective effervescence, not necessarily like Philadelphia where collective effervescence is a product of loud expressive singing, rather, it was a subtle impression of connectedness, in which I felt as though I was praying with everyone else even though I never opened my mouth and barely knew the circumstances of the prayers being offered.

After about ten minutes Ethan concluded the Miserere and then, holding up a bowl, gave thanks for the offering, but did not pass an offering plate around the congregation. Instead, he immediately directed the congregation to “Pass the Peace of Christ,” a ritual in which congregants shake hands with one another often saying a phrase such as, “Peace of Christ be with you.” While everyone was Passing the Peace of Christ, Ethan, accompanied by Josiah on the djembe, led the Blessing of the Children and Lighting of the Epiphany candles.

As the children were exiting the room for Sunday school, Penny, who I introduced in Chapter 3, walked a bowl full of burning Frankincense down the center aisle, adding a wonderful aroma to the air. The Frankincense represented Epiphany, the liturgical season celebrating the arrival of the Magi and their gifts (one of which was Frankincense) to the manger where Jesus of Nazareth was born. However, Penny’s procession, which was meant to be the climax of the liturgy, was interrupted by an extremely high pitched squealing. The smoke from the burning Frankincense set off the fire alarm. Everyone was startled. Kids started crying. Some congregants stood up and opened windows, while others just laughed and cracked jokes.

Although in other contexts a malfunction like this might incur severe penalties, for Bereans interruptions tend to be celebrate. Therefore, instead of being annoyed and frustrated, congregants were generally jovial and joyous. The Frankincense was smothered, Frank, who I
introduced in Chapter 4, turned off the alarm and waited for the fire trucks to arrive, while the rest of the congregation settled back into their seats as the liturgy continued.

Nicholas, who I profiled in Chapter 5, gave a short reflection with his daughter, who was scared by the alarm, in his arms. During the conclusion of the reflection, Colin entered the room and sat in the front row with his head bowed. Once the reflection was finished Colin stood up and shared that, because he had been feeding his infant daughter throughout the night, he slept through his bedside alarm, which was set for 9 a.m. However, he did wake up to the sound of fire engines five minutes ago and, after quickly throwing on his clothes, ran to the church. Many in the congregation chuckled at this story. Nonetheless, Colin was fortunate because he arrived just in time to lead the Prayer of Releasing and Anointing (Appendix A: Picture 6.3), the portion of the liturgy assigned to him.

After taking a deep breath, Colin asked previous community leaders to come to the altar, face the congregation, and kneel. He then prayed for them. In a likewise manner, Colin asked the five newly elected elders to come to the altar, face the congregation, and kneel while the previous community leaders prayed for them. At the end of the prayer, William, a well-respected, older member of Berea, stood up unsolicited and reminded members of their duty to pray for the elders daily.

Following William’s comment, Ethan transitioned the congregation into a time of Eucharist. Two Bereans in their fifties, one male and one female, came to the altar. Ethan blessed the contents of the Eucharist - a loaf of bread and a goblet of wine. He then gave the loaf of bread to the man and the goblet of wine to the woman, who were standing directly in front of the altar facing the center aisle. Ethan led the Eucharist call-and-response (Appendix A: Picture 6.3)
and, without any prohibitions, directed congregants to partake. At this time the children came back from Sunday school to join their families. Ethan went first, swallowing a piece of bread that he ripped from the loaf and then drank wine directly from the cup. He picked up his guitar and started playing background music as the others went forward to receive Eucharist. Some, like Ethan, ate the bread and then drank directly from the cup, while most, like me, dipped the bread in the wine before eating. Once the Eucharist was finished, Nicholas stood and gave a short benediction concluding the service.

As illustrated in this vignette, the culture of the Berean worship service is highly structured (i.e., it’s liturgical); however, there is fluidity to it as unplanned variances often occur (e.g., the fire alarm). As one member reported, the Berean worship service is “unstructured-structure,” meaning that, while there is a plan for the worship service, Bereans allow for a degree of irregularity, or in other words, a “rawness.” Penny explains that this “rawness” is a product of requirements for participation in the service. When I asked her to share her thoughts on the Berean worship service she responded:

I think um, there's a certain degree of, of care towards appearance and um, and respect, but um, I think we love accepting people as they are most, showing ourselves as we are...um, wounds and all. [Laugh] So I think, there's a lot of um, rawness to our worship because the people who lead it are, some of them, very inexperienced. We don't expect people to prove themselves, in order to serve in the church.

Accordingly, I observed many different people voluntarily contributing to the worship service either through leading a portion of the liturgy, playing in the praise band, or reading scripture. Only Nicholas, who typically planned and, more often than not, provided the reflection, is paid for his contributions. Consequently, the reliance on voluntary labor meant that specialized roles, such as a guitar player, must be fulfilled by individuals from outside of the community, or
fulfilled by individuals inside the community who receive specific training. In almost every case consultants reported having been trained for a specific role in the worship service rather than being recruited to the community to fulfill that role\textsuperscript{15}. In this sense, the Berean worship service tends to be a grassroots effort as most roles needed for the worship service are entirely developed within the community. For example, Frank, who often plays in the praise band, shared:

Mark: ...what do you like about the worship service?  
Frank: [Laughter] Uh, something that I like about it, is that there is freedom to learn.  
Mark: Hmm.  
Frank: I don’t know what the heck I’m doing, and for some reason, my community still allows me to get up in front of people with a banjo or a guitar, and a really weak voice, and without stage presence, and somehow help facilitate people to sing songs that tell a story of their relationship with God or our prayers to God. That mystifies me, that I, I hear people talking about like worship services, and it’s uber-slick, there’s lots of planning, and that’s not [what] we do....  
Mark: Yeah.

The grassroots nature of Berean worship service extends beyond the liturgy. For instance, the Sunday school curriculum was created by Sunday school teachers, the Eucharist bread was often baked by one of the members, and the Eucharist wine was produced in Ethan’s backyard\textsuperscript{16}. Similarly, art was another element used in the worship service with a grassroots origin. Besides the handmade cross cited in the vignette above, I witnessed the incorporation of art during the liturgical season of Lent, which, starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter, represents a time of repentance for Christians. During this time the community used the image of a bowl to symbolize the need for members to empty themselves of sin and then to fill themselves with God. Consequently, pictures of bowls lined the Lenten Liturgy booklet (Appendix A: Picture 6.4) and congregants were encouraged to bring broken pieces of pottery
to the worship service, during which they could place the pieces of pottery at the foot of the
cross while confessing sins and praying for spiritual fulfillment. Penny, who organized the art
project, framed the experience as “a very physical, audible, representation of, of bringing our
sins and our laments before God.” Revealed in this quote is the notion of embodied faith (see
Chapter 3), in which the rituals of confession and prayer are not only audible (e.g., spoken), but
also visual and tactile (e.g., seeing and touching the broken pottery).

In this sense, the Lenten art project was a reflection of expressive communalism, Berea’s
cultural ideology. As detailed in Chapter 3, expressive communalism emphasizes public,
concrete, physical acts of spiritual commitment and aligns with twelve behavioral principles
known as the “12 Marks of New Monasticism” (Rutba House 2005). Accordingly, Berea
frequently employed worship service elements, such as the Lenten art project, that
transformed abstract concepts surrounding religious faith into something tangible. Moreover,
the liturgical format was purposeful as New Monastic communities, like Berea, are charged
with, on the one hand, nurturing communal behaviors and, on the other hand, practicing
religious rituals that lead to a contemplative life. In the former case, communal behaviors
were nurtured in the worship service as congregants read, pray, and sang in unison through the
liturgical outline; whereas, in the latter case, contemplation was encouraged through embodied
rituals, such as Eucharist, the Lenten art project, and, despite its failure, the procession of
Frankincense.

However, the Frankincense incident illustrates that, even though Berea took specific action
to create a worship service that reflected their cultural ideology, they did not forsake their
identity as imperfect, broken individuals. Always present in the mind of a Berean is the
charisma of St. Seton (see Chapter 5) - beauty in brokenness. Therefore, although there were
several consultants who offered constructive criticisms of the worship service (5 out of 20), and
one consultant who reported that he was not happy with the liturgical format at all, most
consultants echoed Stephanie’s (introduced in Chapter 4) statement:

Stephanie: Um, uh, what do I think of the worship service? It’s fine. [Laughter]
Mark: Okay.
Stephanie: Listen, my husband [Atticus] was pastor of this church for a year, and
I know how much frickin’ work it takes, and so I can appreciate that. I
appreciate how much work it takes, and I appreciate that it’s not
always gonna come off without a hitch, and that it’s not there for
my, um, my take, my need to always get something from [it]. Maybe
if I do that’s great, but that is not for me….
Mark: Yeah.
Stephanie: So I really try to reserve judgment. I, I, you know, I mean, I just
sometimes, I feel really inspired by it, but mostly I just feel inspired
because I’m with these people that I’m, you know, that we’ve all
[lived] together. Like it’s just, it’s their presence. It’s not anything
that’s going on, run by the worship team, or [Nicholas], or the elders.
I mean, I guess I just feel a deep gratitude for the people and for the
hard work that’s gone into it because I know that’s really important
to some people….

Atticus, Stephanie’s husband, never talked about liturgy when I asked him his thoughts of
the Berean worship service, instead he responded:

Atticus: If your church is about what’s going on, on Sunday morning, you know,
then I got very little time for that….[laughs]…there’s no relationships
going on there….I love a good song. I love a good sermon. Challenge
me. Make me question something. But all that can be awful, and I’d still
be coming back….
Mark: Yeah. It’s about the relationships again.
Atticus: It’s all about the relationships….

Noting his inclination for a “good song” and a “good sermon,” Atticus, nevertheless, prefers to
participate in a worship service that builds relationships between congregants rather than a
worship service with a well-planned production. Reported in these accounts is the sense that
Bereans are not necessarily attracted to the liturgy, or the art, or the music, even though those elements reflect Berean cultural ideology; instead Bereans are attracted to the enhanced relational connectedness of members that is an outcome of the unstructured-structured and grassroots nature of their worship service. I can sympathize with this attraction since I briefly experienced this connectedness while praying with Bereans during the Miserere.

According to Chaves (2004) people attach themselves to religious organizations because they are attracted to the culture of the worship service. He argues that the role of a religious congregation is to engage people in the cultural activity of expressing and transmitting religious meaning, which typically occurs through various artistic mediums present in worship services such as music, art, and architecture (Chaves 2004). In this sense, individuals will adhere to a religious organization as they embrace the specific cultural repertoires promoted by the worship service. I believe this is the case with Berea, whose worship service deepens members’ commitments because it incorporates elements that build communal relationships, and such relationships are highly valued by Bereans.

In contrast, as described in the chapter’s introduction, Philadelphia’s worship service was less structured than Berea’s (e.g., they do not use a liturgy) and allowed more freedom for individual expressions of worship (e.g., the open response period during praise singing). These characteristics are a reflection of freewill individualism, the Philadelphian cultural ideology that stresses individual efforts for spiritual growth. Unlike Bereans who frame their worship services as a vehicle to connect with other members, Philadelphians frame their worship service as an opportunity for individuals to connect with God. Rebekah (noted earlier), who often sings in the praise band, shared:
Mark: And, and you do such a great job with worship. Um, how would you describe worship, um, in, at [Philadelphia]?...

Rebekah: Yeah. Um. Well my, um, my thought on worship is it’s literally connecting with the heart of God.

Mark: Hm.

Rebekah: And speaking to Him in song and, um, or even just in, you know, praise words and stuff who He is.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Rebekah: Uh, I believe that that’s true worship....Well was your question is like what do we do...as a community in worship? [Chuckles]

Mark: Yeah like how would you describe it?

Rebekah: Yeah. Um, well corporately when we’re together on Thursdays and on Sundays it’s, um, sort of the classic musical worship. Like we sing songs. We play instruments and we, um, you just close our eyes and open our hearts to God, and say [to God] like, “You are worth it. You’re worthy of our time right now, and just laying at your feet what we might have been distracted by just moments before. And just singing to You.” Um. And not being afraid of like if people are there who have never experienced this, what it might look like to them when we raise our hands and can’t help but dance a little bit. [Chuckles] You know?

Mark: Sure.

Rebekah: Which is like, “No this is a time to connect with the Father, and tell Him that He’s worthy of everything that He taught us to.”

Although Rebekah notes that these actions are done collectively (e.g., she uses “we” as the subject of her comment); implied in Rebekah’s comments is the sense that each individual is “opening their hearts to God,” and telling “Him that He’s worthy of everything He taught us...”

Accordingly, Philadelphians view worship as an individual phenomenon that occurs in a corporate setting, placing value on individual’s freedom to engage in worship in whatever way they desire. When I asked Nora, a twenty-something female and married member of the community, her thoughts on the Philadelphian worship service she responded:

Nora: Um, I appreciate the freedom that we [have] in our worship.

Mark: Hm.

Nora: I appreciate, um, that if people wanna, like, kneel down or, um, you know, step out of the aisle and, you know, kneel down or, or dance, or whatever,..., um, that they can do that.
Mark: Yeah.
Nora: I, I very much appreciate that...and I also appreciate that not everyone has to do that, either...that you can have the people who sit and just are very [contemplative]...um, and processing internally with the Lord and they can do that, and people could put their hands up and, and do that. And I think it’s, um, also, it’s a safe place to do that, but I think also we have a really good balance of not pressuring people. Like, if someone’s gonna speak in tongues, you know, they do it...
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Nora: - to thems-with, you know, to themselves and, um, quietly. They’re not, like, yelling to the whole world.
Mark: Yeah.
Nora: So I think it’s a very, um, it’s a free but respectful environment.

As with many other Philadelphian consultants, Rebekah and Nora’s accounts clearly illustrate the ways in which freewill individualism has influenced the Philadelphian worship experience – Philadelphians are expected to grow spiritually through worship services that emphasize individual freedom of expression. In this sense, Philadelphians would view the Berean liturgy as stifling and the Eucharist ritual as restrictive. In fact a Philadelphian communion service, which is equivalent in meaning to the Berean Eucharist, typically involves Steven and Paul setting a loaf of bread and a cup of grape juice\textsuperscript{20}, both purchased at a local supermarket, on a table or stool in front of the congregation and, without much introduction\textsuperscript{21}, directing congregants to partake at their leisure while praise singing continued. Individual Philadelphians would proceed to the stool, break off a piece of bread, dip the bread in the grape juice, and then celebrate communion in their own particular way. For example, some sat in nearby chairs, heads hung in silent prayer; while others, without much meditation, returned to their seats to continue singing\textsuperscript{22}. Likewise, for Philadelphians art is not a communal act of embodied faith as it is for Bereans; rather, art is viewed as an individual’s expression of devotion to God. After Group, Jason, the Philadelphian gardener, started to play a song from
the stage while everyone was dismissing from the service. Having gathered a small crowd around him, I inquired as to what Jason was doing. Ed, who I introduced in Chapter 4, told me that Jason’s song was a “sacrifice of praise,” a spiritual exercise in which Philadelphians were to create something for God (such as a painting, a food item, or, in this case, a song) that caused them to sacrifice time, money, or possessions. At that moment Jason was sharing his “sacrifice of praise,” which, although was very much a form of art, was valued as an individual act of devotion to God.

This emphasis on free, individualistic expression deepens the commitment of members who prefer charismatic worship, as is the case with many Philadelphians (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Not one of my Philadelphian consultants provided criticism for the worship service, however many, like Rebekah and Nora, noted how much they enjoyed it. Lillian, who was introduced in Chapter 4, best summarizes consultants’ responses:

Mark: ...Um, tell me about the worship services. What do you enjoy about worship services? What, what might be some things you’d change?
Lillian: Uh, worship. I love worship here so much. I really um, I think that’s it. Like when I’ve gone away...sometimes I take it for granted, I guess....But um, and then I love the spontaneous, just, spirit of worship during it. That [the praise band is] not so tied down to the, to certain [songs]; that they can actually go outside of that too.
Mark: Okay.
Lillian: So, I like, they have a good balance of structure and spontaneous[ness]. So they’re not like going crazy spontaneous. Cuz I’ve been a part of a church that does that. And um, and there’s, [the praise band is] not so structured that they can’t go outside of that too. So I really like the flexibility with that.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Lillian: Yeah, it’s neat.

This general appreciation for the Philadelphian worship service prevents members from seeking their religious needs (e.g., charismatic worship) from other organizations. According to Finke
and Stark (1989) as well as Hatch (1989), the rise of religious pluralism has created a religious marketplace in which congregations compete for adherents. Since the worship service is the most visible aspect of a religious organization, often individuals will chose to affiliate with a congregation that incorporates attractive worship elements (Chaves 2004). Like purchasing a car, people will “test drive” churches before settling on one to attend and, once attending, will deepen their commitment as long as they benefit from the worship services orchestrated by the organization. In other words, Philadelphians become more committed to the community as they continue to delight in the worship service.

Thus, despite the differences between the Berean and Philadelphian worship services, both sets are a reflection of their respective cultural ideologies and serve to deepen members’ commitments. However, the worship service, although visible, is not the only cultural convention of religious organizations that affects commitment. Becker (1999) demonstrates that inter-organizational cultures are important when considering the strength and vitality of religious organizations, including Christian Intentional Communities (CICs). We now turn to this discussion.

THE INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF PHILADELPHIA AND BREA

Becker (1999) argues that congregations develop distinct cultures, albeit not necessarily idiosyncratic cultures, that comprise local understandings of identity and mission. These cultures are illustrated in the ways in which core tasks are carried out as well as the legitimacy that is attached to the course of action which accomplishes these core tasks (Becker 1999). Simply put, local religious organizations have their own way of doing things; nevertheless,
systematic patterns of action are noticeable when examining a cross-section of congregations. Accordingly, Becker (1999) identifies four different types of inter-organizational cultural patterns within congregations. Each type is listed below accompanied by a description:

1. House of Worship Model – The inter-organizational culture is focused on providing an intimate and uplifting worship experience as well as training members, especially children, in the congregation’s heritage, doctrine and rituals. In this case, the religious organization is seen by congregants as simply a provider of religious goods and services (Becker 1999).

2. Family Model – The inter-organizational culture stresses close-knit and supportive relationships for members. Consequently, personal connections and length of membership are more important bases of authority than are formal structures of positions (Becker 1999).

3. The Community Model – The inter-organizational culture emphasizes formal and open decision-making routines that all members are encouraged to partake so as to satisfy their spiritual desires. At the heart of the community model is care for each congregant’s needs while exploring potentially divisive moral, social, and political issues.

4. Leader Model – The inter-organizational culture devalues interpersonal intimacy between congregants, while promoting political and social action beyond their walls (Becker 1999).

Becker (1999) claims that religious organizations shape programming, organize moral order, and distribute resources according to one of these four models. She notes,
They [inter-organizational cultural models] are not just common understandings, but they are manifest in policies and programs, in taken-for-granted ways of doing things, in sermon topics, in the interaction of members with each other and with visitors, and in the forms of liturgy and ritual, all of which fit together to provide an overall sense of identity and tenor of congregational life (Becker 1999:17).

This is the case in Berea and Philadelphia, where particular inter-organizational cultural models shape the dynamics of the communities. However, contradictory to Becker, Berea and Philadelphia demonstrate that these models are not necessarily mutually exclusive; rather both communities display characteristics of multiple cultural patterns simultaneously. As I will describe in this section Berea exhibits features of both the Community and Family Models; whereas, Philadelphia demonstrates qualities of the Family Model, like Berea, but also the House of Worship Model. In this sense, we should view the patterns of inter-organizational cultures with a degree of fluidity, where the boundaries between various cross-sectional cultural patterns are blurred, or, in the case of Berea and Philadelphia, actually overlap.

As I described in Chapter 5, Berea values egalitarianism and, consequently, employs techniques known as, “participatory democracy,” to make big decisions. In this case, Berea reflects Becker’s (1999) Community Model since they stress the importance of gathering together as a community to resolve organizational issues; thereby, valuing every members’ input in the process. Also mentioned in Chapter 5 is the fact that Nicholas, the Berean pastor, uses participatory democracy during worship service reflections. When I asked Nicholas if this method was intentional, he responded that it was, adding that the format was an outcome of the Year of Discernment:

Yep. It was definitely planned and intentional for the discernment process. Um, I think what that did was to create a culture of that being just kind of normal and acceptable, um, within [Berea]. Um, I mean, as kind of a trained youth pastor,
like, I often would try and make things participatory in my talks and messages for youth and so some of that's carried over for me, um, just in terms of pedagogical, you know, effectiveness. The more you can engage people, um, the more things actually stick.

Uh, part of it is I just enjoy the way [I] can almost craft a message, playing off of people's questions and feedback, so a lot of times it's, uh, you know, it's almost like, um, a Mad-lib or something, where everybody's writing in, you know, a piece and it creates this story, which oftentimes can be incoherent.

Correcting his last statement, Nicholas continues:

The nice thing about inviting congregational input during a message is that it often does have coherence. And I enjoy bringing that coherence to people's thoughts and, in a sense, like, assembling them and compiling them into, um, something that, um, hopefully makes sense and is encouraging and, um, affirms what people have shared so that, again, it's not this sense of you have a single, uh, guru who dispenses wisdom from on high, but because everyone has the Holy Spirit, like, everyone has the ability to contribute and speak truth and contribute to, um, a general word that's being spoken that morning.

I think just the affirmation of kind of the priesthood of all believers is something that came up during the discernment and it's something that I would definitely affirm. Um, I mean, the idea in Corinthians of having several prophets speak and, you know, then kind of testing what is spoken. I mean, I think there's different ways you can do that but I think partially by the way that we involve participation and have multiple people share messages on Sunday morning, in a sense we're trying to live into that idea of it's not just the pastor who, you know, can, uh, preach and have something good to say. [Laughter.]

Although Chapter 5 details the ways in which Berea’s egalitarian values are a reflection of their cultural ideology (e.g., expressive communalism), it is important to note that the Year of Discernment entailed a major cultural shift in the community, out of which emerged this Community Model of inter-organizational culture.

However, my consultants also reported strong, caring, supportive relationships with one another; such actions are much more associated with Becker’s (1999) Family Model, as opposed to the Community Model, of inter-organizational culture. At one point or another,
thirteen out of twenty Berean consultants described their community as a family during their interview. While some talked about the community as a tribe and others as “home,” most comments corresponded with Henry, who was introduced in Chapter 4:

Mark: So how do you describe your community?
Henry: Wow, um. On a certain [level] it can be defined as a church. You know, obviously we have a building, we have a location, we meet certain times. Outside of that, it is community. We first started here, and when we first came in it was so unique because, you know some of these things are hard to describe, based on feelings and emotions, and things that aren’t concrete. We certainly had the feeling spiritually that this is where we were supposed to be. And the connection with people, there wasn’t a lot of pretense to a lot of the people, it was just up front, here is who we are. And it has remained that, it remains a very close knit community of people, even when there’s been problems we’ve been able to, you know, it gets messy sometimes, but it’s kind of like a family, in a way, um, a very good way.

Confirming Henry’s statement, on many occasions I witnessed Bereans acting like a large extended family. For example, in the same way that some families organize life around meals, Bereans highly valued gathering together to share food with one another because of the relational benefits that members received by doing so. Consequently, once a month after a worship service Bereans held a pot-luck dinner. Additionally, I attended several meals served on the St. Seton Piazza that were open to the public (see Chapter 1 for an example). Moreover, multiple consultants warmly talked about having impromptu meals multiple times during the week as other Bereans might come uninvited or, because Bereans just happened to be hanging around outside, were invited in. Since meals were such a valued cultural medium, Bereans spent a great deal of time understanding food production processes and, as a result, financially supported their own local agro-business. As introduced in Chapter 1, Shawn and Heather, the
self-titled parish farmers, planted organic gardens throughout West Sharpsburg sharing the produce with community members as well as their neighbors.

As demonstrated with food, acts of sharing also exemplify the familial culture of Berea. In this case, both material possessions (e.g., cars, furniture, and clothing) and non-material services (e.g., childcare, and domestic chores) were shared between members. When I asked Henry’s wife, Gabrielle, who I also introduced in Chapter 4, to provide an example of sharing in the community she responded:

...Um, yeah, um, so a couple who were living down the street bought the house across the street from us and they moved and they sent an e-mail out yesterday asking for people to help them move today. So there was this whole string of people, like, yeah, sort of picking up, back and forth to the, to the apartment and the house, carrying, carrying things to help them move in. And, um, [Henry] got supper ready for our family. Um, I didn’t get home from work until they were almost finished, so he finished up supper and got me and [our son] settled,...and then he called and said he’d run into some stragglers to feed. And so he brought [home] [Jonathan] and we invited, um, [Shawn] and [Heather], who were moving, so, um...I knew they would be tidying things up in the apartment as well, so we just got a, a tray of food together and took it down to them....Um, but when those things happen, I mean, there were probably six people that responded and who knows how many showed up. I mean, [my daughter] put on her little bandana and got up there and went actually,...she was carrying stuff down the street...carrying stuff. So there’s definitely a willingness to support one another...

In Gabrielle’s account is, again, the sharing of food (e.g., Henry cooked dinner for his family, then Jonathan was invited to eat, after which food was sent to Shawn and Heather while they moved into their new apartment) as well as the sharing of services (e.g., moving services).

Other consultants described instances of sharing parental advice, particularly about attachment parenting26, a popular form of parenting amongst Bereans. Bereans who homeschooled their children, talked about the ways in which they receive and give pedagogical support. As with
many other families, when sharing does occur in Berea reciprocity is not necessarily expected, but is appreciated.

Therefore, considering that Bereans organizationally act as a large extended family, I can confirm that Becker’s (1999) Family Model of inter-organizational culture applies in this case. However, given that Berea also displays characteristics of Becker’s (1999) Community Model, it seems as though two cultural patterns are simultaneously at work in Berea. In support of this phenomenon, these two models should overlap as I would expect organizations that culturally function as a family (e.g., the Family Model) to care for members’ needs during the decision-making process (e.g., the Community Model). Thus, I am not surprised that Berea two cultural patterns because I rationalize that the Family and Community Models are relatable.

Like Berea, Philadelphia also demonstrates qualities of Becker’s (1999) Family Model; albeit for a different reason. Summing up several Philadelphian consultants, Mildred, a new member of the community, echoed Henry’s statement by noting the family-like culture of Philadelphia:

Mark: Great, and what do you enjoy the most being part of, being part of the community?
Mildred: Um, I feel like I really experienced what having a family was like, even though the majority of people here are around my age, I really feel like I experience mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters, where I’ve just not experienced that in, um, in Christian fellowship, if you will,..., so that’s been pretty cool.

As with Berea, Philadelphians used meals to establish relationships with, in Mildred’s terms, their “mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters.” However, unlike Berea where most meals were impromptu, meals in Philadelphia tended to be regularly scheduled and usually occurred in two contexts. The first context is within Philadelphian households. Typically, a Philadelphian house, which consists of four to eight same-sex individuals, scheduled a meal in conjunction
with their weekly house meeting. During house meals, members shared personal and spiritual encouragements as well as struggles, often receiving prayer from their housemates. The second context occurred immediately before worship services, in which case a household was in charge of preparing a meal, either a dinner before Group or a breakfast before Sunday morning church service, for the entire community to enjoy. Much like a church coffee hour, I observed that these meals were social occasions where members engaged with one another in conversations about their personal lives.

Additionally, like Berea, Philadelphia planted extensive gardens throughout their properties (Appendix A: Picture 6.5), which included, among many other types of plants, a banana tree\textsuperscript{27} (Appendix A: Picture 6.6). However, Philadelphians did not view gardening as an act of sustainable food production as is the case in Berea, rather Philadelphians planted gardens as a spiritual exercise. Miriam, one of the community gardeners who I introduced in Chapter 4, explains her love of gardening:

Mark: What, what is it that you love about [gardening]?
Miriam: I, I don’t know. I like seeing what that does, like you put this little thing in the ground. It was like that big [pinching her fingers together], and you’ve got this raspberry monstrosity coming that we can’t even control now. You know, I love that. I love seeing that….Like no man can make that.
Mark: Yeah.
Miriam: ...and like our tomato bushes are going crazy. They’re actually kinda driving me nuts. They’re like all over the place, and it’s actually killing [inaudible 00:50:22] tomatoes all next to each other. And one of them is thriving so well, producing so much fruit, but it’s also killing some of the other types of [inaudible 00:50:31] going over it, and it’s like, but we have to trim it back. We have to take control and at the expense of pruning, this is what it means to [be a Christian], and I think I just really enjoy seeing that and what it means in our spiritual life. [Pause] I remember we talked about not bearing fruit and you will burn up\textsuperscript{28}. If you don’t, if you’re dead on the vine after [Christ comes God will] burn you, like, oh gosh!
Mark: Yeah.
Miriam: But I really like that. I’m not a huge social person, um, as far as big group settings, which are hard to avoid around here....But by being in the garden, I get to just hide behind the bushes and do my little thing and, it’s like, a good guaranteed four hours a day, just me and God.

In the same way that Miriam framed her passion for gardening in spiritual terms, so did many Philadelphians when describing their family-like culture. In this sense, Philadelphians did not consider close-knit familial relationships as an end in itself, like Bereans did; rather Philadelphians adopted an organizational culture that mimics a large extended family as a means to grow their individual spiritual lives. When I asked what Philadelphia was all about, Steven responded:

Steven: Yeah, that’s an interesting, uh, we get that from neighbors a lot. Especially once we, we remodel a house or something and they start to connect, like, oh wait there’s, there’s something bigger going on here. What, what’s going on? [Pause] Um, it’s, it’s kind of, uh, for me personally, uh, I, I hesitate when I get asked that question because I don’t want the focus to be what we’re doing in the sense of our houses and living together. And I try to steer it to Jesus.

Mark: Right.
Steven: Like as quick as possible because there are a lot o-, I, I’ve been shocked how many unbelievers actually love the idea of a commune kind of living....And that’s been actually a real surprise for me and I, I realize sometimes if I just tell them this is what we’re doing, they, they’re, they don’t actually ask about our, the why’s. They assume that it’s for saving money and just kind of mutual, uh, strengthening and comforting and so, like, they don’t even, they’ll just be like oh cool.

Mark: Hmm.
Steven: And so I usually start, uh, personally just with, uh, Jesus and I like to just, I tell, I tell people about we’re, our intention is to seek, to follow Christ....And then when they a-, then that leads them to ask kind of well what do you mean? Because obviously that’s not the normal Christian experience, and from there I can kind of describe even more of the broader picture about how Jesus taught us to love one another to, to share things and to basically just the different things that Jesus commands. [Pause] So when I get asked that question I start with Jesus.

Mark: Mm-hmm.
Steven: And then I move into even, I still don’t go specifically to what we do. I go to the principles of loving each other....Of being devoted to each other and then from that I kind of, I’ll usually tie it into family. Most people understand, even if they have broken thoughts of family.

Mark: Yeah.

Steven: They understand a family sharing things, having the same bank account, living together, taking care of each other, sharing cars. And so I say in Christ we’re a family and so we’re, we’re seeking to be a family together here....Usually [I] use the paradigm of family to kind of describe it, uh, when people ask. So I base my, my essential answer is we’re trying to be Jesus’ family here.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Steven: And so that’s kind of, that’s kind of where I go because I, I think it can be distracting from our real intention, which is not to live together and share things. We’re not communists.

Mark: Right.

Steven: You know? We’ve, we want to, we want to be a place where Jesus is glorified. So I start with Christ and kind of bring them down to us. Start up top and then bring it down home, kind of as the conversation goes from there.

Mark: So the, the, the, the communal aspect, that’s just the means to the end.

Steven: Yeah.

Mark: So the ends being Christ.

Steven: Yeah.

Mark: And living as a family for Christ.

Steven: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I mean from my upbringing and personal growth outlook, before I became a Christian, I would not be in any kind of commune whatsoever.

Revealed in Steven’s comment is that Philadelphians purposely understand themselves as a large family, but such understanding does not completely encapsulate all of the cultural dynamics of the community.

Hence, although Philadelphia exhibits characteristics of Becker’s (1999) Family Model of inter-organizational culture, I would argue that the community also displays qualities of Becker’s (1999) House of Worship Model. In keeping with their cultural ideology, freewill individualism, Philadelphia stresses intimate individual connections with God. Consequently, seventeen out of twenty Philadelphian consultants framed responses to questions about their
view of the community in spiritual terms. Julia, who was introduced in Chapter 4, epitomizes these accounts:

Mark: So, what, what would you say is your biggest joy being part of the community?

Julia: I think my biggest joy is being part of God’s kingdom on earth already. I think seeing the broken crappy thing [life outside of the community] that we have in comparison with what the Lord has promised us, but [Philadelphia is] a shadow of that, and to know that there’s infinitely more better things. And I, I have never been in a place or been around people that I have never felt so free and so loved and so happy, um, like it’s additive. It’s like I can’t not not come back. Like, I can’t avoid [the community] because what, it’s just, it’s just the trueness and the truth of the love and the genuineness of the relationships and just the level of trust and sincerity in people. It’s nothing like you’ve ever seen before. Like, I’ve had friends, well, I had friends here at [Evangelical Megachurch], I had plenty of them, plenty more than I ever had before, and I thought I was in heaven then. You know, that I had all these people I could hang out with, and, like, we were all kind of like focused on the same thing, but I can say that and, and I can’t say that about those people anymore, but they’re not really the ones that are, you know, holding me up in the hard times. I know the people that I’m with now they’re gonna fight for me left and right, that they’re praying for me, that they are going to call me out on my crap because at the end of the day, if I’m wallowing in it, I’m not going anywhere but deeper [into sin].

In her comment Julie relates Philadelphia to the Kingdom of God⁹, particularly noting the genuine relationships with other members who will “fight,” pray, and hold her accountable (e.g., “call me out on my crap”) to grow spiritually. As with other religious organizations with an inter-organizational culture that reflects the House Worship Model, Philadelphia provides Julie with religious goods and services that prevent her from going “deeper into sin.”

Additionally, having already detailed the uplifting nature of the Philadelphian worship service in the chapter’s introduction, the community displays features of the House of Worship Model in other ways. For example, twice during my fieldwork the community arranged twenty-four hour, week-long prayer marathons in which members signed up to pray in the community
prayer room for at least one hour during the week. Since Philadelphians perceived prayer to be an intimate act of worship, some willingly volunteered to fulfill time slots designated for the middle of the night. Additionally, members were assigned to small discussion groups that met directly after Group. These groups were designed to mediate on the content of the Bible study, serving as a place to answer questions and to extend religious teaching beyond the worship service. Thus, although Philadelphia demonstrates qualities of Becker’s (1999) Family Model, I also contend that they display attributes of the House of Worship Model.

Given these outcomes, we must ask why Berea and Philadelphia exhibit two simultaneously occurring inter-organizational cultural patterns. I suggest that this phenomenon is a product of both Berea and Philadelphia’s status as intentional communities, but also a manifestation of their cultural ideologies. On the one hand, since intentional communities promote shared living, eating, and housing, an inter-organizational culture based on familial relationship would be logical, even despite the cultural differences between the two communities. In other words, both communities exhibit characteristics of Becker’s (1999) Family Model because they are intentional communities, a unique set of religious organizations. On the other hand, the cultural ideologies of the communities also influence their inter-organizational culture. Thus, since Berea and Philadelphia embrace two different cultural ideologies, I would expect cultural variations to exist. The Community Model, which is based on egalitarianism, works well for organizations, like Berea, who have adopted expressive communalism; whereas organizations that reflect the House of Worship Model, which is based on fulfilling individual’s spiritual needs, fits organizations that espouse freewill individualism, like Philadelphia. Therefore, in critique of Becker (1999), I argue that our understanding of inter-organizational cultures should allow for
greater fluidity, considering the ways in which, for particular religious organizations, multiple inter-organizational cultures occur simultaneously.

As with the culture of worship services, inter-organizational cultures attract adherents and deepen members’ commitments. For example, Henry, despite noting the conflicts that occur in organizations from time to time (e.g., “it gets messy sometimes”), credits the family-like culture of Berea (e.g., the Family Model) as his reason for committing to the community. Likewise, Julie revealed that her commitment to Philadelphia, as opposed to Evangelical Megachurch, was attributed to the community’s emphasis on intimate spiritual experiences, a reflection of Philadelphia’s inter-organizational culture (e.g., the House of Worship Model). In this sense, the vitalities of Berea and Philadelphia are products of cultural repertoires that strengthen individual’s devotion to their communities.

Up to this point I have described how two cultural conventions of religious organizations, (1) the culture of the worship service and (2) inter-organizational culture, deepen members’ commitments. In the next section I do the same, except I shift the conversation from cultural conventions to cultural identities.

THE SUB-CULTURAL IDENTITY OF PHILADELPHIA AND BERE A

The first weekend of March 2012 was special for Philadelphia. They were hosting a three day conference for approximately four hundred local Evangelical and Charismatic church leaders, featuring Donald Douglas, a popular speaker and author associated with the International House of Prayer30. Although most of the conference was closed to the public, I was able to
attend Group during which Douglas was to speak. Here is a portion of my fieldnotes from the event:

After a quick introduction and set of praise songs, Donald Douglas approached the stool centered on the stage. He was an elderly man with a round head, square jaw, thick white comb over, and white goatee. Wearing a plaid wool sweater, collared shirt, and beige khakis, Douglas spoke with a gentle British accent, making him seem warm and academic.

Within three minutes of starting his talk Douglas surprised me with the following statement, “The Muslims are taking over you know. It’s true in Britain. I’m fearful that in a couple of decades the Muslims will (his voice rising in pitch) have completely taken over. It’s not necessarily the same here in the US, but Muslims are here.” Continuing, he framed his comment in an end-times eschatology, noting that God will not let Muslims “take over.” In contradiction to his first statement Douglas remarked, “…Christians are going to take over the earth….After Christ returns Christians will be put into positions of power - we will run the governments, we will run the banks, etc. So we had better start practicing how to do that.” Congregants paid close attention to his teachings, which lasted another 85 minutes. Except for a clanging furnace and a couple of noisy babies, the crowd was relatively silent.

Reflecting on my surprise, I first considered Douglas’s statements a case of isolated antagonism between an ingroup (e.g., Christians) and an outgroup (e.g., Muslims). However, on multiple occasions, I observed members of Philadelphia use similar ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires, causing me to think that exclusionary rhetoric was valued by the community.

One example of this type of rhetoric occurred a month prior to the Douglas conference during, yet, another Group. Teaching from the Second Epistle of the Apostle John, Steven described and provided examples of three types of “false” religious doctrines that contradict Philadelphia’s own theology: false religions (e.g., Hinduism); false Christians (e.g., Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses and, since they pray to saints, traditional Catholics); and Christians-in-error (e.g., denominations that do not take the Bible literally). Concentrating on the third type, Steven taught that Philadelphians should confront Christians-in-error as Jesus confronted the

Steven continued teaching from *The Third Epistle of the Apostle John*, focusing on the need to balance confrontation with honoring differences of opinion; however, this was presented as a quick side note rather than a focus of his teaching. Similarly, I observed these ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires during talks condemning Christian churches that prescribe to strict Calvinism or Arminianism, as well as religious organizations that are influenced by modern psychology. Furthermore, this discursive repertoire is evident in the Philadelphia-Laodicea prophecy (described in Chapter 2), in which, as opposed to shallow, opulent, contemporary churches (e.g., the church of Laodicea), Philadelphia was prophesized to be a place of depth and love. In each of these examples, Philadelphia was framed as the ingroup, embracing the correct understanding of God, while most other religious organizations, particularly Christian organizations, were framed as outgroups, in need of correction.

Interestingly, when these ingroup-outgroup repertoires were used, specific individuals or churches were never targeted; rather outgroups where always described in broad, indistinct terms. For example, Steven never said “Church X” or “Christian X” is in-error, instead, Steven always used ambiguous phrases, such as “Christians-in-error,” causing me to wonder: Who are these Christians? Does this include people who attend Evangelical Megachurch? Does this include any Philadelphians? Does this include me? Essentially, I was confused as to the utility of creating these ambiguous outgroups, particularly concentrating on an outgroup that had a lot more in common with Philadelphia (e.g., Christians-in-error) than others (e.g., “false religions” and “false Christians”).
Smith et al. (1998) relieved my confusion by explaining why religious organizations, like Philadelphia, use exclusionary rhetoric. Building off of religious marketplace theories (Finke and Stark 1989), they argue:

“In a pluralistic society, those religious groups will be relatively stronger which better possess and employ the cultural tools needed to create both clear distinction from and significant engagement and tension with other relevant outgroups, short of becoming genuinely countercultural” (P. 119).

Accordingly, the ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires employed in Philadelphia facilitates adherence to a cultural identity that stands in contrast to the cultural identities of other religious organizations; thereby strengthening members’ commitment to Philadelphia. Smith et al. (1998) base this theory, which they label the “subcultural identity theory of religious strength,” on eight theoretical propositions, seven of which apply in this case:

- Proposition 1: The human drives for meaning and belonging are satisfied primarily by locating human selves within social groups that sustain distinctive, morally orienting collective identities
- Proposition 2: Social groups construct and maintain collective identities by drawing symbolic boundaries that create distinction between themselves and relevant outgroups
- Proposition 3: Religious traditions have always strategically renegotiated their collective identities by continually reformulating the ways their constructed orthodoxies engage the changing sociocultural environments they confront
- Proposition 4: Because the socially normative bases of identity-legitimation are historically variable, modern religious believers can establish stronger religious identities and commitments on the basis of individual choice than through ascription
• Proposition 5: Individuals and groups define their values and norms and evaluate their identities and actions in relation to specific, chosen reference groups; dissimilar and antagonistic outgroups may serve as negative reference groups
• Proposition 6: Modern pluralism promotes the formation of strong subcultures and potentially “deviant” identities, including religious subcultures and identities
• Proposition 7: Intergroup conflict in a pluralistic context typically strengthens ingroup identity, solidarity, resources mobilization, and membership retention (P. 90-116).

Hence, if we were to apply these propositions to Philadelphia, the argument looks as follows:

• Philadelphia provides individuals with a morally oriented cultural identity.
• Members of Philadelphia developed their cultural identity based on theological, ideological and ritual distinctions (e.g., emphasis on charisms), especially in regards to the cultural identities of other religious organizations.
• Philadelphia continued to renegotiate this identity; as for example, evolving into an intentional community from a weekly Bible study (see Chapter 4).
• The cultural identity of Philadelphia and the willingness to aggressively pursue the religious marketplace through recruitment has persuaded individuals to commit to this organization over others, such as Evangelical Megachurch.
• This commitment grows stronger as members of Philadelphia use ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires to compare their cultural identity to religious outgroups (e.g., Christians-in-error).
• As this commitment grows stronger, Philadelphia further develops a subculture that stands in contrast to other religious organizations (e.g., charismatic worship and living communally).
• Therefore, Philadelphia grows strong (e.g., deeper collective identity, community solidarity, increase in resource sharing, member retention) because the
discursive repertoires employed by Philadelphia creates a perceived conflict with other religious organizations; thereby deepening members’ commitments.

Thus, given Smith et al.’s (1998) subcultural theory of religious strength, the antagonistic accounts in which Philadelphians distance their beliefs and behaviors from other ambiguous religious organizations become palatable, as such rhetoric helps to strengthen adherence.

However, unlike Philadelphia, I never observed any ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires in Berea. Instead I observed that, most likely due to their egalitarian values, they sought relationships with religious organizations that espoused doctrines different from their own.

Touching on the familial inter-organizational culture of Berea, Gabrielle explained the openness of the community:

There’s, um, I always think of it as a family, and it just, it’s, it’s nice to become more of an extended family and I think that a lot of, I think a lot of folks, I would imagine, feel similarly, that even with visitors or people that are maybe on the fence, we just feel like they can come into part of the family. [Pause] So it’s, it’s, yeah, it doesn’t really have an “us/them” feeling, and maybe, I don’t know if that’s just my number of years speaking, but I always felt that, that, I think that’s something we try to intentionally do [inaudible 02:11.7], that we really wanna be inviting and embracing of, of everybody.

Reflecting Gabrielle’s statement, Nicholas built relationships with other churches in West Sharpsburg whose doctrine varied, and even contradicted, Berea’s theological positions. I witnessed these relationships during a Lenten lunch hosted by Berea for West Sharpsburg ministers. As with other occasions, the food was mainly provided from the community’s gardens and prepared by Shawn and Heather. The forty-five attendees represented some of the churches in West Sharpsburg, including theological conservative (e.g., the Church of Christ) and liberal denominations (e.g., Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian Church (USA)). After the meal, a
short program was held during which the pastor from the Presbyterian Church (USA) gave an inspiring talk. Throughout the event Nicolas moved around the room greeting the attenders and introducing himself to people he had not met. Nevertheless, despite their theological differences, I observed no rhetoric that corresponded with the ingroup-outgroup dynamics present in Philadelphia.

This is not to say that Bereans compromised on their religious convictions for the sake of inclusiveness. Although this will detailed in the next chapter, when I asked Berean consultants to describe their personal faith many responded with traditional Protestant orthodox theological positions - the same positions that dominate evangelicalism. Likewise, when I asked Bereans how they approach people who do not share the same religious convictions as they do, most responded similar to Lois:

Mark: ...What's your take on um, the nonreligious or people who aren't...Christians?
Lois: You mean in, in [West Sharpsburg] or in general?
Mark: In general.
Lois: Um, that's, that is why I, when I think about people who are not followers of Jesus, that's why I always talk about walking humbly.
Mark: Hmm.
Lois: Um, because um, part of how I was raised [in a conservative Baptist church] was to be proud of my faith, and to wear it on my t-shirt, and to listen to Christian music, and um, and I don't know if that's very digestible to the people around me. Like, and I, I see why that was encouraged. [Pause] I mean because um, being a Christian is not the most popular thing in the world, and so, I think that, that idea was encouraged to like say, “Yes, you can be proud of it,” and “Yes, you can you know, find courage in this.” But I think it went a little bit too far. Like it, it created an isolation as well, um, even though it was meant to, like, promote faith, um, but I think it, it caused people to reject it more than it did to promote it. Like, it, it seemed like we were trying too hard or something.
Lois: Um, so for me, I, I walk, I try to walk very humbly with my coworkers, with my friends, who are not followers of Jesus. Um,...I really see Jesus, um, and who he is,..., who he was, what he was like on earth. Um, Jesus is
the son of God [inaudible 1:10:40] um, his inner workings, like the way he's connected with everyone's spirit, and with God, the Father, um, to be the hope, um, to be the hope of peace, and um, but it, it's that, it's that weird place of saying I can't see another way than to follow Jesus.

Mark: Yeah.

Lois: Um, but I also see it as a place to sit, to tell someone that they are wrong. But yet, with me saying that my only hope for the world is Jesus, is to essentially save it.

Mark: Hmm, a little tension there.

Lois: There is a, there is a, there's a huge tension there, and my only, my only resolution is to be humble in this, and um, like to genuinely, like um, yeah, to trust that God is the creator of the universe, and, and um, but ..., for his kingdom to, to come, is not, is not on my shoulders. Um, I think that's what I carried for a long time, was that it was my, like, it was my role...to save the world.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah.

Lois: ...I had been tasked with that, along with a lot of other people, but like it was...it was quite, um, a burden to carry, um, and yeah. To, to live in that tension is, is difficult, um.

Mark: Do you think a lot of other people in [Berea] kind of lived in that tension too or?

Lois: I think so.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Lois: Yeah. Um, because it's very popular to say, "Well everyone's right. Everyone is seeking God in their own way." Um, but I don't know if that's right.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Lois: And um, so to constantly seek God and, and live in the hope that he is working through me, that he's created me with hopes and dreams and passions and that um, yeah. So it's yeah. That tension is crazy.

Mark: Yeah.

As revealed in her comment, Lois is not willing to adopt pluralistic theological positions (e.g., “I can't see another way than to follow Jesus”); yet, approaches non-Christians with humility, creating a tension between comprising her own beliefs and remaining steadfast in her convictions. However, unlike what I observed in Philadelphia, Lois, as well as other Bereans, chose to live in this tension, rather than relieving it through ingroup-outgroup discursive
repertoires. Thus, in the case of Berea, Smith et al.’s (1998) subcultural theory of religious strength does not apply.

CONCLUSION

As I have illustrated in this chapter, both Berea and Philadelphia reinforce members’ commitments through their worship services and the dynamics of their inter-organizational cultures. However, Philadelphia also strengthens members’ devotion to the community by employing discursive repertoires that facilitates adherence to the community’s cultural identity by creating conflict with ambiguous outgroups. Such rhetoric is not present in Berea. Referring back to Chapter 3, this dichotomy is most likely the manifestation of inclusive orientations found in expressive communities, such as Berea, and exclusive orientations found in freewill individualistic communities, such as Philadelphia. In the next chapter I will expand on the inclusive-exclusive orientations of the two communities, emphasizing the ways in which these orientations affect members’ commitments.
Chapter 7: The Stricter the Stronger: Strictness and Commitment in Philadelphia and Berea

I interviewed Ed, one of the original four Philadelphians introduced in Chapter 5, on a warm June afternoon. When I asked him to describe the expectations of members, Ed, emphasized the freewill individualistic ideology of Philadelphia:

...So the expectations. Okay. So what we really impress upon is the fact that it's freewill...So yes, you know, in order to live here you must, you know, meet this standard...But the principle we wantcha to get is it's your freewill. You don't hafta do that [be a member of the community] if you don't want to...But, you know, we really just, uh, you know, we, we don't want you here if you really don't wanna be here, you know.

Continuing, Ed then explained the expectation of members who do join the community out of their freewill.

Ed: Like and...it's the, uh, principle around, um, you know, pursuing others' interests above your own...you know. And it's like, Mark, like you're part of this community you're doin' this, uh, you know, doctorate deal, like what can I do to serve you in that? I want to see this, you know, the Lord is, if, you know, meaning if I'm walking with you through this whole thing and we're...both in complete agreement the Lord's called you to this...and called you to be in this, you know, school it's gotta be honoring to him [God]. And I wanna make sure that you make sure...that it's honoring to him [God], you know...And...

Mark: So that's that accountability.
Ed: Yeah.
Mark: Yeah. That's support as well?
Ed: Absolutely.

Although Ed’s response fulfilled my question, discreetly concealed in his comment is a paradox that I came to expect from Philadelphians. On the one hand, as described in Chapter 6, Philadelphians value freedom of expression and, as revealed by Ed, want individuals to join the community out of their own freewill. On the other hand, once an individual joins Philadelphia they are expected to conform to the ideological and behavioral standards of the community, even submitting their own desires (e.g., my pursuit of a doctorate) to the will of other
members (e.g., “and we're...both in complete agreement the Lord's called you to this.”). In this sense, Philadelphians are caught in a tension between honoring individual’s freedom and the unity of the community. However, based on what I observed and what my consultants shared, Philadelphians mitigated this tension by valuing community unity over members’ freedom, even despite their freewill individualistic ideology. Consequently, since unity is rarely a naturally occurring phenomenon, the Philadelphian leadership shaped a unified membership through strict theological teachings and behavioral rules, or, in Ed’s words, through “standards.”

Like Philadelphia, Berea also valued community unity; however they achieved it by allowing for ideological and behavioral variation. For example when I asked Stephanie, who I introduced in Chapter 4, to describe the expectations of Bereans she first talked about the covenant agreement that members are asked to adhere to (I detail this agreement later in the chapter). She then went on to explain the “unsaid” expectations of the community, particularly referring to gendered behaviors:

Stephanie: ...I always, um, joke that, at least for women, [Berea] is really kind of hippy.
Mark: Okay.
Stephanie: [A] Hippy place where you’re not allowed to shave your legs and you have to nurse your kids for five years. [Laughter] I know that sounds really strange.
Mark: Right.
Stephanie: But [laughter], um, we kind of, I know I felt, as kind of your typical suburban mom, I felt a little intimidated by the “au natural” expectation that wasn’t ever said and really never even put on me, but just was obvious in our community when I first came here.
Mark: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Stephanie: Um, and so now it’s more of a joke, but we still do joke about it in the women’s circles. [Laughter]
Mark: Yeah, sure, uh-huh.
Stephanie: Um, but yeah, I mean, generally things like that, eating natural food and, you know, attachment parenting and a lot of [laughter]...things that are alternatives, um, a lot of things that are alternative that are
great, that I love and, um, you know. But I still love to shave my legs, you know.

Mark: Sure.
Stephanie: ...I’m still accepted, so I have learned that really, you know, the beauty of [Berea] is that anyone is accepted, um, you know, even with those said and unsaid expectations or descriptions. [Laughter]

As in many other cases I observed in Berea, Stephanie feels accepted even though she does not hold to all of the same “au natural” ideologies or behaviors of other Berean women. Thus, like Philadelphia, Bereans have expectations that unify the membership; nevertheless they approach these expectations with a high degree of leniency rather than strictness.

The different approaches toward strictness and leniency between the communities reflect the results of my national survey\textsuperscript{1}, which revealed that 94.1 percent of freewill individualistic communities, like Philadelphia, report a high degree of unity in essential beliefs; whereas only 66.7 percent of expressive communities, such as Berea, report the same. Given this dichotomy, this chapter will explore how Philadelphia benefits from their level of strictness as opposed to the leniency of Berea, arguing, in accordance with strictness theory (Kelley 1972), that strict theological teachings and behavioral rules demand more individual investments (e.g., sacrificing desires, money, time, energy) than lenient theological teachings and behavioral rules.

Consequently, members of strict religious organizations deepen their commitment as they hope to see psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual returns on their investments. However, I also build on strictness theory by claiming that such investments do not occur naturally, rather they are facilitated through particular commitment mechanisms as described by Kanter (1968, 1972) and Hall (1988). In this sense, I attempt to bring together two bodies of literature (strictness theory and Kanter’s (1968; 1972) work on commitment) to explain how Philadelphia benefits from being strict. I should note that Berea also employs mechanisms that garner
commitment from its members; however, due to Berea’s leniency, these mechanisms have a much weaker effect on members’ commitment when compared to Philadelphia.

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the ways in which Philadelphia, when compared to Berea, strengthens adherence through strict theological teachings and behavioral rules. To accomplish this aim, I build an argument that demonstrates how Philadelphia, as a strict religious organization, exacts members’ investments through particular commitment mechanisms. Accordingly, this chapter is split into two sections, the second of which includes five subsections. The first section reviews literature surrounding strictness theory and provides examples of Philadelphia’s strictness and Berea’s leniency. The second section connects strictness theory to the particular commitment mechanisms identified by Kanter (1968, 1972) and Hall (1988). Then, in the following three subsections, I provide examples of commitment mechanisms employed by both communities, noting how these mechanisms have a greater effect on members’ commitment in Philadelphia as compared to Berea. I conclude this chapter by reviewing the various explanations for member adherence covered in Chapter 5 and Six, and turning the discussion towards why Christian Intentional Communities (CICs), more often than not, choose to reside in urban neighborhoods.

**STRICTNESS IN PHILADELPHIA AND LENIENCY IN BEREA**

Originally developed by Kelley (1972), the main argument of strictness theory is that social strength and social leniency do not go together; such that religious organizations with lenient social structures will gradually become weaker, while organizations with strict social structures will grow stronger. The logic behind strictness theory starts with the notion that religious
organizations are “repositories of the meanings and values that are most ultimate and intimate for their members” and responsible for “treasuring and enhancing, embodying and transmitting the ideals and qualities that earlier generations have found good” (Kelley 1972:147). Therefore, more than anything else, adherents expect religious organizations to conserve the moral order rather than experiment with new moralities (Kelly 1972). To fulfill this expectation religious organizations develop strict social structures to protect conservative moral orders from external onslaughts. Thus, in comparison to lenient religious organizations, strict religious organizations satisfy adherent’s expectations, causing adherents to strengthen their commitments. Succinctly summing up his theory, Kelley (1972) states, “The stricter, the stronger” (p. 95).

In keeping with strictness theory, Philadelphia promoted a theology based on a conservative interpretation of Christian Scriptures, emphasizing God’s wrath and judgment. For example, during one Group, Steven shared with the congregation how excited he was to talk about God’s redemptive plan for humankind, but that he had a hard time putting together his talk because, as he stated, “every time we talk about God’s redemption, we have to talk about God’s wrath.” Using the Old Testament book of Hosea and the New Testament book, The Epistle to the Romans, Steven stressed that we must fully understand God’s wrath before we can understand God’s mercy. At one point, he claimed that too many churches talked only about God’s love and reminded the congregation that God will judge his followers harsher than those who have no knowledge of Him.

Steven repeated his understanding of God’s judgment in a message given prior to a Philadelphian Sunday morning worship service. After sharing a couple announcements, Steven
started to talk about “grumbling” that was happening amongst community members. Although never citing specific examples, he remarked that those who grumbled would be judged by Christ, asserting that God did not care about “what we are, but what we do.” At one point he said, “Even if you’re a martyr for Christ, that matters nothing compared to loving people. If we do not love one another then we will be judged by Christ.” Continuing, Steven said that loving one another was a standard that separated those who were Christians from those who were not. He then shifted the focus of his message by applying the ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoire explained in Chapter 6, stating:

The false religion of America isn’t Hinduism or some other religion, its false Christianity. Eighty-five percent of Americans are Christians, yet Christ said the way was narrow. So either Christ is wrong or those eighty-five percent are wrong.

Through the inflection of his voice I could tell that Steven was insinuating that the eighty-five percent were wrong. Accordingly, I understood that Steven was providing Philadelphians with a negative reference group (e.g., those eighty-five percent who will be judged by Christ because they do not love each other) from which the community could discern their own behaviors (e.g., we better stop grumbling and love one another). After his message the worship service continued.

As exemplified in these vignettes, Steven discussed God’s wrath or judgment during nearly half (seven out of sixteen) of the Philadelphian worship services I attended. Implied in these discussions was the exclusive nature of Philadelphia’s theology, particularly in relation to other individuals who profess to be Christians. On the one hand, Steven recognized that God can redeem humankind and, because of this redemption, requires followers to love one another. However, on the other hand, Steven stressed God’s judgment of humankind, noting that many,
particularly professed followers of Christ, will be excluded from God’s redemption. As I argued in Chapter 3, such exclusion is common in freewill individualistic communities, such as Philadelphia, where conservative theologies are strictly maintained in order for individuals to clearly understand, in black and white terms, how one is to follow God and, thereby, grow in their faith. As a result, doctrinal variation is extremely limited in Philadelphia.

Alternatively, since expressive communities, like Berea, encourage “being missional,” the tendency is to be inclusive of individuals with various religious beliefs, permitting a plurality of theologies to exist amongst the membership. Although most, but not all, Bereans recognized that there are essential Christian beliefs (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity, and Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross), Andrew, the life-long communitarian who I introduced in Chapter 1, notes the allowance for doctrinal “gray areas”:

Andrew: I think our beliefs in some ways are, uh, are at our core fundamental, but they’re, they’re fundamental like the, the early fundamentalism that was more about that here’s some common things we agree on and the, the rest [were up for debate]. The early fundamentalists, um, in my understanding, gathered together and named a few things that they thought were critical so that they could have lots of really rich conversations about the gray areas. 

Mark: Uh huh.

Andrew: And we’ve evolved and, and the fundamental side of things has evolved into a lotta legalism and, um, uh, maybe broadcasting with a fairly loud megaphone about what’s right and what’s wrong, kind of a more, moralism. I think [Bereans] would find ourselves more along the line of the early fundamentalists. There’s a few core things [Bereans] have in common and we are way up for rich conversation about the, the other gray areas, the things that we don’t really know. And I think you’d find different kind of interpretations even about, you know, gays and lesbians, or other kinda things in our congregation. And there’s some ways, um, because we don’t sit around and have arguments about that stuff.

Mark: Yeah.

Andrew: We look at those things and say, “You know, this is a gray area. I’m not really sure.” And, um, I can guarantee there’s nobody in our
congregation that, that’s, um, slamming gays and lesbians. There might be some people that disagree with that as a lifestyle choice. There might be other people that welcome it. But I, I would, I would say there’s probably nobody in our congregation that would be vocally adamant fighting against it, you know, in that kind of sense. I think there’s more of kind of an eclectic, the very nature of our DNA is being eclectic....

Placing Berea in the larger modernist-fundamentalist debate of the nineteenth century (Wuthnow 1988), Andrew described Berea’s leniency towards differing opinions on controversial topics, such as sexuality (e.g., gays and lesbians); noting that, although no Berean would condemn an individual of same-sex attraction, some members view same-sex attraction as a violation of Biblical standards of sexuality (e.g., “some people that disagree with that as a lifestyle choice”), whereas other members would not (e.g., “There might be other people that welcome it”). Such leniency never caused conflicts to arise in the community; rather it was celebrated, unifying members together in an effort to protect Berea’s pluralistic character.

Again, this is not to say that Berean were universalists, allowing any belief or behavior. Rather there were flexible standards to which members were held and, although rare, community discipline was present. When I asked Esther, whom I introduced in Chapter 4, what happens when someone breaks the Berean membership covenant, she responded with a story about Gil:

Well, see, that’s where [laughs] you know, I think we’re kind of mutually all holding each other accountable and, um, I think where one time I saw this done really beautifully with, early on, [with Gil]. He was kind of, like, he was dating this girl, and so he was going to her church a lot, even though he was a member of ours. And it’s not like we called him out on it, although one of the elders who was his friend was like, “Hey, you know, are you, do you wanna still be a member?” You know, that kind of question. [Short Pause] And ultimately [Gil] was like, “Uh, no, you’re right. I’m, you know, I’m doing a lot of traveling. I, you know, I can’t make the commitment,” and so he kind of got up and went up to the congregation and said, “Hey, I’m kind of formally withdrawing my
membership, and I still love you,” and we still love him. And so we kind of all gathered around and prayed for [Gil] and kind of blessed him on his way to do whatever he felt called to do with his girlfriend’s church, so, you know, and travel and whatever else. So, yeah.

In this case, discipline was informal (e.g., the elders did not “call Gil out,” rather he was challenged during an unceremonious conversation), non-restrictive (e.g., Gil was not given guidelines that he had to follow in order to remain in the community), and voluntary (e.g., Gil was not required to leave the community, but could have continued to be a Berean, albeit with probable tension, while attending his girlfriend’s church).

Such discipline contradicts Kelley’s (1972) description of strict religious organizations that necessitate the subordination of individual’s wills to the discipline of organizational leadership. As indicated in Chapter 4, Philadelphia, the quintessential strict organization, labels this subordination, “submission to authority,” and heavily promotes its value amongst the membership. Miriam, a Philadelphian who I introduced in Chapter 4, shared with me a personal incident in which she submitted to the authority of the Philadelphian elders:

Miriam: ...My three and a half years here have not been a bowl full of cherries at all. They’ve been great. There have been a bowl of cherries, but it hasn’t all been a bowl of cherries.
Mark: Interesting.
Miriam: Um, and I’ve had many times where I wanted to go and actually tried to, um.
Mark: What happened? Do you mind if I ask?
Miriam: Not at all. I made poor life choices, uh, with one of the guys in the community, um, about two years ago, maybe two and a half years ago. And by the world’s standards, you can honestly say that nothing inappropriate happened. We cuddled for a night, but it was, that was crossing the line in terms of, he was a house leader at the time. That was not putting him in a position of being above reproach and things like that. We also have some rather strict rules in what it means to [inaudible 00:30:12] one another in a romantic relationship and clearly we do not go through those lines.
Mark: Yeah.
Miriam: ...So, it did come out. We repented and [submitted] to authority, but it was still such a struggle and I was dealing with a lot of [inaudible 00:30:25] in
terms of me being a destructive person by being in community. I messed up you know this man’s position of authority, um, because he had kept it hidden from one of the guys in his house, [who] is his best friend. Before long, it kind of messed their relationship. It messed my relationship up with the [elders]. It was like I’m a destructive person. So, it was a rough, it was a rough year...

Mark: So, you’ve been restored?
Miriam: Yes.

Mark: Um, what was that process like [inaudible 00:31:17]?
Miriam: Um, well, long, um. What was fun is after it, it’s fun now. Then, it wasn’t, but we were given a set of [guidelines for our] relationship, which is, even being friends, like, you’re not allowed to text one another or call one another or be alone in conversation with one another, and at first, that embittered me to nobody’s [end. But I received a] revelation at one of my nanny gigs. One of my kids tried to crawl through the gorilla fence at the zoo. Have you been there?

Mark: I’ve been there.
Miriam: It’s got this deep canyon.
Mark: Yeah.

Miriam: And then, there, and I’m just like, she was almost all the way through [inaudible 00:31:57]. I grabbed her chubby legs and threw her over my shoulder like a sack of potatoes and went straight to the car, got her butt home and I’m in the front seat. I’m just so mad.

Mark: Yeah.
Miriam: Cuz like she knows. I’m trying to explain to her that rules are there because I love her. I make those rules, and that rules are there because we’re trying to make sure that she’s safe.

Mark: Yeah.
Miriam: And she can enjoy the gorillas a lot better back here [on the appropriate side of the fence] than she will up there [on the other side of the fence].

Mark: Right.
Miriam: And then it [hit me]. I can enjoy my relationship with him [the male partner] so much better where those lines are drawn rather than on that side [a relationship without boundaries], and it just was like, that changed everything for me just having that understanding. So, I went straight to my [elders], and then I’m like, “I am so sorry I’ve been so mad. You only do this cuz you love this and it’s right, and I’m so excited to grow.” And so that was really good, and it was several months after that that they came to me and, you know, the guy [the male partner], and they were like,... “You’ve now grown and [been restored].” That was really cool....

Mark: So, he’s still here.
Miriam: He’s still here. He’s still here.
Compared to the discipline of Berea, Philadelphia’s discipline tended to be formal (e.g., guidelines issued by the elders), restrictive (e.g., Miriam had to follow the elder’s guidelines in order to remain in the community), and involuntary (e.g., the elders would have asked Miriam to leave if the discipline was rejected).

However, before judging the disciplinary actions of Philadelphia as cultish, I offer three possible explanations as to why Philadelphia valued strictness. First, as Miriam reported, the assigned relational prohibitions caused her to grow spiritually as she connected the discipline of the elders to the discipline of a caregiver – provided out of love, not vindication. Consequently, Philadelphia’s strictness reflected its freewill individualistic ideology as it assisted in individuals’ spiritual growth. Second, given that Philadelphia is mainly populated by single young adults, creating strict boundaries around romantic and sexual relationships pragmatically safeguards against feelings of jealousy as well as sorrow associated with broken hearts, both of which could lead to internal strife, splintering, and community dissolution. Thus, to protect the internal dynamics of Philadelphia, the elders created strict rules governing opposite-sex relationships.

Third, as detailed in literature amending strictness theory, strict theological positions and behavioral expectations translate to greater levels of investment through sacrificing desire, time, energy, and money. Innaccone, Olson, and Stark (1995) argue that religious organizations with high rates of resource investment tend to grow faster than organizations with low rates of resource investment. Therefore, as compared to lenient religious organizations, strict religious organizations demand more investment from their members, creating organizational vitality (Innaccone et al. 1995). Considering the disciplinary situation in
Philadelphia, Miriam faced a choice: leave the community and surrender all that she had invested, or submit to the discipline of the elders. She chose to submit to the elders, sacrificing her relationship with her male counterpart, as well as her time and energy to make sure she was acting within the prescribed disciplinary guidelines\(^1\). On the other hand, due to Berea’s leniency, not much was demanded of Gil; consequently, he faced a very different set of choices than Miriam: break up with his girlfriend, stay with his girlfriend and remain a member of Berea (albeit with added tension), or stay with his girlfriend and voluntarily leave the community. Gil determined that the tension which might arise if he remained a part of the community while dating his girlfriend would cost more, in terms of time and energy, than the investments he had already made into the community; thus, he ended his membership. In this sense, Miriam and Gil’s situations encapsulate the comparison of strict and lenient religious organizations - Miriam staying, deepening her commitment to Philadelphia; Gil leaving, ending his commitment to Berea.

Although strictness theory has been given a lot of attention, what is missing from this literature are descriptions of specific actions that strict religious organizations take to garner investments. Arguably, theology, in itself, does not beget individual investment; however, an individual who agrees with a theology espoused by an organization may be willing to invest money into the organization through, for example, a tithe. Consequently, the individual’s investment, which is based on a preference for a particular theology, is mediated through tithing. In this sense, strict religious organizations employ mechanisms that mediate investments and, as a consequence, strengthen members’ commitments. These mechanisms, which Kanter (1968; 1972) labels, “commitment mechanisms,” are explored in the next section.
COMMITMENT MECHANISMS IN PHILADELPHIA AND BERE

In her study of historic intentional communities, Kanter (1968; 1972) examined the structural arrangements and organizational strategies (e.g., the mechanisms) that promote and sustain members’ commitments, arguing that intentional communities employ specific commitment mechanisms to socially manage members’ experiences in a way that keeps members devoted to the values and mission of the community. She writes:

Commitment mechanisms are specific ways of ordering and defining the existence of a group. Every aspect of group life has implications for commitment, including property, work, boundaries, recruitment, intimate relationships, group contact, leadership and ideology. These pieces of social organization can be arranged so as to promote collective unity, provide a sense of belonging and meaning, or they can have no value for commitment. The strength of a group and the commitment of its members will be a function of the specific ways the group is put together. Abstract ideals of brotherhood and harmony, of love and union, must be translated into concrete social practices (Kanter 1972: 75).

In other words, Kanter (1972) claims that intentional communities have to make their values (e.g., abstract ideas) tangible through specific mechanisms (e.g., sharing property, requiring work, maintaining sexual boundaries, adhering to a specific ideology) in order to retain members; thereby allowing the community to thrive.

To organize her study, Kanter (1968; 1972) separated commitment mechanisms into three distinct categories:

1. Control – mechanisms, typically justified through moral persuasions, which cause members to uphold community norms and obey authority.
2. Cohesion - mechanisms employed to foster group solidarity, particularly through affective ties.
3. Continuance - mechanisms that encourage commitment through cognitive orientations, such as an internal cost/benefit analysis of continued participation.

Further breaking down this categorization, Kanter (1968; 1972) identified two types of processes for each commitment mechanism category: dissociative processes, which liberate members from other commitments, and associative processes, which attach members to the community. The following table lists the various dissociative and associative processes from the three commitment mechanism categories with examples, some of which will be explained and some of which have already been explained, from Philadelphia and Berea:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment Mechanism Category</th>
<th>Dissociative Processes</th>
<th>Associative Processes</th>
<th>Examples from Philadelphia</th>
<th>Examples from Berea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>Confession Partners and Exercises</td>
<td>Informal/Voluntary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surrender to Community Covenant</td>
<td>Demanded</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submission to Authority</td>
<td>Demanded</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Renunciation of Relationships</td>
<td>Prohibition on dating relationships outside of the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uniform Dress</td>
<td>Community Work Crew\textsuperscript{13}</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communistic Sharing</td>
<td>All property shared</td>
<td>Voluntary Sharing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious Ritual</td>
<td>Worship Services\textsuperscript{14}</td>
<td>Worship Services\textsuperscript{15}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As illustrated in this table, Philadelphia employs both dissociative and associative processes for each commitment mechanism category; whereas Berea only employs some of these processes, typically on a voluntary basis. Consequently, Kanter would contend that, through these multiple mechanisms, Philadelphia, as opposed to Berea, spurs members to remain committed to the values and mission of the community.

Critiquing Kanter’s (1968; 1972) work, Hall (1988) demonstrates that commitment mechanisms which promote ethnic homogeneity, define a spiritual hierarchy, and foster confession rituals accounted for 67% of variance between intentional communities that maintained a committed membership for more than twenty-five years and those that did not. Since Philadelphia and Berea have homogenous memberships (see Chapter 2 for a description of the communities’ demographics) and defined spiritual hierarchies (see Chapter 5 for a description of these hierarchies), in light of Hall’s (1988) critique, only differences in confession
rituals between the two communities would explain variation in members’ commitments.

Although more details will be provided later in the chapter, in comparison to Bereans, Philadelphians engage in much more demanding confession rituals; thus, according to Hall, Philadelphia most likely will maintain a committed membership for an extensive period of time.

However, building on Kanter (1968; 1972) and Hall (1988), I argue that commitment mechanisms, as isolated structural arrangements and organizational strategies, do not have a great effect on members’ commitments, unless they are strictly regarded and enforced. As I previously mentioned, strictness alone does not encourage commitment; however, when strict theological positions and behavioral expectations are mediated through commitment mechanisms, members invest more of themselves, and, as a consequence, deepen their commitment. Therefore, throughout the next three subsections I describe various commitment mechanisms employed by both communities. Since I have covered many dissociative and associative commitment processes in other chapters, I will concentrate on the following: membership covenants, common purse (e.g., financial sharing), and confession practices. Given Philadelphia’s strictness, in each of these subsections I illustrate why these mechanisms have a greater effect on members’ commitments in Philadelphia as opposed to Berea.

Membership Covenants

The Philadelphian membership covenant is a simple two page document outlining eleven agreements, nine of which are supported by a Biblical reference, that an individual must adhere to in order to be a member of the community (Appendix A: Table 7.1). Typically, those who are ready to sign the membership covenant do so in a small ceremony. I witnessed this ceremony after a Group and discussion group in June 2012. Twenty community members crowded into a
living room to support James, a single man in his thirties, as he signed the covenant. Paul led the ceremony by passing around a white three-ring binder which contained the covenant document. As the binder was passed, different people read the eleven membership agreements. Then, upon finishing, Paul asked James if he agreed with everything that was read. James responded that he did and consequently signed, officially making him a Philadelphian. Paul then directed James to move to the center of the room so that his fellow members could pray and prophesied over him, while laying their hands on his head and shoulders. Many prayed, in both English and in tongues, even some who confessed not knowing James; however, only Joseph, the new elder introduced in Chapter 5, prophesized, sharing that he saw two hearts, James and the community’s, melt together. He continued saying that he envisioned a person holding up a house on his back, which indicated that James was a sturdy foundation for other believers in the community. After about twenty minutes Steven closed the prayer and everyone celebrated with hugs and cheers.

By signing the covenant James consented to follow specific behavioral norms (e.g., guidelines for conflict resolution, sexual behaviors, attendance at meals) expected of all Philadelphians. However, these behavioral norms are not perceived by Philadelphians as contrived; rather, the covenant agreements are viewed as moral mandates dictated by Scripture. When I asked Philadelphian consultants what was contained in the covenant, many replied with Biblical references to moral behaviors, submission to authority, and/or inter-group relational expectations. Dwayne, who I introduced in Chapter 4, summarized these responses by stating that the covenant contains “just things from the Bible, you know.” Consequently, since Philadelphians understand the covenant as Biblically substantiated, it is regarded as
moral justification and, therefore, tends to be unquestioned by community members. Thus, Miriam submitted to formal sanctions placed against her for breaking the sexual purity agreement (Appendix A: Table 7.1, Agreement #5), even though one could argue that her transgression, cuddling with a male member, violated nothing. In this sense, the membership covenant acts to control the behaviors of Philadelphians, constituting, what Kanter (1968; 1972) identified as, a control commitment mechanism.

Like Philadelphia, Berea also had a covenant (Appendix A: Table 7.1) that individuals signed in order to be a member of the community. However, instead of eleven agreements, Berea’s covenant required that individuals concur with three core values, each supported by Biblical references, and consent to ten specific practices. In comparison, there are some ways in which the two covenants overlapped, particularly in terms of attendance and participation expectations; nevertheless, at their core, they emphasized very different expectations. For example, Philadelphia’s covenant stressed submission to authority, while providing specific guidelines for complete sharing (e.g., 100 percent) of both material and financial resources; whereas, Berea’s covenant stressed prayer, while providing specific guidelines for how members are to relate to their neighbors. Conversely, Philadelphia’s covenant never mentioned prayer or neighborhood relations; whereas, Berea’s covenant never alluded to submission to authority and only expected members to tithe five percent of their income. Accordingly, when compared to the expectations placed on Philadelphians, less is required of Bereans in terms of time, energy, and behavioral sacrifice (e.g., it’s easier to sacrifice five percent of your income as opposed to 100 percent).
Consequently, because their membership requirements are more lenient, Bereans tend to only partially follow the covenant. When I asked Henry, who was introduced in Chapter 5, if he could describe the behavioral expectations of Bereans now that the Year of Discernment was complete, he shared:

Henry: Well this week, well this year is the first time we ever actually sat down and decided let’s actually have real membership. Before it was kind of come as you are, and stay as long as you want. And if you need to leave or want to leave, we love you anyway. And I think that may be part of the reason it was so... I mean it’s a double-edged thing. On the one hand, if you don’t have that, that, that... entry, the (inaudible) entry, the membership or whatever, it would be, you um, you feel connected very quickly. On the other hand, when things go to turmoil or where you’ve been there for a while you may feel neglected at different times, it certainly makes it easier to leave when you don’t have that commitment....and even if it’s just something as simple as a piece of paper that says, “hey I want to be a member here so I’m going to abide by the beliefs or rules or whatever.” Um, we didn’t have that [before the Year of Discernment], it was just kind of a big family reunion. You just got together, you’re a church, people just kind of hung out, it was very free.

Mark: So now you have...

Henry: We do...

Mark: Do you think there’s, I know the ten points, do you feel there’s a lot of variation within the ten points?

Henry: You know, to a certain extent, I mean, everybody, if they’re asked, and this is kind of saying one on one, they’re going to have a certain like top three, top five that they cannot do without, and they may have them in order. And then the rest of it, there’s some wiggle room...Um, and, but it still leaves wiggle room for how the practices, you know, work out, or. So there’s some wiggle room there. So we might have our ten points on, here’s our ten points and here’s what we do. I certainly think there’s some wiggle room within that. You know, it can’t be stretched too far if there’s some wiggle room.

Reflecting strictness theory, Henry recognized that membership covenants increase individual’s commitment; yet, Bereans, even despite their covenant, have “wiggle room,” indicating that the covenant was not strictly enforced by the community. As with Henry, Kelly, a
twenty-something single woman, noted the newness of the Berean covenant as well as the community’s leniency towards it:

Mark: ...do you think the community allows for variation in, in communal behaviors? I know like, um, if you think about those, those ten [practices], you know.
Kelly: Mm-hmm.
Mark: Yeah, how much leeway is there, in those, in those people’s, in those expectations?
Kelly: Right, I think there, there is. This, this is the first year they’ve had those ten [practices]. That will, I mean, there’s some people who did commit and who, who aren’t around.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Kelly: Um, and I, I’m going to guess there are discussions happening with those folks, in terms of in front of leadership, um, but I also think there’s, there’s variation in practice.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Kelly: Um, I know, yeah, I mean, we started last year forming membership covenants that were nonexistent. Now we have ten [practices], and even though we now have ten [practices] written on paper, that doesn’t mean all of our lives reflect these written out ten [practices], overnight, just because now they’re written.
Mark: Sure.
Kelly: Um, but I think there’s a, the ten [practices] are written in such a way that it there is a lot of freedom in expression. Um, for instance, I know one is like, “Serve the church in the capacity that you’re called.”
Mark: Right.
Kelly: So there’s a freedom in that, of not saying you have to volunteer one time a month for at least two hours, or an equivalent commitment.
Mark: Yeah, there’s no log book necessary.
Kelly: Right, right, um, so there is freedom in that,...

Although Kelly seemed hopeful that the elders hold members accountable to the covenant (e.g., the elders will talk to members who “aren’t around”), during my time in the field only Gil was confronted about his membership commitments. There were many others who were fulfilling only a proportion of the ten practices listed in the membership covenant, but were never held to account for their inaction. Nonetheless, such negligence is not necessarily the
fault of the elders; rather it is a reflection of Berea’s leniency, which allows members to slack on their covenant commitments.

In this sense, both communities use their membership covenants as a control commitment mechanism that, backed by Biblical justification, determined community norms and provided a codified document by which elders (e.g., authority) can discipline members. However, Philadelphia strictly enforced the covenant, causing members to sacrifice desires, time, energy, and money to maintain their commitments; whereas Berea approached the covenant with a degree of leniency, demanding less of members in terms of sacrifices. Consequently, as mediated through membership covenants, Philadelphians tended to have a deeper commitment to their community than Bereans. In a similar manner, as explained in the next subsection, Philadelphia also employed cohesion and continuance commitment mechanisms in order to strengthened member adherence.

*Common Purse*

Based on Covenant Agreement Nine (Appendix A: Table 7.1), Philadelphians were expected to participate in a common purse, sharing financial assets, such as salary, and possibly savings as well as investments. Only members with extraordinary circumstances, such as large debts, were excluded from this expectation\(^2\). Additionally, contrasted to the other membership agreements, the common purse was never forced; rather members were allowed to join when they felt comfortable with the idea, which, in some cases, took several months. However, upon joining the common purse, members had to surrender their entire salary and financial gifts (e.g., Birthday cash, gift cards, etc.), while other assets (e.g., financial investments and savings)
were gladly accepted, but not required. Even despite this latter option, most members had
donated all of their financial assets to the community.

In return for joining the common purse, the community paid for all individual expenses,
including housing costs, food, medical expenses, health insurance, car insurance, automobile
gas, cell phones, gym memberships, new clothing, etc., and gave each member $100 in cash
every month for discretionary purchases. This system was administered by a Community
Treasurer, Assistant Community Treasurer, and House Treasurers. At the beginning of the
month the Community Treasurer sent money, based on a predetermined budget, to House
Treasurers. The House Treasurer paid the house’s utility bills and dispensed money to house
members, delegating certain tasks that require financial exchanges, such as grocery shopping.
For the sake of accountability, receipts were collected and entered into a spreadsheet by the
Assistant Community Treasurer. If an individual needed to purchase a material item which cost
less than $75, such as a jacket, that individual would ask their House Treasurer for the money.
However, if the expense was over $75, the individual would turn in an expense request form to
the Community Treasurer. In either case, if the request was accepted the individual would be
given the money to purchase the item.

In order to ensure that every member was contributing to the common purse, Agreement
Nine included a work requirement clause (Appendix A: Table 7.1). Every Philadelphian had to
work forty hours a week and, if unemployed, were to actively seek employment while working
on a Philadelphian work crew. The work crews took care of Philadelphian properties and, when
needed, served at various community events. As a consequence, Philadelphian houses were
always maintained, their lawns were nicely manicured, and community sponsored events were
well-staffed. Although some members received six-figure salaries, most worked in construction trades or at low-level food-service jobs, particularly as Starbucks baristas. Nevertheless, as reported by the Community Treasurer, in aggregate, Philadelphians contributed between $58,000 and $75,000 per month, totaling, at the high end, close to $1 million in yearly income.

As opposed to the other agreements, the common purse required that members maintain a high degree of integrity. Dwayne, who I quoted above, touched on this notion:

Dwayne: It's really everything's very fluid within the community in regards to possessions.
Mark: Do you, when you get gifts from family members does that all go in [the common purse]?
Dwayne: It depends.
Mark: Okay.
Dwayne: Like material things, I got a book; obviously that's your book. If you get cash gifts oh, you know, it's your birthday, grandma gave me 20 bucks. That is deposited, so that goes in the common purse. If you get a gift card to Dewey's you keep the gift card. If you get a Visa gift card for 100 bucks, into the common purse.
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: So that's kind of like generic. Now if I really need a new pair of running shoes, and my dad's like here, 80 bucks to get your tennis shoes, then I can take the 80 bucks and go get the running shoes.
Mark: Okay.
Dwayne: But if I need new running shoes and my dad gives me 200 bucks, it's like, okay 80 bucks on running shoes and put the other 120 in the common purse.
Mark: Gotcha.
Dwayne: So there's a degree of personal responsibility of like honor and honesty.
Mark: And I'm sure there's accountability in that.
Dwayne: Yeah.

Furthermore, the common purse required more than just financial sacrifice; it required sacrificing desires and ease. Thus, some Philadelphians reported having a difficult time fulfilling Agreement Nine. When I asked Rebekah, who was introduced in Chapter 4, whether or not it was hard to adjust to the common purse, she reported:
Rebekah: Uh, I think it depends on the person, but I’d say for all of us it has been an adjustment of some type. Um, for some people it was a really awesome [chuckles], and very needed adjustment, because they didn’t have income. And they didn’t have a job that made enough income. So that was a really big plus. Um, because then it’s like, “Hey you’re consistently able to pay your bills.”

Mark: Yeah.

Rebekah: And have food, and [chuckles], um, have a little extra spending money, which some people didn’t have before. For others it’s, it’s total adjustment in the opposite end that they went from having their own house, and being able to provide only for themselves, and like care about their needs.

Mark: Yeah.

Rebekah: To then, “Oh, wow, I only have a $100 to spend each month. Oh, I’m sharing grocery money and I can’t have all of the food that I wanted before. I can’t have organic stuff like I wanted before.”

Mark: Yeah.

Rebekah: That’s a hard adjustment for some.

Mark: Sure.

Rebekah: Um, for me, uh, it was kind of mixed.

Mark: Okay.

Rebekah: Cuz, um, I have not been very good [chuckles] when it comes to talk about keeping track of my own spending, but I’ve always like been under. So with this it’s basically insured that I’m not gonna be spending more than I actually need. Um. And that, but it’s also been in some ways a difficult adjustment because before I moved in I was able to like, you know, go on a road trip and visit my sister whenever I wanted. You know?

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Rebekah: So there was more free time with that, and more financial ability. Whereas now it’s like, “Oh yeah I need to pray about that stuff, and put in a request.” [Chuckles] Cuz other people are paying for it now. Not just me.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah.

Rebekah: Um. So it, it can be an adjustment. And then an adjustment of perspective with that stuff like,...wow this stuff isn’t actually my own. It all belongs to God...And that’s why we share it.

As indicated in Rebekah’s account, Philadelphians justified their common purse sacrifices through religious devotion (e.g., “It all belongs to God...And that’s why we share it.”). Earning a large salary in a specialized medical position, Kathy, who was introduced in Chapter 4, joined
the common purse several months after signing the membership covenant. Echoing Rebekah’s justification, she framed her decision to join as a spiritual exercise:

Kathy: Yeah. I mean, basically, I mean, that was it. I was like [God], “You have to show me how to work for you.” I mean, the Lord says that working is worship, and so, if we are, if we are working well, like, I do my job well, I try to do my job really well... My way that I do it, I do it well, and it costs me a lot of extra time.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Kathy: Like, I could cut corners and I could be done with my paperwork and I wouldn’t have long days. I actually probably see less [patients] a day than my average co-worker and probably work more [on paperwork] than my average co-worker. And working that way, like I felt like I couldn’t cut back on how I treated people just because I wasn’t benefiting now from it [since joining the common purse], so I really had to work through some stuff and the Lord brought me through that. I mean, I now sign over a paycheck, a pretty hefty paycheck, every other week, you know? And, um, actually haven’t missed it yet.

Mark: Uh huh.

As revealed by Kathy, when examined on an individual level of analysis, Philadelphians framed their participation in the common purse as a vehicle for spiritual growth; however, when examined from an organizational level of analysis, the community, as a whole, benefited from the common purse. Besides the obvious financial viability that the common purse provided for Philadelphia, the community also profited from the way in which the common purse brought members together and caused members to continue their adherence. In this sense, the common purse served as both a cohesion and continuance commitment mechanism. On the one hand, because all Philadelphians shared financial assets and received the same discretionary income every month, members were financially equal. As I observed, such equality unified Philadelphians (e.g.,, as Rebekah reasoned, “Cuz other people are paying for it now. Not just me.”), preventing greed and material envy from dividing the community. On the other hand the common purse provided a measure by which members judged their continued
participation. For example, if Kathy left the community she would lose all of the money she surrendered to the community; consequently, if ever faced with such a decision, Kathy would have to come to terms with her financial sacrifice. In some cases, such sacrifice is too much to bear, causing members to remain committed to the community so as not to face the financial consequences of a decision to leave. Accordingly, the common purse served to mediate individuals’ investments into the community, thereby, strengthening Philadelphians’ commitments.

In contrast, although Bereans reported some sharing between members, they did not have a common purse or an expectation for financial sharing beyond the five percent tithe that paid for maintenance on St. Seton, Nicholas’s salary, a bookkeeper’s stipend, and donations to neighborhood causes. Although some cohesion and continuance commitment mechanisms were present in Berea, like their membership covenant, these mechanisms were not strictly enforced; therefore, Berea did not benefit from their implementation in terms of membership commitment as did Philadelphia. Such is case when examining the benefits that, in comparison to Berea, Philadelphia received through strict confession rituals, which is the focus of the next subsection.

Confession Rituals

According to Kanter (1968; 1972) and Hall (1988), compared to historic intentional communities without defined confession rituals, historic intentional communities with defined confession rituals maintained a committed membership for a longer period of time. For these communities, confession rituals acted as control commitment mechanisms, forcing members to
announce their violation of community norms and, as a consequence, receive disciplinary guidelines to correct their violation.

Consistent with other types of commitment mechanisms, Philadelphia employed well-defined confession rituals similar to the rituals that Kanter (1968; 1972) and Hall (1988) identified in historic intentional communities. For instance, every member was teamed with another member of the same sex in accountability relationships, labeled Brother-In-Arms (BIAs) for men and Sister-In-Arms (SIAs) for women. Meeting weekly, BIA’s and SIA’s allowed members to confess their struggles and, in return, receive guidance and correction apart from the influence of the elders. Although, these relationships were designed to encourage spiritual growth, they also provided a platform from which members could police each other, preventing any transgressions against community norms.

Another set of Philadelphian confession rituals occurred outside the BIA/SIA relationships. During a Sunday morning worship service, Steven asked Philadelphian men to pray for Philadelphian women as the women began a “spiritual challenge”. Men gathered around the women of the community, laying hands on their heads and shoulders, while Steven prayed for them. After the service I asked Jane, who I introduced in Chapter 4, to explain the challenge. She told me that Kevin, also introduced in Chapter 4, prophesied that 2012 would be the year in which Philadelphian women “really experience the Lord.” In response, the women of the community met to figure out how to fulfill the prophecy, ultimately deciding to have every female member confess thoughts, desires, and activities that prohibit their spiritual growth. Individually, the women wrote their confessions in a letter or email, sending them to Jennifer and Amber, two well-respected members of the community. Jennifer and Amber then prayed
over each confession and returned to every female member a “discipline,” which the member
was to follow, in some cases, for a specified amount of time, in other cases, indefinitely. Steven
and Paul did the same for Jennifer and Amber.

I asked Jane if she would be willing to share with me what she confessed. Without any
hesitation, she told me that she has a hard time, “listening to the Lord,” indicating that she
does not experience spiritual promptings from the Holy Spirit distinguishable from cognitive
intuition (e.g., the Holy Spirit does not speak to Jane like those perceived to have prophetic
charisms). Consequently, in an attempt to increase Jane’s sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, Jennifer
and Amber issued a discipline that eliminated all media from Jane’s life, including Facebook,
television, and watching movies with her husband. This discipline was to continue indefinitely,
or until Jennifer and Amber permitted Jane to use media again. When I asked what would
happen if she looked at Facebook, Jane responded that she would have to repent and seek
accountability from her SIA. I sensed that, in order to be viewed as devoted to her spiritual
growth, Jane followed the discipline even though it demanded significant sacrifice.

Likewise, Rebekah, who confessed that romantic thoughts somewhat distracted her from
“experiencing the Lord,” begrudgingly followed Jennifer and Amber’s disciplinary guidelines.¹³

Eight months after the discipline was initiated Rebekah reported:

Mark: Was it a good thing? Was it a…struggle?
Rebekah: Um. Both. [Laughs]
Mark: Okay.
Rebekah: That’s why I’m still doing a couple of my challenges actually.
Mark: Okay.
Rebekah: Um. Yeah it’s, it was hard in a lot of ways because at least for me some
of the stuff that I had mentioned in the email….My perspective is like I
just kind of offhandedly said, “I kind of struggle with that,” you know?
And then it was like, bam, huge challenge for six months or, for like,
the rest of my life. And I felt really overwhelmed, and really...
Mark: Yeah.
Rebekah: ...Um, I actually really had to work through some offense at that. And...of being like, you know what? I barely mentioned it. I didn’t think it was that much of an issue. And I feel like I, basically my perspective was the punishment didn’t fit the crime, which is just the wrong perspective in general because if I struggle with something, or I need help in an area...that’s not a crime. You know?
Mark: Yeah.
Rebekah: And having a challenge that God wants to meet me in and help me through, it’s not a punishment. [Chuckles]
Mark: Right.
Rebekah: But that was my perspective, so.

As revealed in this account, Rebekah felt as though she was confessing to a crime and, as a consequence, was given a punishment. Given that, in many cases, women were confessing thoughts or behaviors that violated, or possibly could violate community norms (e.g., Rebekah’s romantic thoughts could have caused her to break the sexual purity agreement (Appendix A: Table 7.1, Agreement Five), the women’s spiritual challenge served as a pre-emptive strike against possible discipline problems. Thus, parallel to the utility of the membership covenant, the spiritual challenge forced women to sacrifice desires, time, energy, and in cases apart from Jane and Rebekah, money, to fulfill their assigned discipline. This sacrifice deepened members’ commitment, since, as with the other commitment mechanisms, leaving the community would mean losing all that they had invested.

In contrast, such strict confession rituals were never observed in Berea. Although confession was practiced, it was never forced, only offered voluntarily and returned with much grace and understanding. For example, during a Berean worship service the congregation was asked to share prayer requests with one another. Andrew, who I quoted earlier in the chapter, turned to me and asked if there was anything that had been repeatedly coming to my mind over the past couple of weeks. In response, I confessed my own spiritual longing. He sympathized with my
confession and, encouraging me, told me a story from his past when he felt similar. After the story he prayed for me. Feeling obliged to return his kindness; I asked Andrew if he had any prayer requests. Andrew then shared two requests, but before I could pray for him, the congregation re-gathered to finish the service. Nevertheless, I caught up with Andrew after the benediction and prayed for him then.

As I came to expect in Berea, confession was optional (e.g., I did not have to make a confession to Andrew), informal (e.g., this occurred during a short interlude in the worship service), and absolving (e.g., Andrew did not condemn me or tell me how I should resolve my spiritual longing.). In comparison to Philadelphia, Berea’s informal confession rituals required minimal sacrifice from members and, consequently, minimal investment. Thus, in keeping with strictness theory, Berea’s leniency, as mediated through confession rituals, did little to reinforce members’ commitments, particularly when compared to Philadelphia’s strictness.

CONCLUSION

As argued in this chapter, Philadelphia has strong member commitments because it is strict; thereby confirming the claims made by Kelly (1972). In this case, Philadelphia’s strictness demands that members sacrifice desires, time, energy, and money in order to maintain their membership. Taken as a whole, these sacrifices amount to a hefty personal investment, which is unrecoverable if an individual leaves Philadelphia. However, such investments must be facilitated through, as Kanter (1968; 1972) notes, “concrete social practices.” I identify these social practices as Kanter (1968; 1972) and Hall’s (1988) commitment mechanisms, revealing that both Philadelphia and Berea employ commitment mechanisms, although at various levels
of strictness. Since Philadelphia strictly adheres to their membership covenant, stresses complete financial sharing, and utilizes rigorous confession practices, Philadelphians, as compared to Bereans, must invest more of themselves to maintain their membership; thereby deepening their commitment to the community.

At this point it is prudent to recap my arguments from Chapter 4 up through now. Having established that people join CICs because they experience alienation in Chapter 4, I have examined various arguments as to why members remain committed to these types of religious organizations. On the one hand, Philadelphia strengthens adherence through charismatic leadership, a worship service and inter-organizational culture that reflect freewill individualism, as well as strict theological and behavioral expectations as mediated through commitment mechanisms. On the other hand, Berea strengthens members’ commitments through St. Seton’s charismatic influence, as well as a worship service and inter-organizational culture that reflect expressive communalism; however, based on my observations, Berea does not benefit, in terms of member commitment, from lenient social structures and practices. Nevertheless, despite their leniency, Berea has just as many committed members as Philadelphia, thus there must be some other structure that causes members to remain dedicated to the community. In the next chapter I contend that, particularly for Berea, the urban environment serves as a structure which facilitates member commitment, explaining why so many CICs, especially expressive communities, locate in cities.
Chapter 8: The Parish Consciousness: The Religio-Cultural Ecology of Philadelphia and Berea

When introducing myself to a Philadelphian they would generally ask for my name and then inquire as to my connection to the community, typically responding with elation when I told them that Timothy, who I introduced in Chapter 2, was a former student of mine. In contrast, when introducing myself to a Berean they would ask for my name and then asked where I lived, usually reacting with slight disappointment when I revealed that I lived outside of West Sharpsburg. This subtle difference in introduction repertoires speaks loudly to a major distinction between Philadelphia and Berea. In essence, when compared to Philadelphia, Berea places a high value on geography, particularly urban geography. This is why Thomas, a Berean, interrupted our interview:

Thomas: Um, the other interesting thing, and this may be, I’m sure, it’s off your question, but-
Mark: That’s okay.
Thomas: I don’t wanna miss it.
Mark: Yeah.
Thomas: Um, when I look at [intentional] communities, there’s, uh, some different levels of intentionality and different levels of closeness geographically.
Mark: Hmm, mm-hmm.
Thomas: And what, it, this just fascinates me. The geography seems to matter more than anything else.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Thomas: And geographically close is, and here’s what happens. If, if, you, uh, if you live within about two blocks of where we’re sitting right now, [St. Seton Piazza], you feel connected. You will get up out of your chair, and you will walk this direction [pointing down Endicott Drive], and you will see other people on this impromptu basis.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Thomas: If you live four or five blocks away, you will feel less connected to this community. It’s a truism. I don’t know all of the reasons why, but, uh, but [it] does happen, if you live four or five blocks away, even on [Garland Ave], which is two streets away, there’s a little micro-community of, of people who, who would say they’re part of this community.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Thomas: But there’s a little micro-community developing because, why? They live on the same street, or they live within a street, one street, of their friends.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Thomas: I am blown away by how much that really matters.

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Thomas: You wouldn’t, it, but it’s also the hallmark of who we are here, and I think it’s the hallmark of why we are, why we, how we calculate family and why people want to connect here.

Although not as explicitly, other Bereans repeated Thomas’s comment in various forms, reflecting the manner in which geography is, in Thomas’s terms, a “hallmark” of who they are, how they perceive themselves, and why individuals want to commit (e.g., connect) to the community. This is not to say that Philadelphians completely ignored the effect of geography on their community; rather, in comparison to Berea, geography was just not as valued.

Contextually speaking, Philadelphia’s and Berea’s geography is in reference to Emeryville and West Sharpsburg, their respective urban neighborhoods. For the most part these neighborhoods are relatively similar. Emeryville contains 19,763 residents, approximately sixty percent of whom are white and thirty-five percent are African American, with a $45,382 median family income that is well below the state median. Fifty-two percent of Emeryville residents own their homes, and sixteen percent live in poverty. Likewise, twenty percent of the 24,012 inhabitants of West Sharpsburg live in poverty and only forty-five percent are homeowners. Approximately eighty percent of West Sharpsburg residents are white, while thirteen percent are African American, and five percent are Latino. As in Emeryville, the $36,173 median income of West Sharpsburg is well below the state median.

Nevertheless, despite these conditions, Philadelphia and Berea chose to reside in these urban neighborhoods, reflecting, as reported in Chapter 2 and 3, the choices of many Christian Intentional Communities (CICs). Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to examine why
Philadelphia and Berea reside in urban locations. Based on my observations and consultant interviews, Philadelphia’s and Berea’s residential choices were not based on urban populations’ acceptance of unconventional religious groups, as previous research has indicated (Fischer 1982; 1995; Williams 2006). Rather, using literature on religious ecologies (McRoberts 2005; Eiesland; 2000; Ammerman 1997) as a theoretical backdrop, I claim that Philadelphia and Berea thrive in their neighborhoods because they can utilize resources available in urban environments. Furthermore, I argue that, just as strictness strengthens Philadelphians’ commitments (see Chapter 7), the urban landscape serves to strengthen adherence in Berea by causing an interdependent relationship to form between Berean cultural ideology and the West Sharpsburg religious ecology. In this sense, I develop, what I call, “the religio-cultural ecology,” which has only briefly been explored in previous research.

To complete this analysis, I have organized the chapter into four sections. The first section reviews previous explanations for why religious organizations thrive in urban environments as well as the ways in which my research contradicts these explanations. In the second section I explore the various ecological resources available in the urban environment, particularly housing and organizational networks, that Philadelphia and Berea use to strengthen their communities. Then, building upon religious ecology theory, in the third section I argue that Berea, as opposed to Philadelphia, espouses a cultural ideology, expressive communalism, which works interdependently with the urban religious ecology; consequently, Bereans adopt, what I call, a “parish consciousness,” in which members are completely enveloped by a place-based system of thought and action. Then, in the fourth section, I discuss how the Berean
parish consciousness exemplifies the religio-cultural ecology, developing a better understanding of why particular religious organizations thrive in certain locations.

NEIGHBORHOOD ACCEPTANCE OF PHILADELPHIA AND BREA

Early in my field work I participated in a Philadelphian workday. Taking place on a cool, yet sunny, September Saturday, all members of Philadelphia were assigned specific chores or construction projects to complete throughout the community. I helped scrape glue off of a wood floor that, until the day before, had been covered by wall-to-wall carpet. Despite the several hours I spent in Philadelphia, the most intriguing incident of the day occurred right before I was to leave. Dwayne, who I introduced in Chapter 4, was backing his car out of a driveway. Since his vision was obscured by a large van, he could not see another car driving on the street behind him. Although other Philadelphians attempted to get Dwayne to stop, he continued to back out oblivious to the accident that was about to happen. With a loud screech, the car driving on the street braked just in time to prevent a collision. Dwayne, knowing that the accident had been avoided, backed out much more cautiously and then drove away. But, the car on the street remained, the driver staring down the Philadelphians standing nearby. Then, after thirty seconds, the driver peeled the tires of the car, causing another loud screech, and sped off. I turned to Paul, who I detailed in Chapter 5, and said, “That was quite the stare-down.” Paul responded that they often have these interactions because some neighborhood residents were not happy that the community chose to reside in Emeryville.

Such neighborhood disapproval was noted by several Philadelphian consultants. For example, Dwayne shared:
Dwayne: So when we first, when I first moved in, a lotta the neighbors didn't like us.
Mark: Okay.
Dwayne: and my understanding of that is because it's a natural perception a buncha young people livin' together. They're gonna act like college students and get crazy and have parties that are really loud. “We don't want them on our street.”
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: Cuz there aren't a lotta young people on our, well, there are now, but there weren't, you know.
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: Really there's a lotta older people, retired people. And so a lotta people, and since we had [Group] at the house for a long time and it would take up parking and be kinda loud...[neighbors] were kinda like, “Arrgh.”

Similarly, Berea faced the same contempt, except instead of residents complaining about noise or parking violations -- as was the case with Philadelphia -- Berea was branded a cult by the neighborhood. When I asked William, an original member of Berea whom I introduced in Chapter 6, if there had ever been any tension between Berea and West Sharpsburg residents, he responded:

William: Oh sure. Yeah, when we first moved...[into West Sharpsburg], my gosh, we were [considered] a cult. We were [considered] six gay men living in that building [The Commons].
Mark: [Laughter]
William: Cuz we never had girlfriends stay over.
Mark: Okay.
William: [Neighborhood residents] figured that, you know, why would six men live there and not have any girlfriends stay over the night?...
Mark: Yeah. [Laughter]
William: Um, yeah, we’ve been labeled all kinds of weird things initially when we moved in....Bunch of hippies, you know?

This characterization was echoed by several Berean consultants particularly, Jim, one of only two Berean members that lived in West Sharpsburg prior to joining the community:

Mark: Um, how does, how does the, what’s kinda the, the image of [Berea] then to the, to the neighborhood residents?
Jim: Most of them think it's a cult.
Mark: Most of them think it's a cult?...So why did they think it that cult? Just...
Jim: I don’t know. It’s just, they don’t have, they’re not, their minds aren’t open.

Although Philadelphia and Berea are atypical in their living arrangements and religious practices, previous research has noted the acceptance of unconventional forms of religious organizations in urban areas, contradicting the experiences of many of my consultants. Based on his subcultural theory of urbanism, Fischer argues that the urban environment actually strengthens religious involvement, particularly for minority religions and for individuals to whom religion is important (Fischer 1995). In this sense, Fischer (1995) contends that larger communities will support communal affiliation with coreligionists while undermining conventional religious doctrine and practice. Hence, coreligionists maintain their subcultural identity while, at the same time, constantly interacting with the religious “other” (Williams 2006), constituting a religious heterogeneity unmatched in non-urban areas. As a result of this dynamic Williams (2006) concludes, “Thus, the defining characteristic of urban religion may be its necessary pluralism, fostered within the conditions of social and religious diversity” (p. 32).

In simpler terms, urban populations should, theoretically, be more “open-minded” toward unconventional religious organizations, like Philadelphia and Berea; nevertheless, residents of Emeryville and West Sharpsburg were not open to the communities’ presence.

This contradiction between my consultants’ accounts and theories of religious acceptance in urban areas may be a reflection of socioeconomic differences between the members of both communities and neighborhood residents, rather than a discreditation of previous research. As noted in Chapter 3, members of Philadelphia and Berea tended to be college educated and employed; whereas, based on consultants’ reports, neighborhood residents tended to have lower levels of education and higher rates of unemployment. This difference created a tension
between community members and neighborhood residents. For example, I asked Grace, a Berean who I introduced in Chapter 4, if she noticed any tension between the community and its neighbors. At first she responded that she did not, however, continuing she remarked:

Grace: ... I mean, I think there’s some annoyances with like, there was a house two doors down, this guy was, you know, had people coming all the time and you just kinda wonder, like, is it like a drug house?
Mark: Uh huh.
Grace: The guy was, like, never really, he wore a shirt last Halloween that says, um, “Snitch at your own risk” was the shirt he wore, like, taking his kids trick-or-treating last year.
Mark: Wow.
Grace: So just, like, you know, the intimidation factor of that and...
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Grace: He, like, his landlord confronted him and said “Are you selling?” and he, like, said he was, and he’s like “You have to take that elsewhere. You can’t be doin’ that around the house.” You know?...Just, like, that kind of stuff. So it’s, it’s not necessarily like, um, direct, you know? Like, I've never talked with the guy...
Mark: Yeah.
Grace: ...but it’s still, just, like, I don’t want this around my neighborhood.
Mark: Yeah.
Grace: You know, and then we have a Section 8 apartment at the end of our street and, I mean, it is like a revolving door. Someone probably moves in and out of there every other month.
Mark: Mm-hmm, yeah.
Grace: You know, just this constant, yeah. And people hang around a lot. I’m like “What do they do? They must not work. So are they selling drugs, are they stealing stuff?” You know, it’s just constant, they're around all the time, you know?
Mark: Yeah.
Grace: So it’s just, like that kind of feeling of, like, loitering and sort of like, I don’t know, I kinda wonder what they’re up to.

As illustrated in Grace’s account and confirmed by my observations, tension between the communities and neighborhood residents usually involved issues associated with drugs, crime, transiency, and poverty. All of these issues are much more related to socioeconomic differences rather than religious differences. As a result, Philadelphians and Bereans could relate to their
neighbors by bridging the socioeconomic gap without having to compromise their spiritual beliefs and convictions.

Thus, both communities worked hard to build relationships with their neighbors, which, through various means, they generally accomplished over time. For instance Philadelphia engaged in many acts of neighborliness by helping Emeryville residents with yard work and house maintenance. Furthermore, a couple Philadelphians formed a band to play at Mamasitas, a bar located within a block from Philadelphian residences (See Map of Philadelphia in Chapter 2). Performing several times while I completed my fieldwork, the band covered popular songs that included explicit and implicit religious overtones. Often packing Mamasitas with community members, Philadelphians viewed the band’s performances as a vehicle to gain acceptance from Emeryville residents who typically solicited the bar. Philadelphia also built relationships with residents by hosting neighborhood events, such as an annual block party and the fifth anniversary celebration detailed in Chapter 1. However, Dwayne, continuing his comment from earlier, noted that the best relational tool employed by Philadelphia was the restoration of neighborhood residences:

Dwayne: ...But it's been amazing to see people's hearts change as, you know, as they get to know who we are and what we're not.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Dwayne: And how we desire to serve them and love them. Uh, I've seen very stark changes of people that, like when they see you they'll ignore you, to where [now] they come and talk to you.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Dwayne: And they brought us cookies - People who wouldn't even talk to us.
Mark: Wow.
Dwayne: So it's changed as they got a better understanding of who we are and who we're not...What we're about and what we're trying to do. So it's, and I don't think there are really any relationships that are bad now. Whereas before I could say, you know, [there are] definitely people that they don't like us.
Mark: Yeah.
Dwayne: But I mean, they've just seen the way we try and take, oh, one of the biggest evangelism tools - and it's funny is that - first clean up the houses.

Mark: Hmm.

Dwayne: People, like, the house on the corner, [119]? 
Mark: Yeah.

Dwayne: So many people walked by and [say], like, “Love what you’re doin' with, you know, the houses and takin' care of the neighborhood. You know, we love what you're doin'. Thank you so much.”

Mark: Uh-huh.

Dwayne: It's like, really? Like that means so much to people! But it does, but it's helpin' a lotta people's hearts. Because when I've come to conversations with people they'll just stop by and say, “I remember the people who used to live here and how bad this place used to look. And we're so thankful you guys are here.” It's like wow! It's pretty cool.

Mark: Yeah.

As noted by several other Philadelphians, Emeryville residents warmed as the community restored properties in the neighborhood. Implied in these accounts is the notion that, as Philadelphia restored houses and landscaped lawns, Emeryville residents expected their own property values to rise; hence, the neighborhood began to accept Philadelphia. However, based on an analysis of 77 home values surrounding Philadelphian properties, such expectations have not yet been met. Perhaps reflecting the 2008 housing market collapse, home values have, on average, decreased ten percent in Emeryville since Philadelphia established residency in the neighborhood. Thus, at least at this point in time, Philadelphian property restoration does not seem to have a positive effect on home values in their neighborhood.

The same could be said of Berea, as the value of 86 West Sharpsburg residences decreased three percent since 2008, with value of the twenty four residences closest to St. Seton, which includes many Berean properties, decreasing eleven percent. Although Nicholas, the Berean community pastor described in Chapter 5, revealed that he was concerned with problems associated with gentrification, based on home values alone, Berea does not seem to be
gentrifying West Sharpsburg. Nevertheless, like Dwayne, William, continuing his statement from earlier in the chapter, cited that neighborhood acceptance was partially gained through property restoration as well as some other acts of service:

Mark: But that’s changed?
William: Yeah.
Mark: Yeah?
William: Yeah. We’re pretty accepted now, you know? Uh, yeah.
Mark: What do you think, what do you think that, where that change occurred?
William: We’ve been there for a generation almost.
Mark: Mm, yeah, mm-hmm.
William: So the old people have seen that we didn’t leave and the young people have grown up knowing that we’re there. Saw worship [in St. Seton]. And the building department has seen that we’ve fixed up houses and they like us, you know? And so people have volunteered at [the] YMCA or the city government,…and [neighborhood organizations] liked that help.

Besides the acts noted by William, Berea also offers free periodic meals, sponsors a youth rugby team, monitors littering in West Sharpsburg, and, in some cases, shares produce from their gardens with neighborhood residents.

Given the tremendous energy that Philadelphia and Berea must spend in order to be accepted by their neighborhoods, it would seem logical that they would chose to live in other types of areas, such as on a farm where neighbor relations could be minimized. Nonetheless, both communities remain in their respective urban neighborhoods, not necessarily because of their acceptance, as previous research has indicated, rather because of the urban religious ecology, which provides the necessary organizational resources (e.g., houses and organizational networks) that cause Philadelphia and Berea to thrive. In the next section, I review literature on religious ecology and show how these communities benefit from the religious ecology of the urban environment.
THE RELIGIOUS ECOLOGY OF WEST SHARPSBURG AND EMERYVILLE

Building on religious marketplace theories (Finke and Stark 1989; Hatch 1989), religious ecologists stress the importance of market resources, such as membership, money, legitimacy, and information, available to religious organizations in the place they locate. The essence of this argument lies in the notion that religious organizations must extract these market resources from the local environment in order to thrive (McRoberts 2005). For example, viewing a particular demographic as a religious resource, Ammerman (1997) states, “Where there is a pool of white, middle-class, home-owning families with children on which to draw, Mainline [as well as Evangelical] churches are likely to grow, no matter their theological orientation” (p. 5). Adding, “In an urban region, one can choose, for instance, among the ‘high church’ Methodists and the ‘pro-life’ Methodists and the ‘charismatic’ Methodists and the Methodists with the woman preacher” (Ammerman 1997:35).

Although Philadelphia and Berea did not have a pool of white, middle-class, home-owning families with children to draw from, they did use available resources from their urban neighborhoods, primarily inexpensive housing⁹. When I asked Penny, who was introduced in Chapter 3, why Berea chose to locate in West Sharpsburg one of her answers was, “Um, there is affordable housing here, so I think people who are just getting started in life have been able to find their roots because it has been affordable and available.” Furthermore, although many Philadelphians cited specific prophecies when I asked them why the community was located Emeryville, Kathy, a relatively new member who I introduced in Chapter 4, admittedly took a less ethereal approach:
Mark: ... And do you think there’s, or why do you think [Philadelphia is] in that area, and specifically [Emeryville]. Is there something special about that area?

Kathy: Outside of the fact that, that’s where God took them, um, I don’t know. I don’t know if they, I mean, I, if you wanna look at it from what, I say, my logical standpoint, I can give that. Housing prices aren’t that bad. They were a bunch of young kids, didn’t have any credit, how are you gonna buy a house? You know what I mean? Like, the houses are livable, need some updating. I think that that’s a big part of it. I mean, with as much work as we do on the houses, you know, we’ve now gotten work crew T-shirts so that we can be identified outside of the community of who we are cuz now they’re wearing T-shirts with, you know, [Philadelphia] on it.

... There’s a lot of houses to probably buy [in Emeryville]. There’s probably gonna be a lot of turnover to the point where we’re gonna have access to houses. Whereas if you tried to buy houses in my [old] neighborhood..., probably you’re not gonna be able to get, you know, that many in such close proximity to one another.

As noted in this account, Philadelphia not only benefited from inexpensive housing, it also benefited from the density of the housing, or, as Kathy referred to, the proximity of the houses to one another. Errol, who I introduced in Chapter 4, echoed Kathy’s comment when describing why he joined Philadelphia:

Errol: Yeah, I mean, it wasn’t, there’s no seminal event that I can point to as much as I recognized [prior to joining Philadelphia] that it was easy to engage with people and then be okay with not seeing them for a period of time. And I just recognized that you don’t know what’s going on in people’s lives...and that you just legitimately don’t have a relationship with them unless there’s proximity there and there’s consistency, you know. I asked my, my litmus test was who were the people I would call when something went awry and like when the stuff hit the fan, so to speak.

Mark: Yeah.

Errol: And so for me I was recognizing that the people that I was meeting with once a week or twice, you know, once every two weeks for a [Bible study] or something, were not the people that I probably would call even though we were trying to be intentional, you know, especially if it was, you know, a biweekly meeting and somebody missed and then you’re seeing someone once a month.

Mark: Yeah.
Errol: And in a month’s time a significant amount of things can change, so.
Mark: Yeah, and when you talk of the kind of proximity are you talking about geographic proximity?
Errol: Yeah, absolutely, and with families with their demands of life, as much as you intend to, to be intentional with someone and spend lots of time with them, the farther away they are the more obstacles there are.
Mark: That’s right.
Errol: Things have to be more planned out and they have to be more deliberate, where with what we’re doing now [in Philadelphia] that you can walk down the street and have a ten minute conversation with someone or just check in on them and do life. It’s not an ordeal.

For Bereans, such proximity was perceived as vital for the community. For example, when I asked Lois, who was introduced in Chapter 1, if residency in West Sharpsburg was required in order to be a member of Berea, she shared:

Lois: No. It's not. Um, often, if I hear someone lives really far away, I get a little sad because I think oh, they live so far away because I'm so caught up in walking to church. Um, it's really nice. I, I didn't, I have never done that before.
Mark: Yeah.
Lois: Um, so it, it makes a lot, it makes being a part of this community a lot easier to be able to, to be in walking distance of most of my friends and most of the people that I worship with, who are, a lot of that overlaps….When I was growing up, I would just go to my home [after church]. And then I wouldn't see a lot of the people I went to church with..., until the next Sunday.
Mark: Right.
Lois: But now I, I live across the street from [people I go to church with], or I live down the street from [people I go to church with], and I see them all the time, and so uh, it's a good thing. Like I don't see that as a burden. I see that as a positive thing in that um, we don't have as many physical barriers to being in community with each other because I hear my neighbors, um, and I see them all the time, and so um...We are, we're involved in each other's lives more.

Later in the interview, Lois added:

...so I, and a lot of the people want to live here, and live close to each other, and not drive into their garage every night, and never come out of their home until they drive out of their garage the next morning and go to work. Like [Bereans] spend a lot of time on our front porches. We um, we do a lot of gardening, and
some people will call it farming together, urban farming. [Pause] And so, um, we, yeah. So we interact a lot um, because I think of the whole closeness of our houses, and the fact that we can walk to each other's homes. I mean I have a lot of friends, who live three, four, five streets away, but it's, so it, I could drive there, but it's nice to walk, and to see the neighborhood.

Housing density was so revered by Bereans that, Nolan, the former community pastor introduced in Chapter 4, cited proximity as a factor holding the community together, stating, “You know in the lean times...one of the strongest [things] that’s holding us together was our proximity and the, the historic sort of, like, weight of the relationships that was aided by proximity.” As illustrated in Nolan’s account, CICs, like Philadelphia and Berea, view housing density as a conduit for building relationships with other members -- relationships that keep the community viable during periods of instability. In this sense, unlike most suburban and rural areas, the urban environment is attractive for CICs as it offers affordable houses that, due to higher rates of residential density, facilitate interaction between community members.

Furthermore, the urban environment helped Philadelphia and Berea establish local exchange networks of religious organizations that promote the sharing of ecological resources. In her study of religious change in suburban Atlanta, Eiesland (2000) refines the work of religious ecologists by employing an ecological metaphor adapted from Hannan and Freeman (1977): Like biological species, organizations do not simply adapt to changes in the environment as though they are isolated organisms; instead, organizations respond in ways that highlight their interdependence. According to Eiesland (2000) if religious organizations cannot respond to the requirements of changing environments they become obsolete and new organizations fill their place. These new organizations exist along a specialist-generalist spectrum where specialist organizations focus their resources on particular populations,
organizational forms or identities, and generalist organizations attempt to serve a wide variety of populations within a common organizational structure (Eiesland 2000). Consequently, at the individual level, congregants not only respond to changes in the religious ecology by choosing the religious organization that best fits their taste, but also devise multilayered habits of belonging to several religious organizations within the religious ecology (Eiesland 2000). In other words, church goers can attend a generalist church on Sunday morning, a support group held at a specialist church on Wednesday evening, and take their children to a third congregation on Saturday afternoon to participate in a youth basketball league. Unlike her predecessors, Eiesland (2000) argues that religious organizations do not necessarily compete for resources, but thrive when they share resource within the religious ecology.

As organizations that focus their resources on a particular organizational form (e.g., communal living), I classify Berea and Philadelphia as specialist organizations, who share resources with various generalist organizations in their neighborhoods. As illustrated in Chapter 6, Berea’s sharing network consisted of the West Sharpsburg churches that met for Lenten lunches. Moreover, Philadelphia benefited greatly from their interdependent relationship with Evangelical Community Church (ECC), a church that served a general population of adherents (e.g., a generalist organization). Since ECC was within walking distance from Philadelphia (See Map of Philadelphia in Chapter 2), several Philadelphians cited the relationship as the reason why the community chose to locate in Emeryville, illustrating the value of this connection between the two organizations. Besides the friendship between Steven, one of the Philadelphian elders who I introduced in Chapter 1, and Gerard, the pastor of ECC who I introduced in Chapter 5, Philadelphia often met in ECC buildings, particularly the Emery Place
Chapel, an original Norman church from Southern England that was meticulously deconstructed, shipped across the Atlantic ocean, and rebuilt in the early twentieth century (See Map of Philadelphia in Chapter 2). Consequently, Ed noted his appreciation for ECC:

Mark: Um, do you, uh, talk about some of the other organizations that you guys are connected with...uh, now I know like you, you, you have a connection with [ECC].
Ed: Uh, we feel that the community has a calling specifically to build up the local church....So, so far we have defined the local church,...to begin with [as ECC]...uh, so specifically our leadership, [Steven], is working directly with [Gerard]....And, and then we have their leadership and some of the folks in our community also just relating to each other, spending time, eating lunches, talking about what the needs of [Emeryville] are...and how we can help meet those needs for them and with them and grow together....Uh, so that has looked like a wide variety of, uh, mutually beneficial relationship.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Ed: They let us use their beautiful buildings...at no charge.
Mark: Yeah. That's nice.
Ed: That is so nice. Thank you, Lord, for that. It's, it's beautiful.
Mark: And it's [aesthetical] cool.
Ed: it's way cooler.
Mark: [Laughter]
Mark: Yeah....
Ed: And that's, you know, and, and [ECC] doesn't, you know, they don't take advantage of us with that and...we get to, uh, offer up what we have, you know...and, and share it with each other. So, um, you know, we have manpower and we don't have, you know, extravagant funds. So I mean...but, um, but we can spend time, and we can offer what, uh, you know, what our lives look like to the Lord. We can offer that as encouragement to others. And so that's kind of where we're at right now....They wanna, they wanna hang out with us...which is really humbling, you know. Because...it's, uh, it's an established church for, you know, many years.

As indicated by Ed, in return for allowing the use of ECC buildings, Philadelphians served in the ECC Sunday morning nursery and, once a month, led a worship service for the ECC congregation. In this case, ECC benefited from Philadelphia’s resources (e.g., manpower and
time) as much as Philadelphia benefited from ECC’s resources (e.g., buildings), lending credence to Eiesland’s (2000) argument.

Accordingly, the urban environment provided resources, such as inexpensive housing, residential density, and organizational networks that strengthened, on an organizational level, Philadelphia and Berea. However, I also observed that the urban environment had profound effects on Bereans’ commitments to their community, but not necessarily on Philadelphians’ commitments. In the next section I explore this effect, demonstrating that Bereans’ complete view of life is facilitated by the urban environment, causing Bereans to strengthen their adherence to the community.

THE PARISH CONSCIOUSNESS

When I asked Philadelphians if they thought the community could relocate to another neighborhood, they answered in one of four ways:

1. Without hesitation, four consultants responded that Philadelphia could leave Emeryville.

2. Ten consultants replied that Philadelphia could leave, but it would require significant logistical support and/or a divine calling.

3. Four consultants thought that Philadelphia could not leave due to the logistical barriers preventing such a move.

4. Only two consultants answered that there was no way Philadelphia could leave Emeryville.
In other words, nearly three quarters (14 out of 20) of my Philadelphian consultants reported that the community could, with God’s guidance and hard work, relocate to another neighborhood. In contrast, when I asked Bereans the same question they responded in one of three ways:

1. Fifteen consultants answered that the Berea could not leave West Sharpsburg.
2. Three said it was a possibility, but logistically challenging.
3. Only two replied that Berea could relocate to another neighborhood.

Almost directly contrary to responses from Philadelphian consultants, three-quarters of Berean consultants reported that the community could not leave West Sharpsburg. Comparing Berea to an Oak Tree, Penny expanded on her response to my question:

Mark: ...Do you think um, do you think [Berea] could move?
Penny: [Laugh] Um.
Mark: Could, uh, could yeah. Could we take [Berea], and move it to a suburb? Could you move it to the farm?
Penny: Uh, no.
Mark: No.
Penny: I don't think so. Yeah. And it's, it's hard for me to even like think about [that] because I mean we could, but I don't think we'd be doing what we want to do.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Penny: Yeah. A church is not a building. A church is not a street, but when a church has planted itself extremely, like, I don't know. How could you uproot an oak tree, and move it to another place, a 15 year-old oak tree?
Mark: That, that's a great question.
Penny: Yeah.
Mark: Yeah.
Penny: Maybe a pepper plant. [Laugh]
Mark: [Laugh]
Penny: I think we're more like an oak tree than a pepper plant.

Extending his comment from the chapter’s introduction, Thomas echoed Penny’s sentiment:

Mark: ...Do you think [Berea] could pick up and -
Thomas: No, no.
Mark: Why?
Thomas: Um, it would, it would, just geography so matters and the place matters.
Mark: Mm-hmm.
Thomas: The history of the story here matters.

The difference between Bereans and Philadelphians’ responses to this question reflects the various ways in which the two communities view their environment. Although both receive necessary resources from the urban religious ecology, Philadelphians perceive their locational choice as alterable, concentrating more on developing members’ faith rather than serving the needs of their neighbors. In contrast, Bereans feel yoked to West Sharpsburg, embodying their religious devotion through their presence in the neighborhood. In this sense, Philadelphia displays characteristics of what Ammerman (1997) labels a “niche” congregation, offering religious specialties (e.g., communal living and charismatic practice) to a general population. Since such specialties could be offered in most environments, Philadelphia is not wedded to Emeryville and is willing to relocate to other neighborhoods that supply the appropriate ecological resources. On the other hand, Berea exhibits characteristics of what Ammerman (1997) labels a “parish” congregation, strongly identifying with the people who inhabit a given locale (e.g., West Sharpsburg) and tying into the neighborhood’s network of affiliations. Consequently, as a parish congregation, Berea is bound to West Sharpsburg.

Berea’s distinction as a parish congregation serves to explain why so many expressive communities, like Berea, choose to reside in urban neighborhoods. Since expressive communalism emphasizes “being missional,” Berea chose to locate in West Sharpsburg because of the perceived material and spiritual needs, believing that they can help, in some way, fulfill those needs. Therefore, expressive communities tend to attach themselves to urban
neighborhoods, effectively setting up a parish structure from which they can accomplish their mission. However, based on my observations, Bereans are more than just a group of people devoted to serving a neighborhood, rather they demonstrate, what I call, the “parish consciousness,” a place-based system of thought that develops as their cultural ideology interacts with their religious ecology.

Nicholas provided a glimpse of the parish consciousness in Chapter 1, when he shared that, like historic Catholic churches which expected members to reside, work, and worship, in the parish, he envisioned Bereans weaving together church, residence, and vocation in West Sharpsburg to make that neighborhood stronger. In his interview, Nicholas expanded on his vision:

Um, I mean, for me it's kind of living out an ideal and trying to see whether or not it's just an ideal or something that God actually desires, in terms of really living into a local community and being stable there. I mean, I love being able to walk to work and, uh, walk to church and get to know my neighbors and have them be the same people that I see every day, regardless of what I'm doing.

Um, that integration of church and work and just regular life to me is the piece that I really enjoy and feels life-giving and exciting and decidedly counter-cultural in a good way, um, [contrary to the] increasing isolation and separation that most people in our society are encountering and dealing with.

So yeah, I would say definitely just being able to get to know the people has been, both within the church and within the neighborhood, I mean, I think some of my neighbors that I've gotten to know over the last year, those relationships have taught me just as much or more about, you know, what it means to be the church in a neighborhood than having worked in the church itself.

I've really enjoyed those relationships and they've been, I mean, they've been difficult at times, too. I mean, one of my neighbors was electrocuted this past year stealing copper. And so, you know, the reality of that, yeah I mean that was a really kind of, I don't know, sobering experience, 'cause he literally lived right next door to us and so, um, the realities of kind of the poverty within [West Sharpsbug] became much more real, much more personified and it wasn't, again, it's not just idealism anymore. It's not just theory. Like, we're in it, you
know? We're in the midst of people who are jobless and facing foreclosure and a host of other issues.

I think yeah, it's, so there's, I enjoy the challenge, too. I enjoy the challenge of trying to reimagine a church in an urban place, um, through kind of a medium of intentional community. Like, I just, I think it just feels like a place that the church needs to be growing in, in terms of recapturing that idea of kind of being a locally bound parish where you care for everybody within your neighborhood, regardless of whether or not they go to your church or whatever. So that excites me. It gives me energy and hope, even on the bad days. [Laughter.]

Unlike congregants of other religious organizations that attend church in one neighborhood, work in a different neighborhood, and reside in a third neighborhood, commuting between the three throughout the week, the parish consciousness dictates that congregants, in Nicholas’s terms, integrate “church and work and just regular life” in one location. For this reason, upon signing the Berean covenant, members agree to be “a consistent, active presence” in their neighborhood (see Chapter 6, Table 7.1, Value Three). However, as exemplified by Nicholas’s distressed reaction to his neighbor’s electrocution, at times, the parish consciousness (e.g., the ideal that he is attempting to live out) can conflict with the realities of urban poverty.

Nevertheless, like most Bereans, Nicholas is hopeful that, by adopting the parish consciousness, the community can, “reimagine [being] a church in an urban place.”

This “reimagining” affected the behaviors of Bereans, both on an organizational and individual level. For example, as illustrated by the introduction to the Lenten liturgy booklet (see Chapter 6, Appendix A: Picture 6.4), Bereans often intertwined neighborhood themes into their liturgy. The second paragraph of the introduction reads:

Lent is a time of soul searching and repentance as we bear our sorrows and grief to the cross, where Jesus holds us all. As the people of [Berea], we rejoice in the unity and life God has brought to our church body this past year. We also desire to continue growing in the way of the cross and to embrace the work God still
longs to do among us. During this Lenten season, we seek to identify with the suffering of Christ and the suffering in our neighborhood. 

However, in order to identify the “sufferings of the neighborhood,” Bereans must be present in West Sharpsburg; thus, although not a requirement, many community participants purchased homes surrounding St. Seton, typically leaving behind newer, less deleterious suburbs.

As I observed, these home purchases had a profound effect on Bereans’ commitment to the community. Similar to the Philadelphian common purse (see Chapter 7), the Berean emphasis on home purchasing caused members to make a financial investment that strengthened adherence. Accordingly, when I asked Henry why he remained a member of Berea after the Year of Discernment, he replied, “One, we live here.” Likewise, Thomas, who owns multiple properties and businesses in West Sharpsburg, noted that he stayed with the community after the Year of Discernment because he was “invested” in the neighborhood. Even though Bereans own their properties and therefore do not have to move if they were to recuse their membership, home ownership anchors them to the neighborhood and, by affiliation to Berea. Thus, the parish consciousness, as mediated through home ownership acts to deepen members’ commitments; thereby, strengthening the community as a whole.

Given its effects, I argue that the parish consciousness is theoretically unique, in that it cannot be classified solely as a cultural ideology or an ecological resource. Rather I contend that the parish consciousness is an example of the interdependence between cultural ideology and religious ecology, in which expressive communalism (a specific cultural ideology) is facilitated by the urban environment (a specific religious ecology) and, inversely, religious resources of the urban environment are maximized by expressive communalism. In this sense, Berea’s organizational vitality is a product of, what I label, “the religio-cultural ecology,” a term
denoting the interdependent relationship between cultural ideologies and religious ecologies.

In the next section I further conceptualize the religio-cultural ecology, offering a new approach to understanding the strength and vitality of religious organizations.

TOWARD A RELIGIO-CULTURAL ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

Although never named, the religio-cultural ecology is implied in previous accounts. For example, Hoge and Roozen (1979) studied institutional (e.g., cultural) and contextual (e.g., ecological) factors that influenced church growth in the 1970s. Although they found that contextual factors had a greater effect on church growth than institutional factors, they recognized that there is a complex interaction between the two. As McKinney and Hoge (1983) note:

All investigators agree that local church growth depends partly on adapting to local conditions. This implies that particular interactions between contextual and institutional factors will be important. But past research has not specified the interactions with much precision. Only a few have been noted. For example, Hoge and Roozen ventured that local institutional factors were most influential in suburbs and least so in small cities and rural areas, and that they were more influential in non-growing suburbs than in growing suburbs. Also they concluded that particular denominations are more influenced by contextual factors to the extent that they are embedded in the mainstream culture (1979: 325, 373). Observers have sometimes argued that analyses for urban churches do not fit rural churches well or that some kinds of urban contexts are much different from others....In further research, interactions must be identified. (P. 52).

Although McKinney and Hoge (1983) found that church growth was influenced by interactions between organizational size and location, particularly involving regional and urban distinctions, Rothage and Goreham (1989), in their study of rural church growth, did not find discernible interplay between contextual and institutional factors.
Chaves (2004) gives consideration to the religio-cultural ecology when he calls for a “cultural ecology of religious organizations.” He states, “Congregations’ worship is shaped both by participants’ social characteristics and by the denominations and religious traditions in which they are embedded. Neither of these sources of influence is reducible to the other” (Chaves 2004:162). Unfortunately, Chaves (2004) abandons this perspective as he emphasizes the cultural aspects of congregations throughout the rest of his work. However, Davie (1990), in her study of English religious organizations, develops a typology of belief that juxtaposes ecology with church culture. Concerning this typology Davie (1990) states:

The labels are intended to evoke a distinctive characteristic, a particular flavor even, that differentiates belief in one part of British society from another, and the way that this particular type of belief relates (or fails to relate) to religious practice (P. 464).

Accordingly, based on her data from the 1980s, Davie (1990) noted that inner city churches experienced a depression in belief as evidenced by the number of small congregations that financially struggled, relying on religious networks, such as denominations, for resources. In contrast, suburban churches experienced an “articulated belief” due to the adoption of organizational patterns that reflected middle-class ways of believing. It is the match between middle class organizational patterns and suburban middle class values that caused suburban churches to flourish (Davie 1990). Additionally, Davie (1990) noted that rural churches demonstrated an “assumed belief” as it was assumed that individuals living in rural areas were members of a church unless proved otherwise. She also observed the communal belief of immigrant churches, which not only brought people together for a particular type of worship, but, in addition, provided social support for the immigrant community (Davie 1990). In the case of the immigrant church, community grew out of the church, as opposed to the church growing
out of the community, which is the traditional connection between church and community in
British society (Davie 1990).

Although Davie’s study focused on English religious organizations, there are similar patterns
between church cultures and religious ecologies in the United States. For example, Livezey
(2000) reveals this pattern, in his study of Chicago area churches that experienced
neighborhood transformations:

In response [to neighborhood transformation], these churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques produce the cultural material that enables their members and adherents to locate themselves with respect to the places and times in which they currently live. . . . Mainly through worship, education, and social activities, these congregations appropriate symbols and generate new ones, claim and revise traditions, defend and bridge social boundaries, articulate and invent meanings and values by which to make sense of changing circumstances (P. 21).

Accordingly, Cimino (2011), who researched the religious ecology of Brooklyn, New York, notes that, when compared to other congregational cultures, a particular congregational culture he labels, “life-style enclaves,” thrive within gentrified neighborhoods. Lifestyle enclaves are distinct in that they are relatively newer congregations planted by more established congregations outside of the neighborhood, have loose connections to the neighborhood (for example, they rarely participate in neighborhood issues such as housing prices), and attract individuals from a certain lifestyle (in this case young adult professionals). When speaking about lifestyle enclaves Cimino (2011) states:

“They have the most apparent success in a gentrified neighborhood because their function and form often bear a close affinity with the mindsets and social patterns of new residents. Like the transient newcomers, these congregations, both in their teachings and in actuality (i.e., not owning a building), stress the importance of “journey” and spiritual practices over the establishment of sacred places (P. 175).
In this case, congregations that exhibit a lifestyle enclave culture thrive within a religious ecology that is marked by gentrification.

In another example, Gamm (1999), through his examination of twentieth century Boston Jews and Catholics, demonstrates that Jewish congregations successfully adapted to changing neighborhood demographics because the institutional culture of these congregations allowed them to do so. The culture of Jewish congregations is very flexible as ecclesiastic authority is determined by congregational vote and worship services can be held anywhere as long as ten men and a Torah are present (Gamm 1999). Thus, as Jews left city centers in the mid-to-late twentieth century Jewish congregations followed. However, unlike Jewish congregations, the organizational culture of the Catholic Church is relatively sedentary, not only in worship style but also in location. Catholic churches could not move and rarely adapted to the changing environment around them; instead they closed, as the organizational culture of the Catholic Church prevented congregations from maximizing the resources of their respective religious ecologies. Consequently, during the later twentieth century, Jewish congregations thrived, as Catholic parishes suffered.

Hammond (1988) examines religious organizations similar to the Jewish and Catholic congregations in Gamm’s study, but he labels congregations as either collective expressive, meaning the organization is involuntary and immutable (e.g., Catholic parishes), or individual expressive, meaning the organization is voluntary and transient (e.g., Jewish synagogues). Hammond (1988) concludes that voluntarily created individual expressive congregations are growing because people view religious organizations less as an expression of community and more as an expression of individual tastes. As a result, religious organizations that have the
flexibility to match their congregational culture with a religious ecology flourish, while those congregations that do not have that flexibility grow weak.

Building on this previous work, I argue that particular cultural ideologies work independently with specific religious ecologies, causing some religious organizations to thrive. This was the case with Berea, whose cultural ideology—expressive communalism—worked interdependently with the resources available within the West Sharpsburg religious ecology to produce a parish consciousness, strengthen members’ commitments and causing the community to flourish. In contrast, although Philadelphia reaped resources from the urban religious ecology, their cultural ideology, freewill individualism, did not work interdependently with their environment. Consequently, unlike Berea, Philadelphia had to employ strong charismatic leadership, and strict commitment mechanisms to strengthen their community. In this sense, Berea could afford to be lenient in terms of their theological and behavioral expectations as they were strengthened through their religio-cultural ecology.

CONCLUSION: WHY DO CICS CHOOSE TO LOCATE IN URBAN AREAS?

The third aim of this research is to explain why CICs, more often than not, chose to locate in urban areas. Based on my research with Philadelphia and Berea, I believe that the urban religious ecology provides resource configurations, in terms of affordable housing, housing density, and mutually benefiting organizational networks, that strengthen CICs; thus, attracting these religious organizations to urban environments. However, some CICs, particular those that espouse expressive communalism, thrive in religious ecologies that work interdependently with their cultural ideology. In this case, communities, such as Berea, develop a parish
consciousness, a place-based system of thought that caused Bereans to purchase houses in West Sharpsburg; thereby deepening their commitment to the community. Consequently, unlike Philadelphia, Berea does not need strong charismatic leadership or strict commitment mechanisms in order to thrive, rather, an urban environment. In the next chapter I summarize the arguments made in this dissertation, explaining why CICs are growing, which is the last aim of this project.
Chapter 9: Conclusion: Why Christian Intentional Communities Are Growing

In late September 2011 I attended a workshop facilitated by Evan, the former Berean community pastor. Twenty participants sat in a circle discussing the ways in which Christian Intentional Communities (CICs) implement principles of New Monasticism\(^1\). Although this workshop directly related to my research, I was more intrigued by the fact that it was part of a two-day conference hosted by the Episcopal Diocese in a Midwestern state\(^2\). Approximately one hundred people from various denominations and geographic locations gathered in the Diocese’s Cathedral to learn about Fresh Expressions, the Episcopalian program that promotes non-traditional religious practices, particularly the development of intentional communities. I observed the various conference workshops, panel presentations, and keynote speeches, concluding that, although the Episcopalian leadership realized that CICs were growing, they did not have a clear understanding as to why.

Accordingly, the last aim of this dissertation is to clarify why CICs are growing numerically. Given the previous theoretical and empirical research, there is no single explanation for this phenomenon; rather, the numeric growth of CICs can be attributed to many factors. Nonetheless, based on my research in Philadelphia and Berea, this concluding chapter will link these factors together in order to provide a picture about why CICs grow. I will also discuss the empirical and theoretical contributions of this research, concluding the chapter with suggestions for future research, as well as applications that may benefit religious organizations.
CICs GROW BECAUSE.....

Despite the many similarities between Berea and Philadelphia, the two communities that I studied, most of their differences originate from their distinct cultural ideologies. In keeping with results from the National Survey of Contemporary Christian Intentional Communities (see Chapter 3), Philadelphia’s freewill individualism and Berea’s expressive communalism partially determine variation between the two communities in terms of members’ construction of reality, worship practices, religious beliefs, neighborhood relations, governance, and community programming. These cultural ideologies, and their accompanying behaviors, attract individuals who experience various types of alienation from American social institutions; the members tend to be alienated from media, economic culture, political system, and, particular to CICs, religion. Although I cannot substantiate that CICs are growing numerically because Americans are suddenly feeling alienated, I can claim that Philadelphia and Berea were established by individuals who gathered together in an attempt to assuage their feelings of alienation. Thus, in this sense, alienation contributes to the growth of CICs.

Once established, other factors help maintain members’ commitments to CICs. For example, the charismatic leadership of Philadelphia provided stability for a group of individuals whose foundation was a set of unstable affective ties, thereby, allowing the community to persist through turmoil. Likewise, the charismatic influence of St. Seton provided a totem around which members of Berea could unite, devoting themselves to their mission in West Sharpsburg. In both of these cases charisma encouraged members to invest more of themselves, consequently reinforcing their commitment to the community. Another factor that strengthened members’ adherence to Philadelphia and Berea was their respective worship
services and inter-organizational cultures. In these cases, members utilized religious goods and services offered through the communities’ cultures. In return for these religious goods and services, members invested their time, energy, money, and desires into the community, thereby reinforcing members’ commitments.

There were some factors that had a greater effect in one community as opposed to the other. For example, Philadelphians, but not Bereans, made statements that created perceived rivalries between the community (the ingroup) and various outgroups. These outgroups included other religions (e.g., Islam), unorthodox Christian sects (e.g., Mormonism), and “Christians-in-error,” a label assigned by a Philadelphian leader to Christian denominations that do not interpret the Bible literally. This type of rhetoric, which I call “ingroup-outgroup discursive repertoires,” provided Philadelphia with a cultural identity that appeared constantly under threat by outside influences. Thus, Philadelphians rallied around their subculture, strengthening adherence to the community. Furthermore, Philadelphia employed strict theological and behavioral expectations, which, as mediated through commitment mechanisms (e.g., a rigid membership covenant, complete financial sharing, and rigorous confession rituals), demanded that members sacrifice desires, time, energy, and money in order to maintain their membership. According to adaptations of Kelly’s (1972) strictness theory, such sacrifices amounted to hefty personal investments, which were unrecoverable if an individual were to leave the community (Innaccone et al. 1995); therefore, many members of strict CICs submit to theological and behavioral expectations, consequently strengthening their commitment.

Additionally, both communities benefited from resource configurations offered in the urban religious ecology, such as cheap housing that, due to the close proximity of the residences,
facilitated members’ interactions. Furthermore, unlike Philadelphia, the religious culture of Berea worked interdependently with the urban religious ecology to produce vitality; a relationship I label “the religio-cultural ecology.” In this case, Bereans developed a parish consciousness, a place-based system of thought (e.g., culture) which encouraged members to live, work, worship, and recreate within West Sharpsburg (e.g., their religious ecology). As a result, Bereans reinforced their commitment to the community by investing their time, energy, money, and desires, particularly through home purchases, to live a life wholly contained within their urban neighborhood (e.g., their parish).

Given these connections, CICs grow because ...groups of alienated individuals gather together in a communal setting, cementing commitment through (1) various types and intensities of charismatic influences, (2) particular worship service cultures, (3) specific inter-organizational cultures, (4) the development of subcultural identities, (5) strict theological and behavioral expectations mediated through commitment mechanisms, (6) use of ecological resources, and (7) utilization of the religio-cultural ecology.

Although some of these findings confirm already established theoretical propositions (e.g., how alienation influences individuals’ decisions to join CICs), other findings contribute to the empirical and theoretical understanding of religious organizations. In the next section I describe these contributions and their significance.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

Previous empirical research on CICs is outdated and does not reflect new religious ideologies or practices. Furthermore, previous theoretical work on vitality in religious organizations ignores
the interactions of theoretical propositions across the four bodies of literature considered in
this dissertation (e.g., the formation of intentional communities, strength and vitality of
religious organizations, commitment in intentional communities, and urban religiosity). Given
these gaps in previous research, this dissertation provides two empirical and two theoretical
contributions.

**Empirical Contributions**

The first empirical contribution is the refinement of information regarding CICs. As I described
in Chapter 2, the last national survey that collected data on CICs was Zablocki’s (1980) urban
communes study. Thus, my national survey, which is analyzed in Chapter 3, provides updated
information on the historical foundations, demographics, choices of location, communal
behaviors, neighborhood relationships, family structures, educational programming,
governance, economic behaviors, as well as the religious beliefs and practices of contemporary
CICs. The results of the national survey reveal two types of communities: freewill individualistic
and expressive. Generally older and larger, freewill individualistic communities focus inwardly
on the spiritual development of individuals through communal practices. These practices are
established and maintained by directive decision-making which provides rigid symbolic
boundaries that protect the unity of communal beliefs. Younger and smaller, expressive
communities facilitate actions through the collective, such as consensus decision-making, while
placing heavy emphasis on “being missional” to their local neighborhood. For many expressive
communities this outward focus is assisted by residing in urban environments that provide a
platform for neighborhood programming and inclusive personal relationships resulting in
pluralistic religious beliefs.
Related to the findings of the national survey, the second empirical contribution is the description of the ways in which two cultural ideologies, freewill individualism and expressive communalism, are reflected in freewill individualistic and expressive communities respectively (see Chapter 3). Although there is ample research examining the effects of individualism on religious organizations (Bellah et al. 1985; Roof 1993; 1999; Emerson and Smith 2000), very little has examined expressive communalism, a new ideology emerging over the last twenty years amongst post-boomer Christians that emphasizes concrete, physical acts of spiritual commitment in the larger community through various types of service activities and cultural engagements (Flory and Miller 2008). Based on my ethnographic field research in Berea, I illustrate how expressive communalism influences the behaviors of a religious organization. These behaviors include the embodiment of faith in the physical environment (e.g., Berea’s dedication to St. Seton), egalitarianism (e.g., Berea’s use of participatory democracy in decision-making), and the emphasis on relationships (e.g., Berea’s familial inter-organizational culture). Thus, this dissertation will help researchers understand religious organizations that embrace expressive communalism.

Theoretical Contributions

This research provides two theoretical contributions, both of which relate to structures that religious organizations develop in order to maintain members’ commitments. First, alternative theoretical perspectives (e.g., research on charisma, studies on commitment mechanisms, strictness theory, demographic theories, cultural theories, and religious ecology theory) are not mutually exclusive, but interact with one another to produce strength and vitality in religious organizations. In Chapter 7, for example, I highlight the relationship between strictness theory

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and Kanter’s (1968; 1972) research on commitment mechanisms. Contrary to Kelly (1972), I argue that strict theological teachings are not enough to cause religious organizations to grow. However, religious organizations can employ particular commitment mechanisms, such as, in the case of Philadelphia, complete financial sharing, a rigid membership covenant, or rigorous confession rituals, creating strict behavioral boundaries (see Chapter 7). These strict boundaries cause members to make sacrifices in terms of desire (e.g., the desire to live in a non-urban neighborhood), time, money, and energy, all of which are lost if members were to leave the organization. Thus, strictness, as mediated through commitment mechanisms, cements members’ adherence to the community.

Although hinted at in previous research, the second theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the introduction of the religio-cultural ecology, which describes the interdependent relationship between religious cultures and ecologies. Developed through my ethnographic fieldwork in Berea, I illustrate how the Berean parish consciousness, which exemplifies the religio-cultural ecology, encourages Bereans to purchase homes in West Sharpsburg. Such investment reinforces Bereans’ commitment to the community, allowing the community to approach commitment mechanisms, such as membership covenants, financial sharing, and confession rituals with leniency. In contrast, Philadelphia did not utilize their religio-cultural ecology, relying on other conventions, such as strict commitment mechanisms (e.g., a rigid membership covenant, complete financial sharing, and rigorous confession rituals), to keep members committed. However, Berea is only one case, more research is needed in order to better understand the religio-cultural ecology. Consequently, in the next section I provide suggestions for future research.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can investigate the religio-cultural ecology in several ways. First, researchers could examine the geographic relationship between religio-cultures and ecologies to see if any substantial patterns exist between the two. This research would require localized ecological data, such as demographic information and real estate values for a particular area, as well as data on religious organizations, such as information regarding worship and inter-organizational cultures^3^, located in that same area. Second, researchers could examine whether or not all religious organizations utilize religio-cultural ecologies, or if only particular religio-cultures (e.g., expressive communalism), work interdependently with ecologies to strengthen religious organizations.

Additionally, future research can examine the effects of CICs on their environments. I am often asked if Berea and Philadelphia are good for West Sharpsburg and Emeryville. I typically respond by saying, “I don’t know.” On the one hand, my research shows that these communities are improving neighborhood residences and preserving historic buildings (e.g., St. Seton) while not creating issues associated with gentrification, such as inflated property values. On the other hand, Bereans and Philadelphians had to work hard to overcome their neighbors’ suspicions and, in many ways, are considered outsiders. Thus, researchers could examine, in much more detail than I do in this dissertation, whether or not CICs are beneficial for their neighborhoods.

In a similar manner, future research could examine whether or not CICs are beneficial for their denominations. As evidenced in the chapter’s opening vignette, mainline and evangelical denominations are attempting to capitalize on the growth of CICs by establishing their own^4^.
However, based on my ethnographic fieldwork, I cannot determine the effect, good or bad, that CICs may have on larger religious organizations. Thus, researchers could examine denominational programs that establish CICs, such as Fresh Expressions, determining the effect that CICs have on denominations. Although there are many questions still to be answered, my research allows me to offer several applications for religious organizations in the next section.

APPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The research contained in this book provides the basis for several practical applications for religious organizations. For example, given that Philadelphia’s strictness is mediated through commitment mechanisms, strict religious organizations should consider the mechanisms that they employ in comparison to the mechanisms employed by CICs. Perhaps there are certain commitment mechanisms that have been overlooked or forgotten, which, if revived, will reinforce members’ devotion. As demonstrated in Berea, one mechanism is home purchasing. Religious organizations that can strictly enforce, or strongly encourage, a residency expectation will cement commitments by compelling members to invest time, energy, and money to purchase a home in close proximity to the building where worship is conducted, making it difficult for members to sacrifice their investment if they decide to terminate their membership.

Furthermore, in accordance with religious ecologists, congregations must adapt resource needs to changing environments. As illustrated by the demise of many urban Catholic parishes, if religious organizations remain fixed in their use of particular resources no longer available in their ecology, they will grow weak and die (Gamm 1999). However, given my experience in
Berea, I believe that declining religious organizations can regain their strength by migrating to a religious ecology that best supports their organizational culture. Perhaps I can illustrate this suggestion through ecological imagery: With any ecology, new life forms are constantly emerging as old ones fade. When environmental change occurs, species that do not have adaptive mechanisms needed for survival will evolve ways of garnering necessary resources or face extinction (Ammerman 1997). I would like to reshape this imagery to say that, as environmental change occurs, species that don’t have adaptive mechanisms needed for survival must evolve new ways of garnering necessary resources, or migrate to a habitat that best matches the resources needed for the species to survive. A polar bear cannot survive in the desert and a lizard would not survive in the artic; thus, why we would expect a Christian Intentional Community to survive in an upper-class neighborhood? We would not and should not. Therefore, religious organizations, particularly those facing declining membership, should consider migrating, or planting congregations, in habitats that best supports to the organization’s culture. In this sense, religious organizations should consider the religio-cultural ecology when implementing growth strategies.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

Map 1.1: The Geographic Distribution of Philadelphian Households and Common Areas in Emeryville.

- Denotes a Philadelphian Household (Three households, each with a married couple, are not located on the map)
MAP 1.2: The Geographic Distribution of Berean Households and Common Areas in West Sharpsburg.

- Denotes a Berean Household (Another five households are not shown on the map)
Picture 1.1: Chips and Dips Table

Picture 1.2: Root Beer Float Station
Picture 1.3: Kid’s Games

Picture 1.4: Lydia and others at the Penny Toss
Picture 1.5: Calvin at the prize box

Picture 1.6: Cornhole Court
Picture 1.7: Party Band

Picture 1.8: Locally Grown Produce Provided for the Seminar Hosted By Berea
Picture 1.9: View of the Priory from the Street

Picture 1.10: A Berean Bible Study Member Explaining the Projects for Lower Park
Picture 1.11: The Garden at Lower Park

Picture 1.12: Dinner on the Piazza
The Lord is trustworthy in all He promises
And faithful in all He does.
The Lord upholds all who fall
And lifts up all who are bowed down.
Thank you Lord for 5 years of Your faithfulness.
Picture 5.1: View of one St. Seton steeple from Endicott Dr.
Picture 5.2: An exterior view of a St. Seton stained glass window, shattered in some places.
Picture 5.3: Crumbling Plaster on the sanctuary walls

Picture 5.4: Center cupola with God’s eye looking down on the sanctuary
Picture 5.5: St. Seton looking down on the community.

Picture 6.1: First page of Berean Liturgy Handout

Epiphany Sunday

Epiphany is the oldest of the Christmas festivals and reminds us of Christmastide in some traditions. On this first Sunday after Epiphany, the Church remembers the baptism of Jesus.

CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 29)
One: Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty ones,
All: Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
One: Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name;
All: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
One: The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
All: The God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters.
One: The voice of the Lord is powerful;
All: The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
One: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar.
All: Yes, the Lord splitteth the cedars of Lebanon.
One: He maketh them also skip like a calf;
All: Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.
   The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.
One: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
All: The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kudshah.
One: The voice of the Lord makes the deep give birth,
All: And strips the forest bare; and in his temple everyone says, “Glory!”
One: The Lord sitteth enthroned at the flood,
All: The Lord sitteth as King forever.
One: The Lord will give strength to his people;
All: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

HOMILY
Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty.
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy merciful and righteous.
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea.
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee.
Which was and art and ever more shalt be.
Picture 6.2 (Above): Page two and three of Berean Liturgy Handout, including the Misere

Picture 6.3 (Right): Page four of the Berean Liturgy Handout
LITURGY FOR THE SEASON OF LENT
22 February – 7 April

Spanning the forty weekdays between Ash Wednesday and Easter, the season of Lent invites followers of Jesus to imitate Christ’s withdrawal into the wilderness in preparation for his ministry. (The six Sundays that occur during Lent are not counted, since every Sunday of the year we celebrate Christ’s resurrection.) The word, ‘Lent,’ comes from the Greek, ‘Lenteni’ and is linked with spring, for in the northern hemisphere, the season when it falls is marked by the ‘lengthening’ of days.

Lent is a time of soul searching and repentance as we bear our sorrows and grief to the cross, where Jesus holds us all. As the people of God we rejoice in the unity and life God has brought to our church body this past year. We also desire to continue growing in the way of the cross and to embrace the work God still longs to do among us. During this Lenten season, we seek to identify with the suffering of Christ and the suffering in our neighborhood. We repent for ways our hearts have become hardened and complacent. May God, who is able to heal our brokenness and infirmities, reorient us to the compassion and Passion of Jesus Christ and gift us all with grace and mercy to journey faithfully through this season.

CALL TO WORSHIP
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you!

This is the season of Lent. Why do we gather?
We gather to humble ourselves before a holy God—
to remember the suffering of the Son,
to anticipate the power of the Resurrection,
to receive the grace that brings freedom
and leave behind the chains of sin,
to rejoice in the Spirit and walk in the way of Christ.

PRAYER OF ORIENTATION
(from Isaiah 53)
Jesus, you grew up like a tender shoot,
like a root out of dry ground.
You had no beauty or majesty to attract us to you,
nothing in your appearance that we should desire you.
You were despised and rejected by your people,
a man of suffering and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces,
you were despised, and we held you in low esteem.
Surely you took up our pain
and bore our suffering.
Yet we considered you punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
LENTEN REFLECTIONS

Reflections during the season of Lent will follow Christ “on the road” to Jerusalem. The stories here trace Jesus’s interactions with those he encountered along the way as he journeyed willingly to his death.

Feb 26: On the Road with Children: Jesus and the Children
(Mk 10:13-16)
Mar 4: On the Road with the Poor: Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler
(Mk 10:17-31)
Mar 11: On the Road with the Sick: Jesus and the Blind Man/Men
(Mk 10:46-52)
Mar 18: On the Road with Sinners: Jesus and Zacchaeus
(Lk 19:1-10)
Mar 25: On the Road with the Sorrowful: Jesus Raises Lazarus
(Jn 11)
April 1: On the Road with Jesus: The King (Palm/Passion Sunday)
(Mk 11:1-11)

But you were pierced for our transgressions,
you were crushed for our sins.
The punishment that brought us peace was on you,
and by your wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on you
the sin of us all.

SONGS

SCRIPTURE READING

SONGS

OFFERING PRAYER

PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

COMMUNITY SHARING

BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN

REFLECTION

INDEX OF SONGS FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

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At the Start .......................................................... 9
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Blessed Are the Peacemakers .................................. 10
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Come Let us Return Unto the Lord ............................ 11
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Refrain (Psalm 27:1-2)
The Lord is our light and our salvation.
Whom shall we fear?
The Lord is the refuge of our life.
Of whom shall we be afraid?

Prayers of Confession
Lord Christ, we confess that our hearts have grown hard to you, one another, and our brothers and sisters near and far.
Empty our hearts of all but Love. (Space for silent/spoken confession)

We confess that we have allowed fear and pride, anger and hopelessness to keep us from serving our neighbors with gladness.
Empty our hearts of all but Love. (Space for silent/spoken confession)

We confess that we are weary and heavy with sorrow at the brokenness and darkness in our world.
Empty our hearts of all but Love. (Space for silent/spoken confession)

Spirit, come and fill us with courage, compassion, and hope as we await your restoration and light.

Song of Response: Psalm 127
O Lord have mercy, O Lord have mercy,
O Lord have mercy, have mercy on us. (x2)
Eucharist Prayers
God is with us. / We are not alone.
Christ is present here. / The Spirit moves within us.
Let us give thanks to God. / In memory and in hope.

This is the table of Christ crucified, where our story begins.
Let our song be a fragrant offering poured over his crucified feet.

This is the table of the resurrected Lord, where our story ends.
Let our lives be his broken bread, our love his outpoured wine.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast.

The Eucharist Feast

Communion Song: God is With Us
God is with us, we are not alone.
Christ is present here, the spirit moves within us.
Let us give thanks to God, in memory and hope.

Closing Song

Benediction

That were a tribute far to small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Picture 6.5: One Philadelphian Garden
Picture 6.6: The Philadelphian Banana Tree
Table 2.1: Geographic Location of Established CICs (n=51) Compared to Ecovillages (n=144)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>CICs</th>
<th>Ecovillages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Geographic Location of CICs established after 2004 (n=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>CICs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3: Observations and Interview Questions Given the Appropriate Theory and Explanation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Theoretical Explanation</th>
<th>What I Observed</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strictness Theory</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong when they are strict</td>
<td>The strictness of theological and communal beliefs</td>
<td>What are the tenets of your faith? Does the community allow variation in religious belief? What are the behavioral expectations for community members? Does the community allow variation in communal behaviors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Ecology</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong when they utilize the resources of their local environment in such a way as to serve only the members of their community (parish model) or create a specialized religious product that caters to individuals of a broader geographic context (niche model).</td>
<td>The manner in which CICs use the resources of their local environment</td>
<td>When was your community established? How was it established? What were the reasons for locating the community in this neighborhood? Does your community serve the people of this neighborhood? Do you have a lot of community participants who come to community events from outside of the neighborhood? Describe your community buildings. Why did you choose these buildings? Does your community have parking problems? Do members of your community work or recreate in this neighborhood? Does your community have explicit goals to help people in your neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Theoretical Explanation</td>
<td>What I Observed</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Ecology</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong when they operate in organizational networks that allow the exchange of resources.</td>
<td>The network of organizations the community may participate in and the resources that the community shares with other organizations</td>
<td>Do you belong to a network of religious organizations? What other organizations does your community partner with to facilitate programs? Do community participants also attend worship services or programs at other churches?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Theories</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong because they adopt a cultural model that attracts particular individuals.</td>
<td>The culture of the community</td>
<td>How would you describe the culture of your community? Does your community gather together for meals, worship, or other events? If so, describe. Does your community have any customs? Does your community practice any religious rituals such as prayer, communion, baptism, etc.? Why do you think your community has these customs and rituals? Explain the living arrangements of your community. Do you have unisex or mixed sex houses? How many people do you assign to a house? How are people assigned to a house? <em>Why did you join this community?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Theories</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong because their worship services attract individuals.</td>
<td>The worship style of the community and participants perception of worship practices.</td>
<td>Describe a worship service in your community? Why do you think your community worships in this manner? What do you think of this worship style?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Theories</td>
<td>Religious organizations grow strong because they create a subcultural identity that produces strong in-group loyalties.</td>
<td>The way in which community members frame other religious and non-religious organizations</td>
<td>How do you feel about other religious groups? What do you think about people who are non-religious? How would you describe your relationship with people who don’t agree with your religious tenets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Theoretical Explanation</td>
<td>What I Observed</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Religious organizations grow numerically because they have high fertility rates.</td>
<td>The religious beliefs and practices of community members’ families.</td>
<td>Were your parents ever part of a community like yours? Describe your parent’s faith? Did they ever attend church? If so, which church(es)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alienation</strong></td>
<td>Intentional communities form when individuals feel alienated from society.</td>
<td>The ways in which community members refer to their life before entering the community.</td>
<td>How do you feel about our world? How do you feel about our government? Were you an active participant in society before entering the community (e.g. did you attend school, pay taxes, vote, etc.)? Did you feel as though you were aimless in life before entering the community? Did you feel that life was meaningless before entering this community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charisma</strong></td>
<td>Intentional communities form because of charismatic authority.</td>
<td>The way that community members interact with and talk about their leader(s), as well as the rules governing who can be a leader and the succession of leadership.</td>
<td>How is your community organized? Does your community have a defined leadership? What do you think about your community leaders? Are your community leaders supernaturally gifted? Does your community have a set of rules governing who can and cannot be a leader? Does your community have a set of rules governing the succession of leadership? If so, are these rules documented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Theoretical Explanation</td>
<td>What I Observed</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Mechanisms</td>
<td>Intentional communities increase member’s commitment when continuance, cohesion, and control mechanisms are employed.</td>
<td>The types of continuance, cohesion, and control mechanisms employed by the community.</td>
<td>Upon entering the community do you have to give up anything? Do you have to give money or material items to the community? Does your community have a common purse? Describe your relationship with your family since joining the community. Does the community support your relationship with your family? Does your community have any secret rituals? Do you have to sign a membership covenant upon entering the community? If so, how is the covenant worded? Do you have to wear a uniform? What happens when someone breaks the community covenant? How does the community discipline rule breakers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Mechanisms</td>
<td>Intentional communities increase member’s commitment when they are ethnically homogeneous, incorporate spiritual hierarchies, and confession practices.</td>
<td>The demographic characteristic of the communities, as well as the presence of a spiritual hierarchy, and confession practices.</td>
<td>Is there variation in age, race, ethnicity, and gender amongst community members? Is there a leadership hierarchy in your community? Does your community promote confession of sin amongst its participants? If so, is it a regular practice? How does confession typically occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Theoretical Explanation</td>
<td>What I Observed</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Religiosity</td>
<td>Cities are more accepting of religious subcultures and facilitate communal religious ties.</td>
<td>The acceptance of the community in the neighborhood and the acceptance of communal behaviors by neighborhood residents.</td>
<td>How do you get along with your neighbors? Has there ever been tension between your community and neighbors? If so, over what? Do you think you could locate your community to a rural farm, or a suburban subdivision? Do you think residing in a racially and/or economically diverse area helps or hurts your community?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.1: Comparison of Membership Agreements between Philadelphia and Berea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eleven Agreements of the Philadelphian Membership Covenant</th>
<th>Three Commitments and Ten Practices of the Berean Membership Covenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We agree that if someone in the Group speaks negatively about another in the Group, it is the responsibility of the talked and hearer to go to the person who was talked about by the end of the day to bring the issues to light. (Ephesians 4:25-27)</td>
<td>1. We commit to ongoing discipleship in the way of Jesus. (Matthew 16:24-27, Romans 10:8-13, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 1 John 2:3-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We agree that if someone in the Group wrongs another, it is the responsibility of the person who is angry/hurt/wronged/etc., to first go to the person privately, then if the problem persists, to bring in someone you are both accountable to. (Matthew 18:15-16)</td>
<td>2. We commit to the people of [Berea] as our primary church community. (Matthew 18:15-17, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Hebrews 10:24-25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We agree to submit to Leadership in humility and in reverence to Christ (Hebrews 13:17)</td>
<td>3. We commit to a consistent, active presence in our neighborhoods. (Matthew 22:37-40, Luke 10:25-37, John 1:14, John. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We agree to submit to one another in love. (Ephesians 5:21, Philippians 2:3-4)</td>
<td>Specific Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We agree to remain sexually pure. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)</td>
<td>1. Partaking of the Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We agree to fulfill our commitments to jobs and chores around the house in a timely and intentional way so that we do not take advantage of one another.</td>
<td>2. Faithful participation in weekly gatherings and times of communal prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We agree to attend all house meetings, unless otherwise discussed with the Group or the Leader. (Hebrews 10:25)</td>
<td>3. Faithful service to the church and to the community in a specific God-gifted role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. We agree to follow, with humility, Group and Leadership decisions once the decision is made and put into effect.</td>
<td>4. Faithful participation in discipling relationships through house churches or small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. We agree to pay our agreed portions of what is owed to the Group each month on time, and to work diligently both in the</td>
<td>5. Getting to know, and faithfully praying for, one’s immediate neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Faithfully assisting in a [Berea]-hosted community meal once a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Faithful participation in decision making, including selection of leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Faithfully giving at least five percent of one’s finances to [Berea].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
house and outside in the work place to fulfill our share of the duties. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

10. We agree that the house and all possession therein are community possessions; while the person bringing the item(s) into the community may remain the primary user and steward of it, we agree to respect each other and allow everyone to equally use things as needed, and users will respect and use items as though the item were not their own. (Acts 4:32)

11. We agree as a community to be a conduit for the Kingdom and to use all that the Lord provides us to sow back into the Kingdom, both spiritual and material. (2 Corinthians 9:12-15)
Figure 5.1: Stages of Intentional Community Formation

- Stage 1: Gathering
- Stage 2: Investment of Self
- Stage 3: Communion
- Stage 4: Stable Community

Charismatic Influence

Charismatic Form
- Low Charismatic Potential
- High Charismatic Potential
- Charismatic Leadership
- Charismatic Authority

Charismatic Intensity
- Absolute
- Normative
- Executive
- Policy
- Exemplar

Figure 5.2: Graphical Display of Charismatic Forms and Intensity
APPENDIX B

STRUCTURE OF SURVEY

The survey contained a total of 82 closed and open-ended questions covering eight topics: Community history, neighborhood characteristics, communal behaviors, communal beliefs, demographic characteristics, as well as governance, family, and economic structures. Open-ended questions were coded for common themes and then put into numeric form.

Sampling

Since there is not an umbrella organization for CICs I pieced together a calling list from multiple sources including the Online Directory of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (2010), the Online directory for the Community of Communities (2008), and internet searches for unlisted communities. In all, the calling list contains 207 identifiable CICs that were in operation at some point between August and December 2011\(^1\). Fifty-one of the 207 identifiable CICs agreed to complete the survey, constituting 25 percent response rate.

The survey was completed by key informants over the phone, in face-to-face interviews, or through electronic means. Key informants were participants in the community who were either in a leadership position or had the authority to speak on behalf of their community\(^2\).

Analysis Plan

Based on answers given in open ended questions each community was coded as either Freewill Individualistic or Expressive. For example, one open-ended question asked key informants to describe their community. If informants stated in the description that the mission of the community was personal spiritual growth it was coded as Freewill Individualistic. However, if informants mentioned that their community had a mission which included social justice activities it was coded as Expressive.
Responses between the two community types were tested for statistically significant differences through chi-square and t-tests. Results were recorded as percentages or mean scores for each set of communities. In other words, row 1 of Table 3.1 reports that 70.6% of Freewill Individualistic communities and 71.9% of Expressive communities ranked Statement A as most likely for their community. At a couple of points I report the mean percentage of members per community type. For example, row 8 in Table 3.15 reads: On average, 19.7% of members in Freewill Individualistic communities are currently enrolled in college or university; whereas 13.9% of members in Expressive communities are currently enrolled in college or university. Furthermore, I detail how to read Tables 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8 (the demographic tables) below each table.

ENDNOTES

1The date range is important to note because the life-span of intentional communities is not very long. Thus, it is very likely that some of the CIC’s on the calling list may no longer be operational. Although there are CIC’s that have lasted for decades, the attrition of these communities poses a problem for researchers who want to repeat this survey.

2Some key informants were not in leadership positions, but were delegated to speak on behalf of the community by community leaders.
Table 3.1: Reality Construction of CICs

*Key informants were asked to rank the following three statements from most likely to least likely.*

**Statement A:** When our community gathers together we talk about what is going on in our lives, community, or society (e.g. natural social reality).

**Statement B:** When our community gathers together we talk about what we want our lives, community, or society to become (e.g. produced social reality).

**Statement C:** When our community gathers together we talk about ways in which we can envision ourselves in a place separate from the physical world, such as heaven (transcendental social reality).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranked as Most Likely</th>
<th>Statement A</th>
<th>Statement B</th>
<th>Statement C</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n = 17)</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>117%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Communities (n = 32)</td>
<td>71.9%*</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranked Second Most Likely</th>
<th>Statement A</th>
<th>Statement B</th>
<th>Statement C</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n = 17)</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>94.1%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Communities (n = 32)</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranked Least Likely</th>
<th>Statement A</th>
<th>Statement B</th>
<th>Statement C</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n = 17)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>88.2%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Communities (n = 32)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2$, p≤.05

* Two Freewill Individualistic Communities ranked more than one choice as most likely (one ranked all three statements as most likely, and another ranked two statements as most likely. Hence, we have 20 statements ranked as most likely as opposed to only 17 (one for each community), resulting in a response rate greater than 100%. However, instead of throwing those cases out, which would decrease the sample size for Freewill Individualistic Communities by 17%, I decided to keep the cases and note the questionable reliability of the results.

** One Freewill Individualistic Communities failed to provide a ‘second most likely’ rank. Instead this community ranked all three statements as ‘most likely.’ See the note above for clarification.

*** Two Freewill Individualistic Communities failed to provide a ‘least likely’ rank. Instead one community ranked all three statements as ‘most likely;’ whereas a second community ranked two statements as ‘most likely’ and one statement as ‘second most likely.’ See first the preceding two notes for clarification.
Table 3.2: Historical Foundations of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years in Existence</td>
<td>19.06</td>
<td>11.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founded by Prior Organization</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: General Demographic Profile of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of Members</td>
<td>101.33*</td>
<td>22.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Related by Blood</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>39%b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There are four Freewill Individualistic Communities that have over 180 members (22%), whereas there is only one Expressive Community with membership over 100.

Table 3.4: Age of CIC Members* a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Presence of Members 51-69 Years Old**</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Presence of Members 51-69 Years Old***</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* χ², p≤.05
** Less than 50% of the community membership is aged 51-69 years old
*** More than 50% of the community membership is aged 51-69 years old

* There is no statistical difference in the percentage of CIC members in age groups 19-30, 31-50, and ≥ 70.
Table 3.5: Race of CIC Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All White</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Minority Presence*</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Minority Presence**</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Racial and Ethnic minorities constitute less than 20% of a community's membership
** Racial and Ethnic minorities constitute equal to or more than 20% of a community’s membership

Table 3.6: Education Attainment of CIC Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Educational Attainment*</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Educational Attainment**</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Educational Attainment***</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fifty percent or more of members have only a high school diploma or did not complete high school.
** No educational attainment level is represented by over 50 percent of the membership
***Fifty percent or more of members have a college diploma or have completed a post-graduate degree.

Table 3.7: Gender of CIC Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Male*</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Genders**</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Female***</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Females constitute less than 33.3% of membership
** Females constitute between 33.4% and 66.5% of membership
***Females constitute more than 66.6% of membership
Table 3.8: Location Choices of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice of Location:</th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members Live on Same Piece of Property</th>
<th>16.1%</th>
<th>57.6% *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chose Location because of the Need in the Neighborhood*</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>24% *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Other explanations for location choices that are not significantly different between Freewill Individualistic and Expressive Communities includes: Neighborhood attributes (such as open housing stock, proximity to buildings, low taxes), physical setting, God’s plan for the community, diversity of neighborhood, other explanations, no explanation (it just happened that way).
Table 3.9: CIC’s Relationship with their Neighbors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community provides programs for their neighborhood</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Neighborhood Programs: **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community makes an economic impact on neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Members Know How Many Neighbors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to Five</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to Ten</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has Conflict with Neighbors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of conflict</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some conflict</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No conflict</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has explicit goal to improve neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ .01
** p ≤ .05
*** p ≤ .10
* n = 10 for Expressive Communities; n = 9 for Freewill Individualistic Communities
† Other types of neighborhood programs offered by communities include housing, food related, neighborhood organizing, and children programs. However, there is no statistical difference in the percent of these programs found in Freewill Individualistic and Expressive Communities.
Table 3.10: Communal Behaviors of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members Eat Meals Together</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance is Required at Meals</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Eating Meals</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1 – Less Than Once a Week 2 – Once a Week 3 – Several Times a Week 4 – Once a Day 5 – More than Once a Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Gather Together Outside of Meals</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Gathering Together At Times Other Than Meals</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.30*</td>
<td>1 – Less Than Once a Week 2 – Once a Week 3 – Several Times a Week 4 – Once a Day 5 – More than Once a Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Sharing that Occurs between Community Members</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1 – No Sharing 2 – Some Degree of Sharing 3 – Great Amount of Sharing 4 – Complete Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Unity in Essential Beliefs</td>
<td>94.1%**</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Unity in Essential Beliefs</td>
<td>5.9%**</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Beliefs to the Life of the Community</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1 – Little Importance 2 – Some Importance 3 – Highest Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community is Associated with a Denomination</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Members that Attend a Worship Service</td>
<td>79.17%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Communities that Hold their Own Worship Service</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Communities that Would Prohibit Some Individuals from Joining</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>45%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05
* n = 30 communities
** n = 17 communities
*** Communities that report Complete or a Great Amount of Unity in Essential Beliefs.
**** Communities that report No or Some Unity in Essential Beliefs.
### Table 3.11: Family Life of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence of families in community</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of children in community</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children raised solely by bio-parents*</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community prohibits marriage</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership performs marriages between members</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community allows members to divorce</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree that community members are encouraged to build relationships outside of the community:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatly Encouraged</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatly Discouraged</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* n = 15 for Expressive Communities; n = 13 for Freewill Individualistic Communities

* Other choices included children being raised solely by the community, and children equally raised by bio-parents and community.
**Table 3.12: Governance of CICs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community has a defined leader</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>42% a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the leader is chosen:*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted In</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus Choice</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Way of Choosing</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has defined subordinate leadership positions</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>27% a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How big decisions are made:b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader makes decision</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community comes to consensus</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community votes on decisions</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other way of making decisions</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has a constitution**</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>58% a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a p≤.001  
  b χ², p≤.05  
  * n = 14 for Expressive Communities; n = 16 for Freewill Individualistic Communities  
  ** A constitution is defined as any written document outlining basic tenets and/or expectation for community members.
Table 3.13: Economic Opportunities in CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community produces an income</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean percentage of community members who work outside of the community</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean percentage of community members who work inside of the community</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of occupations found in communities: ^</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>9.0% ^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>39.0% ^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>3.0% ^d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>3.0% ^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of Community Finances:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Sharing</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Sharing</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Sharing</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Sharing</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has financial obligations</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Financial Decision Making:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership typically makes financial decisions</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>42.0% ^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community comes to a consensus on financial decisions</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>64.0% ^c *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other types of occupation of community members include teaching, religious, self-employed, community-employed, fine arts, laborer, business professional, service industry, civil servant, law, student, and other occupations. However, there is no statistical difference in the percent of these occupations found in Freewill Individualistic and Expressive Communities.

* Some Expressive Communities reported that their leadership makes small financial decisions, but consensus is required for large financial decisions. Hence, the percent of this response extends beyond 100.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=17)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempt to separate from general society</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>0%(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain essential beliefs while fully engaged in world</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>48.1%(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential beliefs are influenced by culture</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>78.1%(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential beliefs do not influence relationship with world</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.7%(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\chi^2, p≤.05\)

* Some key informants chose to not answer a preceding question that asked if their community sought to separate themselves from general society, or were fully engaged in the world. In some of these cases key informants cited that their community attempts to do both and therefore could not answer the question as written. Consequently, one freewill individualistic community and six expressive communities are not included in this table.
### Table 3.15: Education Opportunities in CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Attend Public School</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Attend Home School</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members are Encouraged to Further their Education</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of Members Currently Enrolled in a College or University</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Provides Educational Programs for Neighbors</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>48&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Provides Religious Programs for Neighbors **</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Requires Individuals to Take Class Before Becoming Member</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Classes that the Community Requires for Potential Members: ++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Classes</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Life Classes</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> p≤.001  
<sup>b</sup> p≤.01  
* Other types of educational programs offered by the communities include tutoring, skill training, family education classes, and other types of classes. However, there is no statistical difference in the percent of these classes offered between Freewill Individualistic and Expressive Communities.  
** Other types of educational programs required for potential members include other, non-descript classes. However, there is no statistical difference in the percent of these classes offered between Freewill Individualistic and Expressive Communities.
Table 3.16: Religious Beliefs of CICs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=17)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Sin:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans Are Generally Good</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans Are Generally Bad</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans Are Both Good and Bad</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variation between community members on this issue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not know or can't speak for the community on this matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biblical Inspiration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible is the inspired word of God.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible is not the inspired word of God.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variation between community members on this issue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not know or can't speak for the community on this matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of Biblical Inspiration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible is true in all ways and to be read literally</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible is true in all ways, but not always to be read literally</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible is primarily about religious matters, but may contain errors about other things</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variation between community members on this issue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not know or can't speak for the community on this matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Relationship With Christ:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members have committed their lives to Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members would not describe their faith as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variation between community members on this issue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not know or can’t speak for the community on this matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=17)</td>
<td>Expressive Communities (n=30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ the Only Hope of Salvation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members believe that the only hope for salvation is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members believe that there are ways to salvation other than Jesus Christ</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variation between community members on this issue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not know or can’t speak for the community on this matter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\chi^2, p < 0.05\)

\(^*\) n = 23 for Expressive Communities; n = 17 for Freewill Individualistic Communities
Chapter One: An Introduction

Names of people and places are pseudonyms.

Cornhole is a popular regional game played at many outdoor events. There are two 2’ X 4’ rectangular boards set 10 yards apart and raised to a 30 degree angle. Two large holes are cut into the board four inches from the board’s outer edge. Fully enclosed 4"X4“ square bags filled with dried corn (hence the name) are tossed by two teams made up of two individuals at either board. One set of individuals stands next to one board, and their teammates stands next to the opposite board 10 yards away. One individuals start by tossing the corn filled bags to the opposite board. If a bag lands in the hole the team gets three points, if it lands on the board the team gets 1 point. The teams rotate tosses and, after three tosses, they calculate the round’s points by subtracting the lesser points earned by one team from the greater points earned from the other team. For example, if Team A scores 3 points and Team B scores 2 points the final score for the round is 1 point for Team A (3-2=1). The play continues as the individuals standing at the opposite board then throws. The game ends when one team reaches 21 points.

Ear gauges are typically circular objects that are used to stretch ear lobes. Unlike ear rings, individuals who use ear gauges increase the size of the gauges after a certain time period in order to stretch the ear lobe to the desired size.

All scriptural references are based on the Holy Bible, English Standard Version (2001)

There are alternative interpretations for this verse. On the one hand, Cort uses this verse as the cornerstone of Christian Socialism, a political ideology that provides Biblical justification for economic Marxism (1988). In interpretation of Acts 4:32 Cort remarks,

“..., it says something about the Christian view of property and property rights. What it says can easily be exaggerated. After all, these people were “of one heart and soul.” Their socialism was voluntary. It was more akin to the socialism of monasteries than to the socialism of states. But the incident does tell us that where the spirit of Christian love predominates, there and to that extent property rights yield to the Works of Justice. The socialism of those early Christians was a kind of signpost, pointing the way to the kingdom of God on earth” (1988: 38).

This position is supported by Wells who claims that Christian communitarianism is a form Christian socialism (1996). On the other hand, Witherington makes the case that St. Luke, the author of Acts of the Apostles, uses chapters 4 through 6 of the dissertation to illustrate the manner in which the early Christian church was to be of support to each other not as a treatise on a politico-economic ideology. Witherington states:

“Luke seeks to paint a portrait of the earliest Christian community that shows that the church, as a sign of the unity of open and sincere hearts, has addressed the needs of its members. The basic principle is that no follower of Christ should be in need or want. Luke presents his argument in favor of this view by repeatedly revealing how the early church dealt with the matter. Along the way he also makes clear that he is not advocating for some central storehouse of goods or a centralized equal distribution of all property to all the community members” (2010: 106 ).

Thus, according to Witherington this verse should not be translated as a Biblical justification for economic socialism, rather a dictate for material charity between followers of Jesus Christ.

This was the number of members as of October 4, 2012.

Landmarks and buildings are labeled for reference later in the dissertation.

Three members of the community do not live in West Sharpsburg. Although they resided in West Sharpsburg for several years, a family moved to a neighboring county to start a self-sustaining organic farm that specializes in making Eucharist wine and bread. A third member lives several miles to the south in another urban neighborhood.
A bi-vocational pastor is someone who has a full-time professional job, but also serves in a part-time or even full-time role as pastor.

The pears and apples were picked from leftover trees in the neighborhood. Heather told the group that 100 years ago fruit trees were planted next to barns and houses to provide sustenance for residents. However, in the present these trees are considered nuisances by property owners. In fact, the last remaining apple tree in West Sharpsburg was located in the back corner of an apartment building. When Shawn and Heather found it the apples were just falling on the ground and rotting. Having unsuccessfully identifying who owned the tree, Shawn and Heather filled a wheelbarrow full of apples (some of which were used in the desert pizza). However, when they went back the next week, the tree had been cut down.

Although this meal was vegetarian and some Bereans are vegans, the community as a whole does not mandate a vegetarian diet.

Alcohol is consumed by members in both Philadelphia and Berea; however, drunkenness is discouraged. I did drink alcoholic beverages with consultants on several occasions.

The Jesus Movement was a collection of churches and parachurch organizations that facilitated evangelistic outreach to hippies and individuals associated to the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Those individuals who participated in the Jesus Movement were called the Jesus People, or Jesus Freaks. A great description of the Jesus People and their social movement can be found in The Jesus people: Old Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters 1972).

Although not directly addressed in this dissertation, Zablocki (1980) provides a good synopsis on intentional community formation over the span of the last several centuries.

Chapter Two: What are CICs and Why are They Important?

Hall adapts this definition of intentional community from Pitts (1973).

Philadelphia ascribes to holiness theology, whereas, Berea ascribes to a blend of Calvinism and liberal theologies.

The International House of Prayer is a “Mecca” for white Charismatic Christians in the United States. Located in Kansas City, MO the church hosts multiple conferences in charismatic religious practices and has the power to set the religious, cultural, and political agenda for practicing charismatics.

Except for the two communities examined in this study, pseudonyms were not used in this paragraph.

The process by which monastic orders, the Hutterites, and the Amish have routinized charisma and become institutionalized is not relevant for this project. However, please see Weber ([1922] 1946) and Goffman (1961) for theoretical explanations of this process.

See Bielo (2011: 109-11) for an excellent discussion on vows in emerging practices, particularly vows of stability.

I discuss the national survey later in the chapter, but reveal the results in Chapter Three and Appendix B.

The data on Eco-Villages were collected from the Online Directory of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities (FIC). Cohousing developments, self-identified communes, and residential coops are types of intentional communities less numerous than non-Christian ecovillages and CICs. Definitions of each type can be found on the Fellowship of Intentional Communities website.

It should be noted that religious strength has been measured in various ways. For example, Kelley (1972) measures strength solely by church membership, whereas Smith et al. (1998) examines strength through six dimensions, which he labels “vitality.” These six dimensions are: Adherence to beliefs, salience of faith, robustness of faith, group participation, commitment to mission, as well as retention and recruitment of members (Smith et al. 1998:21). Thus, within this debate numeric growth of congregations, as well as members’ commitments (e.g. commitment to congregational belief and rates of participation in congregational activities) are considered valid measures of religious strength and vitality.

Kanter (1972) identifies three commitment mechanisms: Continuance, Cohesion, and Control. These mechanisms are described in Chapter Seven of this dissertation.

A co-religionist is an individual who shares the same religious beliefs and behaviors with another individual.
The date range is important to note because the life-span of intentional communities is not very long. Thus, it is very likely that some of the CIC’s on the calling list may no longer be operational. Although there are CIC’s that have lasted for decades, the attrition of these communities poses a problem for researchers who want to repeat this survey.

Titles of leaders included, but are not limited to, “community organizer,” “community leader,” and “elder;” the latter of which relates to leadership positions within many Protestant churches.

Some key informants were not in leadership positions, but were delegated to speak on behalf of the community by community leaders.

A detailed summary of data analysis for the national survey can be found in Chapter Three or in the introduction of Appendix B.


I detail these two types of communities in Chapter Three.

Eucharist is the term used in older church traditions, such as Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, to signify Holy Communion, a ritual used by Christians to remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I should note that some weeks I spent time only at Philadelphia, while others weeks I spent time only at Berea; yet, more often than not, I was present in both communities each week throughout the year. Field work started in September 2011 and ended in September 2012; however, I did no fieldwork in November 2011 due to several obligations that needed to be completed prior to continuing research.

I led the toddler (0-4) Sunday school at a Berea church service once. Although I don’t consider this a leadership position, leading (or should I say herding) toddlers is as skillful a job as leading adults, particularly if you have to create a curriculum on the fly as I did.

There were four married couples in Philadelphia, only one of which had children. However, by the time I was exiting the field, one other couple had adopted a new born and another couple was pregnant.

This concern was never voiced to me, rather it was an impression I felt early on in my field research. It was clear that hints of sexual relationships were deterred, particularly to protect members of Philadelphia who took vows of chastity.

Little was done to integrate non-whites into community membership even though non-whites were present at events and members desired greater racial diversity in their communities.

This was true in every case except one, where I had established rapport with a wife and not the husband. Thus, I only asked the wife for an interview, to which she agreed and we met at a public coffee shop to have our conversation.

In Chapter Eight I detail the relationship of both communities with their neighbors, which includes accounts that the communities were viewed by neighbors as cults.

Chapter Three: All I Felt Was Love: Characteristics of CICs

Prior to entering my PhD program I was a high school social studies teacher from 2000 to 2008.

In religious organizations discernment typically refers to divine guidance when making very important decisions.

The Year of Discernment occurred during 2011.

The Bruderhof was started in 1920 in Sannerz, Germany by Eberhard Arnold as a common purse intentional community based in Anabaptist theology. With their merger with the Hutterians in 1931 and their subsequent rejection of the Nazi government they were expelled from Germany in 1937. While exiled in England their community grew and started a second settlement in England as well as a settlement in Paraguay. After a break from the Hutterians in 1950, the Broderhof founded the Woodcrest community in New York State and experienced a large increase in membership. More “Hofs,” or settlements, were started in Uruguay, England, Germany, and the United States. However, in 1959 a series of leadership crises caused the closing of Hofs in South America and Germany and the emergence of David Arnold, Eberhard’s son, as the Broderhof leader. Since
1962 the Broderhof has grown to 22 intentional communities located in North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. They have also developed several self-sustaining businesses, such as Community Playthings and Plough Publishing.

Three criticisms of Zablocki’s explanation for intentional community formation are noteworthy; yet do not invalidate his argument. In this endnote I identify these criticisms and provide a defense for Zablocki’s claim against their critiques. First, operationalizing societal change, especially in regards to morality, is very difficult; consequently, Zablocki’s claim remains unexamined. At one point in time I contemplated conducting such an analysis until a member of my dissertation committee told me that doing so would be very difficult (which I am thankful for). Therefore, until an examination does occur, Zablocki’s claim should be treated as a hypothesis instead of a theory. Second, Zablocki frames his hypothesis on a macro-level of analysis, where society is assumed to be a meaningful unit in regards to intentional community formation. Given that most intentional communities emerge from local, sub-cultural, and/or institutional contexts it is hard to imagine how societal change would have an effect on organizations that operate at a smaller level of analysis. In defense of Zablocki are numerous researchers, such as Ritzer (2008), who argue that macro-societal change (i.e. the rise of modern rationalism) has profound influences on local contexts (i.e. local restaurants, such as McDonalds, and coffee shops, such as Starbucks). Thus, like any local organization, intentional communities can be influenced by societal changes; therefore, in terms of a broad history, I have no problems with Zablocki’s macro-level of analysis. Third, there is evidence that intentional communities form on a consistent basis throughout time (Miller 1998), contradicting Zablocki’s claim that intentional communities emerge in specific eras of tremendous social change. While this claim is accurate, historical research cited in this paper has shown that, on average, communities which form between peak eras are the exception and not the rule. Thus, I have no problem supporting Zablocki’s hypothesis that intentional communities form in waves corresponding to societal change.

In essence I’m hypothesizing that intentional communities tend to be created during times when individuals experience a high degree of anomie. However, more discussion of this occurs in Chapter 4.

There has been a lot of debate about the existence of Qumran. Counter to de Vaux, Golb argues that Qumran was a Hasmonenean fortress, and Donceel and Donceel-Voute argue that the site was a manor house of a wealthy merchant. Ultimately, de Vaux’s argument is most recognized and therefore used here.

There is definite debate in this area. Zablocki (1980) argues that there were five waves, the latest being the period between 1960 and 1980. Miller (1998) argues that community formation persists through perceived periods of contraction, although in unconventional forms; thus causing a certain degree of ignorance towards their existence.

The Catholic Charismatic Revival should not be confused with the emergence of Catholic Workers Communities, the latter of which were developed by Dorothy Day in the mid-1930’s to practice Catholic social values and hospitality to the homeless in urban centers.

Kanter explains, “Success was measured by length of time in existence; a system had to exist as a utopian community for at least twenty-five years, the sociological definition of a generation, in order to be considered successful” (1972: 245). Although operationalizing success as a period of 25 years (a sociological generation) is arbitrary, so would any other level of analysis until a member of my dissertation committee told me that doing so would be very difficult (which I am thankful for). Therefore, until an examination does occur, Zablocki’s claim should be treated as a hypothesis instead of a theory. Second, Zablocki frames his hypothesis on a macro-level of analysis, where society is assumed to be a meaningful unit in regards to intentional community formation. Given that most intentional communities emerge from local, sub-cultural, and/or institutional contexts it is hard to imagine how societal change would have an effect on organizations that operate at a smaller level of analysis. In defense of Zablocki are numerous researchers, such as Ritzer (2008), who argue that macro-societal change (i.e. the rise of modern rationalism) has profound influences on local contexts (i.e. local restaurants, such as McDonalds, and coffee shops, such as Starbucks). Thus, like any local organization, intentional communities can be influenced by societal changes; therefore, in terms of a broad history, I have no problems with Zablocki’s macro-level of analysis. Third, there is evidence that intentional communities form on a consistent basis throughout time (Miller 1998), contradicting Zablocki’s claim that intentional communities emerge in specific eras of tremendous social change. While this claim is accurate, historical research cited in this paper has shown that, on average, communities which form between peak eras are the exception and not the rule. Thus, I have no problem supporting Zablocki’s hypothesis that intentional communities form in waves corresponding to societal change.

In essence I’m hypothesizing that intentional communities tend to be created during times when individuals experience a high degree of anomie. However, more discussion of this occurs in Chapter 4.

There has been a lot of debate about the existence of Qumran. Counter to de Vaux, Golb argues that Qumran was a Hasmonenean fortress, and Donceel and Donceel-Voute argue that the site was a manor house of a wealthy merchant. Ultimately, de Vaux’s argument is most recognized and therefore used here.

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An example of an organic originating community is Holtsfield, Wales, which is an environmentally sustainable intentional community that banded individual residents together to fight eviction from their land. An example of an intentional originating community is Brithdir Mawr, which is also located in Wales and dedicated to environmental sustainability. It was dubbed the “Invisible Village” by the British press because, although operating for several years, it was unknown to regional planners and was illegally developed (Maxey 2004).

In contrast, when asked about their community’s orientation toward time, approximately three-fourths of CICs reported having flexible schedules or no particular time organization (e.g. a synchronic time orientation) and, generally speaking, view life after death as a factor in only a few, as opposed to some or most, of member’s time commitments (e.g. non-apocalyptic) (see table below). These results are somewhat expected and, if CICs reported produced modes of social enactment, would confirm Hall’s typology. However, since CICs did not report produced modes of social enactment as they should have (given that they espouse a religious ideology) the results of CICs orientation to time must be relegated to the endnote section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time organization:</th>
<th>Freewill Individualistic Communities (n=18)</th>
<th>Expressive Communities (n=33)</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strict rules that organizes time</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible rules that organizes time</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rules that organizes time</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community has a symbol, such as a bell, that determines the start of activities</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Amount that life after death factors into member’s time commitments | 2.18 | 1.67 | 1 – No Time Commitments  
2 – A Few Time Commitments  
3 – Most Time Commitments  
4 – All Time Commitments |
| Otherworldliness*† | 3.53 | 2.39a | 1 – Strongly Disagree  
2 – Disagree  
3 – Agree  
4 – Strongly Agree |

*p ≤ .01  
*Otherworldliness is a measure of how much community leaders agree with the following statement: What we spend our time doing now, on earth, paves the way for an existence beyond ‘this’ world.  
†n=17 for Freewill Individualistic Communities; n=28 for Expressive Communities

A contrasting ideology would be Liberation Theology, which is found in Liberal and African American Protestant churches.

A Baby Boomer religious organization is not only defined by the number of adherents who were born between 1946 and 1964, but also by behaviors, such as civic engagement, and ideologies, such as individualism, that flourished in the generation birthed after WWII. See Wuthnow (2007) for a good description of Baby Boomer religion.

A post-boomer religious organization is not only defined by the number of adherents who were born after 1964, but also by behaviors, such as the emphasis on aesthetics, and ideologies, such as expressive communalism. See Wuthnow (2007) for a detailed description of post-boomer religion.

It is possible for individuals and Christian organizations to accept both freewill individualism and expressive communalism as their primary religious ideology; albeit at varying degrees. It is rare to find an individual or organization that accepts both freewill individualism and expressive communalism equally, just as it would be to find an individual or organization who accepts both freewill individualism and liberation theology equally. Nevertheless, the caution when presenting any dichotomous classification is to note that, generally speaking,
individuals and organizations tend to adhere to one ideology, while, in certain instances, sharing practices common to the opposite ideology.

17 Of course, rarely do people wake up one morning deciding that they will adhere to a religious ideology; rather most individuals understand faith through inter-subjective contexts (e.g. faith of one’s parents, participation in religious organizations during high school, etc.). However, Smith et al., as well as many others, are simply pointing to the fact that religious belief and practice is not compulsory. Nevertheless it is important to note that given an individual’s religious circumstance (such as frequency of parent’s church attendance), some will have a higher probability of adhering to a religious ideology than others.

18 Other types of Christians, both evangelical and non-evangelical, may employ this trope when describing their faith; however, freewill individualist will claim that a “personal relationship with Christ” is the primary precondition for salvation. In contrast, Bielo (2012) has documented “emerging evangelicals,” a set of evangelicals who develop rituals, “in which human-human connections are a precondition for human-divine relations…” (2012: 258). In other words, for Emerging Evangelicals, healthy human relationships are prerequisite for a “personal relationship with Christ.”

19 Independent, non-institutionalized, monastic orders are groups of individuals who practice monastic behaviors such as vows of silence, as well as daily ritualized prayer and meditation to achieve a deeper understanding of God. These types of monastic orders are not associated with institutionalized Catholic monastic orders, such as Trappists, and therefore are included in the survey. Often independent, non-institutionalized orders are relatively new and, although they might submit to ecclesial authority, operate much like other contemporary CICs in that, except for one case, there are no gender restrictions on participation and members are typically required to work outside of the community.

20 This is my addition to add context to this quote. The sentence prior to the one quoted is, “Thus, we believe that we are witnessing the emergence of a new form of spirituality, what we are calling “Expressive Communalism,” that, although related to the individualistic forms of spirituality as described above, is also distinct form them” (Flory and Miller 2008:188-189)

21 This is not to say that all Expressive Communalists reject all forms of individualism. Bielo, in his discussion of Emerging Evangelicals who dominate Expressive Communities, states:

Because they [Emerging Evangelicals] have displaced individual belief for relational rituals, does that mean that they construe personhood as something other than individual? I do not this that is the case. Emerging evangelicals still understand themselves as individuals – they do not rely on relational commitments to enter full personhood. Their faith, still construed as their woen, is what is at stake in seeking more intimate community relationships. What is especially interesting is that this does not mean they are satisfied with individualist dispositions. Emerging evangelicals reveal themselves as Christian subjects who have chafed under the weight of individualism. Their heritage as modern individuals, including the obsession with private belief, is extremely troubling to them. As a result, it is not the mutual assent to doctrine that provides the basis for their relational connection – it is their desire for an alternative grounded in a cultural critique (2012: 273).

22 Emerging evangelicals (See footnote 18) tend to populate Emerging Churches; however, the two are not exclusively tied to one another. In other words, emerging evangelicals attend churches of various theological orientations, while Emerging Churches contain adherents of various theological orientations.

23 Some of the 12 Marks have been reworded for a general audience.

24 For example, one open-ended question asked key informants to describe their community. If informants stated in the description that the mission of the community was personal spiritual growth it was coded as Freewill Individualistic. However, if informants mentioned that their community had a mission which included social justice activities it was coded as Expressive.
The sample size fluctuates per question based on whether or not key informants answered the question, or if the answer to the question was contingent on previous affirmative answers.

“High presence” means that 50 percent or more of their members are between the ages of 51 and 69. “Low presence” means that fewer than 50 percent of their members are between the ages of 51 and 69.

Within Protestant Christianity those charged to start a new congregation are often called “church planters.” Hence, the term, “planted,” in this context, refers to starting a new congregation.

For expressive communities that adhere to the 12 Marks of New Monasticism this statistic should be troublesome given that Mark #4 explicitly notes the attempt for communities to work against such racial dynamics.

This demographic characteristic is still better than in other Christian churches, of which only 7.5 percent report having a racial or ethnic minority population that constitutes more than 20 percent of the membership (DeYoung et al. 2003). Thus, intentional communities tend to be more integrated than other American religious organizations.

These communities tend to be independent, non-institutionalized, intentional communities of a monastic tradition which are all male due to the strong emphasis placed on celibacy.

Given the mobile nature of our society complete separation is very hard, however, like the Amish, some communities will interact with society-at-large only for economic reasons, while socially separating themselves from society.

Chapter 4: “We live in a land of complacency”: Alienation in CICs.

Alienation will be given a much more precise definition later in the chapter. However, for the sake of brevity, this simple definition will do for now. See Zablocki (1980) for a detailed explication of the term.

In this sense, a “unit” is a collectivity of individuals based on key identities that arise due to the social dynamics of a particular time period. Hippies are a good example of a Mannheimian “unit.”

Perhaps this is why intentional communities tend to be demographically similar – white, middle class, and educated.

In this case, I accept Zablocki’s (1980) definition of ideology:

A system of ideas held in common by members of a collectivity, with the following properties: it is an integrated pattern of beliefs and concepts including, but not limited to attitudinal beliefs, core values, social goals, and behavioral norms; it describes and interprets phenomena both empirically and normatively; it serves to focus and simplify action choices facing members of the collectivity; it stands in opposition to alternative ideological perspectives within the same society (P. 190).

Psychosocial growth communities focus on the personal development of individuals, particularly through therapeutic practices, such as psychological counseling, Eastern meditation, and yoga.

Deviant in the sense that communitarian’s utopian ideology does not reflect the normative ideology of the established order, or in Mannheim’s (1936) terminology, “the state of reality.”

Zablocki states, “Communitarianism is a social movement whose very reason for being,…, can be traced in good part, to the breakdown of the decision making process in larger scale collectivities under the strain of multiplying choice alternatives” (1980:2). However, Zablocki does not provide a concrete example of a “breakdown of the decision making process” and a definition for “multiplying choice alternatives.” Thus, all examples provided in this chapter are based on my interpretation of Zablocki’s claim.

I should clarify the relationship between the following terms: commune, intentional community, collectivity, and society:
A commune is a type of intentional community (see Chapter 2 for typologies of intentional communities).

An intentional community is a type of collectivity. Other collectivities include special interest groups, such as the Tea Party and the Sierra Club.

A Collectivity is any group of individuals who are attempting to achieve ideological or material consensus. Individuals can belong to numerous collectivities with various levels of participation. Compared to some members of the Sierra Club, who participate by donating money to the organization, members of intentional communities typically have higher levels of participation as, in some cases, individuals surrender their entire financial portfolio as well as their private living arrangements to join the community.

Society is a collectivity of which the major consensus building mechanism is generally, but not in all cases, a government system. People are born into society, but can remove themselves from the collectivity by joining an alternative collectivity, such as another society or intentional community. Nevertheless, most alternative collectivities must work within society; thus, in many ways society acts as a master collectivity, under which are many other smaller types of collectivities.

Remember, this research was published in 1980; thus the surveys were quite relevant in support of Zablocki’s argument. However, if Zablocki’s study were replicated new alienation scales would need to be used.

Intentional communities differ from other special interest groups, such as the Tea Party, the Sierra Club, etc., because living in close proximity is viewed as essential to the consensus-seeking process.

One of my reviewers, Dr. James Bielo, offered two follow-up questions: (1) Why does one experience of alienation occur as it does in one context and differently in another? (2) What organizes this differentiation?” Unfortunately, I cannot answer these questions in this research; however, I hope that these questions will be examined in the future. Likewise, my advisor, Dr. Steven Carlton-Ford, suggested that future research examine how various levels of strength and depth of alienating experiences effect an individual’s consensus seeking action.

Ellipses are used for three reasons: (1) since I am reporting consultant interviews verbatim, some words are subtracted from the text for the purpose of clarity; (2) some phrases are left out because, although they fall within a comment, take the discussion on an irrelevant tangent; (3) in some cases my interruptions are left out to make the comments more parsimonious. For example, the ellipses immediately preceding this endnote represents the following italicized text:

Dwayne: I love it. Everybody should vote, follow the rules, pay your taxes. Love it.
Mark: Okay.
Dwayne: I love the idea of responsible citizenship. And I can, I see both sides of the argument. And I'm just like it doesn't really matter because this or that and the other thing but I love it. I love following rules I guess, understanding it.
Mark: Okay.
Dwayne: But, um, yeah. The Bible says that, you know, God puts all the authorities in place.

I do not believe removing the italicized portion of the transcript changes the context of the discussion nor the tone of Dwayne’s answer, but it does eliminate some redundancy. I recognize that in some cases redundancy is needed, even expected, to effectively communicate a consultant’s perspective; however, in this case, I felt I could achieve parsimony without affecting the context of the discussion. Thus, I did not include this segment of the discussion nor my interruption.


Zablocki mentions this in a footnote (1980: 259).
I know that not all Christian organizations would identify as evangelical. However, since I had spent time in Philadelphia and Berea I knew that they would have some familiarity to the concept of evangelicalism. If consultants asked what I meant by “evangelicalism,” which occurred more often with Philadelphian than Berean consultants, I would refer the consultant to the local evangelical mega-church.

Darrell is referencing the blue glow that emanates from television screens when viewing them from a distance.

As you will see later in the chapter, the concept of “authenticity” is an organizing value for Bereans.

Of side interest here is Jane’s mention of “the younger generation.” Given that she is in her late-twenties I can only imagine that she is referring to individuals in her own generation who hold econo-cultural values contradictory to her own.

Work requirements can be fulfilled by being a full-time student or being employed as a community minister. As one reviewer pointed out, Philadelphians “are in this world, but not of it,” a biblical reference to how Christians are to interact with a non-Christian world.

Philadelphian work crews typically consisted of eight members who were unemployed outside of the community and at least two members who were paid by the community as work crew managers. Work crews did many different jobs, including landscaping community properties, fixing community residences, and facilitating Philadelphia sponsored conferences.

Although Philadelphia was legally recognized as a church entity, some members ran businesses from community residences. These businesses included photography, catering, and landscaping companies.

Generational sin refers to destructive behaviors that are passed down from one generation to the next, such as alcoholism and drug abuse.

Sarah Mcgullicutty (a pseudonym) is an active participant in Berea, but not an official member. I should note that Philadelphia had a full member run for local office; however, there were limited references to this event (perhaps because he did not win his election), unlike in Berea, where Sarah McGillicutty was mentioned in several conversations (perhaps because she won her election).

The question I specifically asked was, “Do you, um, do you feel, you know, before [Berea], did you feel aimless or did you feel like, did [Berea] give you meaning or is that not the case?” Although the language is not precise (e.g. I conflate “aimless” in the sense of aimlessness, and “meaning” in the sense of meaninglessness, when I should have used “normlessness”), the point remained the same: Did joining Berea resolve Esther’s alienation?

This need for clarification was possibly a result of two things: (1) these consultants did not know the terms associated with the diversity of American Protestantism; and/or (2) they never used this term in relation to their religious beliefs and practices. For example, it was rare for Philadelphians to classify themselves based on religious orientation (e.g. “I am an evangelical”), more often Philadelphians classified themselves based on the type of church they had attended prior to joining the community (e.g. "I went to a non-denominational church.").

I clarified the term, “evangelicalism,” by first telling consultants that it is a worldview that places a high emphasis on scripture, church attendance, and godly behavior and then, second, referring to several evangelical churches that espouse the evangelical worldview.

Charisms can be defined as divinely conferred gifts, which include divine possession of human bodies, explained healing, prophecy, glossolalia, and spastic body contortions. However, charisms could also describe spiritual gifts such as teaching, pastoring, administering, wisdom, and knowledge.

Pseudonyms are used for names of schools, colleges, and some geographic locations.

Emery Place is a suburban neighbor adjacent to Emeryville.

Prophetic ministry is conducted by individuals who have been given prophetic charisms. Prophetic ministers will pray over an individual or individuals, sometimes in a group, and ask God to give a message to the individual(s). If a message is given it will be spoken by the Prophetic Minister. For example, during Group, a Philadelphian
Thursday evening Bible Study, I experienced prophetic ministry. Here are my fieldnotes from the event, revised for clarity and anonymity:

I had met Matthew at other Philadelphia events. He is the father of a community member. After several hours of waiting while others were prayed for, he came to pray for me. He said that he knew we had met in the past but that he could not remember my name. I reintroduced myself to him. He then asked how I became a part of the community. I noted my relationship with Timothy. He then asked if I had a family. I told him that I am married and have two children. He said that’s great and asked me to stand. Placing his right hand on my back and his left hand on my chest, he took a deep breath and exhaled. I closed my eyes. I could tell that he was waiting to receive the words to pray, after a minute he started to pray, often pausing to receive some more words to pray.

He first prayed that my discernment gifts would increase as I get to know and be with my students. He remarked, in prayer, that I had good relationships with my students and that the Lord would continue to use me in my student’s lives. He then prayed the same increase in discernment for my role as husband and father. He asked God that I would discern how to love and lead my wife and children.

As he prayed he would move around his hands, which felt warm against my body. At times he would put his hand in mine, which I would grip, at other points he would move his hand around my back, or place a hand on my head. At one point he started to pray for my role at a [local high school], but then he asked if I still taught there, to which I replied, “No, I teach at [Midwestern City University].” He then replied, “See you can never assume anything,” and then returned to praying.

He then started praying protection over my heart, indicating that the devil has, figuratively, sent arrows into my heart which make me weaker in spirit. This is when he stopped and said, “You know....I feel that...Well, I’m just going to tell you. I feel like you feel that you’re not known and that you’re lonely.” Instead of waiting for an affirmation Matthew just started praying that I get people into my life that would know me and that I would know that God is good. He indicated that he felt I was going through a “desert period” in my life and that I needed to remember that God is good. Matthew prayed, “Lord let him remember that you are good.”

In total the prayer lasted 7 minutes. I thanked Matthew for the prayer and told him that the discernment prayer is one that I will replicate in my own personal life. He smiled and said, “Thank you for letting me pray for you.” We then departed.

Discipleship is a term used in some Evangelical religious organization to describe the process by which one learns Biblical literacy, basic theological propositions, religious rituals, and norms for behaviors in evangelical groups.

“Filled with the Holy Spirit,” refers to the outward manifestation of divine charisms, such as glossolalia, prophecy, or paroxysms.

The Philadelphian covenant was the official document recognizing your membership to the community.

The “large Thursday night thing” Kathy references was an attempt by Evangelical Megachurch to provide large group (50 to 100 persons) Bible study, out of which small discussion groups of 5 to 15 individuals were to form. These small groups were to provide the deep relationship that Kathy was seeking.

Although it could be that these accounts are in reference to large churches, particularly Evangelical Megachurch, these critiques were also present in consultants who had attended smaller churches as well.
Although I asked Bereans their thoughts of evangelicalism, many expanded this question to include all religious Christian religious organizations.

I believe Gabrielle is referring to Westboro Baptist Church that pickets military funerals as a protest against rights for same-sex couples. I am not sure that Westboro Baptist Church participates in anti-abortion protests as well. Thus, Gabrielle may be merging two images of evangelicals into one.

The Beatitudes refers to a section of The Gospel According to St. Matthew (5:3-12), in which Jesus of Nazareth offers eight blessings: (1) to the poor in spirit; (2) to those who mourn; (3) for the meek; (4) for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; (5) for the merciful; (6) for the pure in heart; (7) for the peacemakers; (8) for those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. The Gospel According to St. Luke (6:20-22) adapts four of the Beatitudes written in The Gospel According to St. Matthew, which are: (1) blessed are the poor; (2) blessed are those who hunger now; (3) blessed are those who weep now; (4) blessed are you when people hate you.

This is a term used by Christian organizations to describe the beginnings of a church congregation. Typically, but not always, a congregation is started (e.g. planted) with emotional, physical, human, and financial support from another congregation. In this case, Berea was planted from a large suburban Vineyard megachurch; one of the reasons why Berea continues membership in the Vineyard Association despite being a marginal participant.

At one point the church offered a Saturday evening worship service in West Sharpsburg while continuing to support house churches that met on Sunday morning.

These principles were just beginning to formulate under the “New Monastic” title; however, when The Commons formed as an intentional community they primarily practiced, in hindsight, three of the twelve principles: Relocation to the Abandoned Places of the Empire, Sharing of Resources, and A Daily Rhythm of Life.

Some house churches continued to meet, however they are more-or-less considered small group Bible studies and no longer remain the structural focus of Berea.

Nolan remains a member of Berea although he only serves as a community trustee. The trustees are responsible for the stewardship of the St. Seton and other Berean property. In our interview he felt good about the outcome of the Year of Discernment, but knows that the community has a lot of work ahead of them. After the Year of Discernment forty Bereans official joined the community, while approximately twenty other participants, including Evan, a former community pastor, did not join. Although in many cases intimate relationships remain between those who joined and those who did not, in other cases, such as with Evan, there is a subtle tension.

Chapter 5: Prophecy, Egalitarianism, and a Beautifully Broken Building: Charisma in Philadelphia and Berea.

Full view of St. Seton has been obscured to protect the anonymity of Berea.

This phrase is taken from Wendell Berry’s poem, “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front”, and is used by consultants to describe their work in West Sharpsburg. The clearest example is Nicholas, who used this phrase several times during the seminar described in Chapter 1.

Zablocki takes the concept of communion from Schmalenbach (1961), who views communion as a third discrete form of association when compared to Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

See the introduction to Chapter 3 to understand the nature of love found in Berea and Philadelphia.

See Raimy (1979), who supports Zablocki’s assertion concerning communal instability in his descriptive work on various types of intentional communities.

Zablocki (1971) describes Eberhard Arnold as, “a highly charismatic and saintly man, gifted not only with unusual grandeur of vision, but with the ability to communicate with other people and to inspire them with his visions” (p. 75).
Zablocki labels these types, “Charismatic Leadership,” not “Charismatic Intensity” as I am doing here. However, given the terminology in Bradley’s charismatic form typology, I thought it best to use a different term than Zablocki in order to prevent confusion. Furthermore, Zablocki’s typology is hierarchical where each successive level the charismatic leader or authority is granted more power over the community. I argue that this increasing concentration of power is a measure of intensity; hence the use of the term.

Since the community was not a legally recognized entity, as it is now, houses in this early period were bought by individual community members with the verbal agreement that the house would be used for communal living.

Paul’s job was part-time and solely involved praying for the community and Richard’s business. Paul also worked part-time as a Barista at Starbucks.

Other leadership positions included a community treasure, coordinator, and house leaders, all of whom report to the eldership. Furthermore, every house is paired with “House Parents,” who are married couples who help house members resolve relational problems. House parents do not have to be members of Philadelphia, but are, in one way or another, associated with the community. Community prayer coordinator is another leadership that would report to the eldership; however, Paul currently holds this position in conjunction with his eldership.

I add this reflexive note because I am indebted to Paul for his vulnerability in regards to this subject. On another occasion Paul shared with me that he was afraid that I would “Jesus Camp” the community. This comment is based on the documentary concerning Pentecostal youth camps, which, in the view of many people who practice charismatic worship, felt betrayed by the manner in which the youth camps were portrayed. Thus, although I feel it is necessary to discuss the prophetic culture of Philadelphia, I do not want to condemn their practice nor portray the community in an unflattering manner.

There are detailed prophecies as well. For example, one of the Philadelphian women received a vision that they were to purchase a house in Emeryville and turn it into a community meeting space, office, and laundry. Despite the fact that the house was occupied and not for sale, the community gave the owners an offer that they couldn’t refuse, purchased the house, and remodeled it into a community space according to the vision. The community named the house 119 after its address (see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, these prophecies tend to be rare.

This is not to say that Paul is effeminate (he is not); rather, the charisms that define his leadership tend to mirror traditional feminine characteristics.

See Map of Philadelphia in Chapter 1

Richard had accused Steven of being in the ‘sin of Saul,’ which is a reference to arrogance. Steven thinks that Richard’s reaction possibly had something to do with Steven’s relationship with Richard’s wife, who insisted that one of her daughter’s housemates be kicked out of the community. Steven refused to kick the woman out (hence, the accusation of arrogance), thereby creating tension between the two, ultimately erupting into this dramatic episode of Philadelphian history.

Richard and his family still reside in the house they bought when they moved to Emeryville. Thus, Steven and Paul often see Richard on the street, which, Paul admits, creates awkward moments.

These questions were adapted from Zablocki (1980).

Anointing is religious ritual in which an individual with ecclesiastical power prays out loud for another individual before he or she enters into an official ecclesiastical position. Sometimes this ceremony involves the pouring of oil over the anointee’s head, as is instructed in St. Paul’s Epistles. However, Joseph’s anointing did not involve the use of oil.

This is the case with the community’s policy on dating relationships. Put into effect in 2011, the dating policy states that marriage is the end goal of all dating relationships and that two individuals of the opposite sex must get permission from their housemates as well as Steven and Paul prior to entering into a relationship.
An example of a charismatic leader with absolute charismatic intensity was Jim Jones, who led members of the People’s Temple, a church he started in California, to Guyana to establish a utopian society called Jonestown. Followers’ family members became concerned and asked the government to investigate. A delegation was organized to visit Jonestown; however, prior to their return home, Jones assassinated five of the team members, including Congressman Leo Ryan, and then led a mass suicide of 909 followers.

One integral member who left during the Year of Discernment was Evan, the former pastor of the community noted in the dissertation’s introduction. Evan and his family reside at The Commons, which they also own. Thus, although Evan still daily interacts with Bereans, he no longer participates in community events. However, most recently Evan has decided to stop the communal living arrangement at The Commons and asked all Bereans living in the house to leave by the end of June 2013. This has created an awkward tension between Bereans and Evan’s family.

They also developed a Board of Trustees that would oversee community property, particularly the physical care of St. Seton. The Board of Trustees is subservient to the eldership, but, given their different concentrations, generally operates independently.

The next most identified members were Ethan and Beth, a married couple who left the community several months prior to the start of the interviews. They were identified 17 and 16 times respectively.

The exact frequency that Nicholas was identified per question is as follows: Question #1 – 45 percent; Question #2 – 28 percent; Question #3 – 10 percent; Question #4 – 10 percent; Question #5 – 7 percent. In contrast, the frequency of Steven’s identification per question is: Question #1 – 17 percent; Question #2 – 33 percent; Question #3 – 28 percent; Question #4 – 3 percent; Question #5 – 19 percent. Likewise, the frequency of Paul’s identification per question is: Question #1 – 14 percent; Question #2 – 41 percent; Question #3 – 14 percent; Question #4 – 16 percent, Question #5 – 16 percent. In comparison with the leaders of Philadelphia, Nicholas is mainly viewed by Bereans as an idea generator.

I witnessed only one instance of prophetic charism during my fieldwork in Berea. An older member prophesized over Nicholas during his commissioning service, however he forgot a section of the prophecy and told Nicholas that, upon remembering, he would share the rest of it at a later date.

Berea uses a liturgical worship format modeled after the Book of Common Prayer, an Anglican publication. In this case, a “reflection” is synonymous with a “sermon,” the term used in most Protestant worship services.

Pentecost Sunday is celebrated, typically in the first week of June, as a commemoration of Acts of the Apostles 2, in which is the recorded the dissension of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus’s followers after Jesus’s resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Brother Lawrence wrote a book entitled, The Practice of the Presence of God ([1958] 2013), in which he encouraged followers to show God’s love through all tasks, no matter how mundane.

Nicholas was given a couple of minutes to explain the proposal. However, for the most part, no one gave it much weight in light of the two other proposed solutions.

One could argue that a special messenger or priest could, through charism, speak on behalf of an inanimate object ascribed with charismatic powers. However, such charismatic leadership would be subjective, based on the whims and desires of the messenger or priest. In this sense, an inanimate object could arguably provide subjective, but not objective, charismatic leadership or authority.

One could argue that, given their many structural iterations, stability is rarely present in Berea. Although I acknowledge that Berea has gone through many changes, St. Seton is the one convention that has remained constant. In other words, while many other communities dissolve after just one structural crisis, St. Seton provides a totem around which Bereans rally; thus allowing the community to survive multiple restructurings.

On one occasion I immediately went home after service to change my tee-shirt because it was drenched with my sweat.
Given the charismatic influence of St. Seton, I am somewhat tempted to say that Berea has high charismatic potential per Bradley’s (1987) typology. However, because Bradley’s typology is based on human expressions of charisma, I am not comfortable making this designation. Consequently, I suggest that inanimate objects with charismatic qualities are special cases that exist outside of charismatic forms used in this chapter.

Chapter 6: The Antiphony and the Contemplative: Culture and Identity in Philadelphia and Berea

1 A djembe is a knee high African drum played with the palms of a drummer’s hand.

2 This song, which is entitled, “We Bow Down Before You” in the Berean Liturgical Guide, seems to be an adaptation of Brother Moon, a song written by the band Gungor (2011).

3 A praise band, which is made up of various instruments (e.g., guitar, drum set, piano, etc.) leads the congregation in sing and/or plays songs during a worship service.

4 Although I was unable to determine where Harp and Bowl worship originated, it is the dominant form of worship at the International House of Prayer (Kansas City), where it possibly received its name. Philadelphians have visited the International House of Prayer (Kansas City) on several occasions.

5 The liturgy is an outline of a worship service that communicates to the congregation when they are to sing, pray, listen to a sermon, participate in communion, as well as when the worship service starts and ends.

6 Approximately two weeks later the service was moved to the St. Seton sanctuary.

7 Liturgical formats incorporate different types of ritualistic elements. The Call to Worship, which is an element that marks the beginning of a liturgical service, is sometimes conducted in a call-and-response format. A leader reads a phrase while the congregation, or everyone present, responds with another phrase. As illustrated in this case (Appendix A: Picture 6.1), liturgies are often printed in a way that clearly delineates the phrases that the leader (noted as “One” in Picture 6.1) and everyone present (noted as “All” in Picture 6.1) are to read.

8 The Miserere is a choral call-and-response exercise that has its origin in the medieval Catholic church.

9 In some ways the Berean Miserere was similar to the Philadelphian Harp and Bowl worship. The difference was that the prayers in the Miserere were offered one at a time, instead of simultaneously during Harp and Bowl worship. Also, the Miserere prayers tended to be more specific in their supplications than the Harp and Bowl prayers.

10 In his study of Australian Aborigine religious practices, Durkheim ([1912] 2001) describes collective effervescence:

   The very fact of assembling is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are assembled, their proximity generates a kind of electricity that quickly transports them to an extra-ordinary degree of exaltation. Every emotion expressed is retained without resistance in all those minds so open to external impressions, each one echoing the others. The initial impulse thus becomes amplified as it reverberates, like an avalanche gathering force as it goes (P. 162-163).

11 Of course, as detailed in Chapter Five, some community members complained about children’s interruptions. The community responded by adding elements to the liturgy specifically for children and encouraged parents to maintain greater discipline. However, even despite their interruptions, children continued to participate in the worship services.

12 Nicholas’s holding of his daughter during the reflection annoyed some Bereans; thus it constituted one of the reasons why the community sought to develop a consensus concerning children in worship (See Chapter Five).

13 This shows the utility of living in close proximity to your place of worship. You can literally be anywhere in Berea, and within 5 minutes, access St. Seton.
Packard (2012) notes the devaluing of professional run worship services in emerging churches, a type of church closely related to Berea. He labels such actions, DIO, as in “do it ourselves,” a play on the phrase, “DIY – do it yourself,” used to promote unprofessional home repair, crafts, music, artisanal products, etc.

I once told Josiah that I could play guitar and bass (both upright and electric). He tried to recruit me to play with the praise band, but I declined the offer so I could spend more time sitting with the congregation.

Ethan and his family left the community halfway through my field research to start an organic farm that specializes in producing Eucharist bread and wine. They left a crate of wine made in their backyard as a gift to the community.

Although she remarked that the broken pieces of pottery would be used in a community art project, by the time I finished my fieldwork no project had materialized.

Principles #7 and #12 in the 12 Marks of New Monasticism (Rutba House 2005).

Rebekah’s reference to “classical” should not be confused with the classical music genre; rather her reference is in regards to contemporary Christian music, the type of music found in many evangelical churches. She considers contemporary Christian music as “classic” because of its ubiquitness.

Grape juice is sometimes used in place of wine for religious organizations that prohibit alcohol consumption. Since alcohol consumption was not prohibited by the community, the use of grape juice could have been due to the number of members who are under 21 years of age. However, I’m not sure why grape juice was used in place of wine.

Although I attended several Philadelphian communion services, only once did Steven provide direction as to whom and who could not partake in the sacrament. Citing the First Epistle to the Church in Corinth, Steven told the congregation that those who were repentant in their sin, held no grievance against other believers, and were followers of Jesus could take communion. He then added that those “who were hanging out with us tonight” were not to take communion. I decided to follow this order since I was not sure if Steven considered me to be part of that group.

The lack of ceremony surrounding religious rituals was also present in Philadelphian baptisms. Symbolically marking the point of conversion, baptism involves an individual who is either sprinkled, or in the case of Philadelphia, submerged into a pool of water. When an individual wanted to be baptized, Paul and Steven would fill a horse trough with water and, without much formality, would baptize the individual. This is often referred to “bathtizing” by my consultants, as opposed to baptizing, because the ritual occurred in an object that looks like a bathtub.

This is a reference to The First Epistle of Peter 2:5-9.

Nicholas is referring to The Epistle to the Church in Corinth.

Prior to the Year of Discernment, decisions were made by the community pastor and Pastoral council, rarely involving the entire community. See Chapter 4 for a brief history of Berea.

Developed by Pediatrician William Sears, Attachment Parenting is a philosophy of childrearing that emphasizes the emotional bonds between parent and child. Parenting activities such as breast-feeding beyond infancy and shared parent-child sleeping arrangements are encouraged by proponents of this philosophy.

To my knowledge the Banana Tree has yet to produce a crop.

A reference to the Gospel according to John, where Jesus Christ claims that people who do not reflect the virtues of the spiritual life (e.g. “fruit), will be “burned,” typically understood as condemnation to Hell, upon God’s judgment.

This is a reference to several Bible passages in which Jesus refers to a place, either physical or spiritual, where he is the king and the law of God rules. Although there are many theological understandings of the Kingdom of God, Philadelphians espouse a pre-millennial eschatology (the religious study of how humanity ends), which claims that Jesus Christ will return and establish a physical kingdom on earth.

See Chapter One to understand the relationship between Philadelphia and the International House of Prayer.
Picture a combination of Sir Richard Attenborough and Sir Alec Guinness. Eschatology is the religious study of how humanity ends. In accordance with The Second Epistle of John, Steven labeled these three doctrines as “false teachings” promoted by “false teachers.” Steven did not cite specific denominations.

In this chapter of the Gospel According to St. Matthew, Jesus condemns the behavior of the Jewish Pharisees stating seven “Woes” against them. I know of only one instance where, after this teaching, a Philadelphian confronted a Christian-in-error. In that case the member challenged his collegiate mentor, who worked for an evangelical parachurch organization, because the mentor did not value the gifts of the Spirit, such as glossolalia and prophecy, as much as this Philadelphian.

Both Calvinism and Arminianism are theological positions on the sovereignty of God and the freewill of humankind that are generally perceived to contradict one another. In brief, Calvinism claims that God is sovereign and will choose an elect group of people to be his followers. Alternatively, Arminianism claims that God has given humankind freewill, consequently allowing individuals to decide whether or not they will follow God. Reformed churches, such as Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed traditions, prescribe to Calvinism; whereas Holiness traditions, such as Methodism and Pentecostalism, prescribe to Arminianism.

Steven did not discuss what he meant by “churches influenced by modern psychology;” however I believe he is referencing the emergence of, what Smith and Denton (2005) call, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a set of beliefs claiming that the central tenet of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself.

The eighth proposition is a comment on modernity rather than religious organizations; therefore, I will leave it out of this analysis. However, for those interested the eighth proposition states: Modernity can actually increase religion’s appeal, by creating social conditions which intensify the kinds of felt needs and desires that religion is especially well-positioned to satisfy (Smith et al. 1998: 115).

During the Christian season of Lent, religious leaders of West Sharpsburg gathered weekly for lunch at various churches.

Chapter 7: The Stricter the Stronger: Strictness and Commitment in Philadelphia and Berea

1 See Chapter 3.

2 Thomas and Olson (2010) validate Kelley’s (1972) work by demonstrating that, albeit through weak measures, congregational strictness positively relates to growth. In conclusion, and perhaps recalling the succinctness of Kelley (1972), Thomas and Olson (2010) state that “strictness matters” (p. 635).

3 I asked Steven if there was a specific incident that spurred him to give the message. He told me there was not a specific incident, but offered his message because he intuited that “grumbling” was occurring amongst the membership. When I asked what the grumbling was over, he noted that it had to do with relationships between housemates more than anything.

4 Steven’s statement contradicts his teaching on False Religions and Christianities presented in Chapter 6. However, the point of the teaching remains the same: there are negative reference groups (e.g., outgroups) by which we judge our own behavior and build our identity.

5 I did witness one Philadelphian report that he felt disconnected from the theological and behavioral expectations of the community. In a small group conversation, he remarked that found it hard to connect with loud, vocal charismatic forms of prayer, instead finding solace in contemplative prayers during his walk to work. He also confided in me that he probably had a contradictory view of the 2012 presidential candidates than everyone else in the community and would probably vote opposite than most members (e.g.,, he would vote for President Barack Obama, while other members would vote for Governor Mitt Romney).
A membership covenant is a set of agreements concerning behavioral guidelines that individuals promise to adhere to upon joining an organization, particularly religious organizations.

In this context, “restored” means that she no longer is being disciplined by the elders. Miriam and her male counterpart can communicate in private settings.

In Chapter 2 I argue that Philadelphia and Berea are not cults; however, because they display atypical behaviors often associated with Christian religious organizations (e.g., living communally), both communities could be considered sects according to Stark and Bainbridge’s (1985) sect theory.

See Chapter 5, endnote 18 for a quick description of the Philadelphian dating policy. When I completed my field work there was only one dating relationship in the community. Philadelphians are not allowed to date outside of the community, nor individuals of the same sex.

In this sense, sacrifice is operationalized as an opportunity cost in which members “trade-off” desire, time, energy and money for their commitment to the community. These trade-offs are considered investments. For example, if I was starting my own company, I would calculate time and energy, along with finances, in my initial investment.

Ultimately, Miriam’s investments were returned to her by the perceived spiritual growth begotten from the discipline.

Kanter (1968) defines commitment as the process through which an individual attaches themself to socially organized patterns of behavior in order to fully their needs and satisfy their interests.

The work crew uniform was not primarily used as a commitment mechanism; rather they were designed to communicate to neighbors the professionalism of Philadelphian community workers.

See Chapter 6 for more detail.

See Chapter 6 for more detail.

See Chapter 2 for more detail.

See Chapter 2 for more detail.

See Chapter 6 for more detail.

The laying of hands on an individual’s heads and shoulders is taken from various accounts from the Bible, where Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles laid hands on those who were sick or disabled, consequently healing their infirmities. This is practiced in many churches of various theological traditions.

This is not to say that Philadelphians do not leave the community. They do. In fact, James only lasted three months as a member before he left, came back, left again, came back, and then finally left for good. I was never able to fully determine why James left, although one Philadelphian told me that it might have had to do with surrendering his wealth to the community. As opposed to Berea, Philadelphians tended to leave hastily and usually in contention with the elders.

This exception insures that an individual will not join the community to have their debt paid off and then leave. Out of the approximately fifty Philadelphians, only two sets of married couples were not part of the common purse.

Based on observation I believe Philadelphians choice of occupation reflected three things: 1) state of the economy, 2) positions that offered health insurance, and 3) some Philadelphians lacked a desire for high incomes jobs because achieving such positions would have no effect on their discretionary income.

Jennifer and Amber told Rebekah to fast from romantic thoughts and engage in Bible study on the subject.

Chapter 8: The Parish Consciousness: The Religio-Cultural Ecology of Philadelphia and Berea

The exact Census (2010) numbers have been slightly changed to protect the anonymity of the neighborhoods. The numbers and percentages are proportionally accurate.

The state median income was taken from the United States Census (2010); however, I did not state the actual number in order to protect the anonymity of the state in which Emeryville and West Sharpsburg are located.
In Chapter Two and Three I share results from the National Survey of Contemporary Christian Intentional Communities, which show that for every one CIC that locates in a suburb or rural area, two choose to locate in cities.

A religious ecology is a set of theories that describes the relationship between religious organizations and their local environment.

Fischer developed the subcultural theory of urbanism in reaction to the Wirthian notion that urbanism begets deviant behavior and consequently social disorganization (Fischer 1981, Wirth 1938). According to Fischer (1975, 1995), population concentration generates a variety of subcultures. Urban subcultures tend to exhibit higher degrees of social control and solidarity, which Fischer (1975) labeled “intensity”, as they attempt to reach a critical mass and negotiate group boundaries with other subcultures. However, interaction with other subcultures also promotes the diffusion of behaviors between groups. Consequently, when small subcultures influence larger subcultures unconventionality (a term used in place of “deviance”) increases. Hence, Fischer (1995) concludes that “urbanism is correlated with unconventionality, in part because it stimulates development of subcultures” (p. 546).

Cited in Chapter One, this is the band that played at the Philadelphian Fifth Anniversary Celebration.

These data were collected through the county Auditor’s website of the county in which Emeryville and West Sharpsburg are located. I compared assessed home values from 2008 and 2011, the only years available. Assessed home values are open to the public on the Auditor’s website. Nevertheless, the values of Philadelphian residences have increased since 2008.

Related to affordable housing, a secondary factor was affordable non-residential buildings, such as St. Seton, which the communities used as meeting spaces.

Thus, as revealed in the results of the National Survey of Contemporary Christian Intentional Communities (Chapter Three), freewill individualistic communities, like Philadelphia, choose to locate in urban, suburban, and rural areas generally equally.

As reported in Chapter Three, two-thirds of expressive communities chose to reside in urban areas.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: Why Christian Intentional Communities Are Growing

See Chapter 3 for an explanation of New Monasticism.

This conference was first referenced in Chapter One.

See Becker (1999) for a categorization of religious organizations’ inter-organizational cultures. She identifies four different inter-organizational cultures: The House of Worship Model, the Family Model, the Community Model, and the Leader Model. Philadelphia reflects the House of Worship and Family Models; whereas, Berea reflects the Community and Family Models.

As noted in the opening vignette, this is true for the Episcopal Church; however, although unconfirmed, I have also been told that the United Methodist Church is experimenting with CICs. Of course, as evidenced by Berea and Philadelphia respectively, the Vineyard Association (USA) and the International House of Prayer (Kansas City) also promote the development of CICs.