

## Camphill Generations

All Camphillers would agree that theirs is a multiple-generation movement. But there is no shared understanding of where one Camphill generation ends and the next begins. The concept of a “generation” is inherently fuzzy. Since some people have children at age fifteen and others at age forty-five, three generations might pass in one family during another family’s single generation. Some groups of people, born at roughly the same time, attain a powerful sense of shared identity—most notably the baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and the millennials (born between 1980 and 1996). There are also events in Camphill’s history that bonded specific generational cohorts together.

At least four generations have left powerful imprints on Camphill. I use the term *founding generation* to include the circle of friends who fled from Vienna to Scotland in 1938 and undertook the shared project of creating a school for children with special needs. These founders were born between 1902 and 1916; all but the Königs were tightly grouped between 1910 and 1916. The second generation, which I refer to as “those who came,” includes children who enrolled in the early Camphill schools and coworkers, some only slightly younger than the founders, who joined the fledgling enterprise in the 1940s and 1950s. Baby boomers constitute a third Camphill generation of students, villagers, and coworkers. A few arrived in the late 1960s, many more in the 1970s, and others as late as the 1990s or beyond. Because this was the period of most rapid growth, baby boomers became the most significant generation in Camphill’s history—a position they still hold today. Because Camphill has been relatively unsuccessful at gaining the long-term commitment of persons born in the 1960s and 1970s, the fourth truly impactful generation has been the millennials. It remains to be seen what their impact will be: though many Camphill communities have achieved a successful transition from the leadership of baby boomers to that of millennials, others have not.

Between each pair of generations, there is a two-stage transition. The first stage involves the arrival of a new cohort of Camphillers; the movement’s challenge at

this moment is simply to make the newcomers sufficiently welcome that some of them will stay. A more challenging change occurs two decades later and involves the transfer of leadership to the new generation. Thus, Camphill's first generational transition began immediately after its founding and culminated in the 1960s, when founder Karl König transferred leadership of the movement to his younger cofounders and to the Camphillers who had arrived during the 1940s and 1950s. The second transition began in the 1960s and reached fruition in the 1980s and 1990s, as König's successors made room for members of the Baby Boom generation who had streamed into the movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The third transition is now in its final stages, as baby boomers seek to foster the leadership of a more diverse, millennial generation of Camphillers.

Each generational transition is characterized by a distinct task. The first transition, as scholars of other communal movements have observed, centers on questions of authority: can anyone other than the founder truly lead the community? Charismatic authority gradually gives way to bureaucratic leadership and to routinized structures. At the same time, community members with significant charismatic gifts are sometimes eager to step into the shoes of the founder. The community must discern the degree to which it can hold those charismatic gifts, and in some cases it must negotiate conflicts between rival inheritors of the founder's charisma.

The second generational transition has to do with trust. Can leaders who were mentored by the founders entrust the community's sacred flame to a generation that did not know the founders directly? It can be hard to practice such trust when, as is often the case, the life experiences of the new generation are different from those of their elders. They may not have experienced the intense challenge of building a community from the ground up, or in the face of societal hostility. The transition is easier if the community is growing rapidly, providing the rising generation with multiple opportunities to express its own leadership, and if communal structures provide opportunities for members of the two generations to build close interpersonal relationships.

The third generational transition, by contrast, demands confidence. Because the older generation did not know the founders directly, they may doubt their own authority to pass on the torch. If they have already made significant changes, they may worry that they have betrayed the founders. As with the second transition, the process is easier if rapid growth provides the new generation with leadership opportunities and if the two generations are able to work closely together. By this point in a community's history, however, growth is likely to have plateaued, while the proliferation of bureaucratic structures may limit opportunities for the two generations to interact.

## THE FOUNDERS

Camphill had both an individual and a collective founder. Karl König was born in 1902 to a Jewish family in Vienna. As a medical student, he encountered the

spiritual teachings of Rudolf Steiner—whom he never met personally—and committed himself to a career as an anthroposophical doctor, that is, someone who combines conventional medicine with healing practices taught by Steiner. König's cofounders included his wife, Tilla (Maasberg) König, and the members of two overlapping anthroposophical youth groups that formed in Vienna in 1929 and 1936. Many were ethnically Jewish, and a few shared König's commitment to the medical profession. Feeling a sense of common destiny, they explored ways to deepen their relationships with one another and searched for shared work. That search intensified when the Nazi annexation of Austria forced them into exile in Scotland. They created the original Camphill school for children with special needs on an estate called Camphill, just west of Aberdeen.<sup>1</sup>

Before that happened, the Königs were shaped by other colleagues who founded schools and communities devoted to what Rudolf Steiner called "curative education." In his own young adulthood, Steiner tutored a young man suffering from hydrocephaly, at that time believed to be a debilitating developmental disorder. Steiner helped this young man develop his talents to a remarkable extent, so that ultimately he pursued a career as a medical doctor. Steiner continued to contemplate this experience after embracing his career as a spiritual teacher. One of his practices was to offer lecture courses that applied "spiritual science" to specific professions. In 1920, he offered his first lecture series for medical doctors, collaborating with a doctor and student of anthroposophy named Ita Wegman. In the same year, Wegman established a clinic in the Swiss town of Arlesheim, just north of the Anthroposophical Society's headquarters in Dornach. Wegman's clinic began treating children with learning difficulties in 1923. A year later, anthroposophists in Jena, Germany, opened a home for children with special needs called the Lauenstein. Many of them had previously worked at the Sophienhöhe, a long-established, nonanthroposophical facility for children with disabilities. The Steiner-inspired Waldorf school in Stuttgart also established a special education class around this time.<sup>2</sup>

The Jena group asked Rudolf Steiner to give a course on the work they had undertaken. Curative education, he explained in this lecture series, is a way of "applying esoteric knowledge in practical life." Good curative teachers are those who "develop greater and greater interest in the mystery of the human organization." In other words, curative teachers could not hope to help children develop their whole selves—body, soul, and spirit—unless they too were on a path of spiritual development, and unless they were motivated by a deep "love" for "the soul-and-spirit nature that descends from the spiritual world" in each child.<sup>3</sup> Steiner suggested that educators can participate in the ongoing spiritual evolution of humanity. Thus far, he explained, humanity has evolved a fourfold nature: each person has a physical body (also found in animals, plants, and minerals), an etheric or life body (found in animals and plants but not minerals), an astral or will body (also found in animals only), and an integrating ego (unique to humanity). The next stage of evolution will be the development of a "Spirit-Self." Other spiritual beings have already attained

this level, and these beings help guide children's growth. Educators can thus cooperate with such spiritual beings as the "Genius of Language."<sup>4</sup> Given this spiritual foundation, anthroposophical curative education focuses less on weaknesses and symptoms, and more on reverence for the spiritual potential of each child. To foster such reverence, Steiner suggested such practices as meditating each morning on the phrase "In me is God" and each evening on "I am in God."<sup>5</sup> He also explored case studies drawn from the Lauenstein community.

In the wake of Steiner's curative education course, Ita Wegman organized one part of her clinic, known as the Sonnenhof, as a curative home for children with special needs. In November 1927, shortly after Steiner's death, Wegman offered her own course in curative education at the Sonnenhof, and encouraged the young anthroposophists who attended from around the world to create local communities modeled on the Sonnenhof. Thus, the Michaelgarden in Järna, Sweden, was established in 1932, anchoring a web of anthroposophical initiatives in that coastal city.<sup>6</sup> In 1930, Wegman's student Sesselja Sigmundsdottir began Sólheimar (now Sólheimar Ecovillage) in her native Iceland. (Her collaborator and husband, Rudolf Noah, would later meet the founders of Camphill on the Isle of Man, where they were interned together as foreign nationals at the beginning of World War II.)<sup>7</sup> Also in 1930, Wegman sent her student Fried Geuter to begin the work of curative education in England, and Bernard Lievegoed began work in The Hague, Netherlands. Just as Sesselja had translated "Sonnenhof" into Icelandic in order to name her community, so the Dutch school was called Zonnehuis and Geuter opted for "Sunfield" as the name of his school.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Camphillers were not the first to bring the work of anthroposophical curative education to the British Isles.

Both Karl König and Tilla Maasberg participated in Wegman's curative education course. König had begun reading Steiner's works in 1921, when he was a medical student and budding embryologist; he joined the Anthroposophical Society in 1925. Soon after he received his doctorate in 1927, König met Ita Wegman when she visited Vienna for the funeral of Rudolf Steiner's sister. Almost immediately she invited him to join her clinic's staff. Since he had already turned down a postdoctoral position because he had been asked to keep his anthroposophical commitments "private," he accepted the offer. During his first Advent in Arlesheim, he had a life-changing experience. He attended the "Advent garden" festival, in which each child followed a spiral path in order to light a small candle from a larger one burning atop a mound of green moss. "And suddenly I knew," he recalled later: "This is my future task! To awaken in each one of these children their own spirit light which would lead them to their humanity."<sup>9</sup>

Tilla Maasberg, from Silesia, was a member of the Moravian Church who had recently become interested in anthroposophy. She applied what she was learning at a curative home she and her sister had already opened in their family's holiday house. A year later they were invited to expand this work at a new curative center directed by Albert Strohschein, one of the founders of the Lauenstein. This

center was on the massive Pilgramshain estate owned by the von Jeetze family. The von Jeetzes found it easy to embrace anthroposophical curative education: they had been farming biodynamically since 1927, and one family member suffered from a profound learning impairment. Members of the family remain connected to Camphill to this day. In 1929, Karl and Tilla were married, soon after Karl accepted the position of physician to the Pilgramshain community.<sup>10</sup>

Among the daughters of the Sonnenhof, Pilgramshain had an especially strong communal ethos. This was a legacy of the Maasberg sisters' Moravian heritage. The Moravian Brethren originated when the radical Pietist Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) welcomed a group of Czech religious refugees to the village of Herrnhut on one of his estates. (Herrnhut is in the southeast corner of Saxony, just a few miles from Czech territory, and about one hundred miles west of Pilgramshain.) These refugees were part of the *Unitas Fratrum*, a remnant of the reforming movement founded by Jan Hus (1369–1415). Over centuries of persecution, the *Unitas Fratrum* had developed a semicommunal culture. Both they and Zinzendorf were committed to maintaining schools and homes for the poor. Hans von Jeetze, who suffered from hemiplegia, lived in a Moravian home in Herrnhut, and similar work was conducted by Moravians in Jena (site of the Lauenstein) as early as 1730. Inspired by all of this, Karl König identified the *Unitas Fratrum* teacher Amos Comenius and Zinzendorf as two of three guiding “stars” for Camphill. (The third was Scottish utopian Robert Owen.)<sup>11</sup>

Nazi hostility to Jews and to persons with disabilities, along with Karl's expanding medical practice, eventually pushed the König family to return to Karl's home in Vienna. There he connected with an existing anthroposophical youth group and organized his own. After two intense years, the Nazi “Anschluss” or annexation of Austria made them refugees once again. When it became clear that they would have to leave their beloved home, the members of the youth group vowed that they would find one another again in exile, and work together to rebuild the spirit of Vienna.

Karl König recalled this moment in an essay written twenty-one years later. During his first Christmas in Britain, he was “alone, a drop in the vast human sea of a city, a stranger, a foreigner. I knew that, together with me, tens of thousands of people shared the same fate. Men and women, old and young, children and adults, we were all in the same boat. It was the boat of loneliness; a ship without a destination, a life uprooted from the native soil and barely saved, like a plant which is given a handful of earth in a little pot of clay. How shall we survive?”<sup>12</sup>

In this evocation of the refugee experience, König drew on two biblical images: that of Noah's ark, seeking a place of refuge in a flooded landscape, and that of a precious seed that carries the promise of the future. He referred explicitly to the threat of Nazism: “I saw Austria overrun and conquered by men who betrayed the very essence of Europe. . . . Could we not take a morsel of the true European destiny and make it into a seed so that some of its real task might be preserved?”<sup>13</sup>

In 1938 König was also an exile in a more intimate sense: he had recently been expelled from the Anthroposophical Society, along with his beloved mentor in the work of curative education, Ita Wegman. In the 1930s Wegman and her ally Elisabeth Vreede clashed with the other three members of the society's executive council, who accused Wegman of claiming too much of Steiner's spiritual authority for herself. The split echoed Steiner's break with the Theosophical Society, as well as earlier theosophical schisms. Wegman and Vreede were expelled along with several of their associates, including König and his friend Eugen Kolisko, who had given the very first anthroposophical lecture that König had attended. Among Wegman's allies were leaders in the British and Dutch branches of the society, including Walter Johannes Stein, a Jewish anthroposophist who had known König when they were boys in Vienna and then emigrated to Britain. The schism separated those branches from the rest of the society.<sup>14</sup>

The anthroposophical schism coincided with the rise of Nazism in Germany. Nazis began harassing Waldorf schools and curative institutions in 1933, forcing many anthroposophists into exile. The Camphillers were part of a wave of refugees who found their way to the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain during the war years. Back in Europe, the remaining members of the executive council made significant concessions in order to keep anthroposophy alive in Germany. After the forced dissolution of the German branch of the society, they wrote a letter to Hitler affirming Rudolf Steiner's "pure Aryan heritage"; disavowing connections to Freemasonry, pacifism, and Judaism; and defending anthroposophy "as a valuable and active representative of German intellectual life." Thereafter, some anthroposophists participated in the anti-Nazi resistance while others cultivated alliances with deputy Führer Rudolf Hess and agriculture secretary Richard Walther Darré.<sup>15</sup> Observing these troubling events from exile, König retained gratitude for everything he had received from the Anthroposophical Society, blaming its "breakdown" on "intellectual arrogance, a lack of faith, and human politics," as well as the fact that "the Christ impulse has not been able to permeate society." He dreamed of creating new social forms to replace what had been lost.<sup>16</sup>

The refugee experience helped knit the founders into a cohesive group with sufficient strength of will to build something new. On the one hand, they were aware and appreciative of the good will of their British hosts. "Britain at that time was the humane one of the European countries," recalled cofounder Anke Weihs. Camphill would never have begun had not British people "extended invitations and stood as guarantors for hundreds of Austrians and Germans whom they had never met." Theodore and Emily Haughton, friends of Ita Wegman who were active in the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, guaranteed the founders and provided them with their first home, Kirkton House, in northern Scotland. Anke Weihs, Alix Roth, and Tilla König set up housekeeping there in March 1939.<sup>17</sup> When Karl König dedicated Kirkton House a few months later, he honored the hospitality of the British people, insisting, "We should promise one another not

to create an island of central Europe here but to try as well as we can to act for the good of this land.”<sup>18</sup>

Still, the warmth of friends could not fully overcome the coldness of making a home in a new country, with an unfamiliar language, as the violence they had fled threatened to spread across Europe. What is more, the founders did not yet know one another all that well. “No one should think that we were a closely-knit, rational group of people choosing the way we wanted to go,” stressed Weihs. “Rather—some kind of spiritual suction drew us up and buffeted us about, shredding our little bits of accustomed ways of life, leading us time and again into our own dark-nesses within the gathering darkness in the world outside.” Most had no previous experience working with children, let alone children with disabilities. Accustomed to “comfortable Viennese homes,” they struggled to cook “on a rickety paraffin stove which maliciously poured out clouds of black smoke every morning.” Those clouds of smoke were mirrored in Karl König’s temper, which could erupt like a volcano when he returned after a week away, while he was pursuing a British medical credential at Saint Andrew’s, to berate his friends for falling short of his “intense sense of order, cleanliness and beauty.” Yet the struggles were punctuated with moments of pure magic, as when König interrupted Anke’s dusting, pointed west to the peak of Bennachie, and told her, “that is where Noah’s Ark came down to rest, and now when the floods of terror and warfare are once again covering the face of the earth, we too must build an ark to help as many souls as we can.”<sup>19</sup>

Noah’s ark soon shifted from crowded Kirkton House to the more capacious Camphill Estate west of Aberdeen. Relations with the Haughtons had grown tense because “they were so very British and we were so very continental.” Now the Camphillers’ leading patron was publishing heir W.F. Macmillan. Before the group could move, they were overtaken by world events. In the wake of the Battle of Dunkirk, all the Austrian-born men in the movement were relocated to British internment camps, and some of the British children were withdrawn from their care. Reduced to six women—Tilla König, Alix Roth, Marie Korach, Trude Amann, Lisl Schauder, and Anke Weihs—as well as a few children, the group could have stayed on at Kirkton. But after a challenging deliberation, they “unite[d] the[ir] separate hearts and minds into *one* strength and *one* deed,” and made the move.<sup>20</sup> The men trickled back the following winter, bringing about what Anke Weihs called “a stormy wedding feast between the male and female components of our community.”<sup>21</sup>

Camphill’s founding mission focused on children with special needs. Village communities for adults would not emerge for more than a decade, though Karl König first proposed such a community in 1938. Camphill was organized first as a residential community and then a boarding school in which everyone lived in the same houses, sharing meals, festival celebrations, and religious rituals. From the beginning, the children of Tilla and Karl König were part of the cohesive community, and the number of “staff kids” expanded as other coworkers



formed families. Camphillers saw the presence of families as a strength, not an inconvenience, since their goal was to provide the children with an experience of authentic home life that, in the 1940s, was unavailable to many young people with special needs. Of course, the children could have enjoyed home life with their own families had their parents made different choices: the practice of sending children with special needs off to institutions had itself arisen only in the nineteenth century. Camphill emerged at a turning point in disability history—a time when some Western parents, especially those with economic privilege, were dissatisfied with the older institutions but not yet confident that society would help them meet their children’s developmental needs at home.

In 1948 Camphill became a full-fledged school, offering a single Waldorf curriculum to the children with special needs alongside children of coworkers and of anthroposophical families in Aberdeen. Loans from W.F. Macmillan enabled the purchase of two additional estates, Murtle and Newton Dee, downstream on the River Dee. By 1949, Camphill School was educating 180 children and offering a seminar for newly arrived coworkers. Because Karl König’s own medical practice frequently took him to consultations in England, word of Camphill School’s success spread, and the movement began sponsoring satellite schools in 1948. The first was Thornbury House near Bristol, a residential hostel for St. Christopher’s School, a center of curative education that König served as medical consultant. Then the Gleed family, whose grandson Charlie was a student at Camphill Aberdeen, offered the movement the use of their home in Ringwood, Hampshire. The possibility of creating a new school was put to the “youth group” of recently arrived coworkers, who were charged with identifying which individuals could play the pioneering role. Ursel Sachs and Averil Buchanan were chosen, and they escorted “seven extremely delicate children” on “a challenging and memorable” train ride to the south. Ursel, after her marriage to Carlo Pietzner, went on to cofound additional Camphills in Northern Ireland and the United States. The Bristol and Ringwood projects united as the “Sheiling Schools,” taking their name from the Gleeds’ home.<sup>22</sup>

Early on, Camphill’s founders understood themselves as a “community,” united by their commitment to manifest the spirit of anthroposophy through practical work. They gathered regularly to reflect on the art of living together, and to support one another in the practice of anthroposophical spirituality. Gradually this “Camphill Community” became distinct from (though interrelated with) the Camphill School and the Camphill Movement as a whole. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to it as the “inner community,” though that phrase emerged only after new Camphillers, less rooted in anthroposophy, had arrived.

The inner community, which is not always mentioned in published accounts of Camphill’s history because of its esoteric character, traces its roots to the two youth groups in Vienna. The refugee experience intensified the connections among members of these groups, and in the summer after the men returned from



internment, the coworkers “met every evening until very late to discuss matters ranging from the broom-and-dustpan, arrangements of rooms, to our spiritual life, and began to know and to recognise one another.” These are the words of Anke Weihs, who served as the community’s keeper of memories. At Whitsun, König shared a dream he had experienced the previous August: Count Zinzendorf had appeared to him as a teacher “and proposed that human beings should gather together every Saturday evening to hold a meal and read the Bible in common, trying to understand the text by all that has been given through Rudolf Steiner in Spiritual Science.” “Our reactions,” wrote Weihs, “were partly dull, partly stunned and partly negative.” As relative newcomers to both anthroposophy and Christianity, the other founders had little context for making sense of König’s testimony. “Endless discussions ensued,” in which König “could experience that hardly anybody would actually like to have it.” Eventually, on the first anniversary of König’s dream, just ten coworkers began putting it into practice.<sup>23</sup>

The resulting “Bible Evening” became a defining ritual for the inner community until it was opened up to other Camphillers in 1949. In February 1942 König established a method for formally admitting inner community members, but resisted requests that he draw up a quasi-monastic rule for the emerging “order.” Though he did not deny that the inner community was like a religious order, he insisted that Camphillers place priority on the openness needed for social therapeutic work. He also made a special arrangement with leaders of the Christian Community, according to which the Camphill Community would be treated as a single, collective member of the Christian Community. All of this divided the founders. For Hans Schauder, the Bible Evening was an opportunity for König to separate the “sheep” who agreed with his interpretations from the “goats” who did not.<sup>24</sup> Schauder, along with his wife Lisl Schauder and their friend Willi Amann, argued that the Bible Evening and other Camphill practices were infringing on their freedom. They left Camphill and form a new community called Garvald.<sup>25</sup> Karl König responded by withdrawing from the inner community and asking that it be refounded, an action that mirrored Rudolf Steiner’s refounding of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923. Finally, in 1945, König produced a defining document for the inner community known as the First Memorandum. This still serves as an inspiring statement of Camphill’s ideals of lifesharing and incomes sharing:

All who work in the Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools in such a way that they do not claim payment in the usual sense, but:

Who do their work out of love for the children, the sick, the suffering, out of love for the soil, the gardens and fields, the woods and everything which is in the realm of the Community—

Who wish to do the work of their hands out of devotion to the Christ-Being who has reappeared in the ether sphere of the earth—

All who are thus willing to act for the true progress of mankind and who are consequently prepared to sacrifice their self-willing to the Spirit-willing;

Who will fashion their lives according to the striving towards the Spirit of our age as it has been revealed through Rudolf Steiner, and as it is manifest in the sacraments of the Christian Community, as well as in the Cosmic Communion of the single human soul that wrestles for its development;

all those who are willing to participate in this striving may call themselves members of the Camphill Community.<sup>26</sup>

The First Memorandum also outlined a formal membership process and described the inner community's shared activities. It was released simultaneously with the creation of "The Camphill-Rudolf Steiner-Schools Ltd.," as the formal charity responsible for running the school, so part of its work was to demarcate the inner spiritual work of the community from Camphill's outer, educational task. A second memorandum, in 1948, similarly relinquished responsibility for Camphill homes, farms, and workshops. Finally, in 1949 König shared an "image" he had received, in which "the fruit of the Bible-Evening has ripened to such an extent that it starts to burst and the seeds are falling out." The locus of the Bible Evening then shifted from the common gatherings of the inner community to the individual Camphill houses, where all residents were free to participate.<sup>27</sup> This decision was confirmed in a third memorandum. These decisions were intended to ensure that all consequential decisions about Camphill's outer activities would be conducted in a transparent and publicly accessible way. Another consequence was that the inner community remained somewhat hidden from Camphill's students, villagers, and newer coworkers, as well as from parents, neighbors, and social care authorities. Though the third memorandum stipulated all three memoranda would be "printed together and made available to those who work in places established through the initiative of the Community," this was not done consistently.<sup>28</sup>

The esoteric character of the inner community means that outsiders like myself cannot observe it as directly as the other forms of Camphill life. Yet I can observe at least two ways it has been significant for the Camphill story. On the one hand, it played a decisive role in anchoring the commitment of most long-term coworkers of the first, second, and third generations. Usually, the decision to start a new Camphill place emerged from the spiritual striving of the inner community. On the other hand, the inner community's primary gesture has always been to relinquish direct control of the places it has inspired—in the words of long-term Camphiller David Adams, "it gives the Places to the world." The consequence of this relinquishment is that the inner community is no longer the primary body shaping the Camphill Movement's future. Many Camphill places have no inner community members in residence. Yet, as David has observed, inner community members continue to be inspired to "found new places where the impulse of Camphill can live," even if these do not always bear the name of Camphill.<sup>29</sup>

Though other members of the inner community did more than Karl König to shape the daily rhythms of Camphill life, his charisma dominated the movement. Other Camphillers called him father, and spontaneously trusted his guidance

about their life choices—even if he asked them to establish a new community on a distant continent. His choices thus shaped the first generational transition. By guiding Camphill's expansion around the world, König allowed members of the founding circle to strengthen their leadership skills as founders of communities far from Scotland. In the 1950s, little more than a decade after Camphill's birth, the founders established schools that still endure today in Northern Ireland, Holland, Germany, and South Africa, as well as an unsuccessful school in Norway. Camphill's growth in Germany was particularly dramatic. Since one of Karl König's initial goals had been to restore the true spirit of Middle Europe, he was thrilled at the establishment of Brachenreuthe near the shores of Lake Constance in 1958. He came to regard Brachenreuthe as "the Camphill Movement's dearest child." Two other schools, Föhrenbühl and Bruckfelden, were established nearby. Also in the 1950s, anthroposophists began curative education schools in Finland and the United States that would soon be absorbed into the Camphill Movement. The geography of Camphill today mirrors that of Camphill during the König's lifetime. Two-thirds of Camphill places today are located in the eight countries that Camphill had reached by 1960.

König made another significant choice after he experienced a serious illness in 1955. He began handing his own leadership tasks to others. In 1957, he designated Thomas Weihs, who had been part of the second youth group in Vienna, as superintendent of the original Camphill school, and claimed a new role for himself as chairman of the Camphill Movement, a global coordinating body. Seven years later, he relinquished that role but did not appoint an individual successor. Instead, he created six distinct regions, each with its own chair. The people he designated as regional chairs were usually founders of the schools or villages that anchored Camphill work in their particular region. Many of them exercised a charismatic authority within their region that was similar to the authority König had held over the movement as a whole: they chastised and encouraged new coworkers, and directed seasoned Camphillers to establish additional places. Others were chosen to foster coordination among the regions and to nurture the development of the inner community. This distribution of responsibilities set a precedent for the further devolution of leadership. König sealed the transition by relocating from Aberdeen to Brachenreuthe, where he spent his final two years fostering Camphill's growth in the region where his life had begun.

#### THOSE WHO CAME

Karl König's retirement and death did not bring Camphill's first generation entirely to an end. Tilla König, like most members of the founding circle, lived on into the 1980s, and three of them—Peter Roth, Marie Korach, and Barbara Lipsker—lived even longer. Still, from the 1960s through the 1980s the Camphill Movement was guided by the two clusters of Camphillers that I identify as the

second generation: the students who began arriving in 1939 and often stayed on as adult villagers, and the young volunteers who came during and after World War II, especially those who participated in the Camphill seminar in curative education that was launched in Aberdeen in 1949. Both students and seminarists had experienced displacement and exile, usually beginning earlier in life than was the case for the founders, and they gave Camphill an inward-looking, self-reliant culture.

Early in the twentieth century, it was common for children with disabilities to be separated from their parents and placed in large and neglectful institutions. The initial Camphill school offered these children a safe home and an alternative sense of family. As these children grew up and graduated, it became clear that the larger society was still not ready to include them. Thus, the defining task of Camphill's second generation—albeit undertaken at the direction of the founders—became the creation of “villages” in which adults with and without disabilities would share life and work. The new villages accelerated Camphill's growth, preparing it to absorb the thousands of young people who would stream toward it in the third generation.

Just as the school at Camphill Estate set the pattern for other Camphill schools, Botton Village in North Yorkshire became a prototype for other villages. Like Camphill's work in Scotland, Botton Village's birth was intimately tied to the Macmillan family. The Macmillans had founded one of Britain's leading publishing houses in 1843, and among their descendants were both Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who served from 1957 to 1963) and Alistair Macmillan, a much-loved student at Camphill School Aberdeen. In 1955 Alistair's mother persuaded the rest of the family that they no longer needed their six-hundred-acre vacation estate in North Yorkshire Moors national park. They invited the Camphillers to use it to create a permanent village home for Alistair and other Camphill students who were then reaching adulthood.<sup>30</sup> Botton's rural isolation set the tone for many subsequent villages, though few could match its sheer scale. Nestled in a valley between high moors, it is capacious enough to include several autonomous farms. In its heyday, it hosted a Waldorf school, a grocery store, a publishing house, a seed business, its own post office, and training courses in social therapy, eurythmy, biodynamics, and other anthroposophical initiatives. From many locations in the village, one can overlook a scenic panorama that is entirely within the boundaries of Camphill.

From the beginning, the Camphillers were clear that the “social therapy” practiced in the villages would be different from the “curative education” of the schools. “It is not appropriate,” Karl König stressed in his first lecture on village life, “for us to look upon grown-up people with whom we live, work, and share our life and destiny in order to analyse and diagnose them. . . . If we fell into this trap of modern life . . . we would become like their jailers and they would be like our prisoners.”<sup>31</sup> Reflecting on this some decades later, another Camphiller noted

that while a curative educator may help a student “overcome her inheritance,” a social therapist’s “task is to help her to fulfil this destiny.”<sup>32</sup>

König also hoped that Camphill would help revive the “village” as a distinct social form. When Botton Village opened in May 1956, he described village life as an antidote to “three great errors” of modern civilization. The first error, which he traced to the French Enlightenment, was the idea that humans had created God rather than the other way around. This error had led humans to “chain nature with the fetters of modern technical inventions,” culminating in “the destructive powers of electrical and atomic energy.” A second error was the notion of the survival of the fittest, which König saw as the source of twentieth century tyranny, even to the point that he affirmed, “Where Darwin started, Hitler and Stalin continued.” Finally, König discerned a third error in the nineteenth-century invention of intelligence tests, which led to “the most ridiculous specialization and segregation” in schooling, as children were subjected to countless tests that determined what schools they would attend.<sup>33</sup> Though König lacked the terminology of the twenty-first-century disability rights movement, these errors constituted his diagnosis of the roots of a disabling society.

König argued that the three errors guided “most of the leading men” in “politics, science and industry” and even in the churches. But he also discerned a countervailing power, still “hidden and unknown,” in “many single people who feel the oncoming disaster with pronounced certainty” and respond by seeking for “a new way of community living.” “These single men are convinced that they should extend their family bonds over a greater number of people and live with them as with brothers and sisters.” He identified communal movements and broader social impulses as indicative of the new quest for community: the Iona and Taena communities in Great Britain, the Bruderhof, the use of “back to the land” as a catchword, the work of the Soil Association in promoting organic agriculture, the writings of Aldous Huxley, the notion of “human relations.”<sup>34</sup>

Placing Camphill in this context, König emphasized that it was not enough to provide “an asylum, a retreat or a place of escape” from a world distorted by the three errors. The Camphill Village, he said, would be “not only a stop-gap for handicapped persons, but a vital experiment for future needs,” insofar as it would teach people to overcome the errors. Village life would teach people of supposedly “normal” intelligence “to overcome their pride and arrogance” and relate to others on the basis of human-ness rather than intelligence. By discerning the “spirit-existence in our neighbour,” residents of the village would overcome the Darwinian error. And by “renewing our enthusiasm for our every day work,” they would live “in the radiance of the divine presence,” much like the medieval builders of cathedrals.<sup>35</sup> Camphill’s communal ethos, in other words, was König’s strategy for creating a nondisabling society that would gradually extend beyond Camphill’s boundaries.

This village vision challenged the first two generations to transcend their refugee roots. Despite its difference from the surrounding society, Camphill hoped to be a catalyst for change, in alliance with kindred impulses from beyond the anthroposophical subculture. The impulse to reach out was echoed in an editorial that appeared in the Camphill Movement's journal. The editor cited an unnamed public intellectual who had predicted a "social catastrophe" that would be followed by a "spiritual revival" inspiring middle-class British people to "repopulate the forsaken and barren glens and dales of the country, giving rise to a new culture based on new values." This editorial suggests that Camphill had entered a paradoxical moment: they had the chance to break out of their inward-looking, refugee mentality, but only by partnering with other social impulses that had something of a refugee spirit and an antipathy to the modern world.<sup>36</sup>

Because many of Botton's first villagers were graduates of Camphill School, they brought with them a deep grounding in Camphill life and were able to exercise significant leadership in shaping it. "The village to my mind is as different a creature as any other child," observed one coworker who encountered Botton when it was six months old and was inspired by the people she met there. "These odd people had just arrived. They hadn't changed the architecture in any way. . . . But the idea, the idea of the village was correspondingly loud and clear. I heard the idea actually originally from two handicapped people. A person with Down syndrome and an epileptic, but I didn't know 'what' they were until afterwards. It seemed to carry answers to all my urgent questions." When she met Karl König, he reinforced her sense that the people with special needs were to be the ones shaping village life. "I can't tell you what you are doing here," he explained. "I can't tell you how to do it. All I can tell you is, do it together. These are not pupils anymore. You are not teachers anymore. Forget if you were pupils and teachers. You are grown-up people trying to make your living together, somehow, because none of you can make your living individually."<sup>37</sup>

It took about a decade for villages to supersede schools as the dominant form of Camphill life. In the years just after Botton's founding, the movement planted its first schools in South Africa, Finland, Germany, and the United States. It added villages in most of these locations early in the 1960s. The school in Northern Ireland, Glencraig, evolved into a hybrid community comprising both a school and a village. Back home in Aberdeen, the Newton Dee estate was repurposed as an adult village managed by the same charity as Botton. That charity, the Camphill Village Trust, added new villages in England as the demand for residential spaces outpaced supply. Often, the parents of Camphill school graduates insisted that the movement establish new villages for their children. Camphill also planted villages in nations that had never been home to a Camphill school, as was the case in Norway in 1966 (with the founding of Vidaråsen) and the Republic of Ireland in 1972 (Duffcarrig). The same pattern persists today, as Camphill's work in Russia, India, and Vietnam has begun with villages, not schools.

Villages today account for nearly half of all Camphill places and more than half of the total Camphill population. Many of those founded in the 1960s have evolved into complex, multifaceted social organisms in keeping with the pattern set at Botton. Camphill Lehenhof, the oldest village in Germany, is home to 270 people, half of them adults with special needs, and a place of daily work for about eighty more. Its three distinct neighborhoods encompass a dairy farm, a performance hall that doubles as a chapel, an industrial area, and a grocery store that mostly serves non-Camphillers. Lehenhof's daughter community, the Hermannsberg, is almost as large, with 114 people receiving special care and living alongside 100 residential coworkers as well as 100 nonresidential employees. Its location has a deep communal heritage, having served previously as a beguineage, a Franciscan convent, and a school led by the founder of Outward Bound and United World Colleges. Camphill Village USA in Copake, New York, is home to almost 240 people and includes a biodynamic seed business with a national customer base as well as a chapel, performance center, and lively café. No one knows for sure which Camphill village is the largest in the world today; one strong candidate is Perceval in Switzerland. Perceval's social organism, which has both residential and non-residential components, includes 100 children and 80 adults with special support needs as well as 380 salaried coworkers.

From the beginning, Camphill villages had a palpable sense of shared endeavor. Everyone had a role to play in erecting homes and establishing farms. Since the residents with special needs were less likely to move from one village to another or leave the Camphill Movement altogether, over time they became some of the most experienced communitarians in the movement—the resident experts on the story and customs of each place. When filmmaker Jonathan Stedall visited Botton Village in 1967, for example, he observed that Alistair Macmillan still anchored the community he had helped found. In the mornings, Stedall heard Macmillan singing in a falsetto voice as he worked in the garden; in the afternoon he switched “to his other job, delivering the post to the seventeen households throughout the village and stopping for a gossip whenever possible.”<sup>38</sup>

Other villagers who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s shaped the youthful communities where they lived. Susan Calvert arrived at Glenraig in 1957, when she was eighteen and Glenraig was just three years old. She was already somewhat familiar with Camphill life, having attended St. Christopher's School in Bristol and spent time at Botton Village. She quickly took on significant responsibilities, including work as an assistant in a children's dormitory. She also “acquired the skills of an accomplished weaver” and became a devoted participant in the services of the Christian Community. Over forty years at Glenraig, she saw many friends move on to the newer villages of Mourne Grange and Clanabogan, and was continually valued for the “great sense of joy in all that she undertook.”<sup>39</sup>

Camphill's expansion required an influx of new coworkers, and this was facilitated by a concurrent change in international policy. Beginning in 1949, the border



between East and West Germany was briefly opened. People with connections to anthroposophy were among the hundreds of thousands of migrants who fled the increasingly rigid Soviet control of the eastern territory, often continuing out of Germany altogether.<sup>40</sup> To absorb them into Camphill's ethos, König organized a seminar in curative education in 1949. Its first cohort of twenty-five participants were drawn almost entirely from Germany, with eleven having been born in what became East Germany and ten more in the West. Several had long-standing ties to anthroposophical work in Silesia and Stuttgart; at least two had direct ties to the Lauenstein and two more to Pilgramshain. One of the latter was Hartmut von Jeeze, a child of the family who had provided the Pilgramshain estate. He would go on to serve as the first farmer at both Newton Dee and Copake, as well as the cofounder (with his wife Gerda, also a member of the first seminar) of Camphill Village Minnesota.

The few non-German coworkers who arrived in those years could not help but be "very much impressed with the refugee element," as one told me. "Coming from a spoiled childhood in the north of Scotland where the war had not affected me physically much at all. . . . I was impressed with all these folks coming from Germany . . . and working with our land and our handicapped people in what was for them a foreign language."<sup>41</sup> Similarly, a young Scandinavian who arrived in the 1950s observed that the schools in those years were full of young Germans "who roll up their sleeves and set to work."<sup>42</sup>

For German refugees who were traumatized by their wartime experience, Karl König's charismatic self-confidence had a stabilizing and healing effect. The Scandinavian coworker told me the story of one of these "traumatized young people who came from the ruins of Germany." She was responsible for "a dormitory of very ill children," and when one of them smeared the walls with feces, she reached her limit. Desperately afraid she might kill the child, she ran out into the forest and "raged." But when she returned to tell König that she would have to leave, he calmly replied that he would "be behind you," making sure she would not harm anyone. "He pulled many of these people out of the dirt," explained my source, "and made them into efficient young men and women." And yet when the Scandinavian arrived, not so many years later and with a less traumatic background, König was "more a distant figure" with an authority that could be offputting.<sup>43</sup>

The same coworker shared a vivid picture of the intensity of Camphill life in the 1950s. "We had to work damn hard. You had been on your feet from six o'clock in the morning, you had a group, you had a class, and then finally in the evening you got the children into bed and then the evening activities started at nine o'clock. . . . We had to belong to seminar to do a play. I lived first in Cairnlee which was a mile and a half away, then I lived in Camphill which was two miles." Play practice began after the evening seminar, "and at half past twelve in the night we had to walk back on the railway line to Camphill." What made it possible was the group dynamic that developed when each coworker was responsible for seven or eight

children. “If you managed to hold that, they also educated each other.” By contrast, the baby boomers who came later often refused to take on groups of more than five children, while at Camphill school today there is often one adult to every child.<sup>44</sup>

This intense experience prepared second-generation coworkers to found new Camphill places in the 1960s and 1970s. Even after the seminar had been going for a decade, the movement was so shorthanded that participants moved rapidly into positions of great responsibility. One coworker who arrived in 1957 said that after two years of seminar she was immediately designated a housemother for eight children, which at that time was considered to be a “small unit.”<sup>45</sup>

The inner community had only recently been opened to people from beyond the founding circle, and it still carried an aura of esoteric mystery—and of the power to overcome challenges. In 1949 and 1950, Barbara Lipsker later told a coworker, the path to the inner community was quite quick, out of necessity. “After three months you had to join the inner community or you left, because it was so tough. And it happened quite often that, one morning, the person disappeared.”<sup>46</sup> Beginning in 1953, the inner community was subdivided into ten “sectors” in order to foster spiritual intimacy within a growing movement. Each sector studied distinctive texts and took on distinctive meditative practices, and new members found their way to a particular sector because of affinities with older members.<sup>47</sup>

“I realized there was more to [Camphill] than the eye saw,” recalled one coworker who arrived in the 1950s. “I questioned,” and gradually she learned about the inner community. “At that time it was so secret that often in the beginning, husband and wife didn’t know from each other in which sector they were.”<sup>48</sup> Her experience was echoed by a coworker who arrived around the same time. Early in his time at Camphill, the inner community had been temporarily dissolved, then reestablished on a more secretive basis. “It went underground. It wasn’t talked about. You didn’t speak—you could speak to your fellow sector members, but you didn’t speak about it to others. And you had to search to find it. Whereas before it had been thrown at you.” And so it was that, after some time in Camphill, he came into a meeting and says, “I suddenly experienced that behind each person there was something, which I am not part of.” That made him aware of the inner community, but even so he did not resolve to join it until the death of Karl König in 1966.<sup>49</sup> The inner community would continue to thrive, and to evolve, in the generation that followed.

### THE BOOMERS

Karl König’s death coincided with a vast expansion of Camphill. In 1966 there were thirteen schools and nine villages worldwide; within twenty years, an additional forty-eight Camphill places had been started. At one gathering of British Camphillers in 1975, “no less than sixteen possible new projects were on the agenda for discussion,” and the same dynamism was present elsewhere.<sup>50</sup>

A movement-wide census in 1976 reported 4,262 persons affiliated with Camphill, 20 percent more than had been counted just two years earlier.<sup>51</sup> New Camphillers were attracted by the movement's youthful spirit, expansive energy, and (compared to the era's many brand-new communal movements) relative stability. Many of these newcomers stayed on and continue to anchor Camphill places today. Some have spent more than twice as many years in Camphill as Karl König did! By my reckoning, they are Camphill's third generation, and its most influential thus far.

The expansion of Camphill was driven, first and foremost, by the desire of adults with special needs (and their family members) for places to live that would honor their human dignity. During the 1960s, the large institutions that had once housed most people with intellectual disabilities shut down very quickly—more quickly than a culture of genuine inclusion could sprout up in the larger society. (Many would say such a culture has still not sprouted!) Camphill also had an internal dynamic that was expansionary. The earliest Camphill villages had been founded to accommodate graduates of Camphill schools who could not find equally affirming homes and workplaces in the larger society, and these schools kept producing new graduates after Botton, Newton Dee, Copake, and other early villages had filled to capacity. At the same time, of course, many graduates of Camphill schools did not go on to live in Camphill villages, and many adults with special needs came to the villages without previous Camphill experience.

The evolving aspirations of persons with special needs prompted Camphillers to create two new community types in the 1960s and 1970s. These take many names; for convenience I will refer to them as “town communities” and “training colleges.” The former deliberately eschew the rural isolation of Botton in favor of immersion within a small city or suburban neighborhood. Town communities are typically smaller than villages, often including just two or three households. These households may be dispersed within a residential neighborhood. The first town community, Heathfield Cottage, was established in Stourbridge, England, in 1968–69, and has since expanded into a cluster of households. This project was inspired by the desire of some Camphillers with special needs “to try themselves in ordinary society, away from the sheltered and settled life of a Camphill village community.” At the same time, Camphill coworkers had noticed that when “so-called ‘normal’ people [are] faced with handicapped adults who were coping with life,” they begin “to ask new, very worthwhile, questions—about themselves, society and mankind in the present day.” They hoped that an urban community would “expose many ordinary citizens” to this transformative process, fostering a nondisabling culture in the larger society. They were keenly aware that their experiment would fail if it did not transform the neighborhood in which they planted themselves: “Community-care . . . would simply remain a newfangled facility for the handicapped and fail through social isolation if it were not recognized at the same time that this meant caring-for-community in a society which barely recognized neighbourliness.”<sup>52</sup>

Another town community, known as the Croft, was founded in 1974 and grew out of the desire of villagers at Botton for more social engagement, as well as from the Camphill Movement's desire to respond to the calls for a more "integrated" approach to care for persons with special needs. The "urban environment," reported one founder, would "afford the possibility of open employment to those handicapped people who wanted to experience 'real life'; but it would also need land and its own workshops to enable a balanced life of community to evolve around and within it."<sup>53</sup> Forty years later, one Croft resident told me that she much preferred the lively social scene of the town of Malton, where the Croft is located, over Botton's rural isolation.

Town communities typically are anchored by a coffeeshop, gift store, or bakery, businesses that provide daily opportunities for Camphillers to interact with their neighbors. The founding of the Croft brought Camphillers into conversation with a host of neighbors who had never taken an interest in the more remote Botton Village: the Lions, Rotary Club, and Probus Club helped prepare the house for occupancy, and a local Quaker group brought in working parties from a nearby home for young offenders.<sup>54</sup> "Everyday," reported one founder, "there are at least two or three callers who want to help with this or that."<sup>55</sup> Camphill Hudson, similarly, maintains two houses and a lively gift shop in the city of Hudson, New York, a rust belt community whose renewal has perhaps been accelerated by Camphill's energy. On the outskirts of Belfast, Camphill Holywood operates a thriving coffeeshop that is a favorite volunteer site for local teenagers, some of whom also participate in environmental education programs in the more traditional, agricultural Camphill communities nearby. "It is a genuine, real business," explained coworker Veronika van Duin, "and the town of Holywood would absolutely hate it if we disappeared."<sup>56</sup>

The Bridge Community in Ireland takes its name from the bridge that is at the center of the town of Kilcullen. It is home to a coffeeshop and to a farm-and-nature trail that allows its neighbors to get their exercise while walking between the River Liffey and the community's houses, gardens, and livestock pens. Interpretive signs introduce visitors to Camphill values, ecological principles, and folk wisdom about plants and animals. What's more, the whole thing was built by a team of volunteers from Fidelity Investments, forging an ongoing tradition of cooperative volunteering between Camphill and its neighbors. "The inspiration" for the community, explained management coordinator Mischa Fekete, "was that it would be integrated into the wider community . . . not just to integrate the people with special needs into the mainstream, which is a very dubious concept," but to help "people in society start to actually see what the true task of people with disabilities might be in society." Thus, a customer at the coffee shop, "meeting the people with special needs," would see that they "are respected, are fully a member, make their contribution." The Camphillers thus make a special effort to participate in the Tidy Towns group, the Kilcullen Community Action Group, and the local

drama society. "You take your friends to meet your other friends and gradually the thresholds diminish."<sup>57</sup>

Three years after the creation of the first town community, Camphillers developed another new communal form. As with the town community, the first training college, the Mount, was established in England. Its mission is to provide a collegelike educational experience for people with learning difficulties between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Camphill training colleges (also referred to as "youth guidance" communities) have thrived because they fill a significant gap in the social care system of most Western nations, which have done a better job of guaranteeing appropriate public education to people with disabilities than of providing for their housing and employment as adults. While fewer parents of children with special needs are willing to send their young children off to Camphill boarding schools, many find value in residential programs designed to ease the transition to adult responsibilities. Camphill training colleges enroll graduates of Camphill schools and young adults who had previously lived with family, and they prepare their students for either Camphill village life or independent or supported employment in the larger society. The training colleges have allowed Camphillers to develop a new field of anthroposophical activity, usually referred to as "youth guidance," located in the space between the older fields of "curative education" and "social therapy."

As with town communities, many training colleges began as offshoots of older Camphill places. Camphill Soltane, in Pennsylvania, is located just a few miles from both a school (Beaver Run) and a village (Kimberton Hills). An additional training college, known as Beaver Farm, is currently a semi-autonomous unit of Beaver Run. Similarly, New York's training college, Camphill Triform, is part of a four-community cluster that also includes a village, a town community, and an elder community.

Cairnlee is a training college under the auspices of Camphill School Aberdeen; its emergence in this role reflected the impulse toward both town communities and training colleges. Around 1970, Camphill School decided to sell Cairnlee, a much smaller estate than either Camphill or Murtle, because it felt like a "small annex" to the other two and because it had "lost its seclusion on being engulfed by a very dense development of housing estates around it." But the new emphasis on integration in disability policy led the Camphillers to rethink their assumption that "every Camphill place must be at least a mile or so away from all other developments."<sup>58</sup> A new phase of Cairnlee's history began in 1988, when a group of senior Camphill School students who were struggling to make the transition to adulthood moved there with a group of four seasoned coworkers. They developed a common life that was focused less on work than the adult villages, and was characterized by a "therapeutic approach which does not put any pressure on our students but leaves them free to develop at their own pace."<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps because many of their disabled residents spend only a few years of their life in Camphill, training colleges often have a "progressive" ethos of engagement

with the larger society. In order to give their students genuine choices about their postcollege lifestyle, the training colleges partner with local businesses to provide workshop experiences that mirror mainstream employment. Soltane has partly evolved into a town community, as many former students have relocated to apartments in the nearby town of Phoenixville. The community sponsors multiple businesses in town, including two cafés and a store specializing in fabric arts. These enterprises provide Soltane students with individualized internships designed to help them develop skills for retail jobs. It maintains a community art center whose classes are patronized by non-Camphillers, both with and without disabilities. It aspires to be a seedbed for additional social enterprises, not all of them focused on disability.<sup>60</sup>

The geography of Camphill expansion between 1966 and 1984 was different than that of the previous quarter-century. By 1966 Camphill had expanded to ten countries, and that number grew to only fourteen in 1984. The vast majority of new Camphills were planted in countries where Camphill was already present, often close to existing Camphills. Increasingly, students at Camphill schools came from nearby towns and cities, and both they and their parents wished for them to remain close. The good news of Camphill also spread by word of mouth among families of people with disabilities, who often took the initiative to invite Camphill into new places. Whereas Camphill growth had once depended on the missionary zeal of anthroposophists and the human need of German-speaking refugees, it now depended on the enthusiasm of people with disabilities and their families.

By far the largest share of Camphillers whom I have interviewed have been lifesharing coworkers from the baby boom generation. They are a large cohort who share many experiences and perspectives. A few of them were born into families of coworkers; far more arrived in the late 1960s, the 1970s, and even the 1980s and 1990s. By the 1990s they held most formal leadership positions in the movement, and in many Camphill places they still do. In some ways, my reliance on their testimony and experiences—shaped in turn by my primary identity as a communal studies scholar—may have distorted my perspective on what Camphill truly is. Other observers, with different research questions, might give them less attention than I have. Yet no observer of Camphill could ignore them altogether. It is unlikely that any other cohesive cohort will ever hold a comparable amount of power in Camphill again—since, as I shall argue in the next section, in subsequent generations lifesharing coworkers have shrunk to a much smaller proportion of the total Camphill constituency.

The forces that brought baby boomer coworkers to Camphill in the years between 1966 and 1984 were utterly different from those shaping the biographies of previous Camphillers. The refugees of the 1940s had been traumatized by war and were seeking a place of safety; the boomers had been raised in middle-class prosperity and brought idealistic, even utopian dreams. “We were different from previous generations,” one boomer told me. “They had gone through the Second World War and had really suffered . . . and then after the war they were looking for

a new life. A lot of them were inspired directly by hearing Karl König speak. [Their goal was to] rebuild Europe and Britain after the tragedy of the Second World War. Our generation was more, we are the hippies and we are going to kind of idealistically help everybody.”<sup>61</sup>

Those who arrived in the late 1960s encountered stable, settled communities dominated by a Germanic and anthroposophical culture that was quite different from 1960s youth culture, but equally different from the middle-class culture of the new arrivals’ parents. Some of these newcomers had already encountered Rudolf Steiner’s ideas in other contexts and were eager to see these lived out in a practical way. Sherry Wildfeuer, for example, visited Beaver Run in 1966 after discovering anthroposophy through a classmate at Bard College. Reading Steiner’s books gave her a new zest for learning, but not one her professors could easily accept: “Suddenly I was fascinated by everything I was learning. Before that I had been an A student and just giving . . . back . . . what they wanted. Now I wanted to know what is true. . . . That’s when I went to Camphill, because I wanted to know, what do people do who think like this.” When she arrived, Sherry and her classmate were the only young people at Beaver Run. Since there “was no format for being a short-term coworker,” she was accepted into the shared work of the community and had the opportunity to meet Thomas Weihs, Barbara Lipsker, Carlo Pietzner, and other Camphill founders. By the time she left a year and a half later—to pursue training in biodynamic agriculture—“there were way more” young people at Beaver Run.<sup>62</sup>

By the 1970s, the experience of arriving in Camphill had changed dramatically. One Norwegian coworker first learned of Camphill as a schoolgirl, selling candles to benefit Vidaråsen. When she came of age, she and a friend tried to join Vidaråsen because “at that time the only thing to do was to find an intentional community somewhere.” It was too full to accept new volunteers, so she did the seminar at Camphill Scotland, then returned in 1974. Vidaråsen was growing so fast that they constructed a new building every year. Apart from the founder and two other women, everyone was in their twenties and “that meant of course that people in their twenties took on a lot of responsibility, often learning by doing. Running houses and having services and everything. And having children.”<sup>63</sup>

As the number of young people living in Camphill increased, it was more and more possible for people to arrive merely because they had friends in Camphill. One coworker told me that she was “just visiting a friend who was at Glencraig. I didn’t know anything about anthroposophy or the background or learning disability. The people there said, ‘We’ve got a training course. Would you like to stay and try it?’ I thought, well, this is something a bit unusual. Yes, I could try it, then I’ll leave. I was going to go to England and get a job as a teacher. Well, obviously, it was my karma, my destiny to do that.”<sup>64</sup> Another told a similar story: “I heard about Camphill from a friend at university, and I went to the Grange Camphill community in Gloucestershire in January 1975, in an open-ended kind of way. . . . I was attracted to it because it sounded like a commune, countryside and odd people. . . .



I was not committed beyond a few months”—and yet I met him at Camphill just a few miles from the Grange almost forty years later.<sup>65</sup>

Many of the new arrivals came with a mix of political and spiritual experiences that had stoked their idealism but also left them hungry for an alternative to hippie and New Left culture. Sherry Wildfeuer had been president of her high school's human rights club, but she was “given so much social consciousness” that by the time she was sixteen “I felt just helpless.” When she came to Camphill, her encounter with anthroposophy helped her see that “I could take hold of myself at least and make changes. I didn't feel so hopeless.”<sup>66</sup> Russ Pooler, of Newton Dee, told me that he and his wife had arrived in 1972 after several years in the San Francisco hippie scene. “I was into poetry. . . . My wife was an artist, a painter. . . . She was into Buddhism and we lived in a Buddhist commune for a while. We also lived in a big house with lots of people in San Francisco. . . . We were both searching around for things.” They were also troubled by the aimlessness of hippie communes that were “a lot of fun” but “going nowhere,” by the fuzziness of Eastern mysticism, and by the polarization of radical politics. “I was longhaired, beard and all that and living that life, but I wasn't completely convinced. I was much more artistically inclined.” At Camphill, he found a political middle ground and the chance to stretch himself artistically: “The whole way they dealt with money and with art, everything was very artistic. You were free to do what you liked. I was able to run a toy shop, which I'd never done. . . . I'd written poems and stories and things. . . . But I'd never done anything with my hands, really. It was really nice to start working like that.” He also liked the fact that “it was possible to work and not have to pay your taxes and worry about all the money and stuff and you could live and help people and learn about yourself and you could take your Steiner or not, depending. I took it very seriously.”<sup>67</sup> At Cascadia in Vancouver, Patricia Smith explained that her interest in alternative schools led her to investigate “Summerhill and Findhorn and Montessori,” while Bruno Bettelheim's *Children of the Dream* inspired her to spend eight months on a kibbutz. “I then went to Switzerland to visit some people I had known in the kibbutz. And in hitchhiking someone picked me up who was involved with the Waldorf movement. So I found out about the Waldorf movement and became involved with that and through that I found out about Camphill and went and visited Camphill. And I guess that turned the course of my life.”<sup>68</sup>

Other new Camphillers came through the formal volunteer programs that proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s. Bernie Wolf, who arrived at Beaver Run just a few years after Sherry Wildfeuer, came as part of his education at Antioch College, which requires students to complete off-campus internships, and he wound up staying for decades. Camphill's relationship with Antioch deepened when its study-abroad coordinator, Gwen Gardner, spent three months of her sabbatical recuperating from an illness at the Sheiling Schools in Ringwood.<sup>69</sup>

Jonathan Reid came to Botton Village in 1980 through a conservation program that placed students for a week or two of tree planting. He stayed because of the

intensity of his meetings with people, and the concreteness of the tasks they undertook together. "My first impression was, here are people doing something. . . . That sense of purposeful activity was really strong. And that was a kind of first phase. After being in university, the relief of being able to actually dig a ditch or cook a meal. And the phase 2 was, well, who are the people who are doing this activity? And then you [having] very strong meetings with the so-called learning disabled people. A very direct way to have a meeting. There is no pussy-footing around in how you meet. It is very direct. . . . then phase 3 is in a way to do with the anthroposophy. What is in the back of all this?"<sup>70</sup>

Bernie's and Jonathan's experiences were possible because Camphill had begun working with international voluntary programs in the 1950s. In the summer of 1955 the International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVS) brought a "camp" of twenty volunteers to Camphill Glencraig, which had recently celebrated its first anniversary. "Penetrating the unconquered parts of the estate," they built a bridge, repaired a cowshed, and heightened a seawall. One of their number, Bill Boyd, was inspired to become a Christian Community priest.<sup>71</sup> IVS had been founded in 1931 by Swiss pacifist Pierre Ceresole, who believed that countries that exchanged volunteers would be less likely to go to war; in 1939 the British government recognized it as an alternative placement for drafted conscientious objectors.<sup>72</sup> IVS is the ancestor of some of the organizations that still guide young people to Camphill placements; other such organizations have roots in the Waldorf movement and other anthroposophical initiatives.

As baby boomer coworkers dug into what was "in the back" of Camphill, most embraced anthroposophy as their personal spiritual path. Some valued anthroposophy simply because it was the source of a mode of communal living they cherished. Others saw it as the answer to a deep spiritual yearning. "Once I met Camphill," one coworker told me, "I had a feeling that I had found something that is mine but I didn't know what it was. . . . I didn't even have a question. I just knew intuitively that there is something that is for me."<sup>73</sup>

That coworker was part of the minority of baby boomer Camphillers who encountered anthroposophy first, and were then drawn to Camphill because it offered the chance to live anthroposophy more holistically. "When I met anthroposophy," he told me, "I instantly recognized, this was it. . . . This was the center of my life." Camphill was a place where anthroposophy "was not only a study," but "a situation where all the different aspects of anthroposophy would potentially be utilized."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, baby boomer Michael Babitch spent ten years "assiduously reading and studying" anthroposophy before he and his family moved to Camphill. He found Steiner's ideas to be relevant to his work as a team leader in a program for preschoolers and infants with disabilities, but he was increasingly troubled by the way "the whole person was being shattered" by professional specialization and conflicts between labor and management. At Camphill he was inspired by the presence of others in his generation who were even "more

steeped in anthroposophy than I was,” but above all by the “social impulses and the social mission.” As he took on management roles, he was continually reminded that “leadership can come from the spiritual world to anybody at any time. You’d better be open to listening to any human being. There are villagers who in large circles have said something that has been the most incredible insight and just what needed to be said.”<sup>75</sup>

Whatever factors brought baby boomers to Camphill, most discovered leadership opportunities within a growing movement. For people who joined the Camphill seminar in the 1970s or 1980s, each year could bring a new task: one might be assigned a small group of students or villagers in the first year, an entire class or household by the end of the seminar, and be asked to help launch a new Camphill place a year or two after that. As a consequence, one coworker told me, “you felt that you were important. You felt, gosh if I don’t do this work what’s going to happen to those children or the community? . . . There weren’t masses and masses of coworkers.” When she was asked to take on a class of high-energy six-year-olds for the first time, without any previous experience with such young children, “it was extremely challenging. . . . But at the end of my first year I thought, gosh, if I leave that class they will really be thrown back to the beginning again, they will suffer, they won’t be able to build on the steps that they’ve made. I’d better stay with them.”<sup>76</sup> Baby boomers who wanted to deepen their training in other aspects of anthroposophy could do so within the context of Camphill, as seminars in various fields were established by Camphill communities. The eurythmy school founded at Ringwood in 1970, for example, expanded into a four-year training by 1978, with the first two years offered at Ringwood and the latter two at Botton Village.<sup>77</sup>

These experiences equipped the baby boom generation to move into positions of community-wide leadership in the late 1980s and 1990s. One of the founders of Camphill Devon offered a vivid portrait of the first years of that Camphill community, when she and her husband were just twenty-two. “Within five months of starting the community we had a baby as well as ten adults with learning disabilities. Frankie was out in the farm all day . . . milking the cows twice a day and starting the process of growing crops for the community.” Because England had rapidly deinstitutionalized persons with special needs in the 1970s, the community grew to include forty adults with intellectual disabilities in its first two months. This created a “beautiful” dynamic in which each villager “had to rise up to play a part in it, much more so than being in a care home. Each one was called upon to do as much as possible to help the whole.”<sup>78</sup>

Upon arriving at the newly founded Pennine training college in 1983 at age twenty-four, coworker Ruth Tschannen was amazed to be among people who took her seriously. She was asked to cook for fifty people, alongside four people with special needs and one other coworker. After nine months, she began running the garden, producing vegetables for the same fifty people, and in her third year she started the basket workshop. “I could do anything. They trusted everything to

me at a young age.” Indeed, she was one of the older people at the Pennine: the students were college-age, the other new coworkers were all nineteen, and the two seasoned couples who mentored them were just in their mid-thirties. “That is the wonderful thing in a pioneering community,” she summed up. “There are so many different opportunities to do things. . . . And then suddenly, you’ve become an expert.”<sup>79</sup>

As the new Camphillers took on more responsibility, they deepened their ties to the older generations. Most baby boomer coworkers whom I interviewed stressed the openhearted way in which older Camphillers bridged generational differences. When younger coworkers sang Bob Dylan’s “The Times They Are A-Changing” at Glencairg’s Whitsun celebration in 1975, observed one participant, the “Mothers and Fathers were here *to learn to understand*.”<sup>80</sup> “I was quite wild when I first came,” recalled coworker Stephen Sands. “I came out of the hippie culture, and was by no means looking like I had emerged from the cultural heights of middle Europe. But I was tolerated in a nonpatronizing way. I was challenged very stringently to clarify what my real views and what my real aims in life were. And having been challenged, I was challenged also to either work with what I was meeting and change it by becoming part of it, or come up with something better. And I would say that to this day I haven’t been able to come up with something better.”<sup>81</sup>

Mutual transformation was possible because older Camphillers, for all their differences, were inspiring and open to dialogue. “I was encouraged to express my questions and go to somebody with more experience,” mused Steve Lyons, wondering if similar opportunities for dialogue are available in Camphill today.<sup>82</sup> Sherry Wildfeuer recalled her biodynamic mentor at Beaver Run, a woman in her late seventies known as Granny Lueder. “I adored her. . . . She was all hunched over and I would go and help her just to carry her basket, because she grew zucchinis like cudgels. . . . I could see that she saw more than I was seeing. Just looking over her shoulder I could see that. That was the first inkling I had. That was just a totally new thought for someone who grew up in the suburbs.”<sup>83</sup>

Baby boomers who spent time at Botton Village, by then the largest Camphill place in the world, spoke with particular appreciation of the leadership exercised by Peter and Kate Roth, as well as others of the earlier generations. One coworker who arrived at Botton in 1977 told me that he met both “a very strong group of older people, of hugely diverse nationalities, cultures, and interests,” and a “quite intense group of people about our age” who would remain close friends even after they scattered to other Camphills. They were all “extremely fortunate in landing at Botton where there was a very strong culture of empowering the younger generation, giving them a little bit too much responsibility . . . [and] allowing them to fail.” As he aged and found himself “on the other side of the table,” he became ever more impressed by the risks his mentors had taken on behalf of him and his peers. “There was a spiritual security . . . that allowed them that largesse.”<sup>84</sup> “Peter Roth,” elaborated Jonathan Reid, a coworker who arrived a few years later, “had the knack of devolving responsibility very rapidly and incessantly to other people. . . . Quite

young people could find themselves running a garden or a farm in very little time.” Moreover, “Peter was also always asking for other people’s opinions. New people’s opinions. To get them really included in the community’s sense of itself. So on one hand, through that founding group you met very strongly the principles of Camphill, but at the same time there was this other gesture of really encouraging new people’s input and creativity and so forth.”<sup>85</sup>

Older Camphillers also welcomed members of the baby boom generation by inviting them to participate in Camphill’s inner community. It experienced periods of intense flourishing, punctuated by a few crises, in the 1960s and 1970s. The opportunity to do one’s spiritual work with other Camphillers exerted a powerful attraction. “You had meetings on a special night,” explained one participant with reference to the 1960s. “Not that you saw spirits, but you knew that everyone had done something.”<sup>86</sup> Joining the inner community, Russ Pooler added, “was a big step because then you in a sense really took on Camphill. . . . Not just the outside work. You took on the inner work as well. . . . This inner work you do has faded away a lot in recent years, but certainly in those years, the late seventies, eighties, boy it was really strong. It was what kept Camphill going and got it through all these things.”<sup>87</sup>

The process by which individual coworkers join the inner community has varied from place to place as well as over the course of time, and as a consequence my interviews have generated a somewhat blurry picture of the process. Some people told me that it was routine, in the 1970s, for coworkers to be invited to join the inner community after one or two years; others insisted that no one is ever invited unless they take the initiative to inquire about it. It does seem clear that the 1970s were a time of transition for the inner community. It was less secret and less dominated by the founders than it had been in the past; at the same time, it was more central to the overall culture of Camphill than it would be in the future. For coworkers in the 1970s, one person explained, joining the inner community was “very important” but by no means automatic. “At a certain point after maybe four or five years, older people who I respected and who were helping me . . . suggested that I might like to think about joining that. . . . But the inner community . . . is not something you just join. . . . For me it was incredibly much part of this process of self-knowledge. And learning my own weaknesses and how to manage myself and manage my frailties and how I could get help and support from other people who had joined the community.”<sup>88</sup> Another baby boomer told me that he had joined the inner community within half a year of arriving at Camphill. “When I finished my training I recognized if I really want to work in the world out of anthroposophy, I need to connect to the roots of that work, the wellspring of that work.” He joined both the First Class of the Anthroposophical Society and the Camphill inner community, “as that circle of people who carries this aspect in the Camphill context. It was not so much a process as it was an instant recognition and a request to be granted that.”<sup>89</sup>

The inner community evolved rapidly during the years that baby boomers were arriving. In 1964 the sectors were renewed, with each one understood in relation

to one of the windows of the Goetheanum, a building designed by Rudolf Steiner that is the center of the Anthroposophical Society. In 1972 the sectors began opening up to one another, to enable greater sharing of the spiritual fruits of their inner work.<sup>90</sup> In places like Botton, the structure of the inner community gave shape and intensity to the outer community as well, giving it the feel of a spiritual university in which coworkers were continually involved in study groups of various sorts.<sup>91</sup> This had lasting effects, said one person who came to Camphill in Germany around the same time. "When you meet old Camphillers, there is a certain kind of flair around or energy around, the way they speak, the way they do things, the way they embrace different things that belongs to the Camphill Community. . . . It is like a holy thing. How to embrace a house. How to embrace guests. How to embrace when you speak."<sup>92</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of, the intensity of inner community life, the community members chose to enact a "quiet year" in 1978, admitting no new members during that year or the next. The inner community was then reorganized on a new basis, with older members going through a new admission and many baby boomers joining for the first time. In keeping with Rudolf Steiner's vision of a threefold social order, each member was asked to devote special attention to either the economic, the political, or the cultural sphere. Gatherings and conferences were devoted to distinctive themes.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, it became acceptable for coworkers to participate fully in the Camphill Movement without joining the inner community. Christoph Hanni, a baby boomer who arrived in the 1980s, told me that he was aware of the inner community from early in his time at Camphill, "but I didn't really feel, this is something I just have to do. I was quite happy not to be. I didn't bother about it." After seven years he joined the Anthroposophical Society, then the inner community after three more years. "I thought, now I know I'm going to stay here, I need to be part of this, I can't just live here and not be a part of it." By that point, there was a clear division between "the people of the inner community, the stalwart anthroposophists who would go to a workshop every evening and do a meditation every day, and have that as their main driving motivation" and "all the Buddhists, people who had a very different outlook."<sup>94</sup>

Camphill also inculturated baby boomer coworkers in the 1970s by holding "youth conferences," designed to give newcomers a sense of the movement as a whole. Since the founders had been an anthroposophical youth group in Vienna, this was a natural way of embracing the new energy of the young while staying connected to Camphill traditions. Conferences enabled the most committed baby boomers to meet their counterparts from other Camphill places; at the same time, they learned about Camphill's history and traditions from older Camphillers who offered workshops. The restructuring of the inner community grew out of youth conferences held in Scotland, Germany, Holland, and the United States in the summer of 1980.<sup>95</sup> Participants often described the conference experience in glowing terms, sometimes trying out the new vocabulary of anthroposophy in order to do

so. After a conference at Christmas 1974, one participant wrote that its spirit had “penetrated, as yeast does a well-worked lump of dough, into the conduct of everyday life in the various houses and neighborhoods” of the host community. Another made the same point by invoking the “golden process” of alchemy, which “manifested itself in the morning meetings where, in groups, we listened carefully to one another and with our impressions contributed to an understanding and feeling for such things as: three-foldness, alchemy, the main social law, gold and more.”<sup>96</sup>

Baby boomer Michael Babitch discovered Camphill at an anthroposophical youth conference at Threefold Community (an intentional community in New York, inspired by anthroposophy, that predates the Camphill Movement). Up until that time he had known anthroposophy only through a few individuals whom he found to be deeply impressive. Now “I was experiencing these remarkable people doing remarkable things, and remarkable workshops. There were I think six hundred people there.” Though he didn’t realize it at the time, he also witnessed a significant step in the healing of the schism within the Anthroposophical Society, as one workshop featured prominent leaders from both sides.<sup>97</sup>

Camphill also marked the arrival of a new generation by creating a new newsletter. The *Cresset*, which ran from 1953 until 1972 and carried long articles that emphasized abstract ideas, reflected the personalities of the founders and the intellectual culture of midcentury anthroposophy. Karl König contributed frequently, and Anke Weihs edited the *Cresset* up to the end. The *Camphill Correspondence*, launched in 1975, was oriented to keeping the by-now numerous communities in conversation with one another, and with the world beyond. In its inaugural editorial, Richard Poole stressed the importance of outreach with an image drawn from the final issue of the *Cresset*: “Anke Weihs used the image of a community as a river, taking the source from a tiny, obscure spring high up in the hills, finally to reach the salt waters of a rapidly-changing world, the great ocean of society.”<sup>98</sup>

From the 1970s until the present (2020), baby boomers have been the numerically dominant group among Camphill coworkers. Already in the 1970s, they assumed much responsibility as teachers, house parents, and workshop leaders. Most Camphill places were either founded by baby boomers or included baby boomers among a circle of founders. Yet the process by which baby boomers assumed primary leadership roles in the largest Camphill places and in the movement as a whole was a stormy one, with more conflict and disruption than occurred in the wake of Karl König’s death. At Botton Village, for example, Peter Roth did a great deal to cultivate the leadership qualities of the baby boomer generation, but most of the strongest leaders in that generation subsequently departed for newer Camphill places. When Roth stepped back from leadership, one subgroup of baby boomers, with a fairly charismatic leader, sought to take leadership of the village, but met a backlash from others who found their vision to be “a little bit syrupy and based on sentiment and emotion” (in the words of one of their opponents).<sup>99</sup> Camphill Vidaråsen experienced similar challenges, despite the fact



that its founder, Margit Engel, had a different personality than that of Peter Roth: where he had been perhaps overly eager to empower others, she struggled to follow through on her intention to allow leadership to devolve. But, like him, she had encouraged the strongest baby boomer leaders to go elsewhere.<sup>100</sup> Newton Dee Village, likewise, experienced such an intense conflict in the 1990s that they brought in an outside consultant to help them resolve their difficulties. As at Botton, the conflict was not between baby boomers and the previous generation, but within the baby boom generation—though in this case it did by at least one account pit those who favored far-reaching changes against those “who still very much clung to the traditions of the older group.”<sup>101</sup>

The baby boomer style of leadership within Camphill has a few distinctive qualities. First, boomers place an especially high premium on shared leadership. The person who told me about Margit Engel’s difficulty relinquishing authority at Vidaråsen, for example, also noted that “I like to be part of a team. I don’t like to be a leader.” In many Camphill places today, day-to-day authority is exercised by a “management group” rather than by a “named manager,” despite the fact that social care authorities prefer to communicate with just one leader. This preference reflects the egalitarian culture of 1960s social movements, but it is also rooted in anthroposophical tradition. Waldorf schools are ordinarily governed by the “collegium” of all the teachers rather than by a nonteaching administrator. The Anthroposophical Society has been governed by an executive committee ever since Rudolf Steiner’s death, though the practice of also naming an individual chairman continued until 2001, which was the first year in which baby boomers constituted half the committee’s membership. In general, anthroposophists have been comfortable with the charismatic leadership of individuals but much less comfortable with bureaucratic structures that vest ultimate authority in a single person. In the 1990s, baby boomers witnessed the death or retirement of many individuals who had exercised charismatic leadership, either as the founders of specific Camphill places or as members of the movement’s founding generation, and for the most part they chose not to emulate the leadership style or roles of those individuals.

Baby boomers in Camphill also relate to anthroposophy differently than do those from the previous generation. This is not to say that they aren’t personally committed to anthroposophy. Most long-term coworkers of the baby boom generation either participate in anthroposophical study groups or have done so in the past; most have read a great many books and lectures by Rudolf Steiner; most have, at some point in their lives, engaged in anthroposophical meditative practices. The majority of baby boomer coworkers who arrived at Camphill in the 1980s or earlier and are still there today are members of the inner community. Yet they have, often by conscious choice, presided over a transformation in which a deep connection to anthroposophy is no longer expected of coworkers from subsequent generations (or, for that matter, of baby boomer coworkers who arrived in the 1990s or later).

One baby boomer whose family heritage extends through three Camphill generations described this transition to me as a mirror of changing spiritual dynamics within Western culture as a whole. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, she said, all the “common traditions” of the past were coming to an end, and “people were very much on a search to break out of stuck modes and habits.” These seekers perceived intentional community as a “new thing” that would supplant the old traditions. If the community they happened to find was Camphill, it was natural for them to embrace “the spiritual esoteric path of anthroposophy” in its entirety. But as older traditions lost their power, and an eclectic New Age spirituality took their place, spiritual seekers of the 1990s and beyond were no longer “looking for a core belief that will sustain the breakup of tradition, because we are so used to living on fluid ground, or shifting soils, that we don’t necessarily need that from outside.” These people still want spirituality, she emphasized, but “they are open to anything and they are not willing to commit any more to one particular path.” What’s more, she said, baby boomers are deeply attentive to the voices of their own children, who “are saying, don’t come and tell us this is the only way. Show us who you are, be authentic, live your life, and we will come and ask you.”<sup>102</sup>

Baby boomer Camphillers have responded to the changing spiritual climate in a variety of ways. Many retain a daily practice of meditation and participate in the Camphill inner community, in anthroposophical study groups, and in Christian Community congregations. Nearly all the people who sustain Camphill’s liturgical life as Christian Community priests or as lay “service holders” for the Festival of Offering (a weekly ritual that does not require a priest) are part of the baby boom generation, or slightly older. Most of these people are happy to talk about anthroposophy with anyone who asks, though they rarely bring up the topic unbidden.

Other baby boomers might be characterized as apostates from anthroposophy who have remained loyal to Camphill. “I went through a time when I was reading a lecture a day,” one told me when recalling his early days in Camphill. “I was being a good boy. There’s a lot of Steiner’s ideas which for me are immensely important and I think very important for the world, but I would only ever say I’m an anthroposophist with a small a.”<sup>103</sup> A fellow member of his community told a similar story with more detail: “I think a lot of us anthroposophists, this is a confession, read Steiner passionately, ardently, for a number of years, and we bought more books by him than we ever possibly could read. Our shelves are full of them and they are all gathering dust. We all got tired of it, couldn’t cope with it, that’s too complex, that’s weird.” He was particularly influenced by the discovery of other authors, notably Ken Wilber and Rupert Sheldrake, who presented ideas similar to anthroposophy in newer and more accessible language. Though he remains “intensely grateful for having found anthroposophy and Camphill,” his real passion today is for intentional community in all its forms. When other Camphillers want to discuss Steiner lectures from the 1920s, his only reply is “what do we have to say to society now?”<sup>104</sup>

Another baby boomer coworker, not quite so alienated from anthroposophy, observed that many in her generation still carried scars from the heavy-handed way in which they had been introduced to anthroposophy.

There is still a cloud hanging over people who are now my age or a bit younger than me . . . who fear they have been pressurized into things, they have been pushed into things, there is only one way to think and if you think differently you are a bad Camphiller. . . . There are some who embraced it very much but then really almost turned against it after a while. . . . But stayed in Camphill because the work with the children is important to them. And others who still embrace it, but . . . [are] very careful . . . not to do the same as was done to us.<sup>105</sup>

A similar hesitation can be found in many aspects of baby boomer leadership in Camphill. Some baby boomers, raised in Camphill, have founded their own communities but declined to affiliate these formally with the movement. Another baby boomer, who came to Camphill as a young adult and participated in a very strong cohort of coworkers at Botton, left the question of affiliation with Camphill open when he and his wife founded a new elder community in England. "We came here out of a wish to develop certain ideas within Camphill and we founded the community here. But we were unsure at the time whether it would be a Camphill community. And so we dissolved the outer forms. We stopped having Bible Evenings, graces at the beginning of meals. . . . We wanted to live with the community impulse and decide a bit later whether it should be a Camphill community." Even though their ultimate decision was to identify as Camphill, giving the community freedom to evolve in its own way was an important value.<sup>106</sup>

When I ask baby boomers about the task of handing Camphill traditions on to the next generation, many begin by comparing themselves unfavorably to the founders. "The generation before me were very sure of themselves," explained Russ Pooler, at Newton Dee in Scotland. "And we came along and we weren't sure of ourselves."<sup>107</sup> A coworker in Ireland elaborated that "the original founders had the pioneering thing. They had by blood, sweat, and tears brought the community into existence, and that gave us huge respect for what they were doing. We inherited it, and it became affluent in our time, and we were seduced by the affluence . . . . My generation has failed to fill the next generation with that enthusiasm to want to take it into the future."<sup>108</sup>

Such comparisons have another side. Russ Pooler added that the founders could be heavy-handed. "They forced Camphill to be like this. It caused a lot of problems, a lot of pain, and you don't do that anymore."<sup>109</sup> The other coworker just cited said that although "the first generation didn't make a moral compromise," this was to the detriment of some things. "To be a staff child in Camphill in [the early] days was not nice, because our parents gave everything to the development of the community." Even the people with special needs, she added, "had to toe the line with the founding members," while her own generation has "been much

more tolerant, and the next generation even more so.”<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the last in a long line of baby boomers to serve as president of the Camphill Association of North America saw herself as ideally suited for generational transition precisely because she did not have a powerful vision to hand on. “I thought I could be that transition president because I am not a big person. I would not impose my ideas and impressions and vision on what the association could be, but allow it to have an evolutionary phase where the young people could step in and bring their new impulses and their new way of working.”<sup>111</sup>

The ambivalence makes it easier to understand why many Camphillers are not confident that the current generational transition will be as successful as the previous two—but also why confidence is just the thing that is needed. In order to inspire the millennial generation, baby boomers must muster the same enthusiasm and idealism that they received from their predecessors, *and* they must express this enthusiasm not only for the work of their predecessors but also for their own work and for the changes they have made. Perhaps paradoxically, they must convey a sense that Camphill *as it exists today* is worth carrying into the future, and that it is in continuity with the Camphill of the founders.

The current transition is also complicated by dramatic changes in the organizational structure of Camphill, which is more socially complex today than it was in 1980. The total number of persons involved in Camphill has perhaps reached a plateau, while the range of roles they play has diversified. The number of non-disabled adults who have lived at Camphill for more than three years and who expect to continue living there indefinitely has declined significantly, especially if one excludes those adults who are of retirement age. They have been replaced by employees who perform functions ranging from janitorial service to executive direction, and by “young coworkers” who come to Camphill for a gap year or specialized training, with no intention of staying long-term. As the social stigma of disability has declined, parents of the residents with special needs are more likely to participate in the daily life of Camphill, as are residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Many Camphills also sponsor day programs for persons with special needs who reside elsewhere.

All of this makes it much more difficult to achieve the intergenerational dialogue that was so important to the previous transition. “We are isolated from each other,” a Camphiller named Steve Lyons explained, because roles are more differentiated and professionalized: “The land people don’t talk to the teachers in the school. Or in an adult community the workshop people are not talking to the folks who have an overall view of the governance issues.”<sup>112</sup> Another mused that “I just hope I . . . can live up that kind of openness [that he had experienced] when people come here. By really listening to who they are. . . . And asking the same question, if you think this isn’t what it should be, what should it be?”<sup>113</sup>

In the past, the most seasoned Camphillers were available for conversation in the kitchen, the workshop, and the garden, amid the daily rhythms of Camphill

life. But with the increasing of state regulation, many of these people today work in central offices, interacting with government inspectors, social workers, and donors. These tasks separate them from the younger generation and make the younger generation less likely to trust them as mentors who have performed the same tasks the young people are doing now.

Perhaps the most significant Camphill response to this challenge has been the creation of formal structures for intergenerational dialogue. In the past decade, many Camphills have expanded the seminar programs in which young coworkers participate, and in both Scotland and the United States it is possible for seminar participants to earn a BA degree primarily through experiences within the community. This expansion only partly offsets the decline of the inner community, which today includes only a handful of coworkers who are under forty and only sporadically plays a vital role in shaping the life of Camphill. The kind of informal handing on of the torch that once happened within the inner community must now find new spaces.

Ultimately, the current generational transition may be both less conflictual and less successful than the one that went before, simply because of the baby boomers' reluctance to be directive. At Newton Dee, baby boomer Simon Beckett told me that there was more harmony in the current transition and more honesty in the previous one.<sup>114</sup> His perception was echoed by Jonas Hellbrandt, a Gen Xer at the same community. Because "the baby boomers come from a culture where it is very difficult to tell people how to live their life," his generation has inherited a "diluted" consciousness of how anthroposophy informs Camphill lives. When it comes time for them to pass on the tradition to a fifth generation, they "will have to make an effort to be informed and . . . more conscious about [how] the ideas of anthroposophy . . . live in our day to day life."<sup>115</sup>

#### A MISSING GENERATION

I began spending time at Camphill Village Minnesota in 1999, when I was thirty-two and starting a career as a college professor. Most of the coworkers I met were either substantially older or younger than me. Several were baby boomers who had met as young adults at Camphill Copake in the 1970s and migrated to Minnesota in the 1980s or 1990s. One couple who had recently left the village and moved to a nearby town were former staff kids from Copake, a few years younger than the others but still within the baby boom cohort. Two other baby boomer couples, without a deep background in Camphill or anthroposophy, had been raising their children in the community for the past decade or so. The other major group of coworkers were so-called "young coworkers," many of them German and fresh out of high school, who spent only one or two years as part of the community. In between were two coworkers who were, like me, born in the late 1960s and thus part of the small cohort known as Gen X. They were both single, and at times

preoccupied with the question of whether they would sacrifice their chance to have families if they stayed in Camphill long-term. Meanwhile, the villagers with special needs were chronologically balanced, with persons born in the 1960s and 1970s perhaps the majority. This may have been because the village was started in the early 1980s, as Gen Xers with disabilities were reaching adulthood and looking for residential placements.

Since 1999, I have seen a similar pattern in many other Camphills, especially those that are far from urban centers. In places that were founded earlier than Camphill Village Minnesota, the “missing generation” phenomenon applies equally to Camphillers with and without intellectual disabilities: many villagers arrived as young adults in the 1960s or 1970s and stayed on, leaving relatively few openings until they began moving on into the newer elder communities. Still, it is the absence of Gen-X coworkers that most frequently sparks expressions of anxiety about Camphill’s future. “It is fairly consistent,” said Camphill Scotland staff-person Neil Henery, “that there seems to be a small group of aging coworkers who have leadership roles . . . and a larger population of transient and younger coworkers. . . . The distance between the two . . . is getting quite acute.”<sup>116</sup> Even places that are proud of their success in retaining members of the millennial generation acknowledge a generation gap, as one Gen Xer at Newton Dee told me: “Really my age there are not so many, there are quite a few who are already ten years on, late fifties, early sixties, and then there is this strong group of younger people.”<sup>117</sup> Another of a similar age who had first come as a young coworker said, “When others talk about young people, they don’t include me. . . . I guess I am just there in the middle.”<sup>118</sup>

Camphill places with strong Gen-X leadership are conscious of their exceptional status. When I visited Camphill Grangebeg in Ireland, I noticed that most of the community’s leaders were in their late forties, and I soon learned that conflicts had driven the community’s baby boomer founders away. “Obviously in Grangebeg you are talking of a Camphill that has gone through some very hurtful periods of time,” explained Tobias Pedersen. “To birth Grangebeg has been so painful on the human side. It has cost relationships. People have come and have gone.”<sup>119</sup> Another Grangebeger described this situation as “a blessing and a misfortune.” On the one hand, they are less frequently “paralyzed” by older forms of life, but on the other they miss a certain “wisdom” that surrounds Camphills with more generational diversity. Most of the coworkers “had extreme karmic struggles in previous projects,” and as a result “we have learned to fairly readily accept one another in our inadequacies and irritating habits. . . . But it also means that we are possibly blindly leading one another.”<sup>120</sup>

For some Camphillers who are rooted in anthroposophy, the absence of a generation is a spiritual phenomenon that requires a karmic answer. Perhaps, one person told me, the Camphill impulse was the work of “a particular grouping of souls,” and “maybe that group has all arrived and there is an end to it. . . . Another

possibility is that their earthly development . . . is getting harder and harder to connect with one's pre-earthly intentions, and [so] people don't find it anymore."<sup>121</sup>

Mundane factors have also contributed to the scarcity of Gen-X coworkers in Camphill. First, it is a smaller generation: birthrates in Western Europe and the United States declined precipitously in the 1960s. Second, the slowing rate of economic growth in the 1980s, coupled with the rising cost of higher education, meant that fewer middle- and professional-class people felt sufficiently secure economically to undertake an open-ended search for a communal alternative to mainstream employment. A third factor was the rise of "gap year" volunteerism in Europe in the 1980s. This was driven by a change in the implementation of Germany's military conscription law. Prior to 1983, conscientious objectors who wished to perform alternative civil service had to go through a cumbersome application process; after 1983, the process was streamlined and virtually all requests were approved. As the numbers of young German men performing volunteer service between high school and college increased, their peers who were female or from other European nations followed suit. By the 1990s, formal placement organizations for gap-year volunteers proliferated, including two that focus specifically on anthroposophical initiatives. The larger of these, *Freunde der Erziehungskunst*, currently has more than a hundred volunteers at Camphill places in the United Kingdom, thirty in Ireland, and fifty in the United States.<sup>122</sup>

Camphill initially experienced gap-year volunteering as a boon. It provided a stream of willing workers, many of them contemplating careers in education or social work. Only gradually did they realize that these young people were not like those who came before: people who were taking a year off before university were less likely to make a long-term commitment than those who had already finished school, or who had dropped out of college in search of an alternative to the mainstream. And those who came after college felt out of place in communities that catered more to teenagers and empty-nesters. Recalling her own arrival in the 1990s, one person recalled a twenty-two-year-old companion who said, "She loves it here, she would love to stay, but she would really struggle because all the other people were the age of her parents."<sup>123</sup> In recent years, many Camphills have taken steps to increase the numbers of gap-year volunteers who become long-term Camphillers, but these strategies arrived too late for Gen X.

Another factor that has limited the role of Gen Xers in Camphill is the declining vitality of Camphill's inner community. Prior to the 1980s, it was common in many Camphills for coworkers to be invited to join the inner community when they completed the seminar, or when they took on primary responsibility for a household or workshop. In other places, potential members had to take the initiative to ask about it, but this happened commonly because all the older coworkers with whom one might interact were already inner community members. By contrast, almost everyone I spoke to who joined the inner community after 1985 said that they had to seek it out and that the process took many years, in part because



many of the seasoned Camphillers were either not members of the inner community or no longer actively involved in it. One person who had been in Camphill for almost thirty years when I interviewed him in 2013 told me that he hadn't joined the inner community until after 2000. "It was actually my initiative, yes, because by that time I realized that I was sufficiently committed that I wanted to give expression to that by joining the inner community."<sup>124</sup>

Marjan Sikkel, a baby boomer whom I met in Scotland, described a more difficult path into being a member in the inner community. "I asked myself if I could become one," she said, then added that she was refused admission to the inner community in one Camphill, a fact that shocked her friends at the next place she joined. She also hesitated to seek out the inner community because her impression was that it did not live up to its own ideals. "I think the idea of an inner community where people hold the flame . . . is really beautiful. But then I heard that actually they were fighting inside the Camphill community with each other. I thought, 'That's not so beautiful, is it?'" She chose to join anyway because she realized that conflict is inevitable in any spiritual community, and that working through the conflict is part of the spiritual task.<sup>125</sup> A Gen Xer in North America said her path to the inner community was slowed by her perception that, with increasing administrative responsibilities, baby boomers were no longer engaged in the real work of Camphill. "When I was a coworker here in my mid to late twenties, I had a little bit of a perspective that it was an older generation who are not really standing in the life. They are not really working with the children . . . and now they are telling us how it is done? You get that picture, right? A very black-and-white picture of a twenty-something-year-old person." Inner community members seemed to her to be "much, much older," and "I could not really see what they were doing." Finally, someone took what was a "very unusual" step and asked her to consider joining—and even then, her process took two or three more years.<sup>126</sup>

Similar challenges prevented another Camphiller, herself a former staff kid, from joining the inner community at all. It wasn't "for lack of trying," she explained. She knew that the path in was to "approach somebody with your interest," and so she tried speaking to people her parents' age whom she knew to be inner community members. "They've all said, oh, no, don't talk to me about it, go and talk to so-and-so who is like the grandma or grandpa in the community. And after two such incidents I decided, well, actually I'm not going to do that again. I want to talk to somebody who is not the grandma or grandpa. It is not because I am not interested in talking to them, but because I think it is not their job to talk to me. The people I approach should be doing that, and they are not confident enough for whatever reason."<sup>127</sup> Her spouse, Tom Marx, added that in their neighborhood the inner community members had recently "decided that they are not going to meet anymore because they have decided that that element of Camphill life is no longer wanted."<sup>128</sup> Another Gen Xer observed that while "a lot of people always take for granted" that she is an inner community member, she has never felt

quite right about joining. “The thing is, I don’t quite understand it myself. There is something, when something goes beyond a certain point into the really esoteric realm, where I feel I don’t want to, or I shouldn’t go there. . . . It is something very holy and precious and I’m not quite sure whether I’m just a coward or whether it is also not for me.”<sup>129</sup>

Even when Gen Xers find their way to the inner community, they may struggle to know what to do with it once they arrive. Guy Alma told me that he had been in Camphill for five years before joining the inner community, and that most of his age peers made the opposite choice because “it just wasn’t relevant to them.” “There’s nothing that you would outwardly miss by not joining it,” Guy observed, then said that “early on when I joined the community, it was a little bit like I was in a big building where there was music playing and I could hear it but I couldn’t find my way to the room that it was in. . . . I think my generation and the people that are coming up now were handed something—I do feel we were handed a torch. But we were handed it somewhat tentatively. We were given it but not really told what to do with it. I found that difficult. I found that exciting.”<sup>130</sup> I heard some of the same excitement from Ruairidh von Stein, a Gen Xer who grew up in Camphill and spent much of his young adulthood in the movement. Ruairidh did not fully embrace anthroposophy until middle age. He joined both the inner community and the Christian Community around 2006. “Some people do it within three months, and some people take their time gradually. I took two years, and I was very grateful that I was led into the community—you get led in by a friend who leads you into the community, you share your life story with the friend. That friend then tells your life story within the community setting, and you then write your own vow.” For all the support he received, Ruairidh still described the inner community as “a lonely path” because it is not visible outwardly. “But I felt it was very important to nurture and carry that within. The spiritual part of the community is very essential to keep up.”<sup>131</sup> These words epitomize the challenge of the inner community today: if it is no longer providing that depth of commitment for the majority of Camphillers, what will?

One factor that offsets the absence of Gen-X coworkers is that this generation is well represented among Camphill employees. There is a direct connection between these facts. Camphill began employing large numbers of people in the 1990s and 2000s because they were having trouble recruiting long-term coworkers, and many of the people on the job market in those years were Gen Xers. Yet it continues to be rare for employees to play a central role in shaping the future of the movement as a whole, and this pattern diminishes the visibility and influence of Gen Xers.

Just as Camphill town communities and training colleges emerged during the years when baby boomers were streaming into the movement, so one final type of Camphill place coincides roughly with Gen X. But it underscores that generation’s low profile, for this type of community was created largely by baby boomers, and

was initially populated by even older people. I refer to the “elder community” centering around the unique needs of older adults, including but not limited to retired coworkers and adults with intellectual disabilities. As early as 1973, the Grange Community in England hosted a conference on the challenge of aging villagers, where participants explored the extent to which care for the aging could be incorporated into the “work” of a traditional village, and whether other forms were needed. The original idea—of creating a “sanatorium” at one Camphill to which aging villagers from other places might relocate—proved difficult to get off the ground.<sup>132</sup> The first elder community, Simeon, was established in Aberdeen in 1984—forty-five years after Camphill’s beginnings in that city, and thus at a time when people who might have arrived at Camphill as teenagers in the early years were moving into old age. The first elder Camphill in the United States, Camphill Ghent, was established up the road from Camphill Copake around 2010, at a time when the number of elderly villagers and coworkers at Copake had grown so large that the community was struggling to open up any spaces for younger people. Yet Simeon and Ghent provide only moderate relief to the aging challenges of nearby villages, since most of their residents did not previously live at Camphill. Other large Camphill villages, notably Vidaråsen in Norway, have designated specific houses as “care homes” for the elderly within the context of multigenerational village life.

Elder communities draw on a heritage of anthroposophical work for the elderly that has taken place outside Camphill for decades. In Spring Valley, New York, the Fellowship Community is a Camphill-like village specializing in care for the elderly, but without a specific focus on disability. It was founded in 1966, and its campus directly adjoins that of the Threefold Educational Center, a loosely organized intentional community that has anchored anthroposophical endeavors in the United States since its founding in 1926. Drawing on such examples, Camphill elder communities generally insist that they are designed as places where the elderly can be fully included in multigenerational community—just as other Camphills are not exclusively for persons with learning difficulties, but places where people of all abilities can freely share their gifts with the world. As one coworker at Simeon put it, their mission is both “to allow each one to meaningfully live out the last years of their life” and “to allow younger people or other people to be involved with older people and to bring about this mix of generations.” This multigenerational mission is made easier by the fact that Simeon shares a backyard and a community center with Cairnlee, the training college that is part of Camphill Schools Aberdeen, ensuring that some of the youngest and some of the oldest Camphillers pass by one another as part of their daily routine. Simeon also seeks to make its community accessible to the loved ones of its residents, knowing that “all the threads and connections of their lives come together in family and friends who surround that person at the end phase of life.”<sup>133</sup>

Elder communities help Camphillers live out an important implication of anthroposophical teaching about karma and reincarnation: that death need not

be a catastrophe, but can be embraced as a joyful transition to the next stage of spiritual development. To maintain personal connections during this transition, anthroposophists often read aloud to their dead relatives for the first few days after death. This is practiced occasionally in all Camphills, but of necessity more frequently in those with elderly populations. The founder of one such community described his community's life as spiritually rich because "this house is saturated with people who've died. . . . It is more than just bricks and mortar and a bit of real estate. . . . Where I work in that office, the one in the back there, that's a room where Frances died. Where I'm at the desk, the wheelchair was right at the desk with me where Robert died. Just through that door is where Betty died. Upstairs is where my dad died because we had him for the last few years. . . . We are just so lucky."<sup>134</sup> "This whole process of aging," echoed the coworker at Simeon, "is what excites me and I find very interesting—one spent one's whole life learning to become independent and then in the last years one has to learn to become dependent or interdependent. There are so many thresholds to be crossed."<sup>135</sup>

Of the five types of Camphill, elder communities have gone the furthest across the threshold separating Camphill tradition from institutional structures of salaried employment. Since these communities must be licensed as nursing homes, they require nursing and medical professionals, few of whom are available within the network of Camphill coworkers. Yet many of these employed coworkers cherish Camphill precisely because of the ways its communal ethos distinguishes it from mainstream care facilities. And many of those employees today fall in the Gen-X cohort.

Gen Xers are also well represented in the new regions to which Camphill has spread in the past few decades. The fall of the Berlin Wall precipitated an expansion of Camphill into formerly communist countries. The Vidaråsen community in Norway, through the energetic leadership of its founder Margit Engel, launched Pahkla Camphilli Kula in Estonia and Svetlana Village in Russia, in 1991 and 1992 respectively. Seven years later, Inga and Vilnis Neimanis established the first Camphill in their native Latvia after five years of preparatory experiences at Vidaråsen.<sup>136</sup> They even brought an old Norwegian supermarket with them, reassembling it to serve as the new community's barn!<sup>137</sup> Petr Netjek, from the Hogganvik community in Norway, brought Camphill to his native Czech Republic.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Hans and Johanna Spalinger marshaled the resources of both Waldorf schools and Camphills in Switzerland to begin the work in Romania early in the 1990s. Within a decade, the work included a day school for 230 special needs children, a regular Waldorf school, two kindergartens, a residential community for thirty children and their caregivers, a small farm, several workshops, a canteen for two hundred people, and its own training course.<sup>139</sup> Preexisting, initially somewhat clandestine communities in East Germany and Poland also affiliated with Camphill in the 1990s.

Camphill's work in Asia also began as Gen Xers were coming of age, though older coworkers often played the role of founders. Sadhana Village in India grew out of the friendship between its founder, Vasant Deshpande, and two seasoned Camphillers he met at Camphill Copake, Kumar Mal and Roswitha Imegwu. Kumar and Roswitha were also instrumental in launching Friends of Camphill India in Bangalore. Camphill's presence in Vietnam grew out of the charismatic leadership of Ha Vinh Tho, a cosmopolitan visionary who is also affiliated with Bhutan's Gross National Happiness initiative. Like many pioneers of Camphill in new places, he began his own Camphill journey in an established community, Perceval in Switzerland. After beginning his family there in the late 1970s, he had an opportunity to return to postwar Vietnam in 1982. He created a foundation, the Eurasia Association, devoted to the creation of schools for children with disabilities, vocational workshops for adults with disabilities, and training programs for social workers. Eurasia then sent seven Vietnamese people to Perceval for the Camphill seminar. Eurasia's schools have educated hundreds of children. But it was not until 2009 that the moment was ripe for the creation of a Camphill-style residential community. That community, Peaceful Bamboo Family, became a full member of the Camphill Movement in 2012. It is primarily a training college, working with young graduates of Eurasia schools to help them find meaningful and income-generating work. Like most Camphills, it has a biodynamic garden and craft workshops, among them lacquer painting and incense making. It also has a tea house as a center of interaction with residents of the neighboring town.<sup>140</sup>

Camphill places in Vietnam, India, and Eastern Europe are still in their pioneering phases. Many have yet to say farewell to their founders or undergo the transition from charismatic leadership that is now a distant memory for other Camphills. Their future development will thus be shaped not only by Gen Xers, but by the more numerous millennials who are currently leading the renewal of Camphill places everywhere.

#### THE FOURTH GENERATION

There are two stories that Camphill coworkers of the baby boom generation tell about their millennial counterparts. One is that people born between 1980 and 2000 struggle to make the sort of permanent life commitments that came naturally to people of older generations. The other is that millennials manifest a profound empathy for other people in general, and for persons with intellectual disabilities in particular.

"This is a very special generation," one baby boomer told me when asked about the millennials. "It is hard to know what they want and how they want it."<sup>141</sup> "We live in a time," echoed another, "when people don't see themselves committing to something for the rest of their lives. People have more than one career. . . .

People will say, well, I am willing to commit two years, maybe three years, and after that I am not sure I can continue to do this. So at that level I think Camphill is struggling worldwide.”<sup>142</sup>

Older Camphillers highlighted the fact that very few millennials have been able to make a genuine commitment to anthroposophy. “Anthroposophy is more or less gone from the younger generation,” said one long-term coworker in Norway, even though the younger ones “run the place.” “And then of course you have the danger to become like [other social service agencies] because you haven’t got this ideal of the image of man.”<sup>143</sup> Russ Pooler gave this point a different accent, suggesting that millennials no longer feel the need to make a stark choice for or against anthroposophy. “People are just much looser. Much more easygoing, much more able to accept more different spiritual paths in a way. I found it really hard to accept one.”<sup>144</sup>

Older coworkers identified a number of factors to explain the millennials’ greater emphasis on individual autonomy. One person suggested that millennials are less connected to “the social life” of their communities because they have access to social media and cheap transportation: “They come with a completely different consciousness. Ears full of plugs, and the mobile always out. . . . There’s a bus that goes to the airport, there are very cheap flights. . . . If they have a long weekend, off to Vienna or off to Hamburg, and back. In my time, that wasn’t possible. You’d have to stay.”<sup>145</sup> Another explained this primarily in terms of a change in parent-child relationships: “In my generation . . . the children followed the parents, not the other way around.”<sup>146</sup>

Many of the millennial Camphillers with whom I spoke agreed with the generalization that they are commitment averse. One told me that he enjoyed the Camphill seminar, but chafed at the intense structure and lack of opportunity to pursue hobbies or “actually create something myself.” “Staying here, working six days a week . . . is very nice, but I have to explore the world and meet many different people.”<sup>147</sup>

Complaints about millennials’ lack of commitment are almost invariably balanced with praise for their empathy. “One of the things which I’ve observed in younger people,” said Martin Sturm of Camphill Clanabogan, “is that they have different possibilities to connect with things and people. You may call it empathy.” This quality, he went on, makes it possible for millennials to forge a deep connection to anthroposophical practice, even if they find little meaning in anthroposophy as a set of concepts. “And yet you find with some of the older generations it is very much still an intellectualized concept . . . upheld through a certain amount of dogma.”<sup>148</sup> Jens-Peter Linde, a Christian Community priest who has spent many decades in Camphill drew a similar contrast. While “the old forms, like Bible Evening . . . are becoming rather feeble, there is something taking their place which is what I call empathy. . . . That I am able in a selfless way to enter into the being of another person or the being of an association. . . . I can see that now with the young

people who come to Camphill. . . . They have that in a very beautiful way. They can enter into these difficult children . . . and be one with the child and know what to do with it. . . . I think it has to do with what Steiner called the reappearance of the Christ in the etheric.”<sup>149</sup>

These two observations about millennials are often framed as sweeping generalizations. To the extent that they accent the impact of social media and changes in parenting practice, they parallel observations that are made outside of Camphill. They also reflect the institutionalization of gap-year volunteering as the primary path by which millennials enter Camphill. In stark contrast to the young people who arrived in the 1970s, gap-year volunteers are not motivated by disenchantment with the mainstream worlds of academia and employment. They have yet to experience those worlds at all. Camphill is their first taste of life outside their family home, and they are looking for greater freedom, not for a lifelong commitment. Many have chosen a Camphill that is far from home, for the sake of “seeing the world,” but anticipate that they will soon continue their education at a university in their home country. What’s more, gap-year volunteers have typically chosen Camphill from a large menu of potential placements. Many opt for Camphill, not because they are attracted to intentional community, but because they are contemplating careers working with persons with learning difficulties. It is not surprising that these young people, many of whom have siblings with disabilities or attended schools alongside classmates with special needs because of “mainstreaming” policies, display strong empathy for the students and villagers they meet. It is also unsurprising that they show less interest in anthroposophy than the new arrivals of the 1970s, many of whom came seeking a spiritual path rather than a career in social work.

Even among millennial coworkers who’ve been at Camphill for several years, very few belong to the Anthroposophical Society or participate in study groups devoted to Steiner’s works. Some openly express disinterest in Steiner; many more appreciate the practical fruits of his work without engaging their spiritual underpinnings. As Newton Dee’s Jake Vollrath put it, “I don’t really believe in all the spiritual stuff. However I very much appreciate the holistic approach that anthroposophy brings.” Steiner’s balanced emphasis on thinking, feeling, and willing, for example, informs Camphill’s approach to the relationship between “work life, home life, and cultural life” in ways that he finds very helpful. He added that most Camphillers in his generation “pick and choose bits from it than we can identify with,” with each individual choosing a unique collection of “bits.”<sup>150</sup>

This pattern creates special challenges for those millennials who are deeply committed to Steiner’s spiritual teaching. At one Camphill I visited, I heard stories of tension between two groups of younger coworkers. On one hand there were those—including some who had been raised in Camphill—who saw Camphill as “full of opportunities” and didn’t want to get bogged down in the question of “are we having Bible Evening or not.” On the other hand, others were “most concerned



that what we do has a spiritual basis, that it is based on anthroposophy, based on Karl König, based on the three pillars of the Camphill way of life.” “You’d maybe expect,” mused my informant, who was from the baby boom generation, that this “would be coming from the older generation,” but “quite the reverse.”<sup>151</sup> Indeed, as subsequent interviews revealed, some of the most “conservative” attitudes were held by individuals who were new to anthroposophy. One of them told me that he had come to Camphill at the behest of his future wife, who told him that “it was a kind of paradise.” His own experience confirmed this report: “I remember the first day I came there was something happening. You could feel something.” Even though he spent his first months “totally in a shock . . . standing there in a language I couldn’t speak,” he appreciated the way he was being transformed by work with people with disabilities and by the lack of a skills-based salary. And yet when I asked him if he was one of the people responsible for Camphill’s future, he couldn’t give a definitive answer, precisely because he wasn’t confident that others of his generation shared his commitment to anthroposophy. “I could say yes, I could say no. Of course, if you live here, if you want to stay, . . . you can be part of decisions. . . . This is a big problem at the moment. We do not know where we will go.”<sup>152</sup>

For millennial anthroposophists, the ambivalence of the baby boomer generation can be a source of consternation. One millennial leader, herself born into the Camphill Movement, told me that she had recently joined the Anthroposophical Society. “What I’m finding is that even though the older members may be members of the Anthroposophical Society, but they also are perhaps not comfortable with calling themselves an anthroposophist. . . . I’m a bit confused, what’s wrong with being an anthroposophist?” When she attended meetings designed to get people of all generations talking together about anthroposophy, she discovered that “there was only one other person at the meeting who seemed to be in the same sort of place as me. In terms of thinking it was okay to be an anthroposophist.”<sup>153</sup>

This difficulty is evident in the life of the inner community. Almost every inner community member I’ve spoken to, whether they’ve been part of it for five years or fifty, said that it is less vigorous today than in the past. “Today it doesn’t function the same way at all,” said Russ Pooler. “It is very loose. . . . It used to be it was a very strong thing. You were either outside or you were inside.”<sup>154</sup> Another told me that when he joined ten years earlier, there was “a very strong inner group,” but “then it seemed to take a nose dive, and very little happening. It seemed to die!”<sup>155</sup> At Beaver Run, one person told me that there were thirty or thirty-five long-term coworkers involved in the decision-making Beaver Run Circle, but only seven of these were part of the inner community.<sup>156</sup> When asked about this, coworker Guy Alma observed that

you can look at living in Camphill as compared to a marriage. You can love someone and cherish someone and raise a family with someone and live with someone with

single-hearted devotion to someone until the day you die and not put a ring on your finger. . . . For some people the form of marriage is too restrictive. . . . For other people, myself included, I wanted to be married. . . . We wanted to get married by a priest. . . . It is not just a commitment to our social community, it is a commitment to the spiritual world too. . . . Community membership is like that.

Guy then acknowledged that although his wife shared his view of marriage, she had made the opposite choice about the inner community. "She has deep feelings about Camphill, it is her life, but she is not going to marry it." He also acknowledged that the "vibrancy" of the inner community is no longer "visible" to many people. "If you didn't know that marriage was available to you as an option, you aren't going to get married."<sup>157</sup>

Several people suggested that the inner community's history of secrecy is a liability, because, said Russ Pooler, "the younger people rejected anything of secrecy. It must be all open and transparent."<sup>158</sup> In several places—including Aberdeen and Botton Village—the inner community has been partly supplanted by "Community Circles" devoted to the study of anthroposophy and open to all Camphillers regardless of whether they are part of the inner community or the Anthroposophical Society. "If we hadn't done what we did within the Circle I think we would be in a far worse place," said one participant, Ruairidh von Stein, at Botton. "[The Circle] is open to noncommunity members. . . . It would be wrong to close it off, because there are many strong people here who are spiritually striving people but they are not necessarily anthroposophists. I still feel the need to be very open to other spiritual streams."<sup>159</sup>

Veronika van Duin, herself a long-term Camphiller and the daughter of cofounder Barbara Lipsker, offered a blistering critique of the inner community, which she regarded as increasingly irrelevant to Camphill's future. Though many conversations about the future still take place within the inner community, she sees this as fundamentally wrong because the inner community does not represent all the constituencies within Camphill. Camphill employees might come to one meeting and "never come again," but "have the community members ever gone and said, why don't you come again? . . . No. They don't. They say, they are invited to come and they just don't, so we will go on. . . . So we are in a real time of transition with Camphill and with anthroposophy."<sup>160</sup>

In their reluctance to make long-term commitments or to become spiritually connected to anthroposophy, millennial Camphillers are similar to the Gen Xers who preceded them. The difference is that there are many more of them, owing both to gap-year volunteering and to their greater numbers as a generational cohort. Those millennials who break with the generational pattern and stay long-term at Camphill are often motivated by deep networks of connection rather than open-ended spiritual seeking. A young American at Newton Dee, Jake Vollrath, told me that he had grown up near Community Homestead, a Camphill-like

community in Wisconsin. "I was friends with some of the children. . . . One of the founding members has been my soccer coach since I was ten. I lived there for just over a year before I came here." Once in Scotland, he discovered that Camphill's BA program, then offered in conjunction with Aberdeen University, fit his learning style well. "As I was doing the BA I needed to show that I could take responsibility for different kinds of things. And I just built it up in a very natural organic way." Gradually, it became clear that Camphill was the right lifestyle for him personally. "I have heard people say, oh, you are so wonderful, you do this work, I could never do this. And that's true to a point, but I could not sit in a bank and cash people's checks. I would find that really difficult. Whereas living in a community with people, I am quite happy to do that." Jake acknowledged that most other people of his generation who come to Camphill discover that it is only "meant for them for the short-term." But that's a strength, not a weakness: "I'm quite happy that it is not a one-size-fits-all."<sup>161</sup>

To outside observers, Jake might seem to be one of the most committed Camphillers of his generation. But he admitted, "I don't feel comfortable making a lifelong commitment," and explained his stance by noting that he is well aware of Newton Dee's history. "Most of the people who have made lifelong commitments to Newton Dee have left," he pointed out. Rather than emulating those predecessors, he prefers to be honest about the fact that "in the back of my head I know that my circumstances could very well change."<sup>162</sup>

I heard a more unequivocal commitment from a millennial coworker at Camphill Solborg in Norway. But Steffi Hagedorn also made clear that if circumstances had been different, her path to community might have taken a very different course. She first arrived at Solborg as a nineteen-year-old from Germany with an eight-month commitment. She liked it well enough that she decided to extend her stay. Then she met her husband, and they decided to begin their family in Camphill. Eventually, their desire for more education took them away: Steffi went to another anthroposophically inspired place to complete the social therapy course she had begun at Camphill, then followed her husband to a carpentry training course in Germany. Missing Solborg and Norway, they returned for one year and discovered that the conflicts that had marred their earlier time in community were easing up. "People were getting closer and being honest with each other and sharing more what is going on. . . . To me that was very important." Even so, Camphill's identity as both Christian and anthroposophical created another hurdle. "I am not baptized, I am not Christian I guess, in any sense of the word," Steffi explained. "So it was not, for me, natural to join a Christian community. So at some point I was looking for another kind of community. . . . But then there is no other community that I have found which also works with villagers. And that I love. This is the whole heart to the villages. Without the villagers we wouldn't make it half a year." She also came to see that although anthroposophy "doesn't include all I think is important," it does carry many important values. After thirteen years,

she can say categorically that she is “definitely a Camphiller” and that she is committed to “protecting” Camphill and “making sure it doesn’t lose its values.”<sup>163</sup>

Millennial coworkers noted that their relationship with the previous generation had much to do with the degree of their commitment to Camphill. One told me that, because of the increasingly bureaucratic structure of Camphill, it is difficult for coworkers of his generation to find mentors who are immersed in the daily work of curative education and social therapy. “I have always found relationships with the generation that began in Camphill in the sixties and seventies very important.” As a young coworker at Thornbury, he found several such mentors—but most were in managerial positions rather than working directly with the children. He switched to Cherry Orchards “because I felt that Camphill was living here in the everyday,” but observed that others of his generation are “seeking mentors of that generation but [unable] to really get down to the life and work with them so directly.”<sup>164</sup>

A millennial generation leader at Newton Dee told me that the open-hearted attitude of the older generation was one reason she could say that she “definitely” sees herself as one of the people responsible for Camphill’s future. “The older generation that I’ve had a lot of dealings with have been very empowering. I’ve never felt not allowed to do stuff, or to have ideas. I’m quite choleric so I do argue . . . but I’ve always felt that people listen to me and that they value what I say and they may have another opinion and they will know that my opinion can be changed as well.” This experience is different from the time she spent at a nonprofit, in between two stints at Newton Dee, where the people with decision-making power were “really not interested in progress or succession.”<sup>165</sup>

Another factor shaping millennials’ willingness to make a long-term commitment to Camphill is retirement policy. Historically, retirement at Camphill was an extension of the larger ethos of economic sharing: just as long-term coworkers forego salaries and trust the community to provide for their needs, so too retirees have assumed that as long as they remain with the community they will be supported. Though many older Camphillers are currently enjoying comfortable retirements under this plan, I’ve never met a Camphiller under fifty who is willing to extend this level of trust to the community. Some older Camphillers see this as evidence of millennial individualism, but millennial Camphillers are not averse to economic sharing as such. Many say that they would be horrified to receive a salary for the caring work they perform; many say that Camphill’s heritage of economic sharing is what attracted them; many have relocated from employment-based to incomes sharing Camphill places. These millennials trust economic sharing as a day-to-day reality, but reject it as an adequate approach to retirement.

The difference here has less to do with generational *zeitgeist* and more to do with the fact that millennial Camphillers know more about Camphill than their parents’ generation did forty years ago. When young coworkers committed to Camphill in the 1970s, they saw that the movement had grown steadily for thirty

years and was bursting at the seams with young people who were more than capable of providing for the needs of their elders. Young Camphillers today also perceive Camphill as an enduring, resilient movement, but they have seen more ups and downs. They anticipate that some of the Camphill places currently in existence will fail to survive this generational transition. Some of their mentors may be enjoying comfortable retirements, but others are in precarious circumstances because they chose to leave Camphill late in life, or were forced out. Younger Camphillers are aware of the Camphill places that have made the transition from incomesharing to a conventional employment model, leaving their retirees partly or fully in the lurch. And many have seen troubling patterns at more traditional Camphills. One young Camphiller, who was deeply committed to the traditional approach in many respects, told me that she'd been horrified to see some Camphill families who lived without salaries but nevertheless "made use of the resources" to maintain a very comfortable lifestyle with minimal engagement in the hard work of "digging their carrots out." When she saw long-term Camphillers leave the movement and find themselves "totally lost, really, in the 'real world,'" she concluded that "something must be wrong if living in Camphills for such a long time disconnects you from reality."<sup>166</sup>

The conditions that make it easy for millennials to stay at Camphill long-term do not yet exist at every Camphill place. If a community is not large enough to include a mutually supportive cohort of millennials, it is not likely to persuade any of its young coworkers to stay on. If coworkers from the baby boomer generation have not consciously stepped out of leadership roles—even without any guarantee that the person who replaces them will have a lifetime commitment—millennials will not experience the challenges and leadership opportunities that give rise to commitment.

The divide between Camphills that have and have not achieved a successful transition to the millennial generation corresponds, in part, to the distinction between the developmental path of "evolving beyond community" and the path of "creative symbiosis." Camphill places that fail to persuade a significant number of millennials to embrace lifesharing as a vocation are perhaps fated to evolve beyond community. Some places, especially in England, have embraced "evolving beyond community" as a matter of principle and do not even try to recruit millennial lifesharers. On the other side, creative symbiosis is a viable option at the places that have already made the transition to millennial leadership. In the past few years, I have visited an increasing number of these communities. Some are large and long-established; others were founded by millennials. Some have leadership teams composed almost entirely of millennial coworkers; others have both Gen X and millennial leadership.

Newton Dee in Scotland is one well-established village that has made a successful generational transition. At the time of my visit in 2016, the chair of Newton Dee's "management group" was someone born in 1977, and five of the twelve members

of the group were also born after 1970. In Newton Dee's decentralized leadership structure, the management group maintains an overall consciousness of the complex interactions among the many dimensions of the community. It also stands in for an "executive director" in relation to the larger world. Daily life in the larger households is shaped by a circle of about twenty-three "house coordinators"; of this larger group of leaders, only two or three are over fifty.

At Newton Dee, the initiative for generational transition came from the baby boomer leaders who had guided the community from the 1990s onward. Their choice was shaped by the memory of their community's difficult previous tradition, when they needed outside consultants to resolve sharp conflicts over how strictly to maintain traditional Camphill ways. Baby boomers were on both sides of the conflict, and the end result was to solidify the leadership of baby boomers who were relatively open to new ways. Parallel conflicts raged in many other Camphill places in Scotland and England in the 1990s. Often these resulted in the departure of all long-term coworkers, causing the community's charitable board to step in, impose a more conventional top-down management structure, and replace nonsalaried coworkers with paid employees.

By 2012, so many British Camphills had evolved beyond community that this was the dominant ethos in the umbrella group, the Camphill Village Trust, that comprised Newton Dee and ten other villages for adults. Troubled by this development, Newton Dee and the other Scottish village withdrew from the Trust, just as conflict reached the boiling point in several English villages. This withdrawal gave them the opportunity to reinvent themselves, and they did so in a manner intended to insulate Newton Dee from what they perceived as the dire fate of the Camphills in England. They refused to create a singular office of "executive director," creating a large management group instead. They mandated that all the members of that group would be "trust money" coworkers—that is, people who trusted the community to provide their living expenses, rather than earning a formal salary. But they did not reject the idea of salaried coworkers altogether. The majority of Newton Dee's workshops are coordinated by employees, while all the houses are coordinated by unsalaried residential coworkers. The judgment was simply that a healthy balance between the old and the new employment structures could be maintained only if decision-making power was concentrated among people living under the old system.

Almost simultaneously, Newton Dee confronted another challenge: Aberdeen University, which had previously sponsored a program that allowed young coworkers to earn a BA degree while living at Camphill withdrew from that program. The BA program had been central to the community's strategy for generational continuity because it enticed gap-year volunteers in their late teens to stay on for three more years, after which point a significant minority of them were prepared to make an open-ended commitment. About a third of the house coordinators were graduates of the BA program. The potential loss of this stream of young people

made it urgent for the community to embrace the leadership gifts of the young people it had.

Newton Dee soon became a magnet for young Camphillers who are interested in spirituality and disgusted by the declining emphasis on anthroposophy at other Camphill places, especially those in England. One of the young coworkers I interviewed, for example, told me that he had first learned about anthroposophy in college as a religious studies major and decided that he “wanted to live it, not just read about it.” His quest took him to a school for children with special needs that was inspired by anthroposophy but not part of the Camphill Movement. The most inspiring person he met there was a house manager who had lived in Camphill for ten years, and her example convinced him that “Camphill provided that real living anthroposophy.” But the first Camphill place where he worked, in England, was rapidly shedding its traditions, and several others openly refused to accept families with children—a clear sign that they were ambivalent about the Camphill tradition of treating coworker families as full members of the community. Newton Dee emerged as his first choice because of its fidelity to incomes sharing and lifesharing, and because its proximity to other Camphill places ensured that he would also be embedded in a lively anthroposophical community.<sup>167</sup>

Interestingly, this particular Camphiller worried that even at Newton Dee, the younger generation was not holding tightly enough to the spiritual core of anthroposophy, even as they celebrated the communal practices that derived from it. Conventional organizations, he explained, have hierarchical structures because power has a natural “tendency to shift into [ever] smaller groups.” Without deliberate practices that enable people to see themselves as spiritual beings rather than as bearers of power, it is almost impossible to maintain “a horizontal or circular way of working.”<sup>168</sup> On the other hand, he was married to someone whose feelings about anthroposophy were similar to those of the other coworkers. She cherished the example of anthroposophists whose “spiritual striving” allowed them to “live their lives in a way that totally shines into other people’s lives,” but she’d met others who led her to conclude that “as soon as you start following it as a dogma, it becomes a bit cult-like.”<sup>169</sup>

Another Camphill whose young leaders have embraced the path of creative symbiosis has not yet experienced a generational transition. Heartbeet Lifesharing was founded in 2000 by Hannah Schwartz and Jonathan Gilbert, who were then in their early twenties, and formally accepted as a Camphill community several years later. Hannah and Jonathan’s choice not to offer their gifts to an existing Camphill community took a certain measure of fortitude, for by 2000 many Camphill places were already worried about generational transition. They would have been thrilled to recruit someone like Hannah, who had grown up at Camphill Village Kimberton Hills and attended the seminar for young coworkers at Camphill Copake, and whose charismatic gifts were beginning to be recognized throughout the movement. But as a twenty-four-year-old, Hannah did not



experience existing Camphills as “super breathable” for people with new ideas. As the mother of an African-American child, she was eager to expose her daughter to racially diverse worshipping communities, rather than attending chapel services at Camphill every week. At the time, that idea was not well received—in part, she speculated years later, because she was not quite comfortable “coming up against” older Camphillers who had known her since childhood and whom she still perceived as “giants.” By starting her own community, she reasoned, she could experiment freely and adopt only those Camphill traditions that still made sense. Initially, that experimental ethos meant that even the question of whether Heartbeet would be a Camphill was left undecided. Within a decade, Heartbeet decided that it would, emphatically, be part of Camphill; by that point, a more mature Hannah recognized that “there is tons of room for creativity.”<sup>170</sup>

Located in the Northeast Kingdom of rural Vermont, Heartbeet has almost as much land as Newton Dee but only about a third as many people and a more limited menu of agricultural enterprises and craft workshops. The community hall was completed recently; prior to that, the felting, fiber arts, and papermaking workshops gathered in residential houses. Its leadership structure, similarly, is relatively uncomplicated: only in the past few years has the community succeeded in moving decision making away from the charismatic authority of the founders to the community as a whole. That community is composed almost entirely of people under fifty, most of them in their twenties and thirties. The only exceptions are the older relatives of the founders, some of whom have spent time at Heartbeet in a kind of semiretirement. At Heartbeet the persons with special support needs are just as youthful as the coworkers with whom they share community life—a natural consequence of the age of the community. At Newton Dee, by contrast, there are dozens of elderly persons with disabilities who have lived their entire adult lives in community, limiting the number of spaces available for younger persons with disabilities. Thus, while Heartbeet can be described as a “youthful community,” Newton Dee might better be described as an aging community with youthful leadership.

One way in which Heartbeet has fostered commitment among millennial Camphillers is by hosting youth conferences. The first was in 2002, and it has held at least a dozen since then. Hannah Schwartz credits one of her sisters with inspiring the first conference. As a young adult member of a branch of the Anthroposophical Society filled with older adults, she was desperate to find spiritual colleagues her own age. Thus, the first few conferences were intended for young adults connected with all aspects of anthroposophy, not just Camphill. Later conferences were intended more narrowly for younger Camphillers.

In organizing these conferences, the Heartbeeters were mindful of the tradition of anthroposophical youth conferences. The early years of the Anthroposophical Society were marked by tension between an older generation interested in studying Steiner’s ideas and younger people who wanted to put them into practice. The founders of Camphill first met as an anthroposophical youth group in Vienna.

And many baby boomer Camphillers, including Hannah's parents, solidified their own connection to anthroposophy at national or international gatherings. Hannah has drawn freely from her parents' friendship circle in recruiting speakers at Heartbeet youth conferences.

These conferences create a space where young Camphillers can meet generational peers who share their depth of commitment to the movement, and also find mentors among the older generations. Ordinarily, older Camphillers are diffident about their traditions because they know that many gap-year volunteers have no interest in long-term commitment. This leaves potential long-termers adrift, unclear about the connections between Camphill's spiritual roots and its present reality. At Heartbeet's conferences, the diffidence disappears: sessions might feature a spiritual interpretation of correspondences between key events in world history and in Camphill history, or a detailed presentation of the economic theories underlying Camphill practices of economic sharing. These heady lectures are punctuated with artistic workshops and hilarious interventions by two clowns, Kristin Crowley and Angie Foster, who ask one another befuddled questions about the anthroposophical jargon they've just heard. The implicit message is clear: all the resources of Camphill tradition are at the disposal of the new generation, who are free to receive them with absolute seriousness or deep humor.

Heartbeet's blend of youthful energy and traditional Camphill values has made it especially suited for creative symbiosis. Much of the community's work happens in coordination with likeminded businesses in the larger community, among them Pete's Greens community-supported farm, High Mowing Organic Seeds, and the Cellars at Jasper Hill, which produces aged cheeses. These businesses grew up alongside Heartbeet, with all the founders participating in an entrepreneurial support group where they learned management skills and shared challenges. It was natural for them to become work sites for some of Heartbeet's disabled residents who wanted more connection to the wider community. Several marriages also link Heartbeet to its community partners, who are becoming as invested in Camphill's future as the Heartbeeters themselves.

A third successful transition has occurred in a less likely place. Unlike Newton Dee, Camphill Solborg in Norway is not a large village with so many young coworkers that is easy to find a romantic partner in community. It is not accessible to other anthroposophical initiatives or to a city with a lively youth culture. And, unlike Heartbeet, it was not founded by millennials. Solborg was founded in 1977, and for most of its history it was led by baby boomers who had been mentored by Margrit Engel, the guiding figure in Camphill Norway for most of its history. Still, in 2016 nine of the twelve coworkers on Solborg's village council were in their thirties or forties, and its villagers were also disproportionately in that age group. Among the leading coworkers, five or six lived at the community for about fifteen years. "That group has become the group that carries the village Solborg into the future," one of them told me. "The older generation that was carrying it before, they

became pensionists or have left, so it is up to us basically.” As a result, many things about the community are different. Whereas their predecessors had participated actively in anthroposophical study groups, such activities do not shape Solborg’s direction in an especially conscious way anymore.<sup>171</sup>

What has taken anthroposophy’s place, explained Steffi Hagedorn, is a deeper sense of emotional, interpersonal commitment. “We are much more bonded to the place and to each other than we were before,” she stressed. “Before maybe it was more idealistic—‘oh, we are all anthroposophists, we should go there’—but . . . there was not so much loyalty. Now I feel that there is a lot of loyalty between people.” This loyalty has been hard won. For several years there was so much conflict that virtually the entire coworker group turned over every few years. Finally, “there was a group saying, we don’t want to leave, we want to stay, and we need to solve conflicts.” Around that time, Camphillers across Norway became interested in a system of conflict resolution called “Zen coaching.” Though this has no connection to anthroposophy, Camphillers saw enough affinity that they were willing to give it a try. “It is about listening with the heart to each other and repeating what the other has been saying.” Once this took hold, even some of the people who had left the community began coming back.<sup>172</sup>

Even before the generational transition, the community had committed to broadly shared leadership, with a “village council” making most major decisions. The new leaders cherish this tradition. They are also committed to extending it to include villagers more fully. “We are much more aware of every villager having their own voice and rights and trying to help them to make adult decisions,” explained Steffi Hagedorn. “We shouldn’t force them to do things. Before, we wouldn’t physically force somebody but there would be houseparents who would just decide that a villager would stop smoking. Now that would be unheard of.” This change, she added, reflects Solborg’s increasing openness to the larger society, as the Norwegian authorities insist on self-determination for persons with disabilities.<sup>173</sup>

Amid the diversities between Newton Dee, Heartbeet, and Solborg, it is possible to identify a few common features. Communities that have achieved a generational transition in leadership tend to be home to a significant cohort of millennial coworkers who are raising families alongside one another. They are hospitable to the formation of romantic partnerships and flexible with couples in which only one partner is fully committed to Camphill. Millennials find it easier to commit to raising children in Camphill if they know they will not be the only ones doing so, and often they relocate from one Camphill to another in order to find this cohort of peers. Paradoxically, the fact that many Camphills have deliberately chosen to evolve beyond community by limiting incomes sharing and lifesharing has made it easier for millennials who cherish those practices to become concentrated in a smaller number of more traditional Camphill places.

Second, many of these communities have at least a few former staff kids among their millennial cohort. These individuals help bridge the generations. Hannah

Schwartz, for example, was not merely raised in the Camphill Movement. She is the daughter of prominent Camphillers who are familiar to virtually all long-term Camphillers in North America, and many around the world. Her mother, Sherry Wildfeuer, still lives at Kimberton Hills and edits the *Stella Natura* biodynamic planting calendar that is published by that community. Her father, David Schwartz, has lived in many different Camphill places, including Heartbeet, and David's partner has chaired the Camphill Association of North America. When established Camphillers look at the new things happening at Heartbeet, they see continuity as well as change, and reassuring evidence that they must have been doing something right, since their children want to carry it forward. Much the same can be said about Newton Dee. One member of the management group is married to the daughter of one of the most influential leaders of the baby boomer generation. Other former staff kids serve as residential coworkers or employed staff.

Third, communities that have made a successful transition are deliberate about telling the story of their transition. This story may involve the deliberate stepping back of baby boomer leaders. Or it may be the story of the community's founding by members of the millennial generation who aspired to re-create Camphill life for a new age. In either case, there is a clear understanding that successful generational transition doesn't just happen—it must be consciously chosen.

Fourth and finally, communities that have embraced the millennial generation's leadership are often characterized by what I call "creative traditionalism." They promote the leadership of a new generation while zealously maintaining core Camphill values. Attitudes about Camphill tradition, moreover, do not correlate predictably with one's generational identity. Older Camphillers are not presumed to be conservative custodians of tradition, and the young are not expected to be rebellious innovators. Rather, the young are forging their own relationship with tradition, modifying its details in order to preserve its essence. Typically, they are fierce defenders of the traditional Camphill practices of lifesharing and income-sharing, and sometimes sharp critics of other Camphill places that have curtailed those practices. But they are adamant that these practices must continually be adapted and renewed in relation to changing circumstances. Often, these communities have experienced a period of intense conflict in which Camphill traditions were severely questioned, and then reaffirmed in modified form. They might, for example, practice a form of lifesharing in which families have more private space (including small kitchens) than was the case previously. Or they may pay salaries to all their coworkers, but use a pay scale in which differences are very small and based on longevity rather than the specific tasks performed by the coworker. Though both Heartbeet and Newton Dee cherish the ideal of economic sharing, both have embraced couples in which one spouse wants to live Camphill 100 percent and the other wants to maintain a professional identity through employment "outside." In some cases, the spouse who wants more professional autonomy was raised in Camphill and doesn't want to live just like their parents, while the

other came to Camphill as a young adult. These communities also have governance structures that concentrate power in the hands of traditional coworkers as opposed to villagers, employees, or board members, but also distribute power fairly broadly within the traditional coworker group.

Heartbeet's employment and retirement policies exemplify the creative traditionalism that many millennial Camphillers seek. At the beginning of each year, each coworker or coworker family prepares a budget of their personal needs. If the community is able to meet those needs, it reports that amount to the IRS as the coworker's income and makes the appropriate payment into the Social Security system. This ensures that these coworkers, unlike their Camphill predecessors, will be entitled to Social Security benefits as retirees, whether or not they remain in Camphill. Heartbeet, like most Camphills today, also promises a specified amount of "leaving money," commensurate with years of service, to any coworker who leaves the community. In effect, savings and retirement are individualized, reflecting the real possibility that the individual will not remain with Camphill for life, while present-day budgets remain communal.

Another aspect of creative traditionalism, evident especially at Heartbeet, is the comfortable embrace of spiritual and therapeutic practices not rooted in anthroposophy. Heartbeet defines itself as a "sober community," honoring the presence of many people with personal or familial experiences of alcoholism, and many of its members participate in weekly therapy groups in the nearby town. Many have been trained in Marshall Rosenberg's "Nonviolent Communication" or in the "Holistic Approach to NeuroDevelopment and Learning Efficiency." Such practices might be perceived as dilutions of Camphill tradition if they occurred elsewhere, but it is hard to perceive them as such when they are promoted by Hannah Schwartz, who is as deeply committed to the esoteric details of anthroposophy as anyone in her generation.

At even the most successful places, there are unresolved questions about the place of anthroposophy in Camphill's future. At the root of these questions is a generational difference. For baby boomers, lifesharing, incomes sharing, and anthroposophy were generally experienced as a package. For Gen Xers and millennials, there are significant numbers of people who are deeply invested in lifesharing and incomes sharing, but uninterested in anthroposophy. The consequence is a two-fold stepping back. People without a personal connection to anthroposophy may hesitate to take on leadership (especially beyond their local community) because they sense that Camphill's thriving depends on its connection to anthroposophy; meanwhile, people who do have a personal connection to anthroposophy hesitate because they are conscious of their minority status. Another consequence is that the inner community is not even able to knit together the traditional coworker group, much less expand its scope.

Even, and perhaps especially, at places with strong cohorts of lifesharing millennial coworkers, I also observed employees and villagers who had significant

leadership gifts and a genuine commitment to Camphill ideals. In some but not all cases, these people had not been invited to shape the future of their particular Camphill. In virtually all cases, they had not been invited to shape the future of the Camphill Movement. This is the most important issue facing Camphill right now, and I am not aware of any Camphill place that has fully faced it. There simply is no inclusive body able to include employees and villagers in the future-shaping work that was historically performed by the inner community. To understand why this matters, we must consider differences of role as well as differences of generations. Villagers, employees, coworkers, and other role-based groups are the vital organs within the Camphill organism.