

Introduction

A VISIT TO CAMPHILL

Each year I bring students from Harvard University to a Camphill community—usually, either Camphill Village USA in Copake, New York, or Heartbeet Lifesharing in Vermont. At Camphill my students encounter a social world that is different from their own. We travel from the busy streets of Cambridge to dirt roads and mountain valleys, where our passage may be blocked by a herd of cows making their leisurely way to the milking barn. Camphill houses have a unique architectural style, with few right angles and lots of whimsical art. Each house is home to as many as a dozen people—families with children, young volunteers, elders—and the houses are interspersed with craft workshops, chapels, performance halls, and gardens. People walk easily from home to work to church to artistic performances that sometimes feature world-class performers. Meals open with sung prayers that are familiar to the Camphillers and unknown to my students. The students must learn the subtle customs of Camphill—a napkin in a ring, for example, signals the usual place of one of the house’s residents, while a napkin folded flat signals a space available for a guest. They learn, sometimes with difficulty, that they should *not* leap up after a meal to help wash the dishes. Every task is already assigned to someone who performs it with pleasure and pride, and the visitor’s role is to wait for someone to offer tea and conversation. My students learn that Camphill is a community suffused with intentionality: its daily rhythms keep everyone in physical and emotional balance; its gardens and farms keep humans, animals, and plants in creative contact; its economy and decision-making structures are designed to honor the integrity of every person.

My students also learn that Camphill places are shaped by a distinctive spirituality. The clues are subtle and ubiquitous. Interior walls in Camphill buildings are often painted using the “lazure” technique, in which multiple colors are applied in very thin layers to create rhythmical variations of hues. Reproductions of classical

Christian art abound, with Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* a favorite. Even more common are "wet on wet" watercolor paintings, many depicting the "elemental beings" associated with earth, water, air, and fire. Many communities include a chapel designed for services of a tiny denomination called the Christian Community; others have "halls" suitable for both religious services and artistic performances. Visiting such a hall, we may see Camphillers practicing "eurythmy," a form of spiritual movement that is used therapeutically and artistically. Outdoors, my students visit "healing herb" gardens full of medicinal plants, and observe cows whose horns have not been removed—both out of respect for the cows' bodily integrity and because some Camphillers believe that cowhorns help channel cosmic forces to earth. If we visit in the summer or fall, we may hear about a St. John's or Michaelmas festival, seasonal celebrations that Camphillers observe as devotedly as Christmas and Easter. We may also hear about plays or conferences devoted to such personalities as Faust, Parsifal, or Kaspar Hauser—the last a nineteenth-century German youth who claimed to have been raised entirely in a dark cell. All of these distinctive features of Camphill life reflect the fact that the movement's founders were inspired by the "anthroposophical" spirituality developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925). Yet our tour guide may not be able to offer a full explanation of any of them, because committed students of anthroposophy represent only a minority of Camphillers today.

What my students do *not* meet at Camphill are starry-eyed utopians certain that they've found the true path for all humanity. Nor do they encounter passive inmates whose individuality has been stolen by an institution. Instead, they meet people who are, simply, at home. Camphillers, many of whom have been identified as developmentally or intellectually disabled by a society prone to ranking people by ability, are experts in the arts of homemaking and hospitality. They have created communities that are beautiful, purposeful, and rhythmical because they have discovered that these qualities help people of all abilities feel at home. Rather than providing special accommodations to allow persons with disabilities to participate in a society that was not designed for them, Camphill builds an entire lifestyle around their distinctive gifts and needs, and then invites the so-called nondisabled to accommodate themselves to it.¹ Those who have been labeled as disabled are usually the most seasoned Camphillers, and they take the lead in welcoming visitors to their space. They take pride in honoring the breakfast preferences of overnight guests, show off their vegetable and herb gardens, and offer tours of the workshops where they bind books, pour candles, weave carpets, and make beautiful jewelry and stained glass. They are quick to ask questions. "Where are you from?" "Do you go to school?" "What do you study?" "Do you know my sister Siobhan? She lives in Cambridge too!"

Secure in their sense of home, many Camphillers are proud of the progress they have made toward a truly nondisabling society. At the same time, some inform visitors that Camphill falls short of its ideals or has declined from a more idealistic past. Some think that Camphill's greatest weakness is its idealistic separation from

the larger society; others worry that it has made too many compromises with social care bureaucracies. Some believe that Camphill's loosening relationship with anthroposophy will deprive it of the fruits of spiritual striving; others believe that full inclusion requires even less spiritual specificity. All know that their movement is changing rapidly as it approaches its hundredth anniversary.

Most Camphillers agree that their movement aspires to be a "seed of social renewal." This means helping all people, regardless of ability, live in ways that are less disabling for others. It also means helping everyone work for the benefit of others, while trusting that others will in turn work for their benefit. And it means fostering harmony between human communities and more-than-human ecosystems. To achieve these goals, a Camphill community must be neither an institution nor a utopia. Institutions perpetuate patterns of disablement by locking people into fixed roles, most notably the roles of "caregiver" and "care recipient." Utopias offer abstract blueprints for social renewal that are disconnected from individuals' diverse identities and aspirations—as, for example, friends or lovers or parents or artists or farmers. For persons who have been excluded from the ordinary goods of society, utopia's promise to replace those goods with something wholly new is both risky and unappealing. People who have been marked as disabled need communities that will help them gain access to the goods of the mainstream society, and simultaneously empower them to resist those aspects of mainstream society that contribute to disablement. Camphill is well positioned to avoid the dangers of both institution and utopia because it has been evolving in complex relationship with its neighbors for four generations.

It has not been evolving alone. Other communal movements with roots in the early twentieth century, such as Israel's kibbutzim and the Catholic Worker movement, face the same developmental challenges as Camphill. Earlier movements have faced these challenges in the past. Some navigate between the abstract illusions of utopia and the concrete constraints of institutionalization by *evolving beyond community*, lowering the boundaries between themselves and their neighbors. Others evolve in *creative symbiosis* with their neighbors, building bridges that inspire those neighbors to invest in the preservation of communal practices. Whichever path Camphill chooses, its future will shed new light on the capacity of spiritually inspired communities to foster a society that is truly nondisabling.

CAMPHILL WORLDWIDE

If my class had the means to visit the other 120 places that constitute the worldwide Camphill Movement, they would meet other people, equally at home in places with much in common and many differences. If we were to visit the Lehenhof in Germany, we could travel by city bus to a village square with its own lively bus stop. Regular buses keep Lehenhof's 270 residents connected to the city of Überlingen, which lies far below Lehenhof on the shores of Lake Constance. We would be greeted by the smell of fresh bread from a bakery that is so productive

that many neighbors associate the name “Lehenhof” with bread rather than with disability or intentional community. The bus would take us to gardens and craft workshops much like those at Copake and Heartbeet, to a dairy barn with a milking herd of fifty cows, and to a factory where workers package and label ecological cleaning products for a company called Sonett. We’d continue to the Lehenhof grocery store, which is not located within the bounds of the community at all but in the neighboring town. It provides organic vegetables and socially responsible products to hundreds of townspeople.

The boundary between intentional community and ordinary town is even blurrier in Callan, Ireland, where the Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (KCAT) is located in a bustling town center. KCAT is not a residential community but an art center that offers studio spaces, a theater troupe, and classes to persons with disabilities “and other disadvantages.” Founded in 1999 with support from the European Union, KCAT maintains a high profile in its local community by sponsoring arts festivals for its neighbors.

Camphill Soltane is equally prominent in the town of Kimberton, Pennsylvania, where it maintains an art center similar to KCAT, a café, a restaurant, a fabric arts store, a nursery for organic plants and garden products, and several residential households. The focus on socially responsible enterprises represents a significant transformation of Soltane’s original identity. The community also has a bucolic residential campus, twelve miles from town, with abundant gardens and craft workshops. Soltane deliberately shifted its center of gravity away from that location because its residents wanted to participate more fully in society.

Camphill’s work in India, which began in the 1990s, reflects a similar yearning for social connection. Sadhana Village, near Mumbai, relies mostly on local workers rather than the international volunteers who are prominent at other Camphills. Its work with people with learning difficulties is a springboard for a broader program of rural empowerment focusing on education, agriculture, and women’s rights. A residential community exists alongside a school for local children, as well as papermaking, candlemaking, and carpentry workshops. Starting with the families of people with disabilities, they have helped two hundred families construct toilets, and have helped build five irrigation projects and three water conservation projects.² Similarly, “Friends of Camphill India” in Bangalore is located on a Hindu ashram that also maintains a senior citizen home. The community incorporates yoga into its daily rhythm and celebrates festivals that blend Camphill’s European roots with local traditions. At the community’s fourteenth anniversary, for example, the Parzival play was presented as an example of the “inner jihad” or “inner Kurukshetra” of any person seeking transformation.³

All Camphills, whether immersed in or set apart from surrounding neighborhoods, strive to create supportive and cooperative homes for people of diverse abilities. All are changing rapidly, in tandem with vast changes in the ways Western societies treat persons identified as “disabled.” Camphill was born at the height of

“institutionalization,” when people with different ways of thinking and learning were segregated in large facilities, often without access to the larger society or their own families. In that context, Camphill was an experiment in radical inclusion, since its nondisabled “coworkers” ate the same meals, slept under the same roofs, and educated their children in the same schools as the young people they supported. Camphill’s success helped foster the “deinstitutionalization” movement of the 1970s and the rise of an activist disability rights movement. From that movement’s perspective, Camphills may look like “institutions” that must be shut down in order to integrate their residents into ordinary neighborhoods. Camphillers reply that what they offer is actually a model of “reverse integration.” Though this vision is clear, Camphillers have diverse ideas about how to embody it.

In its evolving relationship with society, Camphill is similar to other communal movements that are approaching their hundredth anniversary. A developmental trend away from communal isolation toward symbiotic interaction is not unique to communities that welcome people who have been marked as disabled. It is a common feature of the Israeli kibbutzim, the Catholic Worker movement in the United States, and other communal movements that were born during the global crisis of the 1930s. The kibbutz movement in particular has shed many of its original boundaries, in a process that some perceive as renewal and others as betrayal. Social engagement rather than isolation is also an aspiration of communal movements founded more recently, above all the rapidly growing cohousing and ecovillage movements. Collectively, the diverse experiences of intentional communities founded in the twentieth century empower us to think in new ways about the gifts that communities can offer humanity. Camphill is one chapter in a larger story.

This book, likewise, tells just one of many Camphill stories. I discovered Camphill in 1998, when I began teaching at a college that is fifty miles from Camphill Village Minnesota, with a bike trail covering most of the intervening distance. Because I was interested in intentional community, I spent roughly three months (in three successive summers) as a full-time resident of that community, and have since visited dozens of other Camphills in the United States, Canada, Scotland, Ireland, England, Norway, and Germany. I have also become part of the quirky and inspiring community of communal studies scholars, learning from them about diverse experiments in cooperative living both past and present. Camphill has not always been included in accounts of communal history, and I hope to rectify that omission. Neither Camphill’s roots in the anthroposophical spirituality of Rudolf Steiner nor its emphasis on disability contributed to my initial interest in the movement, yet I have come to see how essential both of these factors are to its communal vision. Most of what communal studies can learn from Camphill flows directly from the confluence of anthroposophy and disability. I hope that my Camphill story will be of interest and value to students of Rudolf Steiner and to persons who have experienced disablement, yet I also recognize that those people may see things in Camphill that I cannot.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF CAMPHILL

One hundred twenty Camphill communities are located in Europe, Africa, North America, and Asia. They are loosely organized in seven geographical regions: Scotland, England and Wales, Ireland, Central Europe, Northern Europe, North America, and Southern Africa. Each region has a distinctive set of structures for cooperation.

THE SCOTTISH REGION

Scotland: Camphill School Aberdeen (1940), Newton Dee (1945; became village in 1960), Ochil Tower School (1972), Milltown Community (1974), Blair Drummond (1976), Beannachar (1978), Corbenic (1978), Loch Arthur Community (1984), Simeon Care for the Elderly (1984), Tigh a'Chomainn (1987), Tiphereth (1993)

Cooperative Structures: Camphill Scotland is a membership body that serves the separately incorporated Camphill communities in Scotland.

THE ENGLISH AND WELSH REGION

England: Thornbury Sheiling School (1948), Ringwood Sheiling School (1954), Botton Village (1955), The Grange (1961), Delrow Community (1963), Stourbridge Houses (1968), Mount Community (1971), Croft Community (1974), Pennine Community (1977), Cherry Orchards (c. 1977), Camphill Milton Keynes (c. 1977), Oaklands Park (1978), William Morris House (1978), Devon Community (1979), Gannicox Community (1979), The Hatch (became independent from Thornbury in 1983), Sturts Community Trust (1983), Larchfield Community (1986), Thornage Hall (1989), Taurus Crafts (1995), Saint Albans Community (1997), Lantern Community (1997), Orchard Leigh (became independent from William Morris in 2013), Shared Lives Dudley (2018), Esk Valley Camphill Community (2018)

Wales: Coleg Elidyr (1973), Victoria House (1981), Glasallt Fawr

Cooperative Structures: Camphill Village Trust is a single charity that owns ten villages and town communities serving adults with special needs. Camphill England and Wales is a network that supports all Camphill places in England and Wales. The Association of Camphill Communities in the UK and Ireland facilitates mutual support among Camphill communities in the UK and Ireland. The Alliance for Camphill is an advocacy organization that promotes traditional lifesharing.

THE IRISH REGION

Republic of Ireland: Duffcarrig (1972), Ballytobin (1979, no longer affiliated), Dunshane (1985), Grangemockler (1986), Kyle (1987), The Bridge (1992), Bally Bay (1993), Thomastown (1993), Carrick-on-Suir (1996), Journeyman (1998), KCAT (1999), Callan (2001), Dingle (2004), Grangebeg (2006), Ballymoney (2008), Greenacres, Jerpoint

Northern Ireland: Glencraig (1953), Mourne Grange (1971), Clanabogan (1984), Hollywood (1996)

Cooperative Structures: Camphill Communities of Ireland is a single charity that owns all of the communities in the Republic of Ireland. Camphill Communities Trust (NI) is a support network that serves the separately incorporated Camphill communities in Northern Ireland.

THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN REGION

Germany: Brachenreuthe School Community (1958), Föhrenbühl School Community (1963), Lehenhof Village Community (1964), Bruckfelden School Community (1966), Karl König School Nürnberg (1973), Thomas House Berlin (1975), Hermannsberg Village Community (1976), Hausenhof Village Community (1987), Königsmühle Life Community (1990), Alt-Schönnow Life Community (1990), Sellen Village Community (1992), Markus Community Hauteroda (founded 1973, joined Camphill 1999)

Netherlands: Christophorus (1954), Het Maartenhuis (1980), De Noorderhoeve (1981), Orion Community (1994), Gezinskring 't Huys (2002)

Poland: Wójtówka (1996)

Switzerland: Fondation Perceval (1965), Stiftung Humanus-Haus (1973)

Austria: Liebenfels (1976)

France: Le Beal (1977)

Czech Republic: Camphill České Kopisty (1998)

Hungary: Camphill Magyarországi Velem (2007; operations currently suspended)

THE NORTHERN EUROPEAN REGION

Finland: Sylvia-Koti (1956), Tapolan Kyläyhteisö (1974), Myllylähde (1989), Kaupunkikylä (2006)

Norway: Vidaråsen (1966), Hogganvik (1972), Solborg (1977), Jøssåsen (1978), Vällersund (1981), Rotvoll (1989)

Sweden: Staffansgården (1974), Häggatorp (2003)

Russia: Camphill Svetlana (1993), Tourmalin (2003), Camphill Chisty Klyuchi (2012)

Estonia: Pahkla Camphilli Küla (1992)

Latvia: Rozkalni (1999)

Cooperative Structures: Camphill Village Trust of Norway is a single charity that owns all of the communities in Norway.

THE NORTH AMERICAN REGION

United States: Camphill Special School (Beaver Run, 1961), Camphill Village Copake (1961), Camphill Village Kimberton Hills (1972), Triform Camphill Community (1977), Camphill Village Minnesota (1980), Camphill Soltane (1988), Camphill California (1998), Heartbeet Lifesharing (2006), Camphill Hudson (2007), Camphill Ghent (2012), Plowshare Farm (2015)

Canada: Camphill Communities Ontario (1986), Cascadia Society (1990), Glenora Farm (1993)

Cooperative Structures: Camphill Association of North America is a membership body for the separately incorporated communities in this region. Camphill Foundation is a fundraising body. Camphill Academy provides community-based college and graduate education for coworkers.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

South Africa: Hermanus Camphill School (1952), Camphill West Coast (1964, previously known as Alpha), Camphill Farm Community Hermanus (1978)

Botswana: Camphill Botswana (1974)

CAMPHILLS BEYOND THE REGIONS

India: Sadhana Village (1989), Friends of Camphill India (1995)

Vietnam: Peaceful Bamboo Village (2009)

Additional countries with communities that are contemplating membership in the Camphill movement: Columbia, Kenya, Lithuania, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand

GLOBAL COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES

An Asian Region is currently under development. The Karl König Institute maintains the Karl König Archive and the Camphill Archive (both in Aberdeen, Scotland) and publishes works by and related to Karl König. The Camphill Research Network maintains a repository of academic and community-based research related to Camphill.

CAMPHILL PAST AND FUTURE

More than 120 villages, schools, and other communities comprise the worldwide Camphill Movement, and collectively they are home to several thousand people.⁴ Its founders were inspired by Rudolf Steiner, who in turn was active in the Theosophical Society before creating his own movement known as anthroposophy. Anthroposophy is difficult to describe, in part because Steiner was both a dizzyingly complex spiritual teacher and the founder of multiple practical “initiatives.” Most Camphillers, and most participants in other anthroposophical initiatives today, do not personally subscribe to Steiner’s core spiritual teachings, and initiative participants collectively outnumber members of the Anthroposophical Society, most of whom are committed to Steiner’s spirituality. From an external perspective, the initiatives represent the more important dimension of Steiner’s legacy, yet they cannot be fully understood apart from the spirituality that informs them.

Steiner defined anthroposophy as “a path of knowledge aiming to guide the spiritual element in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.”⁵ From my own perspective, the leading feature of anthroposophy is its emphasis on balance: balance between the human and the cosmic, between spiritual traditions of East and West, between ancient wisdom and the scientific research methods of the modern West.⁶ In the “basic books” that are often recommended to newcomers to anthroposophy, Steiner identified the multiple spiritual bodies possessed by each human being, described the cosmic forces that have guided human evolution on multiple planets, offered an esoteric interpretation of Christianity, and suggested techniques for developing the supersensory powers needed for “spiritual research.”⁷ In his interactions with members of the Anthroposophical Society, he shared mantralike “verses” and helped them understand the karmic implications of past lives. Many scholars of religion regard Steiner’s teachings as a repackaging of Helena Blavatsky’s theosophy, with relatively more emphasis on her original Western esoteric sources and relatively less emphasis on the Eastern vocabulary she adopted in the latter part of her career.⁸ Anthroposophists typically downplay Blavatsky’s influence, pointing to Steiner’s own assertion that he did not teach anything that he had not validated through his own spiritual research.⁹ They also note that he admonished his students to take nothing on faith, but to embrace only what resonated with their own experience.

The best-known of Steiner’s practical initiatives is the Waldorf system of education, which seeks to nurture the spirit, soul, and body of each student through an experiential pedagogy that emphasizes hands-on learning, artistic creativity, and encounters with nature. A close second is biodynamic agriculture, which treats each farm as a living organism, uses homeopathic and alchemical practices to nurture the soil, and rejects chemical fertilizers and pesticides.¹⁰ Camphill is much smaller than those two movements, and represents less than half of anthroposophical work supporting persons with learning difficulties. It is distinctive, though, in its effort to combine features of multiple initiatives within a single social organism. Camphill schools follow the Waldorf curriculum, Camphill farms and gardens use biodynamic methods, and Camphill clinics practice anthroposophical medicine, which combines mainstream and homeopathic therapies with a strong emphasis on the healing bond between doctor and patient. Camphill chapels host the rituals of the Christian Community, a Steiner-inspired “movement for religious renewal” whose liturgies seek to reveal the inner meaning of Christian tradition. Camphill buildings follow Steiner’s architectural principles, mirroring organic forms through the avoidance of right angles. Camphills celebrate an annual cycle of festivals that reflect Steiner’s understanding of the connection between Christianity and the cycles of the natural world. Distinctively anthroposophical art forms are central to Camphill life. And Camphill communities strive to embody what Steiner called the “threefold social order,” in which spheres of economic, political, and cultural activity are autonomous but interrelated.

Camphill was born in Scotland between 1938 and 1940. Its founders were refugees from Nazi-occupied Vienna. Most were Jewish; all were spiritual students of Rudolf Steiner. Most were interested in Steiner's method of "curative education" for children with disabilities, though only one was formally trained as a teacher. Others had studied medicine, nursing, chemistry, dance, and art. By taking on the task of creating a residential community for children with special support needs, they drew on the resources not only of anthroposophy but also of the Moravian Christianity in which cofounder Tilla König had been raised. Moravians, whose own roots stretched from the work of the fifteenth-century Czech reformer Jan Hus to eighteenth-century German Pietism, maintained a central European network of residences for people who had been deemed disabled by the larger society. Tilla König was not the only early Camphiller to have experienced the Moravian model of disability-centered community.

Both the children and their refugee caregivers had, in a sense, been cast out from society, and this helped them form a strong bond. But separation from society was never the goal. Camphillers hoped, rather, to revive the European cosmopolitanism that had been destroyed by Hitler. And they were not without friends in the larger society. Wealthy families helped them obtain several estates, among them the Scottish property known as "Camphill" and the former summer home of a British family prominent in publishing and politics. The interplay between the Camphillers' ideals and the sympathy of their friends ensured the survival of the new movement. With each subsequent generation, that interplay became more complex. At the end of World War II, the founders welcomed a new wave of refugees into the movement, and paved the way for educational inclusion by creating a school to educate both children with special needs and the children of the caregivers. In 1955, with the founding of Botton Village, they created a new form of village life for adults with special needs. Amid the upheaval of the 1960s, they made room for baby boomer idealists, spiritual seekers, and hippies. They then followed the lead of adults with special needs who wanted to bring Camphill out of its rural isolation and into urban spaces. Today, Camphill is making a transition to a fourth generation, in which incomeshaaring communitarians, short-term volunteers, employed staff, nonresident participants in day programs, board members, parents, and neighbors are all creating community together.

It is a time of hope and trepidation. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Camphill has expanded to new countries on four continents and deepened its emphasis on urban living and community-based care for elders. Many Camphill places are environmental innovators, hosting natural wastewater treatment, biomass or biogas power systems, and solar arrays. Yet it is not uncommon to hear Camphillers complain that their movement is dying, and repeating the unsubstantiated story that founder Karl König had predicted the movement would die out in the twenty-first century.¹¹ At eighty years of age, it is perhaps natural that a community movement would be conscious of its own mortality.

When Camphillers predict their movement's demise, they are mostly expressing a fear that it is abandoning its distinctive cooperative features. Notable among these are two practices that I will refer to as "incomesharing" and "lifesharing." In traditional Camphills, people work without salaries and rely on the community for their economic needs, honoring a principle of economic cooperation that Rudolf Steiner called the "fundamental social law." Likewise, people of diverse abilities and ages occupy households in which meals, recreation, religious services, and seasonal festivals are all shared. Camphill founder Karl König was referring primarily to incomesharing and lifesharing when he declared that "the establishment of a true community" was one of the three "Camphill essentials," along with "regard for the spiritual nature" of persons with disabilities and commitment to "inner development" on the part of their companions. Many Camphillers still regard these as definitive marks of the community. "The idea is that we don't get paid for what we do, we get paid what we need to live," said Jonny Mallam-Clarke, a coworker I met at Camphill School Aberdeen. "That was important for the founders of the community. And I think it is still important for a lot of people now."¹²

König's declaration notwithstanding, incomesharing and lifesharing are by no means considered "essential" by every Camphill community today. More and more people participate in Camphill life as employees, day students, or sheltered workshop participants who live offsite. Though the total number of people involved in Camphill is still increasing, the number of long-term, nondisabled Camphillers who participate in both incomesharing and lifesharing is in decline. This is both a source of concern and an opportunity for Camphill to renew König's founding vision of "true community." For the "Camphill essentials," he acknowledged, were not fixed rules but "fruits and flowers" that would need to "unfold and grow" in order for Camphill to achieve its potential.¹³

A CAMPHILL TIMELINE

- 1861 Rudolf Steiner was born in Kraljevec, Croatia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire).
- 1886 Steiner began developing ideas about curative education while working as a tutor for Otto Specht, a boy suffering from hydrocephaly.
- 1902 Karl König was born in Vienna, Austria. Matilda (Tilla) Maasberg was born in Silesia, then part of Germany.
- 1912 Steiner established the Anthroposophical Society after a decade of activity in the German section of the Theosophical Society.
- 1920 Steiner offered his first lecture series for medical doctors.
- 1923 Steiner's associate Ita Wegman began working with children with intellectual disabilities.

- 1924 Anthroposophists in Jena, Germany, opened the Lauenstein, a home for children with special needs.
Rudolf Steiner delivered his lecture series on “Curative Education” at the Lauenstein.
- 1925 Rudolf Steiner died in Dornach, Switzerland.
- 1927 Ita Wegman offered a course on curative education at the newly-established Sonnenhof in Arlesheim, Switzerland. Both Karl König and Tilla Maasberg participated.
- 1929 Tilla Maasberg and Karl König were married while working at the Pilgramshain curative center in Silesia.
Hans Schauder, Lisl Schwalb (later Schauder), Rudi Lissau, Alex Baum, Sali Gerstler (later Barbara Lipsker), and Trude Blau (later Amann) participated in an anthroposophical youth group in Vienna.
- 1935 The General Anthroposophical Society expelled Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede from its executive council, and severed relations with its British and Dutch branches.
- 1936 Karl and Tilla König left Pilgramshain and settled in Vienna, where Karl organized a youth group that included Peter Roth, Alix Roth, Thomas Weihs, Carlo Pietzner, and Marie Korach. Anke Nederhoed (later Weihs) and Willi Amann met members of the group at this time.
- 1938 Austria was annexed to Nazi Germany, forcing the Königs and members of the youth groups into exile. They agreed to regroup in order to continue their shared work, and many arrived in Scotland by the end of the year.
- 1939 Camphill’s founders began their common work at Kirkton House in northern Scotland.
- 1940 The female members of the founding group moved from Kirkton House to the Camphill estate west of Aberdeen. At this time, the men were interned as foreign nationals on the Isle of Man or in Canada.
- 1945 Karl König articulated the founding ideals of Camphill and its inner community in the First Memorandum.
- 1948 Camphill established a school for children with and without disabilities, and expanded to include the Murtle and Newton Dee Estates.
Camphill began work at Thornbury House in Bristol, England, and at Ringwood in Hampshire, England.
- 1949 Camphill’s first Seminar in Curative Education began.
- 1953 Glencraig was established as the first Camphill center in Ireland.
- 1954 Christophorus was established as the first Camphill school in the Netherlands.

- 1955 Botton Village was established as the first village community for adults with special needs.
- 1957 Hermanus was established as the first Camphill school in South Africa. Karl König appointed Thomas Weihs as his successor at the original Camphill school and claimed a new role as chairman of the Camphill Movement.
- 1958 Brachenreuthe was established as Camphill's first school in Germany.
- 1961 Carlo and Ursel Pietzner arrived in the United States, where they transformed an earlier school into Camphill Special School in Beaver Run, Pennsylvania, and established Camphill Village USA in Copake, New York.
- 1964 Karl König relinquished his role as movement chairman and appointed six regional chairs.
- 1966 Karl König died at Brachenreuthe.
- 1968 Heathfield Cottage in England (later Stourbridge Houses) was established as Camphill's first town community.
- 1971 The Mount in Sussex, England, was established as Camphill's first training college.
- 1982 Ha Vinh Tho began work among children with special needs in Vietnam, after several years at Camphill Perceval in Switzerland.
- 1984 Simeon Care, near Aberdeen, was established as Camphill's first elder community.
- 1989 Sadhana Village began Camphill work in India with support of coworkers from Camphill Copake.
- 2008 The first graduate of Camphill Academy's baccalaureate program received his degree.
- 2009 Peaceful Bamboo Village formally opened as the first Camphill community in Vietnam.
- 2010 Camphill Vidaråsen renewed its commitment to lifesharing and incomes sharing after more than a decade of conflict.
- 2014 Conflict erupted at Botton Village when longtime coworkers rejected the Camphill Village Trust's policies limiting lifesharing and incomes sharing.
- 2017 Ireland's Health Service Executive took control of Camphill Ballytobin in response to allegations of abuse and conflict over lifesharing and incomes sharing.
- 2018 A mediation agreement resulted in the formal separation of Esk Valley Camphill Community from the Camphill Village Trust. Both entities continued to maintain households at Botton Village.

CAMPHILL AND THE SCHOLARS

By exploring the relationship between Camphill's past and its possible futures, I hope to hold up a mirror for participants in the Camphill Movement that will be useful to them. I also hope to inspire a long-overdue dialogue between the Camphill Movement and the disability rights movement, as well as between the academic fields of communal studies and disability studies. Yet I must be clear about the limits of my capacity to enact that dialogue within the pages of this book. I have participated in the community of communal studies scholars for two decades, but am new to disability studies. Likewise, I am neither a committed Camphiller nor a person with a disability. I have no standing to dictate the terms of dialogue between those two overlapping groups of people, but can only offer suggestions. Camphillers and disability rights activists who are intrigued by what I have to say should seek out additional dialogue partners to test the validity of my observations.

A deep dialogue between communal studies and disability studies has the potential to expand both fields' imagination about the future. Disability studies imagines something that has never quite existed: a world in which people with physical or mental impairments are not disabled by societal barriers and prejudices. Communal studies explores the long history of idealistic groups that have tried to imagine a new society into reality. Each episode in the history of communalism has the potential to shed light on the task of creating a nondisabling society. Yet disability studies also brings a keen awareness of the dehumanizing potential of social experiments that are set apart from the larger society. Again and again, disablement has been perpetrated by confining institutions that began as idealistic utopias. Communal studies scholars who refuse to face this can offer little to the dialogue.

A dialogue between the fields is overdue because Camphill began exploring and combating the social dimensions of disablement at least two decades before scholars who were also participants in the nascent disability rights movement articulated the "social model of disability" in the 1970s and 1980s. As early as 1956, Camphill founder Karl König identified the use of intelligence tests to segregate schoolchildren by ability as one of the three cardinal errors afflicting modern society, and proposed social reconstruction as a solution.¹⁴ Yet more than half a century later, Camphill's existence is seldom acknowledged by disability studies scholars, and Camphillers have only recently begun inviting those scholars to their own conferences and gatherings.

The lack of dialogue is not the fault of persons on either side of the divide. In part, it reflects the accidental fact that the two movements started at different times. Because the vocabulary of disability studies and disability rights was not available at Camphill's founding, Camphillers adopted different language to express similar ideas and did not consistently update their language. Their understanding of the

social dimension of disablement did not instantly come with a recognition, so important to disability rights activism, that persons with disabilities themselves must play the leading role in shaping a nondisabling society—though in practice such persons were in fact shaping Camphill life. There are also genuine differences of worldview between the movements. The dialogue I hope for will not be characterized by instantaneous consensus, but by deep questioning and perhaps some degree of mutual conversion.

Disability rights activism and disability studies scholarship, for example, were shaped by Marxist models of societal oppression and by the identity-based social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Many disability scholars understand disablement as broadly analogous to patriarchy, white supremacy, and heteronormativity, and more than a few would add that these evils are “endemic to all capitalist societies” and cannot be eliminated without the elimination of capitalism itself.¹⁵ Camphillers would not necessarily disagree. Yet Camphill’s underlying worldview is distinct from that of the New Left and is inimical to Marxism. The other two cardinal errors that König singled out were not racism and sexism, but Darwinian survival of the fittest and the belief that humans had invented God. He assumed that disablement was endemic to all *materialist* societies and that the antidote was a renewal of spirituality.

König also believed that the roots of disability were karmic as well as social, and herein lies a vexing challenge for my hoped-for dialogue. (It is so vexing, in fact, that many or most Camphillers today choose not to engage with this aspect of their own tradition.) Disability studies scholars typically contrast the social model of disability with two “individualist” models: a “medical model” that sees the root problem as individual disease and a “moral model” that traces disability either to individual sinfulness or to special spiritual gifts.¹⁶ At first glance, the use of karma to understand disability might seem to be an extreme case of the “moral model.” Disability studies scholars who are also scholars of religion have often faulted other disability studies scholars for perpetuating antireligious (and, especially, anti-Jewish) stereotypes when they describe the moral model, but few if any of these scholars would venture to defend a karmic approach to disability.¹⁷

Yet the anthroposophical approach to karma is neither individualistic nor inclined to render moral judgments. The minority of Camphillers who choose to engage this aspect of their heritage believe that they have been drawn to Camphill because they share a karmic heritage with other Camphillers. This shared heritage entails a shared task, which some might identify as undoing structures of disablement that they may have created in previous lives. The diverse embodiments of people who live at Camphill all contribute to their shared capacity to contribute to a cosmic destiny. This way of thinking about disability makes for an intriguing contrast with some theologies of disability proposed by mainstream Christians. Rather than calling all people to fulfill a lofty destiny, these theologians are more inclined to treat disability as a sign of the vulnerability that is intrinsic to

the human condition. Here, too, there is much room for dialogue, especially since most of these theologians are deeply concerned with the life of congregations—social structures that have multiple similarities to intentional communities.¹⁸

Even with these clarifications, I do not anticipate that many disability studies scholars will incorporate König's understanding of karma into their theoretical toolkit. Anyone contemplating dialogue with Camphill should know that Camphillers themselves do not agree on its usefulness. By contrast, virtually all Camphillers agree that intentional communities can play an important role in overcoming structures of disablement. This point may vex disability studies scholars, for many of the same reasons that utopian socialists have always vexed orthodox Marxists. If one aims to change society through political mobilization, an intentional community that is home to a few hundred can seem, at best, like a distraction that siphons off the energies of idealists who might otherwise be manning the barricades. At worst, intentional communities may appear little different from the isolating institutions that perpetrate the most dehumanizing sorts of disablement. To the extent that Camphillers fail to root out institutional vestiges from their communities or to support the political mobilization of persons with disabilities, they probably do not deserve to be in dialogue with disability studies. But many Camphillers today are doing both of those things with great energy. So long as disabling structures remain intact, Camphill's communal antidote deserves consideration.

Camphill's contribution has much to do with the fact that it has never understood itself as a utopia set apart from the larger society, but as a "seed of social renewal." It is at this point that the field of communal studies enters the dialogue. Much recent scholarship in that field has also highlighted the symbiotic relationship between intentional communities and the surrounding society. Since 1975, scholars have connected through the Communal Studies Association and the International Communal Studies Association. Many of these scholars are indebted to Don Pitzer, the founding director of the Center for Communal Studies at the University of Southern Indiana, for offering an interpretive approach that he calls "developmental communalism." This approach assumes that all communities grow and change over the course of their history. Drawing on decades of study of communal movements in the United States and around the world, Pitzer observed that movements "that do not adjust their strictly communal efforts or adopt new organizational forms more suitable to changing internal and external conditions and the needs of rising generations can arrest their own development," while those that create "more pliable social, economic and administrative forms usually see their causes not only survive but flourish."¹⁹ Pitzer's model built on the insights of other communal scholars such as Donald Janzen, who argued in the first issue of *Communal Societies* that communities should not be studied in isolation but with an eye to the "interface . . . between the communal society and the larger national society of which [it is] a part."²⁰

The insights of Pitzer and Janzen are especially relevant to communities that, like Camphill, actively seek to chart a middle path between utopia and institution. This group includes several movements that emerged from the traumas of the twentieth century and have endured longer than the classical utopias of Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Étienne Cabet, and rival the longevity of such religiously exclusive communities as Shakers, Harmonists, and Amana. What sets these communities apart from those predecessors is their refusal to draw a binary distinction between the “good” community and the “bad” society. To be sure, they criticize aspects of mainstream society and hope to create a different future. But they do not assume that the new society will emerge exclusively or even primarily from within the walls of their own communities. Instead, they join in broader currents of social renewal. The kibbutzim, for example, did not seek to displace the rest of Israeli society; they helped build a new nation and hoped to infuse that nation with cooperative and socialist values. Gandhian ashrams sought to free India from the political and cultural domination of Great Britain—and they inspired a cluster of urban ashrams in the United States designed to fight Jim Crow segregation. The Catholic Worker was part of a larger impulse to end war and foster a land-based, agrarian culture. Arthur Morgan, the intellectual ancestor of today’s Fellowship for Intentional Community (an umbrella organization connecting hundreds of communities in the United States) was responsible for both the enduring intentional community of Celo and the rural electrification projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Camphill’s founders similarly hoped that their cooperative venture would be one “seed of social renewal” alongside other efforts to restore the cosmopolitan culture of their childhood. They embraced the work of honoring the human dignity of persons with intellectual disabilities and, increasingly, of defending the dignity of the land on which they lived and worked. But at no point did they ask their neighbors to take sides for or against them. Indeed, as one Camphiller memorably put it, a Camphillian parliament could never be organized into two opposing sides: “It would be an octagon or something bananas with lots of different levels and you’d be able to move through it.”²¹

Camphill’s reluctance to take sides has been reinforced by the presence of persons with learning difficulties as a core constituency of every Camphill place. With a few exceptions, these Camphillers do not come to community because they have rejected mainstream society. Most want to participate in society as fully as possible! They want to live in homes shaped by the rhythms of family life; they want to do meaningful work that benefits the people around them; they want to receive support and help from people who are genuinely their friends; they want to pursue romantic and other relationships of their own choosing. Camphill promises to help them do all these things. To be sure, quite a few of the nondisabled Camphillers have strong ideas about which mainstream social practices (such as watching television) are inimical to human flourishing, and this can create tensions with disabled Camphillers who aren’t similarly convinced. Yet the simple fact

that different Camphillers have followed radically different paths to community life means that the movement is continually drawn into deeper interaction with its environment, and this effect has intensified as the larger society has become more welcoming of persons with disabilities.

Camphill's avoidance of a binary opposition between community and society is also shaped by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. This is so for two reasons. First, anthroposophy prizes balance. One of Steiner's favorite paintings was Raphael's fresco *School of Athens*, in which Plato gestures up to heaven while Aristotle points down at the earth. Rather than pitting spirit against matter, students of Steiner seek their spirituality in the way they set a table, weave a rug, or turn a pile of compost. Second, because communal living is not an intrinsic character of anthroposophy as such, Camphillers have always had close ties to other people who share their interest in the work of Rudolf Steiner but choose to live out that interest in different ways. Though in most respects Camphill is quite different from monastic life, it has this in common with monasticism: both are communal expressions of spiritual movements that are not uniformly communal. The support of spiritually sympathetic outsiders has been essential to the longevity of monasticism, and it plays a similar role in the life of twentieth-century movements including the kibbutzim, the ashrams, and the Catholic Worker, as well as more recent arrivals such as L'Arche, which is the other major network of intentional communities supporting people with intellectual disabilities.

Because Camphill and other twentieth-century communal movements are not opposed to society as such, they have created symbiotic connections throughout their histories. These connections are a major reason for the longevity of twentieth-century communities, since they are more likely to have neighbors who are invested in their longevity. All communal groups, to be sure, have sold products to and borrowed money from their neighbors, but the twentieth-century groups have been much more likely than their predecessors to derive a significant share of their income from outright gifts. Donations of cash, land, and buildings have saved many communal groups, Camphill included, from an early demise. The resulting longevity of twentieth-century communities has, in turn, increased their connectedness. Almost every communal movement, even those that start out quite hostile to their neighbors, develops more complex connections with the passage of time.

It is too soon to know if the symbiotically connected communities of the twentieth century will endure as long as the equally symbiotic traditions of Christian and Buddhist monasticism. But the time is ripe to start asking the kinds of questions that can only be asked of communities that have already weathered multiple generational transitions.

MANY PATHS TO THE FUTURE

Developmental communal scholarship provides the essential framework for understanding the diverse paths of enduring communities, though the case of

Camphill suggests some revisions of Pitzer's model. That model is especially relevant to movements, such as Mormonism, for which communalism was one phase within a longer history. In such cases, communal living provides a protective shell in the early history of a new religious or social movement, then is discarded when it becomes an obstacle to the movement's numerical growth. Such transitions can be deeply painful to movements, including Camphill, that regard communal living as an intrinsic value as well as a means to the realization of other values. Fortunately, a wide canvas of intentional communities suggests that multiple developmental paths are open to communal movements.

The most common path is that of the community that fails to foster sufficiently intense commitment to overcome economic challenges and personality clashes, and thus dissolves within a few years. The second most common path is taken by communities that achieve intense commitment through the charismatic leadership of their founders, but fail to sustain their cohesion after those founders' deaths. For communities that survive for three or more generations, three additional paths are possible.

The first is one by which the movement grows large enough to function as a self-enclosed society, with sufficient stability and internal diversity to allow its members to meet the full range of human needs without leaving the community. To my knowledge, the only communal movement to follow this path successfully is the Hutterites, who have endured for half a millennium and now have forty-five thousand members worldwide. This is not a viable path for Camphill, which has about a fifth as many participants spread across a much wider geography.

A second path might be called "evolving beyond community." In this path, a movement dissolves its specifically communal structures while continuing to pursue other defining ideals. Sometimes this process is gradual; more often, it includes one or more crises that force the abrupt termination of specific cooperative practices. (In the language of evolutionary biologists, communal evolution typically follows the pattern of "punctuated equilibrium," in which long periods of stability alternate with times of rapid change.)²² This is the path emphasized in Pitzer's scholarship, and it can be observed to some degree in most enduring communal movements.

A final path, hitherto little noticed by communal studies scholars, is what I will call "creative symbiosis." Movements that follow this path extend the benefits of communal living to their neighbors and others who live outside, to the extent that those people become committed to the preservation of communal practice. The support of outsiders makes it easier for the people who live in community to preserve their practices without sacrificing other life goals. This was the path taken, most notably, by Christian and Buddhist monastic communities. Monastics offered a variety of spiritual and educational services to their neighbors, and in return the neighbors endowed monasteries, invited monastics to create schools and hospitals, and encouraged their children to pursue monastic vocations. A similar path has been taken by the kibbutzim, which grew up symbiotically with the

state of Israel and within the socialist movement in that country, and are currently becoming more involved in providing education and housing to people who are not full kibbutz members.

It is far from certain which of these last two paths Camphill will take in the future. Camphill is “evolving beyond community” in the many places that have abandoned incomesharing and drastically reduced lifesharing. Some disability rights advocates, as well as policymakers influenced by the disability rights movement, insist that evolving beyond community is the only valid developmental path for Camphill, given the imperative of offering persons with disabilities full access to the larger society. In keeping with this perspective, some of the places that have evolved furthest from Camphill’s communal heritage vigorously promote “self-advocacy” for their disabled residents, who have more freedom than residents of traditional Camphills to incorporate television watching and other modern indulgences into their household rhythms. (Self-advocates are people with learning difficulties who speak up for their individual rights, and mobilize collectively for empowering policies.) Other Camphillers worry that if this trend continues, Camphill will lose its capacity to contribute to social renewal and become an uninteresting network of care homes and special education schools, as “institutional” as the asylums of the nineteenth century. These worries resonate with the concerns of the most radical disability studies scholars—especially those influenced by either Marxism or queer theory—who argue that policymakers’ desire for “inclusion” and “normalization” fails to consider the degree to which disablement is intrinsic to contemporary capitalist society.²³

At the same time, Camphill is deepening its symbiotic relationship with its neighbors by piloting environmental practices that then spread throughout society, by creating cafés, walking paths, grocery stores, and performance spaces that are open to the general public, by volunteering in the community, and by partnering with nearby social enterprises. In a few cases, Camphill neighbors as well as the family members of Camphill residents have mobilized politically to resist proposals to eliminate incomesharing and lifesharing. These activists hope that the twenty-first century will be a time of resurrection, when coworkers, villagers with disabilities, families, and neighbors unite to defend Camphill communalism against the excessively materialistic forces of bureaucracy and austerity. For these activists, the path between the Scylla of institutionalism and the Charybdis of utopia requires a deeper embrace of communal cooperation.

It may be that Camphill will evolve simultaneously in both directions, with some communities moving rapidly away from communalism while others find the partners they need to maintain their communal traditions. It may also be that the majority of Camphill places will somehow blend these developmental paths. The future is uncertain, which makes this an especially exciting moment to study Camphill.

Whatever path Camphill takes, it will do so as a significantly more complex social organism than it was in its first generation. Every enduring communal movement starts with a tight-knit group of founders who somehow manage to hang together *and* to open their circle progressively to others. With each subsequent generation, the internal complexity of the movement increases, as people with new backgrounds, values, and beliefs create new ways of connecting with the community. Thus, the coworkers and students who founded Camphill gradually made way for the people I will refer to as villagers, young coworkers, employees, day program participants, board members, parents, and neighbors. This increasing internal complexity, in turn, increases the points of contact with the larger society. The ecology of Camphill at its founding consisted primarily of the anthroposophical movement, the parents of children with disabilities in Scotland and England, and the crisis of World War II. Today, Camphill's ecology is also shaped by environmentalism, the culture of short-term volunteerism among people in their teens and twenties, the governments and professional associations that regulate social care, the politics of austerity, and disability rights activism.

The disability rights movement is an especially important environmental factor because it highlights a core existential question for intentional communities of all types: does the renewal of society ever require a group of people to remove themselves from mainstream social institutions? If so, when and under what conditions should they reintegrate themselves? And, if the individuals in the group differ in their identities, abilities, and access to societal resources, who gets to decide what degree of integration is appropriate? Currently, disability rights activists have engendered a consensus, shared by most policymakers, that "institutions" that segregate persons with disabilities from the larger society are inherently dehumanizing. The activists (but not the policymakers) also insist that "disability" inheres not in individuals but in the "disabling" practices that are perpetuated by society. Yet there is no shared vision of what a nondisabling society would look like. Current governmental policies assume that a nondisabling society would be almost exactly like the current society, except that persons with disabilities would receive whatever assistance they needed to live in the same neighborhoods and work at the same jobs as people not deemed disabled. Such policies constitute a profound betrayal of the activists who first called for their enactment.

Traditional Camphillers, by contrast, assume that a nondisabling society would separate work from income, so that every person would be assured that their basic needs are met and empowered to perform work that is genuinely useful to their neighbors. They assume that a nondisabling society would be more rhythmical than the contemporary mainstream. People would be anchored to the cycles of growth and decay through work with plants and animals, participation in daily rituals such as the lighting of a candle at each meal, and the celebration of seasonal festivals. Finally, Camphillers also assume that a nondisabling society needs

to do more than merely provide safe residences and meaningful work to people deemed disabled. It must also help people who have not been deemed disabled to encounter our own limitations and need for support, and thus learn to live in ways that are less disabling.

The difference in vision is so vast that many policymakers and activists perceive Camphill places as remnants of the discredited, institutional past. They are not wholly wrong to do so. In many ways Camphill has been too slow to absorb the best insights of the disability rights movement, and insufficiently creative in empowering persons deemed disabled to exercise democratic control of their residences and workplaces. But the perception of Camphill places as “disability-specific” communities that isolate people from the larger society misses the paradox at the heart of Camphill: though it may be “disability-specific” in relation to other intentional communities, it is just the opposite in relation to other models of social care.

Camphill’s special contribution to communalism stems from the fact that inclusion of people with disabilities counters utopian illusions. Because the Camphillers with special needs come seeking the ordinary goods of society—meaningful work, deep relationships, physical safety—they balance those communalists who are so deeply dissatisfied with ordinary society that they are willing to sacrifice those ordinary goods in order to achieve an alternative. Camphill’s contribution to disability rights, on the other hand, can be achieved only to the extent that it realizes its aspiration *not* to be a “disability-specific” community, but a place where all people contribute to a shared mission regardless of disability status. Disability rights activists have argued, quite rightly, that the logic of institutionalization and its dehumanizing effects are present whenever people with disabilities interact only or primarily with people whose role is to care for them. As one self-advocate put it, living in community means “integrat[ing] with people who do not have disabilities, and this does not mean staff.”²⁴ It does not matter whether the physical setting is large or small, and ultimately it does not matter whether the caregivers are paid or not. To the extent that one person is primarily a caregiver, the other person is reduced to a care-receiver rather than a complex human being. But not all nondisabled Camphillers are “primarily caregivers.” Some see themselves primarily as farmers, bakers, artists, or lovers of community. All of these roles are also open to Camphillers with disabilities. By enabling everyone to build relationships based on shared devotion to diverse tasks, and by equipping everyone to give and receive care in roughly equal measure, Camphill creates a nondisabling society in which the old labels melt away. To the extent that Camphill fails in this, fostering one-dimensional relationships of caregiving and carereceiving, it replicates institutional patterns and merits the criticisms it has sometimes received from activists.

Many Camphillers would say that anthroposophical spirituality is another safeguard against disability-specificity and institutionalization. The heart of anthroposophy, they would say, is its vision of human dignity. Rudolf Steiner

taught that each person is body, soul, and spirit. Each person has an individual soul, fully equal to all other souls, that holds spirit and body together. Each person has an essential connection to divine spirit that transcends the limitations of their present incarnation. Each person has chosen their current incarnation for the sake of important spiritual tasks. Rudolf Steiner applied this spiritual understanding to disability in part through his early experience working with Otto Specht, who had been deemed disabled because of his hydrocephaly and who was ultimately able to pursue a career as a medical doctor. Karl König cherished Steiner's view of the human as a confirmation of what he had learned through his medical training in embryology, and what he had experienced so powerfully when he first encountered children with special needs at an Advent celebration. Tilla König, for her part, experienced anthroposophy as the fulfillment of the long heritage of work with people with disabilities that characterized her childhood religion of Moravianism. Camphill's other founders, both those with and without disabilities, came to cherish anthroposophical spirituality because it created a space where they could meet one another simply on the basis of their shared humanity. Camphill's spirituality also provides a point of contact and fruitful difference with L'Arche. L'Arche has inspired much of the disability studies scholarship conducted by theologians, though it is scarcely better known than Camphill among other disability studies scholars. Like Camphill, L'Arche sees intentional community as a place where people can encounter one another's shared humanity, yet where Camphill accents our shared dignity, L'Arche stresses shared vulnerability and weakness. People in both movements would do well to explore this distinction.²⁵

Camphill's deep grounding in a spiritual tradition is a quality it shares with most other enduring communal movements. A shared spirituality can help a young community survive by giving it a strong center and a clear boundary. But in subsequent generations, a healthy community's spirituality must become a bridge rather than a boundary. This is what happened for Christian and Buddhist monasticism, and it happens when Camphill seeks to learn from the insights of anthroposophists beyond Camphill, even when those insights suggest the need to disrupt some of the old, Camphill-specific forms. It also happens when Camphill's emphasis on spirituality provides an anchoring connection for people whose personal spiritual path is something other than anthroposophy. Like everything else in Camphill, this is a work in progress.

Whatever the future may hold, Camphill's endurance is cause for both admiration and careful study. Why has Camphill managed to survive thus far? One of the most caustic critics of nineteenth-century utopianism provides a helpful clue. After attending a gathering of Fourierists with several friends, Ralph Waldo Emerson mused "that Fourier had skipped no fact but one, namely life. . . . The faculty of life spawns and scorns system and system-makers . . . [and] makes or supplants a thousand phalanxes and New-Harmonies with each pulsation."²⁶ Camphill, I contend, has survived because it has not skipped the fact of life. Born

amid the hard facts of war, fascism, and prejudice against persons with disabilities, it has grappled with new facts in each generation. Some of the facts that confront it today are challenging indeed, and its future is not foreordained. But in all the messy complexity of its life today, Camphill has much to teach us about the future of community.