Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Collection

J. Oliver Buswell Jr. Library
12330 Conway Road
Saint Louis, MO 63141

library.covenantseminary.edu

BRIDGE OVER THE WATER: EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS IN WENDELL BERRY'S VISION OF COMMUNITY

By

DANIEL K. CHINN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

2010

BRIDGE OVER THE WATER: EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS IN WENDELL BERRY'S VISION OF COMMUNITY

By

DANIEL CHINN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Graduation Date May 21, 2010

Dr. Donald Guthrie, Faculty Advisor _____
Dr. Steven Garber, Second Faculty Reader _____
Dr. Robert Burns, Director of D.Min. Program _____
Rev. James C. Pakala, Library Director _____

ABSTRACT

In Wendell Berry's novel *A Place on Earth*, his fictitious character, Ernest Finley, is hired to rebuild a footbridge destroyed by flood waters. As Ernest restores the bridge he muses that a bridge is not perhaps the first thing a man would build, but it surely is the first thing a neighborhood would build. This musing reflects Berry's understanding that in order for a community to be healthy, connections must be enacted between all members of a membership: human, non-human, and the place itself. The three relational aspects that connect the members of community are mutuality, responsibility, and affection. These three bridging components are further defined by Berry as the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and those who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.

Good work, according to Berry, supplies the opportunities for connecting to each other and the land. Good work, done in a local place, benefiting a local people and economy enables community members to enact a sense that they are bound to each other, and are therefore, accountable to one another, resulting in a love or affection for the work itself, the people in the place in which the work is done, and all other places where the work is not done, since every place is connected to every place. Communities diminish when the work in a place is done for the global economy, because the work is done

beyond the reach of one's love for a place. Individuals in a neighbor who intentionally step away from relationships do something crucial to their humanity.

College of the Ozarks (a four year, liberal arts, Christian, work study college) can benefit from Berry's vision of community. The practiced mission of C of O is education of the head, heart, and hands of its 1500 students who work fifteen hours a week to pay for their tuition as they learn academically and live in community. In an ever individualized culture, where those in a place are isolated from each other (seeing no need for building bridges), C of O can benefit from Berry as he informs its practiced mission by helping their students learn the need to build bridges consisting of mutuality, responsibility, and affection, while teaching them the ethic of good work. This study will explore the connections in Berry's vision of community and seek to discover how C of Os practiced mission can be informed by his vision of communal mutuality, responsibility, and affection. For this exploration, this study will utilize a qualitative method design using semi-formal interviews and constant comparative method with three communal institutions to gain a broader understanding of community and the importance and necessity of bridge building.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anything I could ever say about the subject of community can be little more than a continuation of my beginning to understand community when my Mom and Dad, Larry and Betty Chinn, adopted me when I was merely six months old, and willingly and lovingly embraced me as part of their community. Their willingness to open their hearts and home was my first instruction in community health, furthering my thoughts about mutuality, responsibility, and affection as our community grew and grew together – through the years, through the good and the ill. Mom and Dad, you took a risk, you gave me a chance, and I thank you. You first held me, a sunburned, tiny baby, so that, by God's good grace, you could read the book, you hold now. Though my community has grown beyond and away from my Bowring, OK neighborhood, I will always enfold you in my heart; give God thanks for bringing me into your community; and cleave to Bowring as my rooted place on earth.

But this work's greatest and immediate debt belongs to my wife, Sue. Bear, you too took a risk, and gave me a chance when you said, "I do" over twenty years ago. By so saying, you entered my community and I entered yours – to live covenantally. I learned about community, and about grace; and they go together. You taught me that. Together, we cultivated our own little colony of heaven on earth known as the Chinn Clan. Living the daily comings and goings of our community, you taught me that we really are in this thing together, we truly are accountable for each other, and that affectionate love has come to town to stay. For the untold early mornings when I slunk

off into the dark to my office to write, and you woke alone to get the household started, beds made, four kids ready for school, and yourself out the door on time, I thank you. I am, of course, indebted to you for keeping the home fires burning and planning for pleasant returns during my travels and travails. Sue, you are the better part of anything I've ever done or ever will do, including this work. I made this book for you, its true inspiration and source. Its very life.

Rare are those with whom conversations are easy *and* profoundly transformational. Over brimming bowls of tortilla soup at Little Hacienda, Hayden Head permitted me to drag our conversation through many aspects of this work. His contribution to my thought is more than I deserve, and a singular honor. Hayden, you also took a risk and gave me a chance at genuine friendship – a traditional Catholic and a reformed Presbyterian. Imagine *that* as the basis for a healthy community! You laughed as heartily as I when, over soup, I wondered out loud if the chickens used for the soup were happy chickens – a Berryian thought. And you cried as freely as I as we walked, together, through the veil of the loss of your dad. You shaped my community principles, because we lived them. We put them to the test in real ways, in a real place. My community, my life would be diminished without you, and I am not ashamed of the love we share as friends and brothers. Also, I thank you for the use of your country home – a quiet place to think and write.

For love, hospitality, encouragement, and other kindness in my travels, I thank Jennifer Freeman, College of the Ozarks, Dr. Steve Garber, Canada L'Abri, Dr. Donald Guthrie, Dr. Bob Burns, Dr. Marilyn Graves, my Dissertation Partners, my editor, Dorothy Carroll, Kristen Sagar, Tom Healey, Dr. Marvin Schoenecke, Dr. Sue Head,

Linda Schmidt, my Prayer Partners, my four children Calvin, Jessica, Katie, and Shiloh, and of course, Wendell Berry. He shepherds my heart in the peace of wild things and the grace of the world.[1]

[1] Wendell Berry's literary works assisted me in formulating these acknowledgements.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In *A Place on Earth*, author Wendell Berry tells of the goings and comings of the membership of his fictitious, agrarian community, Port William, Kentucky. Ernest Finley, a member of Port William, is hired by Mat Feltner to rebuild a footbridge destroyed by a recent flood. In the telling of Finley's delight of rebuilding the bridge, Berry lends insight into his vision of community and work. [1]

Ernest Finley knew what a bridge is for. Lame in both legs from the first Great War, Ernest carries himself on crutches. Still, his place in Port William is that of carpenter and handyman. The job of repairing the mangled foot bridge that connected the love and labor of Gideon and Ida Crop to the community of Port William is profoundly significant to Ernest's understanding of how things are connected.

Annie Crop is Gideon and Ida's nine-year-old daughter. The day Gideon heard the rushing flood waters, Annie sat in the middle of the bridge playing with her doll. Annie heard the water and stood to get a better look. She looked toward her daddy, as Gideon saw her disappear as the brown flood waters ripped the bridge, leaving it mangled in the flooded tree tops. Annie never re-appeared. Ida Crop, though deeply changed by her loss, "kept the place" as though nothing had been lost. She watched Ernest Finley repair the bridge in a little more than a sunrise and a sunset. At sunset:

> He hurries at his work, excited by his high balancing out on the thing he has made, feeling the echo of every hammer stroke rock back under him along the taut cables – and excited by knowing that a bridge is what it is. There comes to be

[1] Wendell Berry, *A Place on Earth* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1983), 167.

> something deeply pleasing to him in the idea of a bridge – not, maybe, the first mark a man makes on the earth, but surely one of the first marks made by a neighborhood—and he hastens toward its completion. Long before he is done, he already knows how it is going to be, and he is driven on by an appetite for the finished look of it.[2]

Ernest Finley knew, instinctively, the purpose of a bridge. A bridge is for connecting: connecting people, places, work, lives, and ideas that need to be connected but are not. A bridge may not be the first mark of a man, but it "surely it is one of the first marks made by a neighborhood."[3] This story about bridge building depicts Wendell Berry's understanding of how one's communal mutuality, responsibility, and affection connect all those in a neighborhood.

College of the Ozarks is a four-year Christian liberal arts college, committed to educating the head, heart, and hands. Fifteen hundred students work fifteen hours each week at on-campus work stations to pay their tuition. Most of these students work and study while living in an on-campus community. All students (and employees) are aware of the college's vision statement: "To develop citizens of *Christ-like* character who are well educated, hard working, and patriotic."[4] The college believes that a person with Christ-like character "responds to the love, joy, and peace of God in his/her heart with a commitment to serve others. Dedication to intellectual growth, hard work, and service refines qualities of kindness, goodness, patience, humility, and self-control that reflect Christ within that individual."[5] Although College of the Ozarks' vision statement and definition are oriented around community and vocation, reflecting a commitment to its original mission and charter, the concept of community and work adopted by the

---

[2] Ibid., 167.
[3] Ibid., 167.
[4] College of the Ozarks Catalog 2007 – 2009, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Point Lookout, MO: College of the Ozarks Press, 2007), 5.
[5] Ibid., 27.

employees and students is increasingly privatized. In other words, the students and those who care for them are influenced by the present postmodern age, and their understanding of community and work may reflect more of a petit-narrative than a meta-narrative. They, unlike Ernest Finley, may not necessarily see the value of bridges. Even if they do, they may not fully appreciate the beauty of a bridge's purpose. The problem is two-fold: (1) influence from our postmodern culture, and (2) fuzzy theology surrounding the issues of community and work.

David F. Wells, Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, explains how postmodern college employees and students struggle to know what Ernest Finley knew instinctively, and took pleasure in knowing. Wells asserts that rather than a cohesive understanding of community and vocation, we are experiencing a fragmentation of society. People who once held similar beliefs about life and worldview now believe that a bridge is the mark of an individual, not the mark of a neighborhood. In fact, the need for bridges connecting people to people may not exist at all. Meta-narratives once held sway, but Wells believes that the petite-narrative now prevails. He calls these petite-narratives "privatized worldviews." According to Wells:

> What has replaced the worldviews that once sought to encompass the whole of existence in their understanding are now privatized worldviews, worldviews that are valid for no one but the person whose world it is and whose view it is. They qualify as worldviews because postmoderns are still addressing questions about what is ultimate (the answer is nothing) about the meaning of the universe (the answer is that it has none) and about human experience.[6]

Sometimes floods destroy bridges, instantly separating things that should be connected, like the Crops to the Port William membership. More often, the damage results from slow, nearly imperceptible erosion, the water current persistently tearing

---

[6] David F. Wells, *Above All Earthly Pow'rs: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 74.

away at foundations and supporting pillars. Our culture is awash in the rising waters battering away at a cohesive sense of community and work. How extensive is the damage, and what can be done to repair and shore up the bridges that connect a healthy community to wholesome work? What is Wendell Berry's understanding of community and work? How does College of the Ozarks understand community and work? What can be done to facilitate healthy conversations - taking into account postmodern influences and fuzzy theological thinking - on these issues?

All types of communities can profit from Berry's gospel-shaped understanding of redeeming love, community, and work; particularly, the unique community of a Christian college with a work program, like College of the Ozarks, can benefit from an innovative and fresh conversation about community and work. Berry supplies the vocabulary for such a conversation. This study organizes that vocabulary into a useful dialogue for College of the Ozarks' nontraditional context. To accomplish that organizing task, this study focuses on three components: (1) understanding community, (2) understanding vocation, and (3) understanding Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community, with the goal of informing College of the Ozarks' practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands.

Statement of Problem and Purpose

Our culture, as well as the church, is increasingly ignorant of the meaning, value, and purpose of work and community. In addition, the church and culture fail to perceive how they impact one another. Berry believes that his understanding of the ways in which work and community enhance and cultivate one another is a necessary and healing

remedy for our fragmented and unhealthy vision of communities and for our economically diminished vision of work.

Berry believes his perspective on work and community is healing and necessary because he defines and experiences both through the lens of the Gospels – though perhaps more unconsciously than he himself is aware. If this is the case, then Berry's gospel-shaped vision of work and community could serve as part of a solution to the dissolution creeping into culture, communities, churches, and colleges.

The practiced mission at College of the Ozarks is, broadly speaking, education and integration of the head, heart, and hands. The faculty and students are somewhat confused in their understanding of work and community. Berry can help bring light to the darkness often surrounding these two issues. [7]

Given the reality that many College of the Ozarks students, and those who care for them, struggle to understand the implications of work, faith, and community, the ever-present struggle of students to link belief with behavior, and the unique nature of a Christian college with a work program educating postmodern students who increasingly lack a theology of work and community; the need to explore the bridges that could connect College of the Ozarks employees' and students' understanding of these significant issues with Berry's discussion of them is vital. Unquestionably, "the old answers to the question of work will not always be adequate to new situations."[8] As a Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) minister serving students at a Christian college

---

[7] While there is a body of literature that discusses the nature of faith, community, and work (Miller, Hardy, Nash, Niebuhr, Calvin, Kline, Berry, Garber), none of these writers address the issues of work and community as they relate to a Christian work-study college like College of the Ozarks. Indeed, the one book written specifically about the history of College of the Ozarks' faith and work program does not address these concerns, i.e., Jerry Davis, *Miracle in the Ozarks: The Inspiring Story of Faith, Hope, and HARD WORK U* (Point Lookout, MO: College of the Ozarks Press, 2007).

[8] Hardy, *The Fabric of This World*, 118.

with a work program, the researcher wants to explore Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community and work while investigating the current understandings held by the students and those caring for them, living and growing in a community that expects integration of the head, heart, and hands. The researcher, alongside Ernest Finley (and Wendell Berry), desires to survey bridges, taking deep pleasure in knowing that a bridge is what it is.

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped understanding of community could help inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks.

Research Questions

The primary research questions structuring this study were:

1. What is Berry's understanding of community?
    a. How and to what extent do the Gospels shape his understanding of community?
    b. To what extent do the Epistles shape his understanding?
2. How do Christian organizations that focus on the importance of community understand community?
    a. What is The Institute's[9] understanding of community?
    b. What is the Yukon Fellowship's[10] understanding of community?
    c. What is Well Rested University's[11] understanding of community?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for the five faith-based colleges in the United States,[12] because they also desire consistency in their work program and community practices,

[9] The pseudonym "The Institute" is used to protect confidentiality and identity.
[10] The pseudonym "Yukon Fellowship" is used to protect confidentiality and identity.
[11] The pseudonym "Well Rested University" is used to protect confidentiality and identity.

where the integration of head, heart, and hands is expected. The study will also aid students at College of the Ozarks, helping them make sense of the bridges connecting what they believe about the world and how they live in the world. The study will have significance for the church universal in America as it struggles to integrate faith and learning, and therefore community and work. Finally, the study will have significance for the readers of Wendell Berry, who desire a more in-depth knowledge of his understanding of community and work integration.

Significance for the Five Faith-based Colleges with Work Programs

Colleges with a Christian culture and work program are distinctive largely because of their unique mission – providing a Christian education coupled with a work program (earn and learn) in the context of a self-aware community. Part of the oddity of this concept is the intentional integration of educating the head (academics), the heart (soul), and the hands (vocation) while growing in community.

"Membership in a college involves far more than attendance at classes, and this is as it should be. Ideally, the members of a college, both teachers and taught, *work* together, *think* together, *play* together, and *pray* together,"[13] thus preparing students to live integrated lives. Preparing them for such living (on campus and beyond) requires that these colleges think more closely and consistently about their institutional understanding of how the work program influences and relates to the community practices of college life. This study will seek to identify some of those understandings, thus enabling these colleges to become more consistent, intentional, and self-aware of truly bridging together

---

[12] College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Missouri, Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Kentucky, Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, and Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina.

[13] Trueblood, *The Idea of a College* , 49.

the communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection community in the context of work.

Significance for the Students Attending Christian Colleges with Work Programs

Though these colleges can benefit from this study, it has even greater significance for the students attending these institutions of higher learning. This study will bear fruit for the students who are educated while working and living in community, as it explores Berry's idea of community and work in order to produce a fresh conversation in which students learning and working in community may engage as they develop a more consistently gospel-informed worldview as lifelong learners.

Significance for College of the Ozarks' Employees and Students

Since the researcher serves as Campus Chaplain at College of the Ozarks, where he is much involved with the developing ideas and values of 1,500 students, he interacts on a daily basis with students testing, most for the first time, their own theological, emotional, social, spiritual, and mental wings. "For those whose pathway leads them into the world of the university, decisions are made during that time that are determinative for the rest of life. In the modern world, the years between eighteen and twenty-five are a time for the settling of one's convictions about meaning and morality. Why do I get up in the morning? What do I do after I get up in the morning? One then settles into life with those convictions as the shaping presuppositions and principles of one's entire life."[14]

By discovering and exploring Berry's thoughts about work and community, College of the Ozarks' students and employees may benefit as they access the discoveries made through this study. As understanding of community and work deepens, influenced by Berry, the research can help inform the practiced mission at College of the Ozarks,

[14] Steve Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (Downer Grover, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007) 94.

which has direct benefit for our employees' and students' presuppositions and principles. They will be given opportunities to engage Berry's perspective in fresh conversations concerning what they believe about the world so they can live consistently and cohesively in the world as they think more closely and carefully about their work and the resulting practices of their community – on and off the campus.

Significance for Those Who Read Berry

Berry is a prolific author, and culling out his understanding of community and work can be daunting. Appendix A provides some insight into the scope and breath of his literary contributions.[15] This study is, therefore, significant because it will bring together, in a concise and comprehensive manner, Berry's understanding of three central issues of community and work, and faith.

Significance for the Church Universal in America

The researcher hopes not only to produce a fresh conversation for faith-based colleges with working students and employees, but for the body of Christ more generally. Elton Trueblood highlights the need for this study. "Most men and women see their world through only a tiny crack. It is by education, and the reading and thinking which education encourages, that this crack can be widened."[16] This study can help widen the crack through which the men and women in America's churches understand their community practices and work.

Definition of Terms

Affection - a sense of care and tenderness toward all the parts of a whole; individual parts willing to sacrifice for the collective good; the good of the many outweigh the good of the one; love; devotion.

---

[15] *http://www.brtom.org/wb/berryc.html*
[16] Elton Trueblood, *The Idea of a College*, 157.

Community - the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives; combined memberships.[17]

Faith-Based - based on the historical expressions and beliefs of the historic Christian convictions as delineated in the Old and New Testaments.

Mutuality - a sense that all the parts hold together collectively; every part belongs to every other part; a 'we are in this together' mentality.

Responsibility - a belief that all the parts respond to all the other parts; a sense of being accountable to one another; a knowing that those in a place limit one another.

Well Rested University - a community committed to developing citizens of Christ-like character, who are well-educated, hard working, and patriotic.

Work- Everything that brings one into relation with other people, everything that makes my actions events in other people's lives is contained in 'vocation'[18]; the function of completing a process or carrying out a task; labor.

Work Program - work programs help students to understand work as a tool for experiential education, as a means of serving the community, and as a place for integrating academic learning, practical knowledge, and life lived in the larger community; organized oversight of on-campus work stations where students work.

Yukon Fellowship - a community of homes: families and singles living an ordered life where together they seek to demonstrate the existence of God, not just in mind but also in body. Visitors coming from all kinds of backgrounds, world views, ages and occupations may share in normal family lives, and witness their core beliefs; that the God of the Bible is really there, and that Christianity is true.

Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited to one typical sample consisting of a Director at Well Rested University. Also, this study will be limited to two atypical samples, consisting of interviews with key leaders from Yukon Fellowship and The Director of The Institute

---

[17] Wendell Berry, *The Long-Legged House* (New York: Harcourt, 1969), 61.
[18] Hardy, *The Fabric of this World*, 112.

The conclusions of this study will be limited to the direct input from the Yukon Fellowship leaders, The Director of The Institute, and the Director of Community Life at Well Rested University, along with input gained from selected readings relevant to this study. Therefore, the conclusions are limited to the experience of a select group of individuals. The reader will need to exercise care in making generalizations to a different context due to the limited nature of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped understanding of community could help inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks. The rationale for emphasizing Berry's perspective on community is latent in the words of Norman Wirzba of Duke Divinity School. "Over the past fifty years Wendell Berry has given witness to a vision of our life together that is proving to be indispensable and prophetic."[19] Berry's vision of a cohesive community and meaningful work is not only one of the clearest indispensable and prophetic voices speaking to these issues, but his vision is informed also by the Gospels and therefore provides solidity and sanity. College of the Ozarks' students live, learn, and labor in community; therefore, Berry's insightful perspective lends itself to informing College of the Ozarks' practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands.[20]

Though a large range of literature addressing the broader issues of community exists, little literature exists that addresses the narrower study of community in a Christian work study college. This review, seeking to further inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission, focuses first on general communal issues, then moves to a

[19] Norman Wirzba, as quoted on back cover of Bonzo, J.M. and M.R. Stevens' *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader's Guide* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008).
[20] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1986).

biblical theology of community, narrows to investigate Berry's vision for community,[21] and then more broadly considers other Christian and non-Christian authors' understandings of Berry's vision of community.

Author and cultural critic Wendell Berry, in explaining the loss of ancient memory and history in his imagined community, Port William, Kentucky, distinguishes between a community becoming itself and knowing itself. He highlights the slow, eroding process of that loss:

> In two or three generations the country (Port William and its surrounding land) was imponderably changed, its memories, explanations, justifications fallen away from it. The first rivers left it diminished and detached from its sources. It was like an island, the past washing up to it, in fact, as the force of its becoming, but not as knowledge. Past and future bore against it under cover of darkness. Whoever wanted to make a beginning, then, had to begin with something already half-finished. And scarcely known.[22]

A community must know itself to necessarily or consciously become or maintain itself. A place may possess a history, but those currently in the place may or may not contribute to what the community becomes, for good or ill. According to Berry, as the pressures of our individualized culture creep in and wash away our sense of community, we find ourselves living as islands, with the past washing up to us on all sides, without bridges connecting us to others. This isolated existence develops in us a sense of cynicism toward other isolated individuals.

Donald Guthrie, Professor of Practical Theology at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri understands the eroding effect of our cynical culture. When asked, "What are the pressures that have made it hard to keep connecting what you believe

---

[21] It should be noted that 'work,' for the purposes of this review, is not treated as a separate category; but merely as a subset of Berry's vision of community, given that Berry's understanding of work is embedded uncompromisingly in his vision of community.

[22] Berry, *A Place on Earth*, 27.

about life and the world with how you live in the world?" He answers, "The cynical nature of our culture, as it permeates the lives of people around me – and me. And only community can stand against that."[23] Indeed, community enables us to recognize what we believe about the world, and to understand how to live consistently in the world. Community helps in both regards because members of a cohesive community where love exists will hold one another accountable. They are concerned about each other and the work being done in the community, thus helping each other to stand against the eroding effects of disintegrating society. In other words, a cohesive, healthy community experiences mutuality and responsibility, and affection toward its members. A similar approach is taken by Dennis E. Poplin, a former anthropologist at Murray State University, in his text, *Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research.* Poplin asserts that community encourages hearts away from cynical doubt and despair because "the community emerges as the first subsystem which can potentially meet the full range of man's physiological, psychological, and social needs."[24]

In his essay *Health is Membership*, Berry identifies the links between individuals, as well as the resulting disintegration when community members are not bridging their lives to others.

> If we are lucky enough as children to be surrounded by grown-ups who loved us, then our sense of wholeness is not just the sense of completeness in ourselves but also is the sense of belonging to others and to our place; it is an unconscious awareness of community, of having in common… In the present age of the world, disintegration and division, isolation and suffering seem to have overwhelmed us. The balance between education and experience has been overthrown; we are lost in experience, and so-called education is leading us nowhere.[25]

---

[23] Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, 156.
[24] Dennis Poplin, *Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 15.
[25] Wendell Berry, "Health is Membership," in *Another Turn of the Crank* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), 87-88.

Berry highlights the incapacity of members of our culture to link who they are with what they know or with how they live and work. Increasingly, they live merely out of our experience, distinct from what they know. As a result, what they know is increasingly suspect. Dr. Steve Garber of the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture, believes that upon entering college, students begin to question what they know. "They question long held ideas and beliefs of their parents. They wonder about reality, the world and their place in it. The classroom disciplines open their minds and hearts to new ideas, concepts, values, meaning, and contours in which to stretch their new found understanding and possibilities. They are asking the question we all ask, 'Why do I get up in the morning?' Do you have a telos sufficient, personally and publicly, to orient your praxis over the course of life?"[26] He further explains the purpose of higher education. "True education is always about learning to connect knowing with doing, belief with behavior, and yet that connection is incredibly difficult to make for students in the modern university."[27]

James W. Wagner, President of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, supports Garber's observation. Of students' understanding of community, he writes:

> Students on our campuses seem to have a renewed interest in the value, or set of values, associated with being in community. They seem also to harbor some misunderstanding about the nature of strong community. Their interest may stem from modern pressures that affect the development of social skills. After all, this particular generation of university student has experienced heavily programmed childhoods and the greatest opportunity for solitary entertainment, the latter owing to computer technology. In addition to a need to develop further community membership skills, students often have a somewhat limited definition of what community means.[28]

---

[26] Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness* , 56.
[27] Ibid., 57.
[28] James W. Wagner, "The Practice of Community," *Journal of College and Character* 6 (April 2008): 1.

Not only is the postmodern understanding of community confused, cynical, and individualistic, but members of that community also struggle to make sense of the work they do. They fail to grasp how work contributes to community or how their community affects the way they work. Contrasting the members of the "global community" with the members of the "local community," Berry says that the global community (where most people exist) believes that community has no value, is large, immensely powerful and wealthy, self-aware, purposeful, and tightly organized. On the other hand, the local community is only now becoming aware of itself, widely scattered, diverse, small, weak (though latently powerful), and poor (though by no means without resources). Most people do not understand or live or work in this kind of community. Members of the local community "believe that the neighborhood, the local community, is the proper place and frame of reference for responsible work...They know that things connect...and they want to preserve those connections."[29] Berry believes that most Americans, including students, live in the "global community" with little understanding of the cohesiveness or work of the "local community."

In discussing the inexorable link between community and vocation, Lee Hardy, in his book *The Fabric of This World*, addresses the idea that "our work can count as a work only if it occurs in the kind of social structures that make it genuine service to others through the responsible use of our talents and abilities."[30] "The institution of work is undeniably one of the chief integrators of persons in our society. It orients our lives; it organizes our time; it put us in touch with people."[31] "Work and vocation are not the

---

[29] Wendell Berry, "Conserving Communities," in *Another Turn of the Crank* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), 17.
[30] Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of this World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), xvii.
[31] Ibid., 6.

same thing. Work may be a part of my vocation, but it is not the whole of my vocation; work may be one thing that I am called to do, but it is not the only thing I am called to do."[32] Commenting on a painfully prominent reality in our culture, Hardy realizes that people in our individualized society must often make difficult choices between two things that should coexist harmoniously. Employees and students at a work-study college especially wrestle with this reality – choosing between relationships (community) and work.

> Few of us can claim that our lives are well-balanced. And in our own culture, work is often the part of our vocation which claims disproportionately large amounts of our time and energy. Especially for those in the professions, the constant temptation is to make an idol of one's work. Other human relationships, even the relationship to God, must often make way for the high-speed pursuit of a successful career.[33]

David Miller identifies another partially collapsed bridge that adds to the confusion surrounding community and work- insufficient theology. "Theologically, many clergy and religious professionals have not studied or developed a theology of work as part of their overall systematic theology."[34] Miller, though writing about the "Faith at Work" movement, sheds light on why many college students struggle to see and use the bridges between faith, work, and community. In Miller's estimation, the church "has an internal focus on its own institutional life and existence, at the expense of an external focus on the living out the mission and purpose of the church as the body of Christ."[35] Given this reality, Miller concludes that the clergy's ability to give ethical guidance on issues such as integrating faith and work is impeded.[36] Thus, David Claerbaut, in *Faith*

---

[32] Ibid., 112.
[33] Ibid., 114
[34] David Miller, *God at Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 89.
[35] Ibid., 91.
[36] Ibid.

and Learning on the Edge, deems that many employees and students at Christian colleges lack a well-balanced belief system and struggle to understand how faith and learning interact, and therefore struggle also to understand the relationship between work and community.[37]

Pursuit of an integrated whole, as opposed to a piecemeal approach, is the goal of gospel-informed thinking. Saint Paul in Colossians writes:

> He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.[38]

James D. Bratt, professor of history at Calvin College, draws two integrating points relevant to understanding community and work from a gospel perspective:

> Two points are of immense importance here for education. First, for Calvinists religion is not a long matter of inwardness. Jesus is not just a savior for souls, but a cosmic Lord, wanting his "crown rights" restored, so salvation does not take place only within but pushes the redeemed out into the world. This kind of Christianity has public purchase, expansive scope, from the start. Second, joining comprehensiveness to transcendence in this way makes education a high calling. Searching out every domain of being, plumbing its beauties and mystery, means no less than serving the Most High God with his due of delight, awe, and gratitude.[39]

The nature of God's gospel through Christ is community-minded because the God of the gospel is communal in his nature. The three persons of the godhead enjoy eternal unity, togetherness, harmony, and oneness, always looking outward toward each other. When God brings us into his body through the gospel, he brings us into community, first with himself and then with one another. Enabled by his grace, we reflect his communal

---

[37] David Claerbaut, *Faith and Learning on the Edge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 13, 22.
[38] Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV).
[39] James D. Bratt, "What Can the Reformed Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?" in *Models for Christian Higher Education, Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century,* ed. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 127-128.

nature not only by living in community, but by consciously pushing out into the world, to believers and unbelievers alike. Given that all things were created by Christ and for Christ, educating head, heart, and hands is indeed a high calling. Plumbing the depths of our heart and head by delighting to do the work of learning about his creation (education) truly is "serving the Most High God with his due of delight, awe, and gratitude," and results in "a whole person for a whole world."[40]

Writing alongside the "isolated individual" struggling to make sense of community, Berry embraces the gospel as the only means to rescue a fragmented culture.

> I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsists, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and indwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God. I believe that the community – in the fullest sense: a place and all its creatures – is the smallest unit of health and that to speak of the health of an isolated individual is a contradiction in terms.[41]

Pursuing a holistic "vision of excellence" leads Elton Trueblood, Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College, to believe that the "deepest reason for a college is an unrealized ideal. What inspires her men and women is the vision of a society of learning and teaching and pioneering that continues to be a community of understanding whatever the prejudices and confusion of this surrounding world."[42] This study can help move College of the Ozarks towards a vision of excellence in integrating community and work in the swirling confusion of this world.

---

[40] Ibid., 131.
[41] Berry, *Health Is Membership*, 89-90.
[42] Elton Trueblood, *The Idea of a College* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 198.

A Covenantal (Biblical) View of Community

God speaks to the topic of community from his Word. The word 'community' is used eighty-three times in the Old and New Testaments. The word 'fellowship' is used ninety-six. The capacity for communal relationship/fellowship is found not merely in humankind, but in man's creator, too. Redemptive history is the biblical story about the catalyst of God's covenant relationship to man and then man's covenant relationship to one another. These covenantal relationships manifest themselves in the context of community, as the following survey attests.

God in Community

"In the beginning, God created…" and he was not alone. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."[43] Scripture does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the community enjoyed by the Trinity. The word "trinity" is not used in Scripture to describe the triune nature of God, but the Bible does reveal some of the interactive relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to help us understand their communality The self-chosen names of God indicate the communal, familial relationships of the Trinity, i.e., father/son. God, as one God revealed in three persons, existing in a cohesive, mutual community, is simply one of the aspects or attributes of God's character. Theologian John Frame believes that even the variations of God's appearances to his people indicate diversity within him. Commenting on God's use of the plural in his Genesis 1:26 declaration (cf. 3:22; 11:7), Frame believes we are

> …to understand this language as consultation of the heavenly council, the Glory-cloud… But even that is to underscore the fact that when God appeared to people in the Old Testament, he appeared as a rich diversity of form, movement, and

[43] Genesis 1:26 (ESV).

> sound, interacting dynamically with the heavenly beings and with his spatio-temporal creation.[44]

God's self-identifying personal pronoun 'us' speaks of being, personality, relationship, interaction, and mutuality. Since the Trinity has three persons who are perfect in every attribute, we can conclude that the relationship experienced by the persons is perfectly harmonious, unitized, mutually caring, peaceful, mutually edifying, self giving, eternally directed toward the other, and fully expressed through perpetual love. Thinking especially of the Father/Son relationship, Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 furnishes insight into the dynamic relationship enjoyed by the Father and Son before Christ's incarnation and after.

> After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:
> Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.[45]

"Here we get a glimpse of the eternal fellowship between the Father and the Son: their mutual knowledge, mutual love, and mutual glorification."[46] Frame further helps us understand the mutuality between the persons of the Trinity by highlighting that

> the concurrence of the three persons of the Trinity in all that they do is a profound indication of their unity. There is no conflict in the Trinity. The three persons are perfectly agreed on what they should do and how their plan should be executed. They support one another, assist one another, and promote one another's purposes. This intra-Trinitarian 'deference, this disposability' of each to the others, may be called 'mutual glorification.'[47]

---

[44] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God, A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub., 2002), 621.
[45] John 17:1-5 (ESV).
[46] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 659.
[47] Ibid., 695.

Mutuality is the essence of communal life lived for the good and benefit of the others in the community. Such understanding of the intra-relationships of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit grants a greater insight into the depths to which the persons of the Trinity are mutually responsible for each other and, therefore, the depths to which they love one another. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love is the crucial characteristic describing their relationship. Given the nature of the Trinitarian relationship, Frame believes that love between the persons of the Trinity is not only foundational, but necessary.

> Love is God's nature, a fundamental characterization of his Trinitarian being (Ex. 34:6-7). It binds the Father and the Son to one another: the Father loves the Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:36; 5:20; 10:17; 17:24, 26 [eternally]; Col. 1:13); the Son loves the Father (John 14:31). The love between the persons of the Trinity is eternal. And since God does not exist without his three persons, the love among those persons is *necessary* to his nature. So God's love is first of all directed toward himself, but even his self-love is self-giving. In divine self-love, each person of the Trinity embraces the others and glorifies the others.[48]

We find then three elements occurring in the Trinitarian community: mutuality, responsibility, and affection (love).[49] Mutuality is the idea that the persons of the Trinity belong to each other. In other words, they are "in this thing together." They are felt by each other, and have the same feelings toward each other. Each person of the Trinity possesses characteristics that are expressly his alone, i.e., the differing roles each person possesses; but mutuality means they share things in common for the overall good and benefit of the Trinitarian community. Responsibility in the Trinity means each person is accountable to the others. The Father is not free or able to "do his own thing." The Son cannot act in his own regard without consideration for the other persons. The Holy Spirit

---

[48] Ibid., 417.

[49] I am indebted to The Director for the concept of these three relational aspects, though responsibility for any furnished flaws is personal.

cannot disregard the will or love or mutuality of the Father and Son. Affection speaks of the emotional regard each person of the Trinity has for the others. As mentioned, love is the fundamental characterization of God; thus, their Trinitarian love is self-love, but also love that is given away as expressions of affection, devotion, care for, and love one to the others. Summarily, since the persons of the Trinity are in community together (mutuality), they are, of necessity, accountable to one another (responsibility), and they, of necessity, love one another (affection).

Cornelius Plantinga, President of Calvin Theological Seminary, says, though in different words, that mutuality, responsibility, and affection between the persons of the Trinity, are the foundation of the universe.

> At the center of the universe, self-giving love is the dynamic currency of the Trinitarian life of God. The persons within God exalt each other, commune with each other, defer to each other. Each person, so to speak, makes room for the other two. I know it sounds a little strange, but we might almost say that the persons within God show each other divine *hospitality.*[50]

In his book, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology,* Colin E. Gunton asserts that the Trinitarian community is not only about love, but life, too.

> If you want to understand how God works in our world, then you must go through the route God himself has given us – the incarnation of the eternal Son and the life-giving action of the Spirit. The Trinity is about life, life before God, with one another and in the world. If we forget that...we forget the root of our lives, of what makes for life, and what makes for death.[51]

---

[50] Cornelius Plantinga, *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Cambridge, UK; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 20.

[51] Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 11.

Gunton further explains the connection between the individuality of the divine community and of the human community, as well as the unity and oneness shared in those communities. "The triune God's gracious dispensation is that we need each other if we are to be truly and particularly ourselves… God is the one who has his being in communion."[52] Gunton believes that in order for the members of the Trinity to be themselves as individual persons in the Trinity, then of necessity, they truly need each other to be themselves as individual persons of God. In his understanding, human communities function similarly.[53]

> Supposing that hospitality means to make room for others and then to help them flourish in the room you have made, I think we could say that hospitality thrives within the triune life of God and then spreads wonderfully to the creatures of God… According to God's intelligence, the way to thrive is to help others thrive; the way to flourish is to cause others to flourish; the way to fulfill yourself is to spend yourself.[54]

The communal God creates and shares part of who he is with his creation, particularly creating humanity with a need and longing for community – with its creator and other creatures.

Humankind in Community

Genesis 1:26 says that God created man in his image – imago dei. God's creative design includes sharing some of his attributes with his creatures. One of the communicable attributes shared is the capacity and longing for community while maintaining diversity. Just as the three persons in the Trinity are one God in unity, they, as we have seen, are three distinct and diverse persons living in harmonious community. So too is man. God created humankind as male and female. God created Adam first, as

---

[52] Ibid., 15.
[53] Ibid.,
[54] Plantinga, *Engaging God's World*, 22-3.

the representative of all humanity, but then declared, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him."[55] Thereafter, God paraded the animal kingdom before Adam, but Adam recognized that there was no suitable helper for him among the other creatures. God and Adam knew that being alone was not in accord with God's creative design. So God created woman, a female counterpart, Eve. Part of bearing God's image is a desire for community – a desire for mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Adam and Eve experienced these three relational aspects. Mutually, they belonged to each other, they were "in this together." Responsibly they were accountable, not only to God, but to each other. Adam's declaration, "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,"[56] attests to their affection for one another. They loved and cared for each other as they lived communally, reflecting the communal image of their creator God, while living in communion with him, too. God placed Adam and Eve in community, commissioning them with the Cultural Mandate to build and maintain community, and then satisfactorily announced, "it was very good."[57]

The created universe was good, says God, because it had the potential to spread relational environments throughout the earth. Writing about the "filling" of the earth that belongs to God, Richard Mouw, in his book, *When the King Comes Marching In,* facilitates our recognizing more fully what God meant.

> The command to "fill" the earth here is not merely a divine request that Adam and Eve have a lot of babies. The earth was also to be "filled" by the broader patterns of their interaction with nature and with each other. They would bring order to the Garden. They would introduce schemes for managing it affairs. To "subdue" the Garden would be to transform untamed nature into a social environment. God

---

[55] Genesis 2:18 (ESV).
[56] Genesis 2:23 (ESV).
[57] Genesis 1:30 (ESV).

> placed human beings in his creation in order to introduce a cultural "filling" in ways that conformed to his divine will.[58]

Plantinga links the reality that God is one in three persons (community with diversity) with how humankind is created to reflect that same image in his community with diversity.

> Because God is triune, the image of God is social as well as personal. God lives in the perichoretic glory of a three-person community, radiant with love, power, and beauty. Each person is God only *with* the other two…And yet "there is only one God" the holy Trinity itself, a union of three mutually enveloping persons…What's the connection with us? Thinking of his relationship with God the Father, Jesus prays that "they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:22). By "they" Jesus means the community of believers. Jesus' prayer reveals that when we live in strong unity and harmony with others we are something like God… The one biblically authorized analogy for the Holy Trinity is the church, the "new community" that Jesus prays for and with which he compares his life with the Father.[59]

Seeking something other than God's provision of communal life with him and each other, Adam and Eve chose to withdraw from community with God and seek a different kind of community – one of their own designs, one of God-replacements.[60] Once enjoying life-giving, healthy, cohesive communion with God and each other, Adam and Eve now knew for the first time genuine blindness, even as their eyes were opened. David Tripp, counselor and faculty member at the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, highlights three kinds of blindness that result from the fall of humankind away from and out of community with God: blindness of identity, blindness to God's provision, and

---

[58] Richard J. Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 16.
[59] Plantinga, *Engaging God's World*, 33.
[60] Genesis 3:10-11 (ESV).

blindness to God's process. Using these three, Tripp insists, God "will do whatever he needs to do to produce holiness in us. He wants us to be a community of joy...."[61]

Humankind's blindness resulted in God's cursing them and all creation (Genesis 3:14-19). Part of the curse was that no longer would humankind live with immediate, intimate access or community with God; rather, fellowship and relationship with God would now be mediated through God's acts of grace and mercy on behalf of a rebellious creation. Richard Mouw believes that "God has not abandoned his good creation, even in its presently distorted state. The earth's 'filling' still belongs to him. He sent his own Son to rescue the entire cosmos from the effects of sin, and his rescue efforts take into account the facts of sinful historical development."[62] The rest of biblical history is God's story of faithful, covenant commitment to the community he created and desired.

> The human race had need that God should become man to show forth the dignity of human nature, so that man might not be subjugated either by devils or by things of the body. At the same time, by willing to become man, God clearly displayed the immensity of His love for men, so that henceforth men might serve God, no longer out of fear of death, which the first man had scorned, but out of the love of charity.[63]

The communal, triune God is still working to redeem, rescue, and restore people to fellowship and community based on mutuality, responsibility, and affection, wrought through the work of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. This Jesus, willing to leave his heavenly communion, entered into the earthly community, in the context of real relationships, fellowship, friendship, and love, both mutually and responsibly. The cosmic scope of his salvific work extends from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. Always, the

---

[61] Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2006), 5-6.

[62] Mouw, *When the King Comes Marching In*, 17.

[63] Thomas Aquinas, *Light of Faith: The Compendium of Theology* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1993), 201.

context of God's interaction is with people, nations, tribes, tongues, lands, communities, the Body (Gen. 17:5; Psalm 67; John 17; Eph. 4; 2 Cor. 4; Col. 1:25; 3:8-10; Rev. 22:2). Gunton writes that "the Church is the community of the end times and made to be so by the Spirit."[64] The Christian Church from the beginning was described in terms of *koinonia*, or fellowship. Those belonging to the triune God through Christ understood that they had entered an upside-down kingdom where mutuality, responsibility, and love were everyday realities and necessities. John T. McNeill describes the forms and formations of the *koinonia* that God intends for his Body, the Community reflecting his image.

> The Christian Church took its rise in the koinonia or fellowship, of those who shared a profound and transforming experience which centered in Jesus Christ. Its chief functions were to interpret that experience in terms of social living, to extend the number of those who share it, and to perpetuate it to after generations. The Eucharist took a central place in the Christian's experience since it served both as a means of making Christ's presence a continuous reality, and as a visible pledge of the inviolable fellowship of the group.[65]

Yet, this integrity does not diminish the diversity God intends for the community of his people (1 Cor. 12:10-31). As individuals living in community, we need and desire individual health and coherence, but that health is necessary and desired for the benefit and health of others in the community. David Claerbaut, in *Faith and Learning on the Edge,* says the Holy Spirit is that part of God's personality "that enters the life of a believer, freeing him from seeing the world solely through the confines of the self. It is only through the eyes and ears of God that we can move beyond selfishness...."[66] Self-

---

[64] Gunton, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 179.
[65] John T. McNeill, *Unitive Protestantism; the Ecumenical Spirit and Its Persistent Expression* [Rev. ed.] (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), 22.
[66] David Claerbaut, *Faith and Learning on the Edge: A Bold New Look at Religion in Higher Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 120.

centeredness is a dis-integrating effect of the fall. In our fallen state, fundamentally our focus is ourselves, with little genuine regard for others. Regard for community is minimal, while regard for self is maximum. It takes Christ's redeeming work at Calvary to renovate us to God's intended design of being others-directed and diverse, yet unified—living and loving others, emulating the members of the Trinitarian community.

> Each Christian brings his or her own gifts and individuality...Yet this diversity is knit together into a unity that is more than organizational. It is organic; it is a living Body. This community is accomplished only by virtue of the 'headship' of Christ Himself. He has arranged the parts. Only by virtue of this supernatural coordination can reconciliation of diversity and community be accomplished.[67]

Calvin directs our attention to this overarching reality when he writes that "even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity. Consequently, the beginning of our recovery of salvation is in that restoration which we obtain in Christ, who also is called the Second Adam for the reason that he restores us to true and complete integrity."[68] In other words, we are restored to imaging God again as we experience and grow in mutuality, responsibility, and affection in all our communal relations, vertical and horizontal.

Wendell Berry's Literature on Community

Wendell Berry, for more than forty years, has written insightfully about the nature, making, and maintaining of cohesive, healthy communities. His literary work includes critical essays on agriculture, marriage, family, local economies, the church, war

---

[67] V. James Mannoia, *Christian Liberal Arts: An Education That Goes Beyond* (Lanham, MD; Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 194.

[68] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 189.

and peace, creation conservation, government, public education, work, and rural communities. His works also include his novels, with characters spanning four generations in his fictional place, Port William, KY; and poems, many written on his routine Sunday morning walks into the woods—on the farm he and his family have tended for forty years. "The themes of home, work, husbandry, rootedness, stewardship, responsibility, thrift, order, memory, atonement, and harmony resonate throughout his work," writes Andrew J. Angyal.[69] These categories, as well as others, and the following selections from his literary works develop Berry's vision of what community is and what community is not.

A Berryian Vision of Community - What It Is Not

For Berry, community is not merely human or merely a gathering of people, nor is it merely a place, nor people merely working in a place. To perceive community in these abstract terms is far too reductionistic: too dis-integrated, too individualistic, too unhealthy, and incoherent in Berry's vision of community. Community is not a place of isolation, irresponsibility, or enduring disaffection.

Community is not merely human

Stating the negative positively, Berry in his book, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, argues that a healthy community pertains not only to the humans in a place, but to all the living things in the place, and to the place itself.

> In talking about health, we have thus begun to talk about community. Be we must take care to see how this standard of health enlarges and clarifies the idea of community. If we speak of a *healthy* community, we cannot be speaking of a community that is merely human. We are talking about a neighborhood of

[69] Andrew J. Angyal, *Wendell Berry,* Twayne's United States Authors Series, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), ix.

> humans in a place, plus the place itself: its soil, its water, its air, and all the families and tribes of the nonhuman creatures that belong to it. If the place is well preserved, if its entire membership, natural and human, is present in it, and if the human economy is in practical harmony with the nature of the place, then community is health. A diseased community will be suffering natural losses that become, in turn, human losses.[70]

According to Berry, to speak of a comprehensively healthy community while allowing any part of the community (human, creature, or place) to suffer disease is a contradiction. Maintaining necessary connections between the several members of a healthy community is essential.

> Community, then, is an indispensable term in any discussion of the connection between people and land. A healthy community is a form that includes all the local things that are connected by the larger, ultimately mysterious form of the Creation. In speaking of community, then, we are speaking of a complex connection not only among human beings or between human economy and nature, between forest or prairie and field or orchard, and between troublesome creatures and pleasant ones. *All* neighbors are included. [71]

The relatively recent focus on environmental issues is not truly helpful, as it draws false distinctions between the connections necessary to a healthy, cohesive community, believes Berry. He views environmentalism as a broken bridge that no longer connects.

> No settled family or community has ever called its home place an "environment." None has ever called its feeling for its home place "biocentric" or "anthropocentric." None has ever thought of its connection to its home place as "ecological," deep or shallow. They [biocentric, environment] come from the juiceless, abstract intellectuality of the universities which was invented to disconnect, displace, and dismember the mind. The real names of the environment

---

[70]Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community: Eight Essays*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 14.
[71]Ibid., 35.

> are the names of rivers and river valleys; creeks; ridges, and mountains; towns and cities; lakes, woodlands, lanes, roads, creatures, and people.[72]

Community is not merely a dependent, large or private group of people

"Community, of course, is an idea that can extend itself beyond the local, but it only does so metaphorically. The idea of a national or global community is meaningless apart from the reality of local communities."[73] Berry rejects the idea of a global economy on the grounds that it is disingenuous to talk of a global community because such language allows us to lose sight of the local community. A global, or national, community cannot experience mutual, responsible, loving interactions. "By community, I mean the commonwealth and common interests, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature...."[74]

Berry is not necessarily against private rights. He is against communities so large that the rights of one infringe on another, in the name of privacy, until the so-called rights of the individual cancel the rights of another in a large community, eventually fragmenting and dismembering the community.

> But the [private] life of a community is more vulnerable than public life. A community cannot be made or preserved apart from the loyalty and affection of its members and the respect and goodwill of the people outside it... The community, wherever you look, is being destroyed by the desires and ambitions of both private and public life, which for want of the intervention of community interest are also destroying one another. Community life is by definition a life of cooperation and responsibility. Private life and public life, without the disciplines of community interest, necessarily gravitate toward competition and exploitation.

---

[72] Ibid., 120.
[73] Ibid., 153.
[74] Ibid., 119.

> As private life casts off all community restraints in the interest of economic exploitation or ambition or self-realization or whatever, the communal supports of public life also and by the same stroke are undercut, and the public life becomes simply the arena of unrestrained private ambition and greed.[75]

Given this disparity between private life in community and public life that exploits or undercuts community, Berry insists that the community, to be true to its private life and commitments, must not depend on outside sources for sustainability. We should expect no help from public sources like the media, government, or public education.

> Television has greatly accelerated the process, begun long ago, by which many communities have been atomized and congealed into one public. Nor is government a likely source of help... In fact, there is no one to speak for the community interest except those people who wish to adhere to community principles. The community, in other words, must speak in its own interest. It must learn to defend itself.[76]

Berry asserts that though the word "community" is used in public formats, such use does not guarantee, by itself, that the idea of community is given any lasting significance or meaning. Or, that just because community ideas are given public expression, that the community is enabled to defend itself. He explains the process of how community mutuality, responsibility, and affection are undermined.

> But it is a fact that in both private conversation and public dialogue, the community has neither status nor standing from which to plead in its own defense. There is no denying, of course, that "community" ranks with "family," "our land," and "our beloved country" as an icon of the public vocabulary; everybody is for it, and this means nothing. Local and community organizations, of course, do at times prevail over the would-be "developers," but the status of these victories remains tentative. The powers that be, and the media as well, treat such victories as anomalies, never as the work of a legitimate "side" in the public dialogue.[77]

---

[75] Ibid., 121.
[76] Ibid., 124.
[77] Ibid., 132.

Community is not merely physical locality or proximity

Therefore, Berry believes that cities are not, in any real sense, communities simply because a large number of people gather to work in a place. Community is more than that.

> The failure of modern cities, I think, is that they have become, not communities, but merely crowds of specialists and specializations. The businessman, the physician, the technician are specialists not only in the sense that they have become expert in narrow disciplines, but also in the sense that they accept the confinement of their discipline as the exact equivalent of the old ideas of community responsibility or neighborliness... The modern city, then, is in the fullest sense of the word a crowd, a disorderly gathering of people. Loneliness is on the rampage in it -- so many separate lives pursuing their own ends among and through and in spite of the lives of all the others. And the disease that is destroying the community is destroying the families and the marriages within the community.[78]

In Berry's classic definition of community, from his essay, *The Loss of the Future,* he believes that neither the proximity of people nor any particular spatial design offers a sufficient explanation of community. Community involves more than the physical. It includes the spiritual and a common understanding of belonging to each other and to a place: it is an arrangement involving mutuality, responsibility, and affection for all in the community.

> A community is not merely a condition of physical proximity, no matter how admirable the layout of the shopping center and the streets, no matter if we demolish the horizontal slums and replace them with vertical ones. A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.[79]

---

[78] Ibid., 60-61.
[79] Wendell Berry, *The Long-Legged House* [1st ed.], (New York: Harcourt, 1969), 66-61.

Berry's view of community—comprised of mental, spiritual, and spatial aspects—informs us that his vision is truly comprehensive, allowing no room for a dualistic, but rather presenting a holistic advance.

> What I'm arguing against here is not complexity or mystery but dualism. I would like to purge my own mind and language of such terms as "spiritual," "physical," "metaphysical," and "transcendental" – all of which imply that the Creation is divided into "levels" that can readily be peeled apart and judged by human beings. I believe that the Creation is one continuous fabric comprehending simultaneously what we mean by "spirit" and what we mean by "matter"...A much more valid distinction, and one that we need urgently to learn to make, is that between the organic and the mechanical.[80]

A Berryian Vision of Community - What It Is

Beyond Berry's vision of what community is not, his literary works develop a full-orbed, gospel-shaped vision of what does constitute a healthy, cohesive community. However, an exploration of Berry's vision reveals his insightful reflections on attempting to explain any issue comprehensively. "Explanation is reductive, not comprehensive; most of the time, when you have explained something, you discover leftovers. An explanation is a bucket, not a well."[81] Still, Kimberly K. Smith writes that "his body of work is so extensive that some attempt to distill, organize, contextualize – and of course critique – his ideas is called for."[82] In their book *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader's Guide*, Matthew Bonzo and Michael Stevens state that the breadth of Berry's vision of community is indispensably relevant for two reasons: his vision

---

[80] Wendell Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank: Essays* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), 91.
[81] Wendell Berry, *Life Is a Miracle: An Essay against Modern Superstition* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000), 113.
[82] Kimberly K. Smith, *Wendell Berry and the Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace* (American Political Thought Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 5.

addresses the deep troubles of our time; and his vision is deep, rich, and comprehensive in nature.

> As we unfold the breadth of Berry's vision…we should begin by saying that it is attractive and relevant in no small measure because he speaks bluntly to the deep troubles of our age. The problems of our culture – disease, dislocation, outrageous hubris – are so massive that they present a formidable roadblock to any substantive discourse about true health… Berry represents the fullest embodiment of telling "the Story" through stories. Berry's work is precisely the sort of "renarration" that can bring healing and make visible the call to "practice resurrection"… Berry is thus a purveyor of the "culture of life" and a sharp critic of the "culture of death." Everywhere in his work, in his essays and the fiction and the poetry, by virtue of the agricultural rubric of growth and harvest, fattening and butchering, he is constantly trying to properly measure life and death, to see how they fit together rightly within what he unabashedly loves: God's creation.[83]

Concern for life, healing, health, wholesomeness, redemption, and neighborliness (mutuality, responsibility, and affection) is crucial to Berry's vision of community. He believes the current lack of health and disease in our communities is not inevitable or ultimately defining. He is convinced that the healing of our local communities (the focus of his essays, fiction, and poetry) will come through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In his essay *Health is Membership*, Berry casts his vision plainly.

> So far, I have been implying my beliefs at every turn. Now I had better state them openly. I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsists, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and dwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God.[84]

By his own admission, Berry has long thought and written under the influence of Scripture, particularly the Gospels. His communal vision, then, is additionally critical.

---

[83] Bonzo and Stevens, *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life*, 33-36.
[84] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 89.

Berry reveals in his essay *The Burden of the Gospels*, the shaping presence of God's Word. "It is a fact that I have spent my life, for the most part willingly, under the influence of the Bible, particularly the Gospels, and of the Christian tradition in literature and other arts. For the most part of my adult life I have been an urgently interested and frequently uneasy reader of the Bible, particularly the Gospels."[85]

Berry states his idea of community succinctly.[86] "I believe that the community – in the fullest sense: a place and all its creatures – is the smallest unit of health and that to speak of the health of an isolated individual is a contradiction in terms."[87] In answer to the question, "What are the elements of a good or healthy community?" Berry answers, "A good community is one in which people understand that in order to have certain good things, they have to have them in common… loving one another, taking care of one another, being thankful for the gifts of heaven and earth and our human forebears, taking good care of those gifts."[88] Berry's definitive definition of community helps highlight the three aspects or components of what creates, grows, and sustains a healthy, local community: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. "A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each others, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[89] Angyal insists that Berry

---

[85] Wendell Berry, *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays* (Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2005), 127.
[86] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 19-21. See Appendix B for Berry's understanding of community coherence, health, and sustainability.
[87] Ibid., 60.
[88] Christian Century Editor, "Toward a Healthy Community: An Interview with Wendell Berry," Christian Century 114 (1997): 912-916.
[89] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.

"has, in short, worked to be at home in his particular place and to resist American restlessness and rootlessness, the desire to always be somewhere else, and the inability ever to feel at home anywhere… [A]part from his community, he was rootless and adrift."[90] In other words, detached, isolated people cannot embrace Berry's vision. Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community, therefore, necessarily embraces *mutuality* ("a community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared"), *responsibility* ("and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives"), and *affection* ("It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves"). "Above all," Berry believes, "a community is a placed and rooted people who understand themselves as part of their natural environment… [C]ommunity is the touchstone for economic, aesthetic, environmental, and moral values."[91] This review will address these three aspects (mutuality, responsibility, and affection) as it moves through selected Berryian essays, poems, and novels.

Berry's Vision of Mutuality, Responsibility, and Affection - Main Categories Select Essays, Poems, and Novels

Essays

Berry believes that we belong to each other, we are in this together, we share life and death together, and we are members of each other. He also believes that because we belong to each other, we are therefore responsible for one another. We are accountable for how we treat each other (human and non-human) and the place we share together. We limit ourselves, our expressions, and our behaviors (mental, physical, spiritual, sexual,

[90] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, x-xi.

[91] Ibid., 98.

social), contributing to community integrity, rather to disintegration. Since we are mutually in this life and place together, and are responsible for one another, we are therefore obliged to care for one another, love each other, and display affection for all members of a community. "For Berry, the order of Creation is not a chain rising from animals to angels but a series of concentric circles: The individual is part of a family, which is part of a community, which is part of an 'agriculture' which is contained within nature. Wisdom consists in knowing one's place in this system, and not trying to live outside the community, completely autonomous and free."[92] Jack Hicks believes that much of the "tragedy and pathos in Berry's work (*A Place on Earth*) originates in the failure – either willed or fated, conscious or unaware – of men to perceive a natural order or conduct their lives within it."[93] Hicks further asserts that the model of Berry's own life, recounted in the return of his family to his native Kentucky in *The Long-Legged House*, has been "nourished by an extraordinarily rich metaphor (marriage): man as husband, in the oldest sense of the word, having committed himself in multiple marriages to wife, family, farm, community, and finally to the cycle of great nature itself. This is the great stream of Wendell Berry's writing, his 'country of marriage', the controlling pattern to his imagination."[94]

In his essay *Some Notes in Conclusion,* from his book, *Life is A Miracle,* Berry marks his regard for mutuality, responsibility, and affection by expressing his concern about the scientific world applying scientific findings generically, rather than specifically to local communities. He writes expressly of the health care model. He is not against

---

[92] Smith, *Wendell Berry and the Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace*, 138.
[93] Jack Hick, "Wendell Berry's Husband to the World: A Place on Earth," American Literature 51 (Summer 1979): 239-254.
[94] Ibid., 239.

science or scientific application, per se. He is against scientists (or doctors, or technicians) applying their wares as dislocated, dismembered human beings. "The only remedy I can see is for scientists (and artists too) to understand and imagine themselves as members of and sharers in, the fate of affected communities. Our schools now encourage people to regard as mere privilege the power and influence that they call leadership. But leadership without membership is a terrible thing."[95] Berry strives for mutuality, responsibility, and affection for all related to or involved with a local community, and he calls that relating and involvement, membership.

Berry asserts in *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community* that mutuality, responsibility, and affection are part of the crucial underpinning of community.

> By community, I mean the commonwealth and common interest, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature. A community identifies itself by an understood mutuality of interests... I[I]t lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self-restraint, compassion, and forgiveness. If it hopes to continue long as a community, it will wish to – and will have to – encourage respect for all its members, human and natural. It will encourage respect for all stations and occupations.[96]

Rebuilding local economies, the topic of Berry's essay, "Conservation is Good Work," focuses on the mutual, responsible, caring interests of the community, not a national or global community, where there is no mutual responsibility or love in economic choices.

> If we think of this task of rebuilding local economies as one large task that must be done in a hurry, then we will again be overwhelmed and will want to the government to do it. If, on the other hand, we define the task as the beginning the

[95] Berry, *Life Is a Miracle*, 148.

[96] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 121.

> reformation of our private or household economies, then the way is plain. What we must do is use well the considerable power we have as consumers: the power of choice. We can choose to buy or not to buy, we can choose what to buy. The standard by which we choose must be the health of the community – and by that we must mean the whole community: ourselves, the place where we live, and all the humans and other creatures who live there with us. In a healthy community, people will be richer in their neighbors, in neighborhood, in the health and pleasure of neighborhood, than in their bank accounts.[97]

In his discussion of freedom, Berry insists that freedom possesses its greatest meaning in the context of the local community.

> From another point of view, not necessarily incompatible, freedom has long been understood as the consequence of knowing the truth. When Jesus said to his follower, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," he was not talking primarily about politics, but the political applicability of the statement has been obvious for a long time, especially advocates of democracy… But to define freedom only as a public privilege of private citizens is finally inadequate to the job of protecting freedom. It leaves the issue too public and too private…Here as elsewhere, we need to interpose between the public and the private interests a third interest: that of the community. When there is no forcible assertion for the interest of community, public freedom becomes a sort of refuge for escapees from the moral law.[98]

Berry links the moral law to the mutuality, conscientiousness, and affection shared and enjoyed in community life. In fact, moral law is what promotes a sense of belonging to each other.

> The moral law, which is remarkably consistent from one culture to another, has to do with community life. It tells us how we should treat relatives and neighbors and, by metaphorical extension, strangers. The aim of the moral law is the integrity and longevity of the community, just as the aim of public law is the integrity and longevity of a political body… A community, unlike a public, has to do first of all with belonging; it is a group of people who belong to one another and to their place. We would say, "We belong to our community," but never "We belong to our public."[99]

---

[97] Ibid., 40.
[98] Ibid., 146.
[99] Ibid., 147.

Community membership, though indispensable to community health, does not necessarily guarantee that a "membership" in the community actually benefits the community. Berry believes that anything, including something as benevolent as belonging to a community may be misused. Even the church is guilty.

> All the institutions that "serve the community" are publicly oriented: the schools, governments, and government agencies, the professionals, the corporation. Even the churches, though they may have community membership, do not concern themselves with issues of local economy and local ecology on which community health and integrity must depend. Nor do the people in charge of these institutions think of themselves as members of communities. They are itinerant, in fact or in spirit, as their careers require them to be.[100]

Berry parallels his idea of community to that of a healthy ecosystem. Each part supports, harmoniously and naturally, all the other parts.

> A healthy community is like an ecosystem, and it includes – or it makes is itself harmoniously a part of – its local ecosystem. It is also like a household; it is the household of its place, and it includes the households of many families, human and nonhumans. And to extend Saint Paul's[101] famous metaphor by only a little, a healthy community is like a body, for its members mutually support and serve one another.[102]

Not only do the Gospels inform Berry's thinking about community, but he also takes some of his cues from the New Testament epistles. In using Paul's body metaphor to explain mutuality, responsibility, and affection in community, he acknowledges the need for biblical truth to inform properly any vision of community health. Each part mutually, responsibly, and lovingly contributes to the health of the whole, and the whole is healthy

---

[100] Ibid., 152.
[101] Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow: A Novel* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000). 250. Berry has Jayber Crow refer to Paul as "that clarifying and exasperating man." This marks Berry's uneasiness with Paul's New Testament theology due to Paul's presenting of the "organized church," to which Berry has not endeared himself.
[102] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 155.

only when the parts are healthy. Disease occurs when either the individual parts or the whole loses sight of contributing to the whole. In other words, all the parts are mutually dependent, mutually contributing (in a responsible, caring manner) to the overall health of the body. In a healthy body, there is no competition.

Competition is one topic of discussion in Berry's collection of essays *What Are People For?* Competitiveness, as developed in an economy in which everything is driven "to lower costs at any cost, and to raise profits at any cost"[103] does not hesitate to destroy any community or community membership, for such an economy does not understand or promote affinity, accountability, or love; and therefore does not promote mutual care in the local community.

> But it is equally obvious that no individual can lead a good or satisfying life under the rule of competition, and that no community can succeed except by limiting somehow the competitiveness of its members. One cannot maintain one's "competitive edge" if one helps other people. The advantage of "early adoption" would disappear – it would not be thought of – in a community that put a proper value on mutual help. Such advantages would not be thought of by people intent on loving their neighbors as themselves.

The biblical call to love our neighbor as ourselves informs Berry's vision of mutual community. His community vision "places a high value on neighborly love, marital fidelity, local loyalty, the integrity and continuity of family life, respect for the old, and instruction of the young. And a vital local community draws its life, so far as possible, from local sources."[104] When Berry's older brother, John, was in a Louisville, KY hospital for heart surgery and recovery, Berry "never so clearly understood and felt the difference [between creatures and machines] as when he [John] was attached to many

---

[103] Wendell Berry, *What Are People For? Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990). 131.
[104] Ibid., 135.

machines."[105] Berry, at that point, thought more closely about expendability – one part of a machine being interchangeable and therefore expendable.

> Expendability is also an assumption of the world of efficiency, which is why the world deals so compulsively in percentages of efficacy and safety. But this sort of logic is absolutely alien to the world of love. To the claim that a certain drug or procedure would save 99 percent of all cancer patients or that a certain pollutant would be safe for 99 percent of a population, love, embarrassed, would respond, "What about the one percent?" There is nothing rational or perhaps even defensible about this, but it is nonetheless one of the strongest strands of our religious tradition – its probably the most essential strand – according to which a shepherd, owning a hundred sheep and having lost one, does not say, "I have saved 99 percent of my sheep," but rather, "I have lost one," and he goes and searches for the one... Just so, each of us is made by – or, one might better say, made as – a set of unique associations with unique persons, places, and things. The world of love does not admit the principle of interchangeable parts... In the world of love, things separated by efficiency and specialization strive to come back together.[106]

Regarding communal support, responsibility, and affection, Berry insists in his collection of essays *In the Presence of Fear,* that the local economy and community (as opposed to a global free market economy) rests on two pillars: neighborhood and subsistence. "So far as I can see, the idea of a local economy rests upon only two principles: neighborhood and subsistence. In a viable neighborhood, neighbors ask themselves what they can do or provide for one another, and they find answers that they and their place can afford. This, and nothing else, is the *practice* of neighborhood. This practice must be, in part, charitable, but it must also be economic."[107]

In his essay *The Idea of a Local Economy,* Berry marks two requirements (products of the "free market") that work against neighborhood and subsistence.

---

[105] Wendell Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 103.
[106] Ibid., 104-105.
[107] Wendell Berry, *In the Presence of Fear: Essays* (Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society, 2001), 30.

> But the "free market" idea introduces into government a sanction of an inequality that is not implicit in any idea of democratic liberty: namely that the "free market" is freest to those who have the most money, and is not free at all to those with little or no money. Wal-Mart, for example, as a large corporation "freely" competing against local, privately owned businesses has virtually all the freedom, and its small competitors virtually none. To make too cheap and sell too high, there are two requirements. One is that you must have a lot of consumers with surplus money and unlimited wants... The other requirement is that the market for labor and raw materials should remain depressed relative to the market for retail commodities.[108]

Berry, in his essay "Some Thoughts on Citizenship and Conscience in Honor of Don Pratt," writes on the issue of citizenship in the United States. Comparing the "oversimplified" assumption "that all one needs to do to be a good citizen is to vote and obey and pay taxes" with his idea that one must belong to a place or community in order to be a good citizen, Berry sheds light on his understanding of mutuality, responsibility, and love in community. It begins at home, in a place.

> But it [citizenship] begins at home. Its meanings come clearest, it is felt most intensely in one's own house. The health, coherence, and meaningfulness of one's own household are the measure of the success of the government, not the other way around. My devotion thins as it widens. I care more for my household than for the town of Port Royal, more for the town of Port Royal than for the County of Henry, more for the County of Henry than for the State of Kentucky, more for the State of Kentucky than for the United States of America. But I *do not* care more for the United States of America than for the world.[109]

For Berry, the further away from the center (family and local community) one moves, the less sense of belonging to each other, the less sense of mutuality, the less responsibility, the less love.

> The global economy does not exist to help the communities and localities of the globe. It exists to siphon the wealth of those communities and places into a few

---

[108] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 17-18.
[109] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 77.

> bank accounts. To this economy, democracy and the values of the religious traditions mean absolutely nothing. And those who wish to help communities to survive had better understand that a merely political freedom means little within a totalitarian economy."[110]

Berry's warning is anticipated by T. S. Elliot. "But if we are compassed with snakes and dogs: therefore some must labor, and others must hold the spear."[111]

Mutuality, responsibility, and affection center on issues of community health. "The difficulty probably lies in our narrow understanding of the word health... But by health we mean little more than how we feel... By health, in other words, we mean merely the absence of disease."[112] Nevertheless, when Berry writes about community health, in terms of mutual regard and responsible concern for community membership, he thinks in comprehensive meanings of that health – both for the community and all those constituting its membership.

> ...[T]he concept of health is rooted in the concept of wholeness. To be healthy is to be whole. The word *health* belongs to a family of words, a listing of which will suggest how far the consideration of health must carry us: *heal, whole, wholesome, hale, hallow, holy*... If the body is healthy, then it is whole. But how can it be whole and yet be dependent, as it obviously is, upon other bodies and upon the earth, upon all the rest of Creation, in fact? ...The body cannot be whole alone. Persons cannot be whole alone... To try to heal the body alone is to collaborate in the destruction of the body. Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality is healing.[113]

Berry also stands against the belief that abundance and health pertain only to material possessions. In his discussion of Jesus' comment in the fourth Gospel, "I am come that

---

[110] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 129.
[111] T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909-1962* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1963), 159.
[112] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 102.
[113] Ibid., 103.

they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly,"[114] Berry argues that, like so many aspects of God's Word relating to communal mutuality, accountability, and caring, this statement is largely misunderstood and therefore abused. Rather than interpreting Jesus' statement to include community, too, often it is interpreted for purposes of selfishness.

> To talk about or to desire more abundance of anything has probably always been dangerous, but it seems particularly dangerous now. In an age of materialist science, economics, art, and politics, we ought not to be much shocked by the appearance of materialist religion. We know we don't have to look far to find people who equate more abundant life with a bigger car, a bigger house, a bigger bank account, and a bigger church. They are wrong, of course. If Jesus meant only that we should have more possessions or even more "life expectancy," then John 10:10 is no more remarkable than an advertisement for any commodity whatever. Abundance, in this verse, cannot refer to an abundance of material possessions, for life does not require a material abundance; it requires only a material sufficiency. That sufficiency granted, life itself, which is a membership in the living world, is already an abundance.[115]

Writing in response to 9/11, Berry consistently focuses on the problem of interior destruction of community mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Berry asserts that the government's response to 9/11 is understandable since its response was a product of fear and haste. But the government's response cannot save communities from themselves, because, Berry believes, the community's worst problems flow from within, not from without. In his collection of essays, *Citizenship Papers*, Berry's essay, "A Citizen's Response," highlights some internal problematic issues.

> But they [the government] cannot protect us against the destruction of our own land by ourselves. They cannot protect us against the selfishness, wastefulness, and greed that we have legitimized here as economic virtues, and have taught the world. And they cannot protect us from what may prove to be the greatest danger

---

[114] John 10:10 (ESV).
[115] Wendell Berry, *The Way of Ignorance,* 133.

> of all: the estrangement of our people from one another and from our land. Increasingly, Americans – including, notoriously, their politicians – are not *from* anywhere. And so they have in this "homeland," which their government now seeks to make secure on their behalf, no home place that they are strongly moved to know or love or use well, or protect.[116]

Berry insists that our government fundamentally stands against citizens exhibiting the necessary elements for community health: a mutual regard for those in a local community, a sense of responsibility for self and others in a place, and love manifest in mutual care for a place and those in the place. The remedy is found within community choices, both relational and economic. "We must achieve the character and acquire the skill to live much poorer than we do. We must waste less. We must do more for ourselves and each other. It is either that or continue merely to think and talk about change that we are inviting catastrophe to make."[117]

Human economy and activity, Berry insists, must account for the land and adapt itself accordingly, if truly healthy communities are to survive and thrive. "The human economy is under an inescapable obligation to adapt itself conservingly to the multiplicity of unique earthly places. There is no impracticality in saying this, because some human economies, and even the economies of some individual farmers, have made this adaptation...and have made the health of the place the standard of their work."[118] Even soil erosion from failing to account for and adapt to the land is linked to lack of affection for people and the land. "The resulting soil erosion may be understood as

---

[116] Wendell Berry, *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003), 6.
[117] Berry, *What Are People For? Essays,* 201.
[118] Berry, *Citizenship Papers*, 177.

something that inevitably happens when the attention, memory, and affection of the people have been alienated from the land."[119]

Poems

That each member of a local community belongs to the others and is responsible for and loves the others is evident in Berry's latest collection of poems, *Given*. In that collection, the poem *Original Sin* highlights not only the devastating effects on Creation, but on human relationships too, underscoring the interrelatedness and dependence of those relationships.

> Well, anyhow, it preserves us from the pride
> of thinking we invented sin ourselves
> by our originality, that famous modern power.
> In fact, we have it from the beginning
> of the world by the errors of being born,
> being young, being old, causing pain
> to ourselves, to others, to the world, to God
> by ignorance, by knowledge, by intention,
> by accident. Something is bad the matter
> here, informing us of itself, handing down
> its old instruction. We know it when
> when we see it, don't we? Innocence
> would never recognize it. We need to
> too, for without it we would not know
> forgiveness, goodness, gratitude,
> that fund of grace by which alone we live.[120]

By the errors of sin that complicates, harms, and even destroys relationships between one another and God, we understand that "something is bad the matter here." What is bad the matter here, according to Berry, is that original sin disrupts a mutual concern for others,

---

[119] Ibid.,176.
[120] Wendell Berry, *Given: New Poems* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005), 35.

interrupts the responsible care we should have for others, and interjects the poison of self-purpose to the neglect of community love.

Mutual, responsible love in Berry's vision of community is redemptive in its scope: desiring to gather all the sorrows experienced in the community to oneself, so that all the members of the membership would be spared the pain of them. Berry summarizes this redemptive notion of mutuality in his Sabbath poem, "Jayber Crow in Old Age." This poem reflects Christ's joy in gathering all sorrow to him on the cross to spare us. This is a gospel idea found in Christ's redemptive work (Hebrews 12:2).

> To think of gathering all
> the sorrows of Port William
> into myself, and so
> sparing the others:
> What freedom! What joy![121]

Berry's collection of poems, *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems 1979 – 1997,* reveals his regard for mutuality, responsibility, and affection in community as well. In the poem "Loving You Has Taught Me the Infinite," he weaves together a deep and profound, mutual, self-sacrificing concern for his wife, his children, and his life and offers all as a gift to be given away on behalf of others. Such is the nature of reciprocal love.

> Loving you has taught me the infinite
> longing of the self to be given away
> and the great difficulty of that entire
> giving, for in love to give is to receive
> and then there is yet more to give;
> and others have been born of our giving
> to whom the self, greatened by gifts,
> must be given, and by that giving
> be increased, until, self-burdened,

[121] Ibid., 141.

> the self, staggering upward in years,
> in fear, hope, love, and sorrow,
> imagines, rising like a moon,
> a pale moon risen in daylight
> over the dark woods, the Self
> whose gift we and all others are,
> the self that is by definition given.[122]

Highlighting the relational aspect of Berry's poetry, Angyal believes that, for Berry, "the poem is not an autonomous object but something that exists in a world of relationships. He rejects self-reflexive poetry, insisting on the poet's obligation to relate to his or her community."[123]

Novels

A sense of belonging to one another, accountability for others, a loving attitude, an understanding that a community is not healthy unless health is established for all the members of the membership—these undergird Berry's vision of community, explicitly in his essays and poems The same pillars of community are implicit in his novels. *Jayber Crow* is Berry's novel about a member of the agrarian Port William community who, though a Port William native, is dismembered, dislocated, and displaced from the membership, but then makes his way back to the community and becomes the barber and story keeper of the Port William membership. Jayber, now seventy-two and remembering his life, understands mutual, responsive love, and learns that he, in fact, becomes a possession of the community through mutual, caring association with others in the Port William membership. Acceptance back into the membership was a slow process of familiarization. "And though I was only twenty-two when I came into the town, many of

---

[122] Wendell Berry, *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems, 1979-1997* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 149.

[123] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 116.

the same ones would call me 'Mr. Cray' to acknowledge that they did not know me well... Once my customers took me to themselves, they called me Jaybird, and then Jayber. Thus I became, and have remained, a possession of Port William."[124]

Jayber spent his early years dislocated and solitary. Early in life he had been sent to the Good Shepherd orphanage, where he made no ties. Then he attended college in Pigeonville for a season, and made no ties or friends. He, due to his experiences at both of these institutions, believed that being a "theoretical person in a theoretical place" was commendable. By the time he made his way to Louisville working as a barber near the stockyards, he was completely disillusioned about shared relationships. But now, in his later years, looking back he understood the loneliness and sadness of being alone, outside community.

> By the time I had got to Lexington, I was so convinced of the temporariness of any stay I would ever make in this world that I hadn't formed any ties at all... I had made acquaintances, but I didn't make any friends. At the university I came and went almost without speaking to anybody... But then when the dark change came over my mind, I was in a fix. My solitariness turned into loneliness... That, I guess is why I got so sad. I was living, but I was living my life. So far as I could see, I was going nowhere. And now, more and more, I seemed also to have come from nowhere. Without a loved life to live, I was becoming more and more a theoretical person, as if I might have been a figment of institutional self-justification: a theoretical ignorant person from the sticks, who one day would go to a theoretical somewhere and make a theoretical something of himself – the implication being that until he became that something he would be nothing.[125]

Berry has Jayber recall "an invisible web": all the people of his membership, both from the early days and the later times. It is the shared mutuality, responsibility, and love between him and the others that helped him identify his community, and his membership in the community.

---

[124]Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 11.
[125] Berry, 72-73.

Jayber acknowledges that being embraced by the community, and knowing he was accepted, changed him. His isolation had enabled him to put his "whole life in a smallish cardboard box and carry it in [his] hand."[126] A growing sense that he belonged to the community and the community belonged to him forced Jayber to realize that he "never again would be able to put [his] life in a box and carry it away."[127]

> After all those years of keeping myself aloof and alone, I began to feel tugs from the outside. I felt my life branching and forking out into the known world... The place itself and its conversations surrounded me with reminding... [A]ll the people of that early world I once thought would last forever, and then thought I had left forever- were always coming back to mind because of something I saw or heard... In my comings and goings I crossed their tracks, and my own earlier ones, many times a day, weaving an invisible web that was as real as the ground it was woven over, and as I went about I would feel my losses and my debts.[128]

Troy Chatham is Berry's quintessential opposite of mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Through Chatham, Berry "presents a comprehensive criticism of the methods, assumptions, and effects of industrial agriculture and proposes that American farmers adopt instead methods of sustainable agriculture...."[129] "The measure of a man's character, in Berry's vision, is in his use or abuse of the land."[130] Troy Chatham was a man of low character because he abused both the land and the relationships belonging to it. Chatham explains Berry's belief that

> the community disintegrates because it loses the necessary understandings, forms, and enactments of the relations among materials and processes, principles and actions, ideals and realities, past and present, present and future, men and women, body and spirit, city and country, civilization and wilderness, growth and decay, life and death – just as the individual character loses the sense of a responsible

---

[126] Ibid., 130.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 130-131.
[129] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 31.
[130] Ibid., 23.

> involvement in these relations... The divisions can be bridged and critical connections reestablished through "fidelity" considered as a cultural discipline.[131]

Chatham, a larger-than-life character living in Port William, stood against and grasped for everything incoherent and contributing to the disintegration of community. He needed no one, not even himself. He was an escapee from mutual concern and regard. Fidelity was lost on him. Troy Chatham believed that he needed no one, and that everyone existed to serve his larger than life dreams that contributed to the demise of the community.

> Troy Chatham, if he were there, [at the barber shop gathering of the community] would hold himself outside this conversation. But he could not be too much aloof from it, because he needed to stay close enough to look down on it... He never said much outright, but he made his point by his standing aloof, by his looking down, by his refusal of their hope and worry. He made his point by not bothering to make it.[132]

It was the beginning of the death of a rural, agrarian community, the beginning of the end as long-term businesses in Port William closed, and no one bought them. It was a time when the second generation moved away from the community, and out of the membership, a time when the highway bypassed the town, a time when communal mutuality and love labored to exist. Jayber lamented the loss, knowing the cost. "You may say that I am just another outdated old man complaining about progress and the changes of time. But, you see, I have well considered that possibility myself, and am prepared to submit to correction by anybody who cares about a community, who can show me how the world is improved by that community's dying."[133]

Jayber Crow understood that love was the indispensable adhesive that brought together and held together members of a cohesive, mutually concerned and involved community.

---

[131] Steve Weiland, "Wendell Berry: Culture and Fidelity," *Iowa Review* 10 (Winter 1979): 99-104.
[132] Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 271.
[133] Ibid., 274.

And Jayber embraced the hard reality that he did not love as he should, or as the community integrity demanded. Some of what kept him from loving as he should was his long-held questions about God and his truth – the Scriptures.

> Not one single one of my doubts and troubles about the Scripture has ever left me. They had, in fact, got worse. The more my affections and sympathies had got involved in Port William, the more uneasy I became with certain passages, not just in the letters of St. Paul, that clarifying and exasperating man, but even in the Gospels… My mistake was not in asking the questions that so plagued my mind back there at Pigeonville, for how could I have helped it? I can't help it yet; the questions are with me yet. My mistake was ignoring the verses that say God loves the world.[134]

Troy Chatham was married to Mattie, whom Jayber loved, secretly and from a distance. He did not believe Troy deserved her. Some of what kept him loving responsibly, as he should, was his hatred of Troy.

> One Saturday evening, while Troy was waiting his turn in the chair, the subject [war protesters] was started and Troy said – it was about the third thing he said – "They ought to round up every one of them sons of bitches and put them right in front of the damned communists, and then whoever killed who, it would be all to the good."
>
> There was a little pause after that. Nobody wanted to try to try to stop it. It was hard to do, but I quit cutting hair and looked at Troy. I said, "Love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them that hate you."
>
> Troy jerked his head up and widened his eyes at me. "Where did you get that crap?"
>
> I said, "Jesus Christ."
>
> And Troy said, "Oh."
>
> It would have been a great moment in the history of Christianity, except that I did not love Troy.[135]

---

[134] Ibid., 250.
[135] Ibid., 287.

Jayber did come to love Troy, simply because he knew that Troy belonged to Mattie, and Mattie belonged to a long line of love that binds everything to everything. "For finally he was redeemed, in my eyes, by Mattie's' long-abiding love for him as I myself had been by my love for her."[136] Because of his eventual love for Troy, Jayber learned that community is the eventual and ultimate place for hope.

> Listen. There is a light that includes our darkness, a day that shines down even on the clouds. A man of faith believes that the Man in the well is not lost. He does not believe this easily or without pain, but he believes it. His belief is a kind of knowledge beyond any way of knowing. He believes the child in the womb is not lost, nor is the man whose work has come to nothing, nor is the old woman forsaken in the nursing home in California. He believes that those who make their bed in Hell are not lost, or those who dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, or the lame man at Bethesda Pool, or Lazarus in the grave, or those who pray, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.* " Have mercy.[137]

Jayber Crow, though welcomed and belonging to the Port William membership, was made to feel, by the church, a man cut off and outside. And the loneliness stemming from his attendance at the church flowed from the isolating and dismembering messages preached by the young, itinerant ministers, coming from the seminary in Louisville,

> with the mantle of power, but not the mantle of knowledge… They learned to have a very high opinion of God and a very low opinion of His works – although they could tell you that his world has been made by God Himself… To them, the church did not exist in the world where people earn their living and have their being, but rather in the world where they fear death and Hell, which is not of this world.[138]

Despite the messages of the young, uncommitted preachers who would not live poor enough to stay in Port William long enough to grow old there, Jayber enjoyed the church

---

[136] Ibid., 361
[137] Ibid., 357.
[138] Ibid., 160.

services because he sensed the fortifying presence of communal belonging and love expressed in the reasons they assembled at the church.

> What they came together for was to acknowledge, just by coming, their losses and failures and sorrows, their need for comfort, their faith always needing to be greater, their wish (in spite of all words and acts to the contrary) to love one another and to forgive and be forgiven, their need for one another's help and company and divine gifts, their hope (and experience) of love surpassing death, their gratitude.[139]

Berry, through his character Jayber Crow, reveals his understanding of mutuality, responsibility, love, and its relationship to the organized church that Jesus Christ left on the earth. Berry rejects the idea of the organized church, opting rather for the "unorganized church." The unorganized church, he believes, is the true model of mutuality, since its membership includes, loves, and senses a responsibility for all that are in a place (human and non-human) and for and the place itself. In that regard, Berry has Jayber entertain the possibility that he is the ultimate Protestant.

> I am, I suppose, a difficult man. I am, maybe, the ultimate Protestant, the man at the end of the Protestant road, for as I have read the Gospels over the years, the belief has grown in me that Christ did not come to found an organized religion but came instead to found an unorganized one. He seems to have come to carry religion out of the temples into the fields and sheep pastures, onto the roadsides, and the banks of rivers, into the houses of sinners and publicans, into the town and the wilderness, toward the membership of all that is here. Well, you can read and see what you think.[140]

His mind going often to the subject of war (that community dis-integrating evil), Jayber would ask himself why Jesus Christ did not come in power and glory, bringing all war to an end so that the community could live mutually, lovingly in real peace. Jayber

---

[139] Ibid., 163.
[140] Ibid., 321.

knew the answer – Christ is manifest in the warp and woof of the tragic and beautiful joys and sufferings of all in the membership.

> Those who wish to see Him must see Him in the poor, the hungry, and hurt, the wordless creatures, the groaning and travailing beautiful world. I would sometimes be horrified in every moment I was alone. I could see no escape. We are too tightly tangled together to be able to separate ourselves from one another either by good or by evil. We all are involved in all and any good, and in all and any evil. For any sin, we all suffer. That is why our suffering is endless. It is why God grieves and Christ's wounds still are bleeding.[141]

Jayber Crow ends his book, struggling with the tension of having written a book either about Heaven or about Hell. In the end, he decides he has written about both, and both are intimately bridged to mutual love and responsibility – the sense that everything is connected to everything, or not.

> This is a book about Heaven. I know it now. It floats among us like a cloud and is the realest thing we know and the least to be captured, the least to be possessed by anybody for himself. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which you cannot see among the crumbs of earth where it lies. It is the reflection of the tree on the water… This is, as I said and believe, a book about Heaven, but I must say too that it has been a close call. For I have wondered sometimes if it would not finally turn out to be a book about Hell – where we fail to love one another, where we hate and destroy one another for reasons abundantly provided or for righteousness' sake or for pleasure, where we destroy the things we need the most, where we see no hope and have no faith, where we are needy and alone, where the things that ought to stay together fall apart, where there is such a groaning travail of selfishness in all its forms, where we love one another and die, where we must lose everything to know what we had. But the earth speaks to us of Heaven, or why would we want to go there? If we knew nothing of Hell, how would we delight in Heaven should we get there?[142]

Hannah Coulter, the titular character of another of Berry's Port William novels, is now in her late seventies, remembering her life growing up and living in Port William:

---

[141] Ibid., 295.
[142] Ibid., 351, 354-355.

twice married, rearing children and watching them leave the community. She retells her memories of life, love, work, loss, death, and community. She called the gathering of all the people whose lives had become interwoven with hers 'the membership."

> This was our membership. Burley called it that. He loved to call it that. Andy Catlett, remembering Burley, still calls it that. And I do. This membership had an economic purpose and it has an economic result, but the purpose and the result were a lot more than economic. The membership includes the dead… My children were born into that story, and into the membership that the story is about, and into the place that was home to the membership...[143]

"Membership" is a key term for Berry. "Membership" is more instructive and comprehensive than "member," or "party," or "resident," or "homeowner." Membership, as known through Hannah Coulter, is about generational connections. It is about understanding that all members of the community belong to one another. It is about believing that when there is work to be done or life to be lived, the members of the membership are accountable and responsible to help each other. It is about sensing the deep river of love and affection binding their hearts together, manifested in their behaviors toward each other. And, of course, Hannah knew that the most basic membership, along with a sense that things connect, begins in the home where that love is birthed.

Paralleling his thoughts in *Hannah Coulter,* in his collection of essays *Home Economics*, Berry testifies to his overarching perspective that membership is about how things connect. "The essays in this book continue an attempt to construct an argument that I began twenty or so years ago. The subject of the argument is the fact, and ultimately the faith, that things connect – that we are wholly dependent on a pattern, an

---

[143] Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter: A Novel* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 94-95.

all inclusive form, that we partly understand. The argument, therefore, is an effort to describe responsibility."[144] In his essay *The Body and The Earth*, though, Berry is careful not to overstate his case.

> I do not want to speak of unity misleadingly or too simply. Obvious distinctions can be made between body and soul, one body and the other bodies, body and world, etc. But these things that appear to be distinct are nevertheless caught in a network of mutual dependence and influence that is the substantiation of their unity... There is in practice, no such thing as autonomy. Practically, there is only a distinction between responsible and irresponsible dependence.[145]

Hannah Coulter understood that community was not only important, but necessary. The membership of a community needs each other, is accountable to each other and affectionate toward each other for the sake of the community membership.[146] Describing the demise of a 1938 community in his essay "Does A Community Have A Value," Berry helps answer the pressing question, "Is a community necessary?" He answers, "Yes," because "today, the community is defined mostly by the mere proximity of its people to one another. The people belong, often to their own detriment, to a national economy whose centers are far from home."[147]

Berry provides a commonsense remedy to community loss: the membership of a community must focus on its own commonness.

> The only preventative and the only remedy is for the people to choose one another and their place, over the rewards offered them by outside investors. The local community must understand itself finally as a community of interest – a common dependence on a common life and a common ground. And because a community is, by definition, placed, its success cannot be divided from the success of its place, its natural setting and surroundings: its soils, forest, grasslands, plants and

---

[144] Wendell Berry, *Home Economics: Fourteen Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), ix.
[145] Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture*, 110-111.
[146] Berry, *Hannah Coulter*, 41.
[147] Berry, *Home Economics*, 184.

> animals, water, light, and air. The two economies, the natural and the human, support each other; each is the other's hope of a durable and livable life.[148]

In his book *That Distant Land,* a collection of novels, including a story by the same name, Berry believes it is an inner working of life, illness, and death (all mutually experienced by the community) that helps members of a community know that they are, in fact, part of membership. Andy Catlett returns to Port William, after being away for a while, to be with the family as they watch and wait for his grandfather, Mat Feltner, to die. It is Mat's illness and eventual death that not only brings the family together, but restores a sense of belonging to each other. "And others who were not family came: Burely Coulter, Burley's brother Jarrat, Elton and Mary Penn, Arthur and Martin Rowanberry. They would happen by for a few minutes in the daytime, or come after supper and sit and talk an hour or two. We were a membership. We belonged together, and my grandfather's illness made us feel it."[149]

Woven into his novel *A Place on Earth*, is Berry's insistence that everything connects to everything. The novel reveals the daily comings and goings of the people, whose lives are enmeshed and embedded by the work and living in a rural, agrarian community, fully aware of and committed to itself. "The novel contrasts the natural rhythms of the seasons, of winter flood and spring renewal with the gradual disintegration of the local community."[150] One of Berry's characters, Earnest Finley, is a handyman and is hired to rebuild the bridge that was destroyed by a flood. In his rebuilding the bridge, Earnest understands the purpose of a bridge – it connects things that should be connected:

---

[148] Berry, *Home Economics*, 191-192.
[149] Wendell Berry, *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 310.
[150] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 23.

lives, work, death, memories, joys, sorrows, a sense of belonging to someone else, and love. "There comes to be something deeply pleasing to him in the idea of a bridge – not, maybe, the first mark a man makes on earth, but surely one of the first marks made by a neighborhood...."[151] Earnest Finley finds deeply pleasing the idea that a bridge connects; it links together; it enables people, otherwise dislocated, to locate in a mutual place to build community together. Earnest knows that the Crop family's work, memories, and contributions to the community are cut off when the flood rips the bridge out. "Their losses are wounds to the social body...."[152] He knows, instinctively, that they need to be restored to the community membership and the community to them in order for the community to be healthy and whole. For this reason, he takes great delight "and hastens toward its completion. Long before he is done, he already knows how it is going to be, and he is driven on by an appetite for the finished look of it."[153] Finley's pleasure reflects Berry's world of moral order in which work and love are united to create a full and meaningful life.[154] A close reading of this novel reveals that Ernest Finely, among others, is not united to a full and meaningful life. Though Finley recognizes the need of it for others, due to his lack of community, he eventually commits suicide. Opposed to characters like Finely, Hicks asserts that the emphasis of *A Place on Earth* is on "the mature husband (Mat Feltner) and as the title and recurrent language of the novel suggest, on his *place* within the organic cycles of nature."[155]

Mutual, responsible love infuses Berry's story, "Fidelity," in his collection of five stories by the same name. "Fidelity" is the story of Danny Branch's (Burley Coulter's

---

[151] Berry, *A Place on Earth*, 167.
[152] Hicks, *Wendell Berry's Husband to the World,* 245.
[153] Berry, *A Place on Earth*, 167.
[154] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 25.
[155] Hicks, *Wendell Berry's Husband to the World,* 244.

illegitimate, but loved son) rescue of Burley (who is dying) from a Louisville hospital to let him die in the woods he loves. Reluctantly, Danny and others had taken Burley to the hospital because his condition had worsened to the point that they had to do something. One of their visits to the hospital to see Burley is reconstructed as act of love between the living, the dying, and the dead – all those belonging to the community.

> Those who loved him came to see him: Hannah and Nathan, Lyda and Danny, Jack Penn, Andy and Flora Catlett, Arthur and Martin Rowanberry, Wheeler and his other son a law partner, Henry, and their wives. They sat or stood around Burley's bed, reconstructing their membership around him in that place that hummed, in the lapses of their talk, with the sounds of many engines. Burley knew them all, was pleased to have them there with him, and appeared to understand where he was and what was happening. But in the course of his talk with them, he spoke also to their dead, whom he seemed to see standing with them.[156]

After the rescue, there is, of course, an investigation. Nearly the entire town of Port William is in on the rescue or has knowledge of it. During the investigation, the community stands together: standing against the engines of the hospital, standing against the probing of the law, standing against the external elements that try to create division in the membership. Burley does die, and Danny takes great pains of love and care to bury him in the woods by a creek. The lawyer investigating the case assembles all the people belonging to Burley and Danny's membership in the courthouse. Henry Catlett the town lawyer, and part of the membership, holds the lawyer at bay until Danny comes in from the woods and into the room where the members of the Port William membership are assembled. Seeing he has no evidence (or right), the lawyer, Kyle Bode, finally admits his defeat, and Henry Catlett pronounces his benediction on Burley, making reference to Burley's mutual people and place. "A man has disappeared out of your world, Mr. Bode,

---

[156] Wendell Berry, *Fidelity: Five Stories*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 112.

that he was never in for very long. And you don't know where, and you don't know how. He has disappeared into his people and his place, not to be found in the world again forever… And so… peace to our neighbor, Burley Coulter. May God rest his soul."[157]

Berry, in his story "Remembering," employs the word "remembering" to address significant issues in understanding mutuality, responsibility, and affection in community. Andy Catlett loses his right hand in a corn picker accident. His loss, in his mind, has dismembered him from the membership of his wife (he is angry and curt towards her, always bitter); dismembered him from the membership of Port William (out of his anger of his loss, he is angry and bitter toward his friends, unwilling to accept their help); dismembered him from his place (he has flown to Cincinnati to speak at an agricultural forum, where, of all the speakers, he is the only one who has worked on a farm in twenty years and understands that their agenda is to further remove the farmer from his land, his place, his community); and dismembered him from love (his self-pity is not motivated from love, the empty space where once he had a hand reminds him that he is unlovely; he lives in isolation and hatred). Through the process of being away from home, away from his wife, Flora, and away from his place, he experiences a type of redemption – a remembering. He works through his loneliness, grief, self-pity, and loss. He understands that his dismembered hand does not affect his place in his membership – at home or in Port William. He "remembers" what truly constitutes a healthy membership: a sense of belonging to one another, of being held accountable by others, and of embracing one another in love, unconditionally. Exhausted after his long flight home, he falls asleep under a tree, and dreams and remembers that "in the fields and the town, walking, standing or sitting under the trees, resting and talking together in the peace of a Sabbath

[157] Berry, *Fidelity*, 189.

profound and bright, are people of such beauty that he weeps to see them. He sees there the membership of one another and of the place and of the song or light in which they live and move."[158]

Berry's Vision of Mutuality, Responsibility, and Affection – Subcategories Select Essays, Poems, and Novels

This review has presented Berry's vision of community by highlighting the three segments of the bridge that connect members of a local community: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Berry's vision is such that all three segments are comprehensively presented as a whole category, and therefore, have been presented as such.

Out of Berry's ample vision of community, two subcategories warrant special consideration: work[159] and the church. This review does not attempt a complete handling of these issues, merely a sampling from Berry's essays, poems, and novels to help further grasp his vision of community. Berry's novels, in particular, so enmesh work with his vision of community that this review makes no attempt to comment on them. However, before this review considers Berry's view of work as it is presented in his other literature, it is essential (to contextualize Berry) to provide a brief theology of work.

A Covenantal (Biblical) Theology of Work

This review now considers some of the theological literature pertaining to the theology of work. Exploring the theology of God's work will then introduce the theology of work for humankind.

---

[158] Berry, *A Place on Earth*, 221.

[159] No attempt is made to distinguish the epistemology of vocation, work, or calling. Such studies are beyond the pale of this review. Work is addressed briefly in this review as a subcategory, because the issue of work is so completely embedded in Berry's vision of community that to address work comprehensively as a main category is disingenuous, though highlighting work briefly as a subcategory is warranted.

God is the God who works. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created." "From the beginning of the world," writes Chuck Colson, "...there was work, for at the beginning there was Creation – the work of God. When he rested on the seventh day, 'he rested from *all his work* of the creating he had done' and God pronounced his work 'good.'"[160] God's work, emanating from himself and for himself (Colossians 1:16) is directed to the well-being of others. Luther expresses it in the vivid terms of God milking cows. "God himself will milk the cows through him whose vocation that is... Care for one's office is, in its very frame of reference on earth, participation in God's own care for human being."[161] Plantinga asserts that God's speaking all things into existence was not a necessity for him. "Creation is an act of imaginative love... In creation God graciously made room in the universe for other kinds of beings. And then, out of his limitless and self-sustaining resources, God began to work."[162]

Drudgery has no place in God's work. Proverbs 8 pinpoints the sense of the joy of Wisdom, personified in the person of Christ (Col. 2:3), before and during God's creative process.

> I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

Dallas Willard, thinking of Proverbs 8—"Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in humankind"[163]—noticed the delight in God's work, too. "We

---

[160] Charles W. Colson and Jack M. Eckerd, *Why America Doesn't Work* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1991), 32.
[161] Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 9.
[162] Ibid., 23.
[163] Proverbs 8:27-31 (ESV).

should, to begin with, think that God leads a very interesting life, and that he is full of joy. Undoubtedly he is the most joyous being in the universe... We pay a lot of money to get a tank with a few tropical fish in it and never tire of looking at their brilliant iridescence and marvelous forms and movements. But God has *seas full of them,* which he constantly enjoys."[164]

John Frame believes that God's work of creation is a matter of worship. "God creates the world as Lord... Creation itself, including the inanimate objects, worships God (Ps. 19:1-4; 50:6; 89:5; 98:7-9; 148:1-14; Is. 55:12). And when we think of God as the Creator, we encounter his holiness, and we are moved to worship."[165] Frame insists that in the work of creation, God displays his covenantal, lordship attributes of presence, control, and authority. [166] "So in creation, God acts as Lord. He needs no helpers... [H]e controls all, interprets all, and thereby enters into an intimate relationship with his world.... In all of this, God shows by his creative acts that he is the Lord. Compare also Jeremiah 33:2 and Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6."[167] God's lordship attributes of covenantal presence, authority, and control make it possible to think in terms of mutuality, responsibility, and affection as they relate to God the worker. As the worker who creates, God has an identity with, an ownership of his creation. Thus he is mutually involved with it, though the creation is distinct from his being. He remains actively involved with his work. He is present. As a responsible worker, God takes covenantal responsibility for his creation, animate and inanimate (Ps. 86; 104; Matt. 5). He responsibly creates, redeems,

---

[164]Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco, 1998), 62-63.
[165] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 291.
[166] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Pub., 1987). This work as an excellent introduction to Frame's normative, situational, and existential categories.
[167] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 295.

and re-creates what he created. God is affectionate toward the world. "God so loved the world"[168] that his heart was moved to action. Wendell Berry believes that God's love for the world is the only thing that ultimately will bring health to the world.[169]

David Bloesch argues that

> Christianity is not about pie in the sky. The Christian faith is based in transcendent realities but its implications appear immanently in creation. "God was in Christ," the apostle said, "reconciling the *world* to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Put another way, God wants to save souls in factories, offices, farms, and the unemployment office…as well as souls in political activity, souls in bedroom and boardroom, souls on playing fields, souls in domestic order, and on and on.[170]

Lee Hardy, insisting that God's loving participation with his creation enables us to make sense of the doctrine of Creation, writes in his book *The Fabric of this World*, "the religious significance of human work is first apprehended in the light of the doctrine of creation. Having fashioned a world filled with resources and potentials, God chose to continue his creative activity in this world through the work of human hands… For God established the various stations of earthly life as channels for his love and providence for the human race…."[171]

Humankind as Workers

Adam, though Forrester insists that Abraham was the first to receive an explicit call from God,[172] was the first human to receive the call to use his hands (the totality of his being) to carry on God's work. Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them. And God said

---

[168] John 3:16 (ESV).
[169] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 89, 90.
[170] Donald Bloesch, "God the Civilizer," in Mark A. Noll and David F. Wells, *Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans , 1988), 176.
[171] Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 48.
[172] W. R. Forrester, *Christian Vocation: Studies in Faith and Work*, Being the Cunningham Lectures, 1950, in New College, Edinburgh (New York: Scribner, 1953), 23.

to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" This is recognized theologically as the "cultural mandate." Nancy Pearcey calls it "the first job description."[173] This was God's executive command to man to be a worker who reflects God's image as a worker. The Scriptures have no word for "culture" ("culture" understood here as the total pattern of a people's behavior and interaction with the created reality), but it is clear from the beginning that God created man and woman as creatures of culture. The early chapters of Genesis present the created order as an interrelated community in which relations with God, the earth, and human beings all played a part.[174] "The fall, following Adam and Eve's rebellion against God's instructions, resulted in a disordered community and culture, and hard work that reflected human pride (Gen. 4:11)... God's desire to redeem and restore human cultural patterns is implied in the ministry of Christ, who came with a clear consciousness of fulfilling the redemptive purpose of the OT."[175] Christ's redemptive work not only set the standard for working and resting by accomplishing the work that his Father gave him to do (John 17). He also satisfied the work standard for all, thus freeing humankind from the guilt and power of sin, enabling them to accomplish the original task or mandate. "And what is that task?" asks Pearcey.

> Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. The first phrase, "be fruitful and multiply," means to develop the *social* world: build families, churches, schools, cities, governments, laws. The second phrase, "subdue the earth," means to harness the *natural* world: plant crops, build bridges, design

---

[173] Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 47.
[174] Genesis 3, 4 (ESV).
[175] W. A. Dryness, "Christianity and Culture," in Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 212.

> computers, compose music. This passage is sometimes called the Cultural Mandate because it tells us that our original purpose as to create cultures, build civilizations – nothing less.[176]

Our chief task is to work and in such a manner that God is glorified both by how we work and what we build or produce through our work. Though the work is hard, God's blueprint for us to engage and redeem and build culture through our work remains intact; in fact, Christ's grace enables us to work any station in life for God's glory and for the health of the community.

Robert Johnson observes, "as Christians [we are] not to maximize either our work or our play while minimizing the other… [T]here is, in short, a God-ordained and graciously upheld rhythm of work and play that we are called to adopt."[177] In his book *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, Josef Pieper helps us grasp the meaning of rest. He believes that "rest" means more than doing nothing or vacating. "Against the exclusiveness of the paradigm of work as *activity*, first of all, there is leisure as 'non-activity' – an inner absence of preoccupation, calm, an ability to let things go, to be quiet."[178]

Chuck Colson believes that God intends for human beings to live "for high morals and spiritual purposes – to love God and serve their neighbor."[179] Mutuality, responsibility, and affection are the animators of this good work ethic. "To be human is to be responsible. And this ability to respond is of a particular kind, because of that to which it responds: the love of God, expressed in God's blessings and promises."[180] For

---

[176] Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 47.
[177] Robert K. Johnston, *The Christian at Play* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 134-135.
[178] Josef Pieper and Gerald Malsbary, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 31.
[179] Charles W. Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 388.
[180] Gideon Strauss, "Responding," *Comment Magazine,* June 2009, 3.

Gary Badcock, the Meldrum Lecturer in Dogmatic Theology, University of Edinburgh, the "fundamental human vocation is to do the will of God …to show that one cannot love God unless one also loves one's neighbor...."[181]

A Berryian View of Work

Essays

Berry contends, in his essay *The Work of Local Culture,* that there is no greater work for a community to do than holding the community together by its own desire and effort. "A human community, then, if it is to last long, must exert a sort of centripetal force, holding local soil and local memory in place. Practically speaking, human society has no work more important than this." Berry's essay *Conservation is Good Work,* connects his vision of mutuality, responsibility, and affection to the issue of work in households and communities.

> We are used to hearing about turning off unused lights, putting a brink in the toilet tank, using water-saving shower heads, setting the thermostat low, sharing rides, and so forth – pretty dull stuff. But I'm talking about actual jobs of work that are interesting because they require intelligence and because they are accomplished in response to interesting questions: What are the principles of household economy, and how can they be applied under present circumstances? What are the principles of a neighborhood or a local economy, and how can they be applied under present circumstances?[182]

Berry further defines "good work" and how it connects to everything, everywhere.

> And the real name of our connection to this everywhere different and differently named earth is "work." We are connected by work even to the places where we don't work, for all places are connected; it is clear by now that we cannot exempt one place from our ruin of another. The name of our proper connection to the earth is "good work," for good work involves much giving of honor. It honors the

---

[181] Gary D. Badcock, *The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 15.

[182] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 33.

> source of its materials; it honors the place where it is done; it honors the art by which it is done; it honors the thing that it makes and the user of the made thing. Good work is always modestly scaled, for it cannot ignore either the nature of individual places or the differences between places, and it always involves a sort of religious humility, for not everything is known. Good work can be defined only in particularity, for it must be defined a little differently from every one of the places and every one of the workers on earth.[183]

Berry underscores the point of thinking about good work in terms of mutuality, responsibility, and affection.[184]

> The point of all this is the use of local buying power, local gumption, and local affection to see that the best care is taken of the local land. This sort of effort would bridge the gap, now so destructive, between the conservationists and the small farmers and ranchers, and that would be one of its great political benefits. But the fundamental benefit would be to the world and ourselves. We would begin to protect the world not just by conserving it but also by living in it.[185]

Specifically, Berry uses farming to explain the connection between responsible work and the affection of the gospel. "Farming becomes a high art when farmers know and respect in their work the distinct individuality of their place and the neighborhood of creatures that lives there. This has nothing to do with the set of personal excuses we call "individualism" but is akin to the holy charity of the Gospels...."[186]

"Conserving Communities," an essay in Berry's collection of essays, *Another Turn of the Crank,* identifies his understanding of responsible work as it relates to the health of the community. The notes of communal affinity, accountability, and care carry Berry's thoughts as he distinguishes the party of the local community from the party of the global economy. The party of the local community

---

[183] Ibid., 35-36.
[184] See Angyal, *Wendell Berry,* 25-26 for a partial list of Berry's characters and how they do or do not connect love and work.
[185] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 43.
[186] Berry, *The Way of Ignorance*, 45.

> takes a generous and neighborly view of self-preservation. They want to preserve the precious things of nature and human culture and pass them on to their children. They believe – they know from their experience – that the neighborhood, the local community, is the proper place and frame of reference for responsible work. They know that things connect…and they want to preserve the connections. They know that contrary to all unmeaning and unmeant political talk about "job creation," work ought not to be merely a bone thrown to the otherwise unemployed. They know that work ought to be necessary; it ought to be good; it ought to be satisfying and dignifying to the people who do it; and genuinely useful and pleasing to the people for whom it is done. The party of the local community, then, is a real party with a real platform and an agenda of real work and doable work… They are seeing that a community's health is largely determined by the way it makes its living.[187]

Commenting on shoddy work as one of the by-products of dualism between the body and spirit, Berry in *Health is Membership*, lists as destructive to community health "confusion about the body's proper involvement in the world. People seriously interested in health will finally have to question our society's long-standing goals of convenience and effortlessness. What is the point of 'labor saving' if by making effortless, we make it poor, and if by poor work we weaken our bodies and lose conviviality and health?" Berry insists that shoddy work is blasphemy. "To work without pleasure and affection, to make a product that is not both useful and beautiful, is to dishonor God, nature, the thing that is made, and whomever it is made for. This is blasphemy: to make shoddy work of the work of God."[188]

Considering dualism, Berry states in *Christianity and the Survival of Creation*, that the "Bible leaves no doubt at all about the sanctity of the act of world-making…

---

[187] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 17-18.
[188] Wendell Berry and Norman Wirzba, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2002), 312.

[W]e are holy creatures living among other holy creatures in a world that is holy."[189]

Berry asserts that the absurdity of the dualism between spiritual and material is apparent.

> Obviously, the sense of the holiness of life is not compatible with an exploitive economy. You cannot know that life is holy if you are content to live from economic practices that daily destroy life and diminish its possibility. By "economy" I do not mean "economics," which is the study of money-making, but rather the ways of human housekeeping, the ways by which the human household is situated and maintained within the household of nature. [190]

Berry further believes that of gravest significance for community mutuality, responsibility, and affection is whether we practice or do not practice our religion. And how we practice or do not practice our religion hinges on how we view work and the work we do.[191]

Dualism, according to Berry, is merely another way of talking about disconnections. The modern industrial society, he believes, is based on a series of these unhealthy, community-destroying

> disconnections between body and soul, husband and wife, marriage and community, community and earth... Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed. Connection *is* health. And what our society does is its best to disguise from us is how ordinary, how commonly attainable, health is. We lose our health—and create profitable diseases and dependences—by failing to see the direct connections between living and eating, eating and working, working and loving.[192]

In this regard, Angyal asserts that *The Unsettling of America,* is probably Berry's most influential book.[193]

---

[189] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 98-99.
[190] Ibid., 99.
[191] Ibid., 108.
[192] Berry, *Unsettling of America*, 138.
[193] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 60.

Berry is not persuaded that the current "environmental crisis" is a valid representation of the problem. The problem, in part, seems related to our view of work, as well as most other human activities. He writes in *The Idea of a Local Economy*,

> [I]f people begin the effort to take back into their own power a significant portion of their economic responsibility, then their inevitable first discovery is that the "environmental crisis" is no such thing; it is not a crisis of our environs or surroundings; it is a crisis of our lives as individuals, as family members, as community members, and as citizens. We have an "environmental crisis" because we have consented to an economy in which by eating, drinking, working, resting, traveling, and enjoying ourselves we are destroying the natural, god-given world.[194]

Citing a *New York Times* article written by Michael Cox and Richard Alm, in which they state that the displacement of workers and disruption of communities is necessary for economic progress, Berry stresses the great fault of this kind of thinking and its effect on community mutuality, responsibility, and affection. "When one works beyond the reach of one's love for the place one is working and for the things and creatures one is working with and among, then destruction inevitably results. And adequate local culture, among other things, keeps work within the reach of love."[195] "Berry invites us to consider instead an economy driven by pleasure – affection in action – rather than competition."[196] And he insists that maturation of these categories results from integration of these categories. "Hovering over nearly everything I have written is the question of how a human economy might be conducted with reverence, and therefore with due respect and kindness toward everything involved. This, if it ever happens, will be the maturation of American culture."[197]

---

[194] Berry, *In The Presence of Fear*, 14.
[195] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 24.
[196] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 94.
[197] Berry, *The Way of Ignorance*, 50.

Berry believes that disaffection is what leads to dismemberment of members from the community.

> That fault is in their debasement of vocation to "job," implying that what a worker does or where it is done does not matter so long as the worker gets paid for doing it... To this, the purpose of a coherent community gives us the necessary answer... The members of a community cohere on the basis of their recognized need for one another, a need that is in many ways practical but never utilitarian... If it is to cohere, a community cannot agree to the loss of any of its members, or the disemployment of any of its members, as an acceptable cost of an economic program. If it is to cohere, a community must remember its history and its obligations... Persons, places, and things have a practical value, but they are not reducible to such value: they are not interchangeable. That is why we outlawed slavery. That is why a house for sale is not a home.[198]

Overhanging Berry's thoughts about work in his collection of essays *Life is A Miracle,* is the issue of community health, as well as the beauty of form that provides stability for the community.

> Good artists [workers] are people who can stick things together so that they stay stuck. They know how to gather things together into formal arrangements that are intelligible, memorable, and lasting. Good forms confer health upon the things that they gather together. Farms, families, and communities are forms of art just as are poems, paintings, and symphonies. We make them well or poorly; this choice is another thing that we make.[199]

Louis D. Rubin, in his introduction to *I'll Take My Stand,* agrees with Berry in believing that community economic choices must involve awareness of the assumption "that labor is an evil, that only the end of labor or the material product is good."[200] Commenting on Berry's view of the full value of work done in a healthy community, Smith identifies

---

[198] Ibid., 79.
[199] Berry, *Life is a Miracle*, 150.
[200] Allen Tate, "I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition," in *Remarks on the Southern Religion*, ed. Louis D. Rubin Jr. (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1930), xl.

Berry's alternative to mere labor. Work that contributes to the health of the community is "a moral ideal he calls grace."[201]

In his essay "Discipline and Hope," Berry exposes the modern visions of work and education and their accompanying traits of consumption and drudgery. He also proffers a remedy.

> The entire social vision, as I understand it, goes something like this: man is born into a fallen world, doomed to eat bread in the sweat of his face. But there is economic redemption. He should go to college and get an education – that is, he should acquire the "right" certificates and meet the "right" people. An education of this sort should enable him to get a "good" job – that is, short hours of work that is either easy or prestigious for a lot of money. Thus he is saved from the damnation of drudgery... In reality, this despised drudgery is one of the constants of life, like water only changing its form in response to changes of atmosphere... The so called drudgery has to be done... And one of the chief uses of discipline is to assure that the necessary work gets done even when the worker *doesn't* feel like it.[202]

Drudgery in work is a topic Berry also considers in his essay "The Body and The Earth." He uses the drudgery of growing one's own food in a garden to display the delight of working in the garden to grow one's own food. He also emphasizes mutuality and love as the resulting fruits of embracing the drudgery of good work.

> The "drudgery" of growing one's own food, then, is not drudgery at all. It is—in addition to being the appropriate fulfillment of a practical need—a sacrament, as eating is also, by which we enact and understand our oneness with the Creation, the conviviality of one body with all bodies. As the connections have been broken by the fragmentation and isolation of work, they can be restored by restoring the wholeness of work. There is work that is isolating, harsh, destructive, specialized or trivialized into meaninglessness. And there is work that is restorative, convivial, dignified, and dignifying, and pleasing. Good work is not just the maintenance of connections—as one is said to work "for a living" or "to support a family"—but the enactment of connections. It is living, and a way of living; it is

---

[201] Smith, *Wendell Berry, and The Agrarian Tradition*, 159.
[202] Wendell Berry, *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981), 176-177.

> not support for a family in the sense of an exterior brace or prop, but is one of the forms and acts of love.[203]

Finally, Berry addresses two issues explicitly that are often understood implicitly in his other works: effect and influence. In his collection of essays, *The Citizenship Papers,* he writes in his essay "Going to Work," that the work done in any place has an effect both on the worker and the place in which the work is done. Even professional, industrial, or electronic enclosures, though making the workers think their work has no effect, do, in fact, have an effect. Berry contends that it can be no other way, because to live, one must work, to work we must work in a place, and therefore the very activity of working in a place has effect on both the worker and the place. Work affects everything connected to the work and the worker: the local ecosystem, watershed, landscape, productivity, human neighborhood, and even the local memory.

The second issue is closely related to the first: influence. Because one must work to live, and because when one works it affects the place, there are naturally resulting influences that occur. The influence occurs first on the place and people where the work is done, and then on the people and place that use the product or service. Eventually, work influences people's attitudes everywhere the product is used, and in every place where its byproducts are used.[204] See Appendix D for a partial listing of Berry's essential forty-nine points from the essay, "Going to Work."[205]

---

[203] Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 138-139.
[204] Berry, *Citizenship Papers*, 33.
[205] Ibid., 33-41.

Poems

Work is far from mere drudgery for Berry. A poem[206] from his Sabbath collection of poems *The Timbered Choir*, marks his understanding that God takes delight in His Creation work. So, then, our work remains a valuable and authentic expression of God's work, though the work, because of the Fall, has become painful, yet restful. The poem "To Sit and Look at Light-filled Leaves," displays Berry's vision of work as full of pleasure, joy, life, and light.

> To sit and look at light-filled leaves
> May let us see, or seem to see,
> Far backward as through clearer eyes
> To what unsighted hope believes:
> The blessed conviviality
> That sang Creation's seventh sunrise,
>
> Time when the Maker's radiant sight
> Made radiant every thing he saw,
> And every thing He saw was filled
> With perfect joy and life and light.
> His perfect pleasure was sole law;
> No pleasure had become self-willed.
>
> For all His creatures were His pleasures
> And their whole pleasure was to be
> What He made them; they sought no gain
> Or growth beyond their proper measures,
> Nor longed for change or novelty.
> The only new thing could be pain.[207]

"One senses in Berry's poetry a keen awareness of living in a fallen world that can only be redeemed, if at all, through hard work, loyalty to place, fidelity to one's obligations, disciplined self-knowledge, and a gradual healing of the land."[208]

---

[206] See also Berry's extended poem, *The Farm*, in, *A Timbered Choir, The Sabbath Poems 1979-1997* (135-148), where he reveals work as a healthy and necessary companion to the seasons and contours of the place where the work is performed.

[207] Berry, *A Timbered Choir*, 8.

His poem "Teach Me Work that Honors Thy Work," accentuates Berry's belief that work is honorable to the degree that the worker also embraces and experiences the intended rest from labor provided by God. Paradoxically, resting from our work is possible because of God's unresting love for the work and the worker.

> Teach me work that honors Thy work,
> the true economies of goods and words,
> to make my arts compatible
> with the songs of the local birds.
>
> Teach me patience beyond work
> and, beyond patience, the blest
> Sabbath of They unresting love
> which lights all things and gives rest. [209]

Berry also insists that our work interacts with God's grace – we need both, God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

> And yet no leaf or grain is filled
> By work of ours; the field is tilled
> And left to grace. That we may reap,
> Great work is done while we're asleep.[210]

A Berryian View of the Church

Essays

"Reduction does not necessarily limit itself to compacting and organizing knowledge; it also has the power to change what is known. But biblical religion is also explicitly against reductionism."[211] This statement reveals Berry's concern regarding the church, though Angyal reveals that "as a family, they [the Berry family in which Wendell

---

[208] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 117.
[209] Berry, *Given*, 117.
[210] Berry, *A Timbered Choir*, 18.
[211] Berry, *Life is a Miracle*, 101.

was reared] were active members of the New Castle Baptist Church."[212] Berry believes the church has suffered and is suffering from reductionism in its beliefs and its practices. Allen Tate, one of the Twelve Southerners writing collectively in *I'll Take My Stand*, influenced Berry greatly. Tate, in his essay "Remarks on the Southern Religion," anticipates Berry's contention that "abstraction is the death of religion no less than the death of anything else."[213] Berry is much excised by the nearly insurmountable gap between what the church believes and how it lives. Particularly, he is concerned about the church's view of and involvement in the local community.

> All the institutions that "serve the community" are publicly oriented: the schools, governments, and government agencies, the professions, the corporations. Even the churches, though they may have community membership, do not concern themselves with issues of local economy and local ecology on which community health and integrity must depend. Nor do people in charge of these institutions think of themselves as members of communities. They are itinerant, in fact or spirit, as their careers require them to be.[214]

For Berry, his view is not theoretical. His own community, Port Royal, KY is suffering the deadening results of neglect by the church because the church is not committed to his or any community.

> My small community in Kentucky has lived and dwindled for at least a century under the influence of four kinds of organizations: governments, corporations, schools, and churches – all of which are distant (either actually or in interest), centralized, and consequently abstract in their concern… The church is present in the town. We have two churches. But both have been used by their denominations, for almost a century, to provide training and income for student ministers, who do not stay long enough even to become disillusioned.[215]

---

[212] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 1.
[213] Tate, *I'll Take My Stand*, 156.
[214] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 152.
[215] Wendell Berry, *What Are People For? Essays*, 199-200.

Berry asserts that the reductionism in the church has led to a dichotomy between body and soul, material and spiritual. This dualism has allowed the church to entertain strange bedfellows and inconsistency between belief and behavior.

> Organized Christianity seems, in general, to have made peace with "the economy" by divorcing itself from economic issues, as this, I think, has proved to be a disaster, both religious and economic... The *organized* church comes immediately under a compulsion to think of itself, and identify itself to the world, not as an institution synonymous with its truth and it membership, but as a hodgepodge of funds, properties, projects, and offices, all urgently requiring economic support... Like any other public institution so organized, the organized church is dependent on "the economy"; it cannot survive apart from those economic practices that its truth forbids and that its vocation is to correct.[216]

Then Berry pushes the issue further by highlighting the great inconsistency of the church – not practicing the love it teaches.

> The irony is compounded and made harder to bear by the fact that the building fund can be preserved by crude applications of money, but the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field can be preserved only by true religion, by the *practice* of a proper love and respect for them as the creatures of God. No wonder so many sermons are devoted exclusively to "spiritual" subjects. If one is living by the tithes of history's most destructive economy, then the disembodiment of the soul becomes the chief of worldly conveniences.[217]

The church, representative of organized religion, Berry insists, is in cahoots with both Capitalism and Communism in the sense that all three embrace and live out of the same lie.

> If you are presently occupied in destroying every good thing in sight in order to do good in the future, it is inconvenient to have people saying things like "Love your neighbor as thyself"...Communists and capitalists alike, "liberal" and "conservative" capitalists alike, have need to replace religion with some form of determinism, so that they can say to their victims, "I am doing this because I can't

---

[216]Ibid., 96.
[217] Ibid.

> do otherwise. It is not my fault. It is inevitable." The wonder is how often organized religion has gone along with this lie.[218]

Berry "criticizes organized religion for its lack of reverence for the immanent creation and for its destructive dualism between humanity and nature. Christian eschatology focuses so exclusively on the next world, he complains, that we miss the sense of holiness and the presence of creation all around us."[219]

This dualism evidences itself in practical behaviors of the church. Berry believes that much of the abroad mission work of the church has served only to permit inconsistent behaviors at home. "There is good reason, for instance, to suspect that the foreign mission programs of certain Christian denominations have served as substitutes for decent behavior at home, or as excuses for indecent behavior at home; in return for saving the souls of Negroes in Africa, one may with a free conscience exploit and demean the lives of Negroes in one's own community."[220]

Berry believes that institutional usurpation of private responsibilities perpetuates a dualism between public and private, leading to morally vacant institutions – even including the church – and self-focused members of those institutions. In his 1965 essay "The Loss of the Future," he seems to predict the situation in the contemporary church.

> This usurpation of private duties by the institutions has fostered in the public mind the damaging believe that morality can be divided neatly into two halves: public and private. It appears easy now to assume that institutions will uphold and enliven the principles of democracy and Christianity, say, while individuals may without serious consequence pursue the aims of self-interest by the methods and the standards of self-interest… It thus becomes possible to imagine the development among us of a society that would be perfectly hypocritical: a

---

[218] Berry, *In the Presence of Fear*, 16.
[219] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 42.
[220] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 49.

> democratic government without democratic citizens, and a Christian church among whose members there would be no Christians.[221]

Elements of this dualism of the church are manifest in what Berry considers the inept and dismembered behaviors of the ministers of the church. Writing in his book *The Long-Legged House,* about his own wedding ceremony preparations, the minister's behavior makes him look like a displaced buffoon, and Berry minces no words.

> The church is resurrected and permitted to interfere [in his wedding plans]... One of my unforgettable moments, as they are called, was a quaint session with the minister who having met me for the first time that moment, and being scarcely better acquainted with Tanya, undertook to instruct us in the marital intimacies. A display of preacherish candor and presumption unusual even for a preacher, and all carried out with a slogging joyless dutifulness. And as we were leaving he handed us a book on marriage. In a country less abject before "expert advice," the effrontery of it would be incredible. Well, be damned to him and his book, too. We thrive in spite of him, and in defiance of some of his rules... Our marriage became then, and has remained, the center of our life.[222]

The solution, Berry writes in his essay "The Body and Earth," is not a mere return to the Bible. He never left it, nor does he suggest that anyone can find better. "Better that Christianity should survive and renew itself so that it may become as largely and truly instructive as we need it to be."[223] The remedy for the dualism, the prevailing reductionism, is a consistent living out of the biblical truths of mutuality, responsibility, and affection.

> And yet what is the burden of the Bible if not a sense of the mutuality of influence, rising out of an essential unity, among soul and body and community and world? These are all the works of God, and it is therefore the work of virtue to make or restore harmony among them. The world is certainly thought of as a place of spiritual trial, but it is also the confluence of soul and body, word and flesh, where thoughts must become deeds, where goodness is to be enacted. This

---

[221] Ibid., 53.
[222] Ibid., 129-130.
[223] Smith, *Wendell Berry, and The Agrarian Tradition*, quoting Berry, 175.

> is the great meeting place, the narrow passage where spirit and flesh, word and world, pass into each other. The Bible's aim, as I read it, is not the freeing of the spirit from the world. It is the handbook of their interaction. It says that they cannot be divided; that their mutuality, their unity, is inescapable; that they are not reconciled in division, but in harmony. What else can be meant by the resurrection of the body?[224]

Poem

Berry understands, and expresses in his poem "The Little Stream Sings," that it is Christ's resurrection that will free us from our organized-Christianity-induced focus on the dark grave of self.

> The little stream sings
> in the crease of the hill.
> It is the water of life. It knows
> nothing of death, nothing.
> And this is the morning
> of Christ's resurrection.
> The tomb is empty. There is
> no death. Death is our illusion,
> our wish to belong only
> to ourselves, which is our freedom
> to kill one another.
> From this sleep may we too
> rise, as out of the dark grave.[225]

Angyal asserts that Berry's use of the Bible in his poetry explains his commitment to the "unorganized" church and not to any "organized" sense of it. "Berry weaves many scriptural allusions into his poems, quoting from the Psalms, the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament. His poems manage to convey a deep religious sensibility without making any formal religious affirmations, except by implication."[226]

---

[224] Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 109.
[225] Berry, *Given*, 125.
[226] Angyal, *Wendell Berry*, 133.

Novels

In his novel *Jayber Crow,* Berry reveals that the mutuality, responsibility, and affection required for a healthy, cohesive community do not come from the church (as would be expected), but rather the community provides those communal aspects. "But it is the women more than the men who see to it that cooked food goes where it is needed, that no house goes without fuel in the winter, that no child goes without toys at Christmas, that the preacher knows where he should go with a word of comfort. This is a charity that includes the church rather than the other way around."[227] The church, though present, has become ineffective, dismembered, and the community now has taken up the mantel of community health. Rather than the church saying to the community, "Here's how you can help," it is the community that now says to the church, "Here's how you can help, if you care to."

Jayber Crow understood the resulting damage of this role reversal, and the inevitable dualism that gripped the church. Attending church on Sunday mornings and hearing the sermons that insisted on the saints laying up treasure in Heaven and not being seduced by the pleasures of this material world, made Jayber feel like a man cut off from reality. He did not believe these preachers, these representatives of organized religion. And he saw their hypocrisy.

> In Port William, more than anyplace else I had been, this religion that scorned the beauty and goodness of this world was a puzzle to me. To begin with, I didn't think *anybody* believed it. I still don't think so. Those world-condemning sermons were preached to people who, on Sunday mornings, would be wearing the prettiest clothes… The people who heard those sermons loved good crops, good gardens, good livestock and work animals and dogs; they loved flowers and the shade of trees, and laughter and music… And when church was over they would

[227] Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 190.

> go home to heavenly dinners of fried chicken, it might be, and creamed new potatoes, and creamed new peas and hot biscuits and butter and cherry pie and sweet milk and buttermilk. And the preacher and his family would always be invited to eat with somebody and they would always go, and the preacher, having just foresworn on behalf of everybody the joys of the flesh, would eat with unconsecrated joy.[228]

The Port William community, along with Jayber Crow, would continue assembling at church to endure "even the worst sermons pretty well. They had the great virtue of causing a mind to wander."[229] What, then, kept the community coming to the church? Despite the fact that the church was ineffective, no longer did its job, sent uncommitted, dualistic, and hypocritical ministers, sang songs like "Onward Christian Soldiers" that violated Jesus' teaching to love our enemies, and made the community members feel like they were cut off, what kept them returning? Berry's answer is the community. The community continued to assemble for the community's sake, not for the church or for the minister, or for any sensed need of religion. The Port William membership assembled in church so that the community could provide the needed mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Jayber Crow's vision of the community, while napping on the floor at the back of the church building (he is the janitor) gives the sense that the community had been attending church to receive from the membership, not necessarily to access anything the church had to offer. For the church had no real interest in the community, at least no material part in it. For Berry, Jayber Crow's dream is what the church should be:

> I saw them in all the times past and to come, all somehow there in their own time and in all time and in no time: the cheerfully working and singing women, the men quiet or reluctant or shy, the weary, the troubled in spirit, the sick, the lame,

---

[228] Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 161.
[229] Ibid., 162.

> the desperate, the dying, the little children tucked into the pews beside their elders, the young married couples full of visions, the old men with their dreams, the parents proud of their children, the grandparents, with tears in their eyes, the pairs of young lovers attentive only to each other on the edge of the world, the grieving widows, and widowers, the mothers and fathers of children newly dead, the proud, the humble, the attentive, the distracted – I saw them all. They were just there. They said nothing, and I said nothing. I seemed to love them all with a love that was mine merely because it included me. When I came to myself again, my face was wet with tears.[230]

Berry, through Jayber Crow, drives the ever-emergent distance between the gathered church and the gathered community so far that in end, the community replaces the church.

> My vision of the gathered church that had come to me after I became the janitor had been replaced by a vision of the gathered community. What I saw now was the community imperfect and irresolute but held together by the frayed and always fraying, incomplete and yet ever-holding bonds of the various sorts of affection. There had maybe never been anybody who had not been loved by somebody, who had been loved by somebody else, and so on and on... It was a community always disappointed in itself, disappointing its members, always trying to contain its division and gentle its meanness, always failing and yet always preserving a sort of will toward goodwill. I knew that, in the midst of all the ignorance and errors, this was a membership; it was the membership of Port William and of no other place on earth. My vision gathered the community as it never has been and never will be gathered in this world of time, for the community must always be marred by members who are indifferent to it or against it, who are nonetheless its members and maybe nonetheless essential to it. And yet I saw them all as somehow perfected, beyond time, by one another's love, compassion, and forgiveness, as it is said we may be perfected by grace.[231]

Berry is not endeared to the organized church, but he does embrace the Christ of the Gospels and Christ's unorganized church. To make his point, Berry fashions his character, Jayber Crow, into the ultimate Protestant, embracing Christ's unorganized church. Berry does not believe that the organized church embraces his understanding or

---

[230] Ibid., 164-165.
[231] Ibid., 205.

vision of community. His vision includes the fact that we share, mutually, the place and space with all members of the community (human and non-human) and with the place itself, and therefore are responsible to love and care for all members that are in a local community. Organized religion, in general, embraces the non-material, the heavenly, the spiritual while disparaging the earthly and the material, lacking a mutual concern for much of what makes up a place and the place itself. The unorganized church accounts for and embraces both, thus removing the dualism that Christ did not intend.

> I am, maybe, the ultimate Protestant, the man at the end of the Protestant road, for as I have read the Gospels over the years, the belief has grown in me that Christ did not come to found an organized religion but came instead to found an unorganized one. He seems to have come to carry the religion out of the temples into the fields and sheep pastures, onto the roadsides, and the banks of rivers, into the houses of sinners and publicans, into the towns and the wilderness, toward the membership of all that is here. Well, you can read and see what you think. [232]

This segment of this literature review has surveyed Wendell Berry's vision of community mutuality, responsibility, and affection using selected essays, poems, and novels. This review has also underscored his vision of community by considering his understanding of work and the church as they relate to community by assessing selected essays, poems, and novels. This review will now consider broader topics of community by surveying other authors' understandings of community.

Community and Various Authors

Authors Commenting on the Berryian Vision of Community

In a collection of essays *Wendell Berry: Life and Work*, dedicated to Tanya and Wendell Berry, Bill McKibben in "A Citizen in the Real World," asserts that behind and serving as the undercurrent for most of all Berry's novels is the consistent vision of

---

[232] Ibid., 321.

community membership. "The Port William membership is just that: a membership, a citizenry… Berry is our great poet of community, and on his tongue that word loses the sentimental airiness that lately threatens to rob it of any meaning."[233] Remembering the "holy vision" that Berry weaves into his novel, *Hannah Coulter,* Norman Wirzba in "An Economy of Gratitude," understands that it was the Coulters' affection, or love for the place and its members, that caused them to connect their place on earth with Heaven.

> As Hannah puts it, "There is no 'better place' than this, not in *this* world. And it is by the place we've got, and our love for it and our keeping of it, that this world is joined to Heaven". To think that some other place will always be better is to have abandoned the potential latent in the place in which one is. It is to refuse – and to bear witness to previous refusals of – responsibilities and care… Resolve, at its best, is maintained by *affection.*[234]

Looking for the appropriate place to ground community, Jason Peters, in his essay, "Education, Heresy, and the 'Deadly Disease of the World,'" believes that for Berry the only fitting place is the ground. "Berry, for his part, consistently grounds marriage and community in – what else? – the ground. The marriage of Hannah and Nathan Coulter…begins with a discussion of where the marriage will be *placed.*"[235]

J. Matthew Bonzo and Michael R. Stevens in their book *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life,* think it was after Berry traveled in the academic world (Italy, Spain, New York, California, and Kentucky) and settled "back home" (a forty acre farm in his native Henry County, KY[236]) that sustainability issues such as mutuality, responsibility,

---

[233] Jason Peters, *Wendell Berry: Life and Work, Culture of the Land: A Series in the New Agrarianism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 116.
[234] Ibid., 151.
[235] Ibid., 273.
[236] Summer 2007, I, along with Dr. Hayden Head, reveled in the opportunity to meet and visit with Wendell Berry and his wife, Tanya, in their Henry County farm and home [That Native Hill]. On a sunny Sunday afternoon, we talked of community and religion as we sipped iced tea together, though in his poem, "A

and affection became themes about which he would write. His concern, they propose, is about "our culture's causal relationship to the land, the community, even the past… The set of stories [his novels] creates the place, the place creates the stories, and the people and their bonds to one another." Even death does not remove a member from the Port William membership or stories. "People die in Port William, but through stories they live on in the community, continuing to teach and delight."[237] Marriage and the sexuality marriage bespeaks is an essential underpinning of mutuality. Bonzo and Stevens believe that marriage and sexuality, in Berry's vision of community, is precisely what connects one in the community to the other. In other words, marriage and sexuality are not merely private affairs. "The couple's identity is given by the community and to the community; the couple's story becomes a patch in the quilt."[238] They further assert that postmodern rugged individualism and healthy communities are so distant from each other that "no bridge can span this divide. An appropriate individuality, then, has its desires molded by obligations to the other, within the boundaries of community."[239] Appropriate individuality, within the appropriate confines and limitations of community mutuality, responsibility, and affection, bridges the span. The bridge spanning the gap between the individual and the community is referred to, in Berry's world, as hospitality. To offer hospitality, the community must possess some level of health that opens the way to being vulnerable.[240] "But hospitality is a tricky thing… [T]here must be the creation of a safe

---

Position," Berry declares, "I'm philosophically opposed to iced drinks: Last should equal first, for a man who thinks." Wendell Berry, *Given: New Poems*, 25.

[237] Peters, *Wendell Berry, Life and Work*, 43.

[238] Ibid., 109.

[239] Ibid., 131.

[240] Ibid., 141.

and open space, a located offer and a located response, mingling vulnerability and responsibility.[241] Bonzo and Stevens insists that there is a dark side to community as well.

> For Berry, when a member leaves the community there is a dis-memberment that is as wounding and grim as the word suggests. The risk of our vulnerability with one another can be eased by the wrenching realization of what it would mean to leave and lose each other. The language in 1 Corinthians 12, with its talk of the unified body and the coordination of its members, is very much in accord with Berry's vision… [T]he gaps caused by lost neighbors, wayward children, distant parents, and the press of forces external to the community, bring the horror of dis-memberment into sharp relief.[242]

Healing and restoration is possible, Bonzo and Stevens believe, because "hospitality has room for the wounded (and for being wounded). The finite community thus shows an almost infinite array of ways to love, to forgive, to keep, and even to give away. There truly is room for everyone, with the only caveat being that love must be accepted as given; it must be received as gift." Following Berry's description of modern society, Norman Wirzba identifies the process of modern society's "decline of delight by losing time and space to know and therefore welcome others."[243] According to Wirzba, Berry's account focuses on the mass migration of farmers to the city, "where innovation, the product of risk and daring, could provide us with unheard-of goods. In a certain respect, cities represented the 'unknown': they were quite unlike rural communities in that their inhabitants were mostly unknown, and thus not responsibly tied to each other. Berry describes this period [after WWII] as a 'migration in the direction of money.'"[244]

---

[241] Ibid., 144-145.
[242] Bonzo, Stevens, *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life*, 179.
[243] Wendell Berry, *The Hidden Wound* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989), 67.
[244] Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight, The Christian Practice of Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 65-66.

Berry is much influenced by the Amish people and their practices and beliefs.[245] His view of community is shaped by his knowledge of and interaction with the Amish people. Amish communities thrive on mutuality, responsibility, and affection for each member of the community. John A. Hostetler describes the Amish as displaying loving responsibility in not merely economic ways, but in social concerns, too. "Intense interaction [like barn-raising] is how the little homogeneous community makes members feel responsible for each others' welfare. Although community aid is often a form of economic sharing, the feelings are the result of intense social concern... This bond informs individuals that they are in harmony and makes them conscious of their moral unity."[246] Berry explains that the Amish practice "Christian agriculture" based on the idea that it is wrong to misuse, neglect, or destroy what you did not create.[247]

Though critiquing Berry's theory of modern education, Madhu Suri Prakash, Associate Professor of Education at the Pennsylvania State University, is careful to acknowledge in her essay, "What Are People For? Wendell Berry on Education, Ecology, and Culture," that Berry is a careful thinker directing our attention to community mutuality. "For Berry is a genuinely radical thinker, a master at making whole again our fragmented lives and learning. Berry teaches us how to live and learn on the human scale; as communal beings, virtuous and ecologically literate because of our closeness to the land, without the alienation we suffer because of being 'educated' to work for inhuman modern institutions and technologies."[248]

---

[245] See "Amish Economy," in *A Timbered Choir, Sabbath Poems 1979- 1997*, 190-191.
[246] John Andrew Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 249, 251.
[247] Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 213.
[248] Madhu Suri Prakash, "What Are People For? Wendell Berry on Education, Ecology, and Culture," *Educational Theory* 44 (Spring 1994): 136.

> At the core of Wendell Berry's social thought is an intimate relationship between the land, community, and personhood. The realization of one's full humanity for Berry is contingent upon being deeply connected to the land one inhabits... However, this rootedness, this ecological construction, of personhood, does not occur in isolation; it is also social in that it is mediated by community life... How it [the land] is shared shapes, according to Berry, the mental and spiritual condition of the individual.[249]

David Snauwaert, Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Education, University of Missouri, underscores Berry's belief that for healthy community to exist no gap can subsist between a place, a community, and the formation of personhood. Snauwaert connects with Berry's definition of a community: "the mental and spiritual condition of knowing the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives...."[250] Berry's definition of community parallels Norman Wirzba's, in that both understand the interdependence and mutual influence existing between all relationships. Wirzba asserts that "as the biblical witness makes clear, our practical living amongst *all* the members of creation is a deeply religious matter.[251] The focus of Snauwaert's essay is the theory of education as seen through a Berryian lens. He underscores Berry's insight that "those who possess objective power in society have the capacity to package thoughts. The media, the public schools, and other cultural institutions are the vehicles that convey 'ready-made thoughts.' The result is what Berry calls a 'mind-dominated society.' According to Berry, the primary means through which mind-domination occurs is the distortion of language."[252] According to

---

[249] Dale T. Snauwaert, "Wendell Berry, Liberalism, and Democratic Theory: Implications for Rural School," *Peabody Journal of Education* 67 (Summer 1991): 118-119.
[250] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.
[251] Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath*, 144.
[252] Snauwaert, *Wendell Berry, Liberalism, and Democratic Theory*, 121.

Snauwaert, Berry's remedy for both mind-domination and language distortion is to understand that

> in a truly democratic society dominance of the "mind" is absent; rather one has the opportunity to know one's mind through deliberation and action at the local community level. In this case the individual has the opportunity to come to a "mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared" through common deliberation and debate, thereby providing an opportunity for formation of democratic personhood.[253]

Snauwaert asserts that for Berry the purpose of education is fundamentally liberal:

> education should liberate the full potential of every individual and conceives of human potential in terms of two basic categories: productivity and judgment. The obvious implication is that schools must be reoriented toward an emphasis on the cultivation of judgment and the resuscitation of creative work... Berry envisions two fundamental dimensions: literacy and local knowledge and membership, both of which are designed to cultivate judgment and enhance creative work.[254]

Sean Michael Lucas, former Archives and Special Collections Librarian at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY identifies closely with the three aspects of community that this review has pursued (mutuality, responsibility, and affection). In *God and Country: Wendell Berry's Theological Vision,* Lucas asserts that, for Berry, community work takes place in a four-fold manner: the community works by memory, by sharing, through affection or fidelity, and in achieving harmony.[255] According to Lucas, Berry's vision of community is helpful and theologically formative because it borrows capital from the Christian tradition. "Christians participate in the community by faith; they trust in God's promises as each member binds her life to the other. Participation in the community focuses not only in the practice of spiritual

---

[253] Ibid., 121-122.
[254] Ibid., 125.
[255] Sean Michael Lucas, "God and Country: Wendell Berry's Theological Vision," *Christian Scholar's Review* 32 (Fall 2002): 82-83.

disciplines, but also in the services of listening, active helpfulness, and forbearance with the other. The ultimate result of such a life in community is love to the other for Christ's sake."[256]

Love, stresses Jeff Fearnside, is not an abstract concept for Berry; rather, it is concrete and manifest in how we treat others and contributes to community health. Fearnside, in a July 2008 interview with Berry, made this statement. "Love is the catalyst for concrete action, which is taking responsibility for what we do here and now. It seems to me that in some ways this kind of love is the salvation of the world." Berry's response flows from his vision of a healthy, mutually focused community. "That's true. But like religion, love has to be practiced. It has to find something to do. Love isn't just a feeling. It's an instruction: Love one another. That's hard to do. It doesn't mean to sit at home and have fond feelings. You've got to treat people as if you love them, whether you do or not."[257]

In her article "Learning and the Life of the Pastor," Leanne Van Dyk highlights Berry (noting especially his novels, *Jayber Crow, Hannah Coulter, The Memory of Old Jack,* and *Andy Catlett: Early Travels*), among the many contemporary novelists who are "especially suggestive when exploring the implications of grace in human communities… Port William is a landscape of pastoral imagination" as these stories account for faith, perseverance, and community.[258] Van Dyk, though not clarifying the meaning of "grace," does appear to agree with Kimberly Smith and her understanding of the common grace displayed throughout Berry's work. Hicks agrees that behind all Berry's works and

---

[256] Ibid., 84.
[257] Jeff Fearnside, "Digging In: Wendell Berry on Small Farms, Local Wisdom and the Folly of Greed," *The Sun* (July 2008): 11.
[258] Leanne Van Dyk, "Learning and the Life of the Pastor," *Preaching: The Professional Journal for Preachers,"* 24 (Spring 2009): 33.

thinking is the idea of common grace, if not more. "While Berry does not stress the Christian element – indeed his work shows little sympathy with organized religion – his settlers are as near the garden as mortal man can ever return, held spell-bound, 'for that upswelling / and abounding, unbidden by any / man, was powerful, bright, / and brief for men like these, / as a holy vision.'"[259]

Hicks also asserts that Berry underscores three of the most dominant concerns for communities and for the husbands of Berry's communities (metaphors of community health): work, history, and marriage. Mat Feltner, the key maturing husband in *A Place on Earth*, becomes a man through hard work. "Work is important in Berry's world," writes Hicks, "testifying to a man's relationship to nature; as exhausting as it is, the husband's labor is an entering into the rhythms and harmonies of natural growth... So work is a kind of kinetic prayer, a witnessing and affirming of man's active place in the natural world."[260] A sense and understanding of one's place in community history also enables one to find or place himself in his role in the community.

> Mat's own personal and family history has been a preparation for his life as a mature husband. What emerges from the pattern of his life – Berry emphasizes this – is that he finally *elects* his role, takes vows of marriage to his wife and place and people. Further, he is historically prepared for it, perhaps even *fated* for it, so that he does indeed finally "choose" what he was destined to choose.[261]

The emphasis on marriage, throughout the novel,

> is decidedly on the faces of friendship, partnership, parenting... Berry's farm marriages are more characterized by quiet respect, support, endurance, than by passion, intensity, or personal encounter... [H]e (Berry) writes in "Discipline and Hope," as he emphasizes the homespun aspect, "it (marriage) must make a household, it must make a place for itself in the world and in the community.[262]

---

[259] Hicks, "Wendell Berry's Husband to the World: A Place on Earth," 239-254.
[260] Ibid., 246-247.
[261] Ibid., 249.
[262] Ibid., 253.

In his essay "Remembering and Home Defense," Carl Esbjornson asserts that Berry's "fidelity to place and to the life of a community is necessary to another of Berry's great concerns, the establishment of a household in the good faith of mutuality of marriage."[263] Though Berry holds that his hope for healthy, cohesive, mutually responsible, caring communities is a "difficult hope," he insists that "on the other hand we want to be hopeful, and hope is one of our duties. A part of our obligation to our own being and to our descendents is to be always studying our life and our condition, searching for the authentic underpinnings of hope. If we look, these underpinnings can still be found."[264]

Summarizing Berry's understanding of a person's place in a community, Marilyn Snell suggests that the artist (the poet, the worker, the community member) as the "rememberer" in the community *is* the community, in that he brings together in what he creates the past, present, and future. "There is a very arrogant way to answer that question," says Berry.

> But there is also a humble response, which sees the artist not as an isolated, preeminent genius who materializes ideas from thin air, but as a person who has been in a community a long time, has been attentive to its voices... There are two things the artist must do: pass on all that is involved – the art, the memory, the knowledge. And take responsibility for his or her work – that is the reason the work is signed, and that should be the only reason.[265]

Paul Merchant, commenting of the comprehensiveness and creativeness of Berry's work, believes that Berry "resists simple classification."[266] Agreeing with this

---

[263] Carl Esbjornson, "Remembering and Home Defense," in *Wendell Berry*, ed. Paul Merchant (Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1991): 164.
[264] Wendell Berry, "De-Colonizing Rural America: How Do You Calculate the Costs of Losing Communities?" *Audubon* (Spring 1993): 100-105.
[265] Marilyn Snell, "The Art of Place," *New Perspective Quarterly* 9 (1999): 29-34.
[266] Paul Merchant, *Wendell Berry* (Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press: 1991), 2.

estimation, in an open letter to Berry, his friend and colleague Wallace Stegner insists that Berry's books are, therefore,

> revolutionary… [T]hey fly in the face of accepted opinion and approved fashion. They reassert values so commonly forgotten or repudiated that, re-asserted, they have the force of novelty… And you give us all this with such directness and grace. Grace is a word that in fact I borrow from you, and it is the only word that fits… Everything you write subjects itself to its subject, grapples with the difficult and perhaps inexpressible, confronts mystery, conveys real and observed and felt life, and does so modestly and with grace.[267]

Previous Studies Specifically Related to Berry's Vision of Community

A limited number of previous doctoral studies have focused on Berry's approach to community. Bernard Baker focused on Berry's quest for the simple, responsible life lived at home, in a place. His overall conclusions were as follows:

1. A philosophy of the simple life may be seen as a state of mind oriented toward the harmony and balance of the material and spiritual, the real and the ideal.
2. Berry combines elements from three distinct, simple, life elements to develop his vision of simple community living: agrarianism, Romanticism, and environmentalism.
3. The cornerstone of Berry's vision is human relationships to each other and to place. These relationships operate on three levels: the individuals and the concrete place in which they live, the expanded domain that includes family and community, and human life in the order of Creation.[268]

Baker's primary focus is Berry's approach to the simple, responsible life lived in a place, not the bridging triad of mutuality, responsibility, and affection experienced in Berry's vision of community in a place.

---

[267] Wallace Stegner, "A Letter to Wendell Berry," in *Wendell Berry*, ed. Paul Merchant (Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1991), 47.

[268] Bernard Baker, "Responsibility at Home: Wendell Berry's Quest for the Simple Life" (Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve University, 1992), 1.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter explored Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community, particularly the three bridging aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection, by examining a large body of literature consisting of Berry's essays, poems, and novels, as well as other authors' perspectives on Berry's vision of community. It also examined a biblical view of community and work, as well as other authors' perspectives on work and community. Though much has been written on the Berryian vision of community, little has been written on applying its communal elements of mutuality, responsibility, and affection in the context a Christian, work study college, where the students and those who care for them live and work in community. Thus, to achieve a fully orbed perspective of the mutuality, responsibility, and affection dynamic within a working community, it is vital to examine other models that intentionally link community and work. This examination will be conducted within various models, namely, a work/community context in Washington, DC, and the community/work context of Yukon Fellowship. In particular, little has been written about applying Berry's three community aspects to Well Rested University's community and work program. Thus, to understand more fully the perspective of mutuality, responsibility, and affection in that context, it is vital to explore Well Rested University's understanding of community and work.

In the following chapter the methodology of this study will be examined in order to comprehend the qualitative, constant comparative method implemented to facilitate the research.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks. There is no literature discussing the bridge between Berry's vision and College of the Ozarks' practiced mission. Composed of interviews conducted in person, the study incorporated perspectives of key people from various types of communities. The interview locations ranged from a metropolitan city in the Atlantic northeast, to a remote island in the Pacific Northwest, to a small, rural, agricultural town in mid-America. One community has been in existence for six years, one for twenty years, and the other for over one hundred years. The pseudonyms (The Institute, Yukon Fellowship, and Well Rested University) are used to maintain confidentiality and to protect identity. "The Institute" is a 'think tank' organization in the northeast committed to understanding community and intentional integration of vocation and culture as factors influencing communal aspects. "Yukon Fellowship" is a community of homes: families and singles living an ordered life where together they seek to demonstrate the existence of God, not just in mind but also in body. Visitors coming from all kinds of backgrounds, world views, ages and occupations may share in normal family lives, and witness their core beliefs; that the God of the Bible is really there, and that Christianity is true. While "Well Rested University" is an organization committed to developing citizens of Christ-like character, who are well-educated, hard working, and patriotic. This study also entails integration and analysis of

readings relevant to community issues. This chapter discusses the design of the study, interview design, study limitations and biases, and conclusion.

Design of the Study

The researcher employed qualitative case studies in exploring various understandings of community. Sharan Merriam defines a qualitative case study as an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit."[269] Merriam identifies five characteristics of qualitative research: [270]

1. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people construct or the experience they have in the world.
2. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
3. Qualitative research normally involves fieldwork.
4. Qualitative research primarily employees an inductive research strategy.
5. The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive through words and pictures.

Further, Creswell explains qualitative research to entail the following components:

1. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behavior and events occur.
2. Qualitative research is based on assumptions that are very different from quantitative designs. Theory and hypotheses are not established a priori.
3. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection.
4. The data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive, reported in words and pictures rather than numbers.
5. The focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and experiences, and the way they make sense of the world.
6. Qualitative research focuses on the process that is occurring as well as the outcome.
7. Data is interpreted in regard to particulars of a case rather than generalizations.
8. Meanings and interpretations are negotiated with human data sources because it is the subjects' realities that the research attempts to reconstruct.
9. This research tradition relies on the utilization of tacit knowledge, because often the nuances of the multiple realities can be appreciated most in this way.

---

[269] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 6.
[270] Ibid., 6-8.

10. Objectivity and truthfulness are critical to both research traditions. First and foremost the research seeks believability, bases on coherence, insight, and instrumental utility.[271]

Denzin and Lincoln, in their voluminous work on qualitative research, account for the complexity of defining qualitative research as it has developed over eight historical movements (traditional, 1900-1950; modernist, 1950-1970; blurred genres, 1970-1986; crisis of representation, 1986-1990; postmodern, 1995-2000; postexperimental inquiry, 2000-2004; and fractured future, 2005-present). They understand that qualitative research can mean different things in these different periods; however, they do attempt an initial, generic definition.

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interview, conversation, photographs, recording, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them.[272]

Denzin and Lincoln conclude their lengthy definition by stating that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, and interview. Qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln additionally conclude, deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter.[273]

---

[271] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach,* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oak, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 198-199.
[272] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonnas S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 3.
[273] Ibid., 4.

In that regard, the researcher utilized a qualitative research approach, employing case studies to learn from the personal insights and experiences of individuals who are intentional about understanding the nature and vision of healthy, cohesive communities. This approach provided the researcher with the best opportunity to answer his research questions. A quantitative study, though beneficial, would not have enlightened his understanding of community as effectively as personal interaction with people intentionally living in community did. Hearing and seeing communal struggles and victories first-hand helped the researcher interact on a personal level with the communities and ultimately understand them better. Additionally, this approach afforded the researcher the opportunity to engage in different types of communities in order to gain a clearer understanding of community in general. Following a qualitative case study model also extended to the researcher some flexibility in answering the research questions. The researcher was able to add or subtract interview questions as the situation required. Those interviewed gave rich, descriptive accounts of their interaction with and understanding of community, which the researcher endeavored to express by reporting the findings.

Traveling to the locations of those interviewed helped the qualitative process in a number of ways. It encouraged the interviewees toward a more comfortable, natural interaction, thus helping them answer the research questions more fully and descriptively. Compared to meeting elsewhere or talking over the phone, conversing with the interviewees in their home locations created a relaxed, natural interview environment. Engaging the interview questions at their home locations also enabled the interviewees to share their natural communities with the researcher, which added to the richness and

wealth of information of the field study. The qualitative study also enabled the researcher to satisfy his desires better to understand different community models. Exploring the in-depth understanding of community through intimate interaction with the interviewees helped the researcher obtain greater insight into what constitutes a healthy community. A quantitative study would not have produced the rich and varying interactions, personal relationship, or experience of community that this qualitative case study afforded. Surveys would not have produced the personal experience or goals of this study. In this regard, the qualitative nature of this study made it more effective, its results more satisfying and authentic, than quantitative research would have allowed. The personal experiences of those community members interviewed are indispensable to learning about community issues and satisfying the requirements of this study.

To enhance this study, the researcher also used the constant comparative method. First, the researcher considered Berry's literary works on community and then compared Christian and non-Christian authors' perspectives on Berry's community vision, highlighting the communal elements of work and the church. A brief theology of community and work is also included.

Interview Design

The interview questions[274] were designed to help the interviewees think about the broad and narrow community aspects, elicit personal insights of understanding community, and afford them the opportunity to share their personal experiences in different types of community. The interview questions were also designed to help the researcher learn about many communal elements in his own community by discovering common elements consistent in all community types. For the interviews, the researcher

[274] See Appendix B for a listing of these interview questions.

implemented a semi-structured format. Semi-structure is, according to Merriam, "guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic."[275] The semi-structured format enabled the researcher to respond spontaneously to developing lines of thought, either adding questions, adjusting questions, or removing questions as desired. It left open the option to pursue unanticipated topics brought to light by the interviewee.

The researcher withheld the interview questions from the interviewees until the actual interview sessions. Wanting the subjects to respond and interact with the questions naturally and spontaneously, the researcher did not enable them to prepare their responses beforehand. This also permitted their unique personalities to interact with their responses in an ordinary, rather than more formal, manner. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer explained the topic of the study, the purpose of the interview, and the basic parameters of the interview process. The researcher then indicated that the interview would take approximately one and a half hours. Having prepared five to six general questions, the interviewer, however, varied the questions at times, depending on the interviewee's unique context. Also, based on the flow of the responses, the researcher at times removed or added questions. The interviewer did not feel compelled to stay with the original questions, and adapted them to compensate for the flow of the conversation. All of the interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis.

---

[275] Ibid., 74.

The communities studied consisted of two "atypical samples"[276] (reflecting rare or exceptional occurrences) and one "typical"[277] (reflecting the average person or situation). The two atypical samples were intimately familiar with Wendell Berry's literary works and his vision of community.

In determining the number of people to interview, the researcher followed the advice of his advisor, as well as considered the needs of the study. The researcher determined to conduct one interview per community, accompanying each interview report with relevant elements recorded while visiting the communities and directing the interviews. The interviewer determined to interview one person per community in order to get a pure and deep interaction on the topic, while information garnered from multiple interviews would have been broad, but lacking depth. At one of the atypical communities, the researcher interviewed a husband and wife team that serves together as leaders in the community. They were interviewed together. Also scheduling more than one interview in these distant places was difficult, and working with varying schedules contributed to the complexity. Additionally, interviewing more people would have expanded this study beyond a manageable and reasonable pale.

Primary Research Questions

The primary research questions structuring this study were:

1. What is Berry's understanding of community?
    a. How and to what extent do the Gospels shape his understanding of community?
    b. To what extent do the Epistles shape his understanding?

---

[276] Ibid., 62.
[277] Ibid.

2. How do Christian organizations that focus on the importance of community understand community?
    a. What is The Institute's understanding of community?
    b. What is the Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community?
    c. What is Well Rested University's understanding of community?

Determining the communities to which the researcher would travel was simple. The researcher's advisor recommended one of the atypical samples because a person in that community was familiar with Berry's works and shared many of the same perspectives on community. The other atypical sample was recommended as a place to engage community while observing community. The typical sample is over one hundred years old; and has been cultivating community for an extended time. Therefore, the researcher desired to focus the study on the atypical samples familiar with Berry's thought, and the typical sample that provides the context of one of the five Christian work-study colleges. These samples were also selected due to the geographic locations. Because they are located in various geographic regions with varying cultural aspects that contribute to the distinctive nature of each community, the locations provide varying data and unique experiences for the interviewees. The samples range from a metropolitan city in the Atlantic northeast, to a remote island in the Pacific Northwest, to a small, rural, agricultural town in mid-America.

Because the researcher studied one of the five Christian work-study colleges, with which the researcher possesses fraternal relationships, he was able to select an interviewee based on first-hand knowledge of the college personnel. The researcher knew that the interviewee was intimately and intentionally involved with building community at the college. The researcher also inquired of other personnel concerning whom they

would refer as the best source to interview on the topic of community. The researcher pursued the selected interviewee because he knew that this person would be comfortable, knowledgeable, and honest as the researcher sought answers to the research questions.

In each of the communities the researcher studied, he relied on the willingness and availability of the interviewees. The researcher encountered only one individual hesitant to speak freely about community. But when the interview purposes, parameters, and goals were explained, this person contributed willing and knowledgeably. The researcher assured each interviewee that complete anonymity would be maintained, with no mention of names or detailed locations.

The researcher interviewed one person or couple from each community location. All interviews were conducted in person, on location, and the researcher devoted between forty-five minutes and one hour and forty-five minutes to each interviewee.

The researcher communicated his desire to the interviewees that they speak freely and without reserve. This produced rich, vivid, varied, descriptive, and intimately personal insights and experiences surrounding community issues. One interviewee in particular helped the researcher broaden his grasp of community mutuality, responsibility, and affection. In one community, the researcher interviewed a husband and wife together, as they both possessed understanding of community from their previous, un-married lives, as well as from serving together as a married couple and as leaders in their current community.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study. This study was limited to one typical sample and two atypical samples. The study was limited to three geographical

regions: Atlantic northeast, Pacific Northwest, and mid-America. Another limitation is the size of the communities. They range in size from twelve to 1500. They were also limited in the scope of their purposes: one community was limited to the perspective of a 'think tank' context, one was limited to an apologetic model, and another was limited to the context of higher academics.

This study was also limited to interviewees and communities with some approximate knowledge of Wendell Berry's literary works on community. As the purpose of this study was to explore Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community, it was essential to include in the study – and limit the interviewees to those acquainted with – his essays, novels, and poems.

Because the researcher was the primary instrument for conducting the interviews and asking the questions, concerns arose regarding ability and ethics. Case study researchers must remain unbiased and rely upon intuition to guide their interviews. They must focus on answering the research questions and remain within the conceptual frameworks of their respective studies. Triangulation, member checking, and peer reviewing were implemented to increase ability, reliability, and consistency. By adhering to these techniques, the researcher ensured that this study would possess the necessary validity and reliability.

Biases of the Study

This study possesses some areas of bias that must be taken into consideration. The fact that the researcher lives in a college community is itself a bias. The researcher made every attempt to remove himself from his environmental circumstance in order not to bias the interviewees, the research questions, or interactions with selected communities. The

researcher's interest in understanding community was considered as he conducted this study. However, as a community member on a college campus, his context differs from those of the other communities studied, and therefore the researcher holds an adequately unbiased perspective on community.

Another bias in this study was the endearment the researcher holds for Wendell Berry and his literary works. Two years ago, the researcher visited with and informally interviewed Berry in his Henry County, KY home. The researcher has read Berry's works for several years and has been indirectly mentored by Berry throughout those years. Much of the researcher's thought on community mutuality, responsibility, and affection was influenced by Berry. Even given this affinity for Berry, the researcher believes that he was able to look at the data objectively, reliably, and honestly.

As the researcher was interviewing the interviewees, he was aware that they could hold biases of which he was ignorant. When interviewing the person from one of the five Christian work-study colleges, the researcher recognized that this person might answer the research questions in favor of his personal perspective rather than with objectivity. However, if such bias was present, the researcher did not detect it.

Conclusion

The methodology described in this chapter helped facilitate the purpose of this study. This purpose was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks. Using semi-formal interviews and the process of selecting individuals to interview and communities to observe, the study implemented a qualitative case study methodology. While there are limitations and bias in this study, sufficient information and data was collected and

analyzed to accomplish the purpose of the study and to answer the associated research questions. The findings that resulted from this methodological study will now be reviewed. The conclusions of this study are limited to direct input from selected interviewees and insights gained from selected readings relevant to this study. Therefore, the conclusions are limited to the experience of a select group of individuals, and due to the study's thus limited nature, the reader will need to exercise care in making generalizations to alternative contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks. To that end this chapter utilizes the findings of the literature review, which examined selected Berryian essays, novels, and poems, and reports on common themes and relevant insights pertaining to the research questions. This chapter also reviews relevant data collected from three sample institutions.

This study was conducted utilizing the case study and constant comparative methodology. The limited research identified institutions that had invested interest in understanding community. Data for the study was collected through informal interviews, document analysis, and on-sight observation to provide a holistic description and explanation of the institutes' understandings of community.

Berry's Vision of Community

The first research question sought to discern Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community. In his writings, Berry defines community as "the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the

freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[278] Berry further defines community as

> the commonwealth and common interest, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature. A community identifies itself by an understood mutuality of interests…it lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self-restraint, compassion, and forgiveness.[279]

From these definitions of community, three themes develop:

> **Mutuality**: a sense that all the parts hold together collectively; every part belongs to every other part; a 'we are in this together' mentality.
>
> **Responsibility:** a belief that all the parts respond to all the other parts; a sense of being accountable to one another; a knowing that those in a place limit one another.
>
> **Affection**: a sense of care and tenderness toward all the parts of a whole; individual parts willing to sacrifice for the collective good; the good of the many outweighs the good of the one; love; devotion.

To speak of a healthy community, for Berry, is to speak of a vision of community in which all aspects (human, non-human, and the place itself) are embraced in the regard for health. Berry believes that if one member of the community (including the place) is unhealthy then it is disingenuous to believe that the community is healthy. Berry believes this because of his concept of mutuality. Mutuality is the reality that every part of a community belongs to every other part ("the mental and spiritual condition of knowing

---

[278] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.
[279] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 121.

the place is shared"), and therefore, to think of community health is to think in comprehensive as well as mutual terms.

> In talking about health, we have thus begun to talk about community. But we must take care to see how this standard of health enlarges and clarifies the idea of community. If we speak of a *healthy* community, we cannot be speaking of a community that is merely human. We are talking about a neighborhood of humans in a place, plus the place itself: its soil, its water, its air, and all the families and tribes of the nonhuman creatures that belong to it. If the place is well preserved, if its entire membership, natural and human, is present in it, and if the human economy is in practical harmony with the nature of the place, then community is healthy. A diseased community will be suffering natural losses that become, in turn, human losses.[280]

Berry carefully underscores all the elements of a healthy, cohesive community: human, non-human, the place itself, and economic practices. Berry's vision of community holds not only the relational components together, but the practical and economic as well. He defines community in a way that accounts for all the interconnectedness of authentic, mutual relationships. Human relations are essential, are perhaps the glue of community, but Berry understands that those relationships must play out some *where;* and that the interactions between humans and creatures are relational, not merely spatial. At some point they must touch the practical coming and going of the place, and then express themselves in economic terms on some level. At the same time, human relations do not exist merely to support and advance the economic enterprise of a community. This is Berry's consistent lament against the idea of a global economy. A global economy is not *placed* anywhere, but is rather directed everywhere. And since a global economy is not conducted in a local place, it therefore does not contribute to the health of the human relationships in a local place. The economic practices of a global economy not only

[280]Ibid., 14.

siphon resources (human and non-human) away from the local community, they care little for the local place (land, water, streams, plants, animals) and therefore leave the local place unhealthy, resulting in natural loss, which eventually leads to human loss. Mutual connections are lost.

> Community, then, is an indispensable term in any discussion of the connection between people and land. A healthy community is a form that includes all the local things that are connected by the larger, ultimately mysterious form of the Creation. In speaking of community, then, we are speaking of a complex connection not only among human beings or between human economy and nature, between forest or prairie and field or orchard, and between troublesome creatures and pleasant ones. *All* neighbors are included.[281]

In his concern for mutuality, Berry does not disparage private rights or the notion of a private citizen. His vision of community, though highlighting the bridges that connect, makes allowance for private relationships and pursuits. However, his understanding of private relationships flows from his insistence that even the private must define itself in the context of the public or community. Individuals in a community, though free to pursue private relationship and enterprises, follow those pursuits in the overall context of mutual relations bridging out in all directions. Private life, though conducted in privacy, remains a component of community life.

> But the [private] life of a community is more vulnerable than public life. A community cannot be made or preserved apart from the loyalty and affection of its members and the respect and goodwill of the people outside it... The community, wherever you look, is being destroyed by the desires and ambitions of both private and public life, which for want of the intervention of community interest are also destroying one another. Community life is by definition a life of cooperation and responsibility. Private life and public life, without the disciplines of community interest, necessarily gravitate toward competition and exploitation. As private life casts off all community restraints in the interest of economic exploitation or ambition or self-realization or whatever, the communal supports of

[281]Ibid., 35.

> public life also and by the same stroke are undercut, and the public life becomes simply the arena of unrestrained private ambition and greed.[282]

Berry takes his vision for community from both the Gospels and the Epistles (though he considers Paul both a clarifying and exasperating man[283]). Though he chaffs what the contemporary, organized church has become, he submits his understanding of community to the shaping influences of Jesus (though he believes Jesus came to bring an unorganized religion, one that takes into account all aspects of community health).

> I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsist, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and dwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God.[284]

In so far as the world can be redeemed, restored to health through mutual regard for those living mutually in a place, it will be redeemed through the love of God as expressed in the Gospels. Berry seems to understand that the gospel is the only source of real help in reconciling the world because Christ's incarnation offers the clearest mutual relationship between the material and spiritual – an idea Berry believes is indispensable to living mutually in community. Christ came to redeem humanity and the world, but he came to a place, a local community with ties to the local people and history and values, to accomplish his work. Only this kind of love – cosmic in scope, but located in real time and place, can redeem the cosmos and the people and water and plants in a place. Further highlighting his gospel-shaped vision of community, Berry embraces St. Paul's use of the human body as an analogy for a healthy, mutually connected community. "A healthy community is like an ecosystem… It is also like a household; it is the household of its

---

[282] Ibid., 121.
[283] Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow: A Novel* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000), 250.
[284] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 89.

place, and it includes the households of many families, human and nonhumans. And to extend Saint Paul's famous metaphor by only a little, a healthy community is like a body, for its members mutually support and serve one another."[285] Berry asserts that a healthy community, one with mutually related interdependence, must also be a responsible community.

The second section of Berry's definition for community underscores his concern for responsibility in communal relations: "the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives." Because the human and non-human components of a local community are mutually committed to the health of the community, of necessity, the members of a community are responsible, or accountable, to one another. A community "lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self-restraint, compassion, and forgiveness."[286]

These virtues that Berry believes are essential to community wellbeing are 'common' and therefore affect each member of the community. Trust, in community relations, works because all individuals in the community believe they are obligated to respond to one another in such ways that build the bridges of trust, not destroy them through deception. So the members respond by truth telling. Forbearance means that each member of the community is responsible to endure, be patient with, and suffer alongside of the other members. That is, all members respond to the needs of others in ways that not only hold others accountable for their actions and responses, but they also endure with each other for the overall benefit of the community. Self-restraint is mindful that each person in the community is not alone, but all are members of each other. They must,

[285] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 155.
[286] Ibid., 121.

therefore, restrain their movements, expressions, wills, thoughts, emotions, and personal interactions so as to allow room for others to respond and have room to express their wills, thoughts, and emotions. Self-restraint does not mean dancing alone with shadows. It means dancing with other members of the local community so that both parties are part of the dance – both restraining themselves so the other can move freely in the dance. Both are then free to express themselves, yet each in consideration for the other.

Compassion in community means we do not suffer alone. Since members of a local place belong to each other in responsible ways, then members position themselves to responsibly carry each other's burdens. In *A Place on Earth*, Mat Feltner is surrounded by family, friends, and neighbors who responsibly enter into his suffering when he hears that his son is missing in action in the theater of WWII. And Mat responds to these family, friends, and neighbors by allowing them to enter his suffering and loneliness. Only Brother Preston, the local minister, is the 'member' of the community who is unable to respond rightly to Mat's loss and emptiness, though he tries. Berry contends that the reason Brother Preston fails is that he does not view himself as part of the community and therefore is not a part of the membership. Those who, in fact, are part of Mat's community, respond to Mat's pain and display appropriate compassion.

Finally, forgiveness implies a responsive interacting between the members of a local community. That forgiveness is necessary and bespeaks of people having interacted with each other in an irresponsible manner – someone, in some way, has violated someone else. The need for forgiveness means bridges that normally connect are broken and need rebuilding. And responsible members of a community will seek to rebuild them by going to the offended party, seeking reconciliation. The offended party, moved by

grace and compassion, will respond by extending a forgiving hand, thus responsibly rebuilding the bridge that connects them. Berry's comprehensive sense of community entailing these virtues of responsible living echo again his assertion that "community life is by definition a life of cooperation and responsibility."[287]

A healthy, cohesive community functions, grows, and is cultivated by mutually related interdependence and a sense that members of the community respond to and, indeed, limit the possibilities of the other members. In other words, a membership is defined by communal mutuality and responsibility. Berry also believes that mutuality and responsibility are animated by affection or love. Affection, as Berry understands it, gives life to the third and final section of his definition of a healthy community: "It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[288] Berry considers the modern city to be a crowd, a disorderly gathering at best because, by its very design and intent, the people there lack affection for one another, resulting in an endemic of loneliness. "Loneliness is on the rampage in it – so many separate lives pursuing their own ends among and through and in spite of the lives of all the others. And the disease that is destroying the community is destroying the families and the marriages within the community."[289] His observation highlights the loss of community mutuality and responsibilities because there is no sense of love one to another. People merely live separated lives, pursuing their own means in spite of the lives of others.

Berry further contends that it is a loss of a sense of affection for others that increasingly marginalizes the moral law. Moral law fails when community fails. "The

---

[287] Ibid., 121.
[288] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.
[289] Ibid., 60-61.

moral law, which is remarkably consistent from one culture to another, has to do with community life. It tells us how we should treat relatives and neighbors and, by metaphorical extension, strangers. The aim of the moral law is the integrity and longevity of the community...."[290] The moral law has to do with how we treat others, or to use the categorical word, the moral law has to do with how we love or show affection for others. It is the knowledge that we have each other. Members of a health community are emotional creatures, created by God to express and receive each other with the emotion of love. But love is no mere emotion. Love is both a noun and a verb, so love is what we are and what we do, or how we treat others in the community. Love, or affection, for Berry is the freedom shared in the affectionate coming and going of those in the community. Affection is the willing interaction of, the purposeful care for, and the intentional devotion to, flowing freely between the community members for the sake of the overall health of the community. And Berry believes that affection and care are not reserved for the merely human constituents, but for the non-human (water, rivers, land, plants, and animal life) and for the place itself. Therefore, Berry insists that a healthy community "places a high value on neighborly love, marital fidelity, local loyalty, the integrity and continuity of family life, respect for the old, and instruction of the young. And a vital local community draws its life, so far as possible, from local sources."[291]

Berry's vision of a healthy, cohesive community entails the three communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection; and his triadic vision works because he understands and values the connections between everything. In a healthy community, nothing is separated or isolated; everything affects everything. Consequently, in his

---

[290] Ibid., 147.
[291] Ibid., 135.

vision of community, the bridge connecting everything to everything is good work. It is work that defines the "freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[292] It is good work that gives cause for the members of a local place to come and go among themselves. Rest creates space for coming and going among community members, but Berry acknowledges that it is the doing of good work that creates the normative catalyst that moves the community in and out of itself in sustainable ways.

> And the real name of our connection to this everywhere different and differently named earth is "work." We are connected by work even to the places where we don't work, for all places are connected; it is clear by now that we cannot exempt one place from our ruin of another. The name of our proper connection to the earth is "good work," for good work involves much giving of honor. It honors the source of its materials; it honors the place where it is done; it honors the art by which it is done; it honors the thing that it makes and the user of the made thing. Good work is always modestly scaled, for it cannot ignore either the nature of individual places or the differences between places, and it always involves a sort of religious humility, for not everything is known. Good work can be defined only in particularity, for it must be defined a little differently from every one of the places and every one of the workers on earth.[293]

This is not to say, in Berry's vision of community, that all work lends itself to the health of the community. The chief antagonist in *Jayber Crow*, Troy Chatham is the antithesis of a responsible, affectionate community member working for the welfare of the community. Chatham works hard. In fact, he works harder than most in the community; but he fails to work out of a sense of mutuality, responsibility, and affection. He works for himself, to be the 'big' man with the 'big' farm, with the 'big' reputation. He possesses little regard for human or non-human aspects of the place, and he holds no regard for the place itself. Chatham wanted to become a specialist in his farming techniques and approach. Specialization in work is, for Berry, the ruination of local

---

[292] Ibid., 61.
[293] Ibid., 35-36.

community and work. Specialists so narrow their focus of work that in the end they separate themselves and their work from the local community and place themselves in the service of a global economy, which is focused no place, but everywhere. "When one works beyond the reach of one's love for the place one is working and for the things and creatures one is working with and among, then destruction inevitably results. And adequate local culture, among other things, keeps work within the reach of love."[294]

Berry further insists that work is not merely about maintaining healthy connections, about merely maintaining bridges, but is about using them. "Good work is not just the maintenance of connections—as one is said to work 'for a living' or 'to support a family'—but the enactment of connections. It is living, and a way of living; it is not support for a family in the sense of an exterior brace or prop, but is one of the forms and acts of love."[295] It is the old and retired community members who no longer work who sense that their place in and affection for their community waned as their community-focused work diminished. Stanley Gibbs, in *A Place on Earth*, painfully conceded that his "coming and going among themselves" was diminished because he could no longer contribute to the community health through his work, due to old age. He saw his work as his connection to the community. And as he was unable to work, he watched those connections break, not because the community rejected him, but simply because he was not interacting with the community life and love as he had when he was able to work alongside the community, expressing his own life and love.

---

[294] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*, 24.
[295] Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 138-139.

Berry's understanding of work's place in his vision of community is expressed summarily in his poem, "Amish Economy."[296]

> We live by mercy if we live.
> To that we have no fit reply.
> But working well and giving thanks,
> Loving God, loving one another,
> To keep Creation's neighborhood.

Finally, to report comprehensively on Berry's vision of community, his understanding of the church is critical. It is critical because, in his vision, the gathered community replaces the church. Berry's fictional character Jayber Crow explains,

> My vision of the gathered church that had come to me after I became the janitor had been replaced by a vision of the gathered community. What I saw now was the community imperfect and irresolute but held together by the frayed and always fraying, incomplete and yet every-holding bonds of the various sorts of affection. There had maybe never been anybody who had not been loved by somebody, who had been loved by somebody else, and so on and on...[297]

In his novel *A Place on Earth,* Berry has his character Burley Coulter write a letter to his son, Nathan, who is fighting in the far away fields of the WWII theater. In that letter, Coulter reveals that for him, the community of Point William is preferable to the church and even Heaven itself. "I ain't saying I don't believe in Heaven. I surely do hope there is. That surely would pay off a lot of mortgages. But I do say it ain't easy to believe. And even while I hope for it, I've got to admit I'd rather go to Port William."[298]

Berry replaces church with community, because he believes that the church does not practice the love it preaches, but a healthy community does and will. The organized church does not practice the love it teaches because of its implicit and often explicit connection to the economy.

---

[296] Berry, *A Timbered Choir,* 190.
[297] Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 205.
[298] Berry, *A Place on Earth*, 105.

> The *organized* church comes immediately under a compulsion to think of itself, and identify itself to the world, not as an institution synonymous with its truth and it membership, but as a hodgepodge of funds, properties, projects, and offices, all urgently requiring economic support… Like any other public institution so organized, the organized church is dependent of 'the economy'; it cannot survive apart from those economic practices that its truth forbids and that its vocation is to correct.[299]

A healthy community, imperfect and frayed as it is, will not participate in the institutional practices of the global economy. Rather, its concern, love, focus, and care is for the local community, all aspects of the community – human, creature, and the place itself. The community stands against practices that siphon resources (and not merely economic) away from the community, whereas the church, in its practices, is complaisant in such practices. "Organized Christianity seems, in general, to have made peace with 'the economy' by divorcing itself from economic issues, as this, I think, has proved to be a disaster, both religious and economic…"[300] Berry's distinction between the *organized* church and the *unorganized* church that Christ left on earth is a vital component of his vision of community. Through his character, Jayber Crow, Berry reveals his distrust of the organized church or Christianity because it does not offer mutuality, responsibility, or affection to all the members of the local community. Though some regard may be offered to the humans of the community, little regard is extended to the animals of the community and nearly none is afforded to the soil, water, or plants of a community. But the unorganized church's vision of community, on the other hand, thoughtfully extends mutual, responsible love and care for all elements of a healthy community: human, non-human, and the place itself.[301]

---

[299] Berry, *What Are People For? Essays,* 96.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 321.

Berry's vision of community develops around three communal aspects: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Since each member of the community belongs to the other, all are accountable to respond to each other, and therefore are obliged to love and care for one another. Good work is the catalyst through which these aspects are relationally known and enacted as a way of life, not as mere maintenance of an unused notion of membership. Though imperfect, the community, rather than the organized church, is the purest expression of this kind of community because it embraces and gives life to an unorganized Christianity intended by Christ—one that takes into account the various members of a healthy community: human, creature, and the place itself.

The Institute's Understanding of Community

The second research question sought to determine The Institute's understanding of community. The Director of this institution seizes upon the same three foundational aspects for community health and cohesion as Wendell Berry – mutuality, responsibility, and affection. He believes that the three words or concepts cannot be separated. "The words always go together. They have to; they depend on each other."[302] Community health flows from the fact that those in the community sense that they belong to each other, that they impact one another, or live in the awareness that 'we are in this thing together.'

For the Director, not only do the members of a place belong to each other, but their lives, their comings and goings, are enmeshed in such a way that each member must respond to the others in ways that promote integration and health. He asserts that mutuality and responsibility are indispensable to community health. "I don't think that

[302] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this section are from the researcher's interview with The Director of The Institute, 14 May 2009.

healthy families, or healthy neighborhoods or any of the structures in society exist without an honest understanding of relationship between mutuality and responsibility." It is not merely mutual relationships or responsible communing together that creates community health, but both. Given the sense that we belong to one another, it necessarily follows that we interact in such ways that our responses to each other are for the betterment of the community. "[W]e are in this together,…we are responsible for each other. Your marriage doesn't exist healthily apart from that. Mine doesn't. I don't think your school can. I don't think a business can. I don't think a society can."

The Director understands that tragedy can strike any community, and that is when a mutual, responsible commitment is most needed; but he also sees clearly that when brokenness develops in the community, the tragedy is when the community steps away from mutuality and responsibility. "You know where we stumble and fumble, and where we have heartache, where sometimes, you know, there is moaning and tragedy in the background is where on some level, in some way, we step back away from commitments to mutuality and responsibility." He believes this is a double-edged sword, cleaving the community in one of two ways. When community members break mutuality, irresponsible communal tragedy and moaning result. A member withdraws from the mutual regard for community health, and in an isolated mode betrays the integration of the community, resulting in a dis-integration or community dis-ease. Nevertheless, it is a consistent, sometimes painful insistence and commitment to a sense that 'we are in this thing together' that moves relationship members toward one another in the midst of tragic moaning. Since the participants in a membership belong to each other, they are

committed to and see the value of responding or reacting to each other in healthy, community sustaining ways – ownership necessitates responsible action.

Responding to the question of how community members get to a healthy interplay between mutuality and responsibility (two sides of a good coin), The Director responds, "I think we get there by the grace of God." He believes that our world is a world of brokenness and woundedness, and that the closest we can get to living as we should is grace. He understands that community living and commitments are proximate, not perfect.

> If we talk about the common good in a way that's an abstraction, then it's somehow different than the life we live as human beings. [The idea that] It exists out there that [though] we haven't achieved the common good yet is more Greek [and] we are never going to achieve [it] in this life. I think more of a Hebrew dwelling in, a participation of, in the sense of belonging to, a responsibility for. That's what I understand to be a more Hebrew view. So for me, the question of how do you get there, what I was saying to these folks in KC was, understanding that [it] is [the] proximate good that we are going to get at [is important]. We already agree ahead of time that we are not going to be functioning under the fiction that it will be a perfect end to our efforts if we work hard or somehow if we get the words all in a, you know, and they are the right words we've chosen, that we can all sign on to the words, that somehow we're going to get there. That isn't going to happen. We believe in Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation story. So the best we get in this world is the hope that all things will be made right and well, is that we are, we see things proximately. If we could achieve proximate happiness in marriage. If we could achieve proximate justices in society. We can achieve proximate goodness in a city.

In his understanding of community, the Director functions under the meta-narrative: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation. This worldview informs his understanding, and he quickly highlights the reality that "we see through a glass darkly. We're trying our best; you know there's a humility toward each other, and for each other." The straining to see through the dark glass and displaying humility toward fellow creatures are marks of belief that we are created beings, created in God's image, who

exist with imperfect mutuality and responsibility toward each other and their creation. The essence of carrying God's image is that we live in relationships with capacity, interest, and desire for community. God created us to live mutually and responsibly toward all members of a place. The Director's belief in the Fall underscores his awareness that the capacity for humanity to develop and spread healthy, cohesive relational environments is hampered by the effects of the Fall: self-centeredness, isolation, exclusiveness, fragmentation, disease, and un-health. Even as Christ (born as man in the context of mutuality and responsibility) came to redeem humanity back to mutually responsible relationships (both vertically and horizontally), the Director believes that this restoration will not be perfect in this life. In this life, restoration is merely proximate in our relationships, as we live in the 'already, but not yet.' Perfected relationships must wait until the Consummation, at which point Christ will return to perfect human relationship in the re-creation of all things.

The Director's Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation paradigm suggests a belief system that helps him make sense of his life in this world. As we live incarnationally in this world of broken and messy relationships, we need ways to make sense of our relational experiences. He insists that what we believe helps make sense of how we live. "So to get there, in some ways it's having the right theologies, the ideas that can make sense of our experience even as we live our lives before the face of God.... [It's also] to realize that he does call us to be holy even as I am holy; and yet he looks at us with longsuffering and patience, love." What carries this worldview paradigm is God's grace to us in our messiness. The Director believes that Bono, the leader singer and

songwriter of the famed rock band, U2, offers a healthy perspective on the distinction between the grace of Christianity and the abstractions offered by all other belief systems.

> I'm a pretty serious student of that pop philosopher, Bono—Paul Houston, as they call him in Dublin. He says this in a remarkably apologetic insight: every other worldview outside Christianity offers a vision… [of] karma, a fated existed, a fated universe. So whether its Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Marxism or evolutionary materialism, or Islam, I think there is, well he says that Christianity alone offers grace—so poetically captured in the song called "Grace." He says not karma, karma, but grace. In a book called *Conversations with Bono*, which goes on for pages and pages about this, he's very particular about this. Where it's Christianity, it about grace, not karma. We're not stuck in a moment we can't get out of as one other poet put it. So I think what Jesus comes to do… he comes to offer amazing grace to the world. He offers, he steps into history so we are no longer stuck in a fated existence. We are no longer in a karma world. Because in Christ God chooses to offer grace, which is different than every other version, which is Bono's argument. It's always some version of karma. And I think he's exactly right about that.

And it is the vortex of abstraction and reductionism that the Director of The Institute, believes is much too Greek and not Hebrew enough in its expressions. He explains that for the Greeks, "ideas like justice and compassion and love and wisdom were disembodied, they exist out in the heavenly, they are ideals that exist outside our experience." In contrast, he believes that ideals like justice, compassion, love, and wisdom are embodied in God's creation, and particularly embodied in Christ, the God Man, who holds these ideals from mere abstraction. In other words, the Director believes that God's grace to us through the incarnation of Christ is what keeps issues like justice, compassion, mutuality, responsibility, and wisdom from being mere words. These words become incarnate in our experiences as our beliefs about Christ affect how we live our lives for him, how we conduct our relationships.

> In Jesus, words become flesh. And we have that given to us poetically in John chapter one, the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. But I think it's also fair to say that words become flesh in the incarnation. We are not Greeks. We are Hebrew and Christian people. Incarnation matters, so that we're no longer looking

> out into the world of ideals and asking the question, what about justice here? What about love here? What about mercy here? We are to contemplate the incarnation and ask the question, what does justice look like then in the life of Jesus? What does mercy look like in the life of Jesus? What does wisdom look like, then, in the life of Jesus? Words become flesh just as the Word became flesh, so too words become flesh. And I would say in community, in the community of the church, community of the college, words have to become flesh for reality to be seen. Christ's incarnation was an intentional act on God's part to actually redeem his creation.

Redemption for him, and thus for us, did not remain an ideal, but concrete and particularized in Christ's becoming what we are that we might be what he is. The Director understands that grace alone will not produce a healthy relationship between mutuality and responsibility. Intentionality plays a significant role in that union. "We get there [mutuality] by intentionality. I think we get there because we have become committed to that." Mutuality and responsibility work together, uniting a community, because its members are committed to sensing intentionally that they each belong to the others, that they possess a regard for how they interact with and respond to one another. Members of a community are intentional about community health because of what they believe. The Director sees a necessary cohesion between what we believe and how we live:

> We are Hebrew people. And Hebrew people have a vision of revelation. And I would say that we don't think about things like that. We just don't. And as I've read a Hebrew understanding of knowledge, which has implications for all of us, but particularly those in education... [I've seen] that when you have knowledge of something, you have responsibility to something.

Since we are created for community and in fact live in community, the Director asserts that we have at least some level of knowledge about our responsible place in community. If we know something, then we are obligated, responsible to its implications. God reveals his knowledge about community to us, and as we own this knowledge, we are therefore

responsible to live out what we know in the local community, the place in which we live. In this, the abstract knowledge and information becomes particularized and experienced some *where.*

The Director carries his assertion even further to include the third aspect of community: affection.

> So when you have knowledge of, you have responsibility to, which means that you have to have a care for. And that's true in Genesis 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 when Adam knew his wife – it's that kind of knowledge that's being talked about. Yes, I know him, but I don't care about him. I'm implicated in what I know… All that beautifully comes, poignantly and fully is manifest, in the incarnation in the Gospels. Where we see God in Christ embodying God's knowledge of his broken, wounded world, and then lean into it, being responsible for it, caring for it. So God in Christ not only knows the world, but he chooses to love the world. And it's that epistemological commitment which to my mind has to shape the pedagogical practice of Christian institutions.

We, creatures fashioned in God's image, are therefore mutual beings with understanding of community, and are therefore responsible to community, which, in turn, leads to love for the community. The Director addresses the issue of the word "community" as merely an abstract ideal. Since we operate from a Hebrew understanding of revelation, we understand community as that which must be lived in a local place, with local people holding a common focus, purpose, history, economy, and desire to continue as a placed community. Love or affection is a placed emotion and choice to invest in all the members of a local community. Affection, particularized in place and in real relationships, says the Director, is a person's choosing from a position of faith, not cynicism, in light of all the evidence, to care for all the creatures of a place and for the place itself. We do this because we understand that we belong to that place and to the wellbeing of it. Just as God leans into the broken, messy world and chooses to love it, we too lean into our communities, with all its mess, and choose to love it. Affection is the accountable

response of knowing that we belong to each other and to the place, too. In that regard, the Director of the Institute takes his cue for community from Wendell Berry, who reminds us that community is the mental and spiritual sense that the place is shared, and the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other. A healthy sense of community flows from our understanding of the triune nature of God, says the Director.

> There is something about God in mystery to us with enough clarity for us to be responsible for what he's revealed. In his mystery choosing to be triune. It's a mystery to me what it means that God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit. I believe it; I build my life on that basis, but it's mystery to me. I think what it is clearly is what you and I have talked about having implications for all this. There is plainly in the Godhead, while they are distinct persons, there is a community, there is a trinity, a joint relationship, a mutuality between Father, Son, and Spirit. There is a distinctness of work, vocation, purpose, calling; they do different things even as they are bound up together as a trinity.

The Trinitarian formula – that one God is revealed in three persons, each in relationship with the other, yet distinct in their roles and functions – provides the model for our sense of community. The word "trinity" is not used in Scripture to describe the triune nature of God, but the Bible does reveal some of the interactive relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to help us understand their communal aspect. God, as one God revealed in three persons, existing in a cohesive, mutual community, is simply one of the aspects or attributes of God's character. God's self-identifying personal pronoun "us" speaks of being, personality, relationship, interaction, and mutuality.

Since the Trinity has three persons who are perfect in every attribute, we can conclude that the relationship experienced by the persons is perfectly harmonious, unitized, mutually caring, peaceful, mutually edifying, self giving, eternally directed toward the other, and fully expressed through perpetual love. Mutuality is the essence of

communal life lived for the good and benefit of the others in the community. Such understanding of the intra-relationships of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit grants a greater insight into the depths to which the persons of the Trinity are mutually responsible for each other and, therefore, the depths to which they love one another. First John 4:8 proclaims, "God is love." Love is the crucial characteristic describing the inter-Trinitarian relationship.

We find then, concurring with the Director of the Institute, three elements occurring in the Trinitarian community: mutuality, responsibility, and affection (love). Mutuality is the idea that the persons of the Trinity belong to each other. In other words, they are "in this thing together." They are felt by each other, and have the same feelings toward each other. Each person of the Trinity possesses characteristics that are expressly that person's alone (i.e., the differing roles they each possess), but mutuality means that they share things in common for the overall good and benefit of the Trinitarian community. Responsibility in the Trinity means that each person is accountable to the others. The Father is not free or able to "do his own thing." The Son cannot act in his own regard without consideration for the other persons. The Holy Spirit cannot disregard the will or love or mutuality of the Father and Son. Finally, affection speaks of the emotional regard each person of the Trinity has for the others. As mentioned, love is the fundamental characterization of God, thus, their Trinitarian love is self-love, but also love that is given away as expressions of affection, devotion, and care for others. "My best reading," insists the Director, "is that the fact that we are relational creatures living in a relational universe most truly and profoundly grows out of the trinity." His understanding of community is shaped by his ontological and astrophysical beliefs. He believes that a

person can experience a sense of community out of the common grace that God extends to all creatures, but insists that perversions of common grace result in varying ideas of karma, which function according to a flattened sense of existential existence.

> Ontologically, cosmically, the reality that we are relational creatures in a relational universe is because God is trinity. The other alternatives, again, are versions of karma. The alternatives are time plus chaff plus matter. Those do not provide the basis for relationship or meaning for that fact. So philosophically speaking, the sources of evolution materialism or Hinduism don't provide a basis for relationship. You are required to have something deeper than what hard edge secularism offers to us.

The Director referenced Dr. Steve Garber's book *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief and Behavior,* where Garber asserts that the three categories of convictions, character, and community nourish the vision of moral meaning that can stand against the most destructive forces of the contemporary world.[303] The Director stated that he believes that these three marks enable a person to enter a sustainable way of life over time.

> I think as I've seen these three marks [identified] in the book, a worldview, a set of convictions, as a teacher, mentor, or a member of community, I've seen them as habits of heart that sustain a meaningful life over time. They sustain a meaningful vocation over time. They sustain a meaningful faith over time. So I've seen them in that light. Habits of heart that sustain what we say matter. I think the most destructive forces of modern life are perhaps pre-modern, modern, and postmodern all bound up together. The temptation is to feign that. To disconnect. To be incoherent. Your experience with the [the train] this morning, face to face with the anonymity of a metro system in a metro world. When you got off the [the train] you said that you were sad. I just saw hundreds of people who don't seem to want to talk with me. They don't want to talk with each other. They are in their own little universes. They get on the [the train] and they become less than human somehow.

Without convictions, character, and community, people slip into anonymity: nowhere people going nowhere. The Director, sensing the loss of personhood, the idea of what it means to be human, is reminded of Walker Pierce's phrase, "getting lost in the cosmos"

---

[303] Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness.* 51.

of the modern and postmodern world. The local communities disintegrate because of a dualistic approach to life that separates what God intended to stick together. He believes that the destructive forces of the modern world (disintegration; isolation; evolutionary materialism; master-planned, gated communities; etc.) lead to a damaging temptation "to disconnect and be incoherent" in our communal relationships. Our "I'm an island" society necessarily diminishes our humanity. And The Institute Director asserts that that is the essence of Wendell Berry's thought regarding community. "The most important contribution is this important insight he [Berry] has. When we casually disconnect ourselves from people and place, we do something crucial to our humanity. Without a commitment to local community, place, and people, we lose our sense of place and purpose. That temptation is a very perennial one. It feels so modern, so twenty-first century to us," says the Director. "I think as I've read, watched people, and looked at my own life, having a set of convictions about how the world is, how the world ought to be, or what the histories are all about – having that order ordered truthfully gives a person a place to stand. I think it's too hard frankly to keep believing if you don't believe it's true." This again reflects Berry's assertion that "What I stand for is what I stand on," referring to the necessity of one's set of convictions, one's character, and one's community being lived out incarnationally among the goings and comings of those in that place.

Can a person stand in community without a set of convictions rightly ordered? The Director believes they might stand, but they cannot flourish. "Can a person stand without community, probably? Can they flourish? No. I am much influenced by that language used by John Paul II when asked what are the conditions of human flourishing.

You can't flourish really without being a part of a human community." The Director believes that a set of convictions are meaningful only as they are enacted or lived out in the context of meaningful relationships. Without person-to-person connections, the convictions are mere abstractions, mere statements of truth, mere words. Even character means little if not lived in the context of healthy relationships. Character matters, not because of how it affects an individual only, but because of how it affects the individual interacting with other sentient beings, how its actions help shape the overall community. Or to elicit Berry's understanding again, members of a community limit and define the possibilities of those who share a place. Members limit and define one through their beliefs and in their interactions with each other, community members limit and define one another as they interact with others through their beliefs and their conduct among themselves. The Director insists that

> It is a vision of faith-shaping, vocation-shaping culture. And again, regardless of one's belief system, faith shapes vocation, shapes culture. And the question for all of us is my faith. What I believe about God and the human condition in history produces the most important question in the universe… How do you explain when someone sees himself implicated in history? That's one of the most important questions in life really. I think it's something deep about the Hebrew understanding of history, the human condition, and of God that gives us the basis to care about the world. To be responsible for the world in Christ's name. To love the world in Christ's name. In Bono's terms, the future needs a big kiss. In a sense to have an affectionate relationship with the world, rather than choosing to be cynical.

The Director consistently returns to the three aspects of communal health and cohesiveness: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Even as he carries his triadic vision of convictions, character, and community, he carries them on the bridge of mutual, responsible love. "…[W]hen you know you are responsible, therefore you care. When you know, you love. So when Bono says the future needs a big kiss from us, it's good

poetry but it's good theology, too. Because it says, what are you going to do to nourish a sense of affection around you? A sense of love for the world around you… You see the Christian vision says that when you know the world, you love." The Director is not naïve. He understands the strain between knowing and loving. If one truly knows what something is at the core, given all its brokenness and mess, why would one choose to love that something? Why would one want to give the future a big kiss? The Director's answer flows straight from his triadic vision of moral order and the triadic vision of communal health.

> I think that's the hardest thing for we as humans to do is to know and love at the same time. Whether you're talking about a friendship, a marriage, or arena of responsibility like politics or business or education or the arts. How do you get to know a city like Washington, and still love a city like Washington? Why would you love it now that you know it? Why not just say, "screw you"? This is way too messy. How do you choose to love what God chooses to love? For my own children, I've had this long prayer. That they would come to love what God loves. Well, God loves messes. We understand that. He loves brokenness. He loves us in our brokenness. For God so loved the world that he gave his own begotten Son. You know, it's pretty amazing really. That God chooses to know the world and chooses to love it at the same time.

Knowing that in this life, in this broken world, one cannot expect perfect mutuality, responsibility, affection, knowledge, character, or community, the Director realizes that

> Life has taught me this thing called proximate justice… making peace with proximate justice. If the alternatives are all or nothing, we're going to have nothing, whether it's in marriages, or business, or vocations. But if we can figure out a way, by God's grace, something, something that's honest, true, and meaningful because it's a signpost of the coming kingdom point[ing] us toward the reality of God's reign over all history to the final consummation when all things will be made right. I long for that.

It is a Hebrew or covenantal epistemology that helps the Director approach educating adults of all ages. He believes that in reality, there is no dichotomy between theory and

practice, though in educational practice and learning, there may be. Students are dualistic in their learning because they do struggle for coherence between what they believe and how they behave. "So how do students begin to develop coherence between belief and behavior? I think part of it is that we need theology that can make sense of that… to be able to orient them to the biblical worldview which helps them see that in fact when you have knowledge of, then you have responsibility to, then you have care for. Because, you see, Walker Percy, who writes centuries later, says you can get all 'A's and still flunk life." The Director finds that the story of the Good Samaritan is instructive for students at this point. Like many students, one character in the story wants to justify himself by deconstructing the meaning of "neighbor" – taking the concept out of its relationships and responsibilities, out of life, and putting it there in a deconstructed conversation, then asking who my neighbor is anyway. Yet, the Director asserts, "there is a relationship between epistemology and morality, between the moral life and epistemological vision." The character in the Good Samaritan had knowledge of the person in need of help, and therefore was implicated for not extending the needed help, as an expression of affection, to a needy member of the community.

Turning his attention to the College of the Ozarks' practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands, The Director considers a question for the students that links what they know to what they love. His question requires proximate coherence between mutuality, responsibility, and affection from students living out convictions and displaying their characters while living in a college community context.

> It's an Augustinian question. What do you love as you come into this place? What have you learned to love as you leave this place? Augustine says that we don't really know about a person, or know a person by asking them what they believe. It isn't until we ask them what they love that we begin to get at the deeper things.

> So when I want to help a person over the question of connecting belief and behavior, I push them over the question of "what do you love?" Because that gets more to the issue of what matters to me. It gets at how I live my life. So belief is seen in behavior. That's the deeper insight… We must avoid helping them to get all 'A's, in Percy's words, and still flunk life.

Yukon Fellowship's Understanding of Community

The third research question sought to determine Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community. Yukon Fellowship is a community of homes: families and singles living an ordered life, where together they seek to demonstrate the existence of God, not just in mind but also in body. They are not an academic institution, conference center, or quiet retreat facility. Visitors from all kinds of backgrounds, worldviews, ages, and occupations may come to Yukon Fellowship to share in normal family lives and witness the Fellowship's core beliefs – that the God of the Bible is really there, and that Christianity is true. Yukon Fellowship is set in twenty-one acres of beautiful, evergreen rain forest, with two small lakes and open, grassy fields. Tom is a Leader of community life at Yukon Fellowship, along with his wife, Sue. A leader's responsibility entails prayer, leading those in the community in Bible study, establishing mentoring relationships, and structuring work projects, overseeing tea time (intentional fellowship through the day), overseeing meals together, and providing opportunities for recreation and rest. The intent is to guide liturgy, learning, living, and labor in the context of understanding and cultivating a sense of healthy, cohesive community.

Tom explains how his understanding of community developed.

> The experience I had was that I was invited over… [W]e had small groups that went through a Christian life class, and each group went out and visited the professor's home on the island. And his home was full of books – essentially a little Yukon Fellowship. We worked half a day. You had time for play, time for study, time for dialogue, time for walks, and time for discussions. He took us out on his boat. We just did life together for that weekend and that impacted me very,

> very deeply. I remember when I began to think about doing something, that was what stuck in my head. An intentional shaping so that we could do life together. That's where community came from for me, my initial understanding of community.

Tom realized the need for intentionality in understanding community, an intentionality that creates space in a place, in which the members of the community begin to sense that in 'doing life together' they belong to each other (mutuality). There is a "shaping," or a sense that they are responsible to each other, and in that togetherness, care and affection for the community grows. Tom's sense of community grew out of the community members' interacting together—learning, talking, playing, and working together. This experience reinforces Berry's belief that good work is the catalyst for cultivating healthy relations, since mutuality, responsibility, and affection grow out of the daily interacting that work necessarily requires.

Developing her understanding of community from many of the same communal aspects, Tom's wife, Sue, understands community as a healthy interaction between people, learning, and work:

> I've also experienced community alongside normal life. I've experienced community when we were living in Portland just doing our job and we had a community group in our church and we would meet together on Sunday nights. We would discuss things and read books and talk about them and eat a meal together and share ideas and share our lives through that.

Sue believes that community revolves around an understanding that the members belong to one another, and therefore respond to each other, and therefore develop a love for one another. She also believes that community is more than a group of people living together or a group that decide to name themselves a community. Community must gather around something, something larger than the mere abstraction of community.

> It has to be something gathered around something bigger than themselves, and the idea of submission is incredibly important I think in community. Because if each person comes in and dictates what they want the community to be, the community fractures. So there has to be something to gather around and agree to, to submit to. The community seems to fundamentally challenge individualism. And so I began to see that as something that didn't work in my previous communities. And I like that idea that there's got to be a gathering point – something that is bigger than ourselves, a relinquishing of all of our, not part, of our total demand to be an individual.

Sue sees the value of people submitting their individualism to the greater good of their communities. This understanding agrees with a student at Well Rested University who, in the context of pre-marital counseling, said, "There is no room for a personal agenda in family. All agendas must be for the collective good of the family."[304] Community necessarily fractures or dis-integrates if subjected to strictly personal agendas as the gathering point of the membership; though Sue understands that, as in the Trinity, loss of individualism is not absolute. Following St. Paul's analogy of the Body, each part has its own beauty and usefulness, but only to the degree that its beauty and usefulness contribute to the wellbeing and health of the whole body. So too, in community, each member remains an individual part, but submits his individual agendas to the wellbeing and health of the whole membership. Sue further explains Yukon Fellowship's view. "As far as the wider society, I see it as fragmented, and I believe community is the answer to what modernity has done. It has specialized work, it has fragmented people. We're fractured or quite cut off from creation in most cases and each other. And I think the call to community, which I believe is part of the gospel, a call to enter a community; I believe part of our salvation brings us into a community of faith."

Hospitality and intentionality also are significant to Tom's understanding of community as lived at Yukon Fellowship.

---

[304] Ben Wilson, interview by Daniel K. Chinn, College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, MO, 8 October 2009.

> I think two things [that] stood out as significant to how I see community since that time have been hospitality and intentionality. Yukon Fellowship started as a family, like the Schultz family for years. In fact, Schultz was the only one who worked initially. Everyone else came in to work and take care of everything so he could teach. That's my understanding. But it grew out of their family, their home. People would come in, sometimes up to a hundred people. It was hospitality that stamped the form of community when we were together, because it was a family being hospitable, opening their home. The second thing is the intentionality. Since that time, which has been a bit more chaotic, from the stories I've heard, it intentionally shaped a schedule, to create a space where we don't have to dictate to make sure this happens. They intentionally shaped it around work, around study, around play, around our creaturely aspect to bring more of us, more of our humanity, more of our aspects of it. And by doing so, I think they really—this actually plays into how I see my own vocation—it's really played into really letting God work in a sense. We set this structure, this intentionality to guard, to bound, to form, and now freedom can occur in that. So God can move and work. For me the form and freedom combination is really important.

The themes of hospitality and intentionality are formative in Tom and Sue's vision of community. The couple understands that the nature of hospitality is the intentional creating of space within a place in which to invite others to express themselves for the better of the whole membership. Hospitality works because as the space is created, it is necessarily shared, and as the space is shared, there is the sense that those sharing the space belong to each other. As they share the space together, they necessarily sense they are responsible to each other. And as they share the space through study, work, rest, and conversation, caring grows for those in the space. They understand that the mutual responding does not happen by chance. An authentic sense of community happens through intentional design, purpose, and motive. Tom and Sue at Yukon Fellowship set the intentional structure so that the "intentionality to guard, to bound, to form, and now freedom can occur in that. So God can move and work…[T]he form and freedom combination is really important." This understanding of the interaction between form and freedom resonates with Berry's definition of community wherein he links form

and freedom: "It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[305] The having of, concern for, and trust in others creates the form of community and at the same time enables the freedom of those in the community to honor others as they come and go among themselves. Without the forms of community, there is no freedom in community, only chaos and disintegration of community. Sue understands hospitality and freedom as two sides of the same river in their contribution to community health.

> I think there is delicate balance of safety, space, and confrontation. True hospitality welcomes the guest and whatever gift they are giving. We welcome our guests, we call them students, and we hope to receive what they have to give, which is hopefully trust so they can ask their questions and be real about who they are. And after that safety happens, at some point there is space for some sort of confrontation. I think that is where they run into the community. It's safe because we're committed to structure and we're committed to hearing their questions. But at some point they run up against the need for confrontation. So there are limits to the freedoms here.

Additionally, Tom understands the place of work in a healthy community.

> We intentionally make work-time a place where people are going to just start talking about their life. More is going to come out of the great moments of speaking in somebody's life, be that student to student or worker to student, or helper to worker, or whatever combination that is, is in times that are not in times of formal discussion or lectures, but in times of work-time or tea-time. I've probably had more profound experiences digging in the garden…than I ever did in any setting up to that point. By setting space, then God begins to work on their thinking about the lectures or being in relationship with someone else. I think sometimes we limit how that can happen. And we are often surprised at just how common the common aspects of community – work-time, our meals – I mean those are dramatic and dynamic. And it's intentionally set up that way for that space.

At Yukon Fellowship, work is intentionally part of the daily schedule for everyone. Each day everyone works three to four hours with a tea-time break halfway

---

[305] Berry, *The Long-Legged House,* 61.

through. This stems from Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community. They see that working together causes the lives of the workers to interact in a unique manner that no other type of interaction affords. Working side by side scraping chipped paint off the banister railings offers ample time to enter into conversation and therefore enter into each other's lives. Relationships are built and cultivated simply through the process of intentionally working together. At Yukon Fellowship, everyone must work, and they must work together, and they are affected by the relationships that develop from the intentional creation of that space and time. Work changes not only the worker but the others working alongside of her and the place in which or on which the work is performed; which, in turn, affects the people doing the work. It is an ongoing cycle that creates and sustains the health of the members of the community, all the members of the community – human, non-human, and the place itself.

Regarding his understanding of how work impacts community; Tom provides a three tiered approach: response, gifts, and duty. "Vocation is a calling, that first and foremost we are called to respond as Christians. That's the first one. The second one then is to be eventually in God's world with our gifting, and third is to do the duty in front of you." Tom's first aspect of work is response, which relates to the second aspect of communal health, responsibility. As one works, one necessarily responds to the work that needs to be done, responds to others involved in the work, and responds to the effect that the work has on them, the other workers, and the place in which the work is performed.

The second component of work's impact on community is the use of one's gifts to accomplish the work. Since community is the sense that we belong to each other, the sense that the individuals in a community limit and define one another, one's gifts will be

limited and tailored in their expression so that they enhance the community. This enhancing of the community stands opposed to the tearing it down that happens through exclusive display of gifts that benefit only the individual. Sue's understanding of this point is helpful. "Good work has to be mindful of the larger community and then it can serve the community. And it does serve the community. If I have a group of people working only for themselves then the community is not served… I believe the work I do helps sustain the community."

Duty, Tom's third component of how work impacts community, highlights the fact that the community will be affected as its members simply do the next task in front of them. That next task might be accomplished by an individual, but healthy members of a community will accomplish their tasks with the benefit of the community in mind, not merely with the purpose of whatever individual gain they may attain from doing the task. Duty is community-minded, not isolationist, in its work.

Sue adds one more component to understanding work's affect on community - using one's gifts to the glory of God. "And another call is to use our gifts to glorify God. What can I do to glorify God and build his kingdom, and pay those bills?" Sue's understanding is spiritual and practical, much like Berry's understanding that community is both the mental and spiritual sense that we belong to each other. Coming to value the connectedness of the spiritual and practical meant that, with the help of community, Sue had to walk away from a robust dualism.

> And like Tom said, the dualism completely formed everything I thought. I didn't understand that something like the sciences could be spiritual and for God's glory. So I struggled a lot with misconceptions about vocation and watched Jeff struggle through to find vocation, and I have struggled myself. Discerning vocation is a process. It requires the input of a community or people who are trusted. People

> who have been there… The calling, in connection with community—there needs to be community input.

Work is also related to beauty and integration in Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community. Tom remembers how reading George McDonald helped broaden his understanding of work and community:

> He did a lot to restore that concept of value, beauty of calling to work. I remember, in Oregon, one of two states that still have people who still pump your gas, I was pumping gas, and I was quite ashamed of it. My Dad kept telling me, "It's good, honest work. It's good, honest work." So my own sinful, broken heart needed some adjustments on the idea of work. McDonald has gone a long ways to restore that original to work, to steward, to tend for me. One of the things I enjoy about my particular calling is that I'm doing both. I'm doing intellectual work in a sense, but I'm also fixing the toilet. I'm also repairing the roof, or deck – that's integratedness.

Tom refers to "a creaturely and human aspect" in his understanding of work and its impact on community. In a healthy community, work and intellect are not mutually exclusive. Knowing, learning, and understanding happen in the context of community, and work and labor happen in the context, or at least for the context of community. There is an integration of knowing and doing. This harkens back to The Director of The Institute's understanding that to know something requires one to respond to and loving the same. For Yukon Fellowship, this is the creatureliness and human aspect of work. As creatures, we know, respond, and care, and this triadic vision has its context in the work done for the building up of community health and cohesion. Sue further reveals Yukon Fellowship's understanding of how work and community are integrated by anchoring both in a sense of reality.

> I do believe good work happens when the work is valued and the work is necessary. And I think that can inspire and enhance a community. I think in a community where others see others doing work is good. I think it can create health, and create growth. Just a call to maturity, because work is a gift. And it's a trial by fire in all our lives. We must work and to work is to engage with reality

> and that can be grounding and maturing. And I think that that is contagious in a community and that it inspires.

The intentionality woven into the study/work fabric of Yukon Fellowship is intended to create a space in which the individual encounters God's truth and reality. And so, Yukon Fellowship is a careful provider of that intentional space. Tom explains:

> But then when I began to understand working at Yukon Fellowship, the creation of intentionality and creation of space, I began to realize that what I was called to do even beyond that and how I would go about actually fulfilling true spirituality is to let God be God and let me be me and help guard the space, stay out of the space in which God would do the work and transform lives.

For Tom and Sue, the true purpose of community is to create a safe and welcoming space where individuals have the freedom to enter community through which they encounter God's grace and truth. They encounter God through their work, study, rest, and relationship building. "I think that cohesive and healthy community happens when people are known and able to be known," concludes Sue.

Yukon Fellowship understands that an essential aspect of community health possesses a singular, grander vision around which to gather.

> Part of it is keeping sort of being locked in on the purpose of being here. Are we here just to hang out? I know a lot of students think that just being in proximity is being in community. There is no vision. They are less gathering around something, to use language we've already used, than they are being there. I think part of what it takes to keep a community cohesive and whole is a clear understanding of vision in a sense. What we're here for. For here as I've thought about it, Yukon Fellowship gathers around truth – God's truth. In order for this community to stay cohesive and healthy, that always has to be kept in mind. So that's sort of the overarching reminder of why we're here and what we're doing: God's truth transforming lives. And that is a very practical reward to what we do.

In highlighting the need to have a purpose around which to gather, Tom is quick to note that the purpose must be practiced. He understands the need to circle around God's truth, and he sees the need of applying God's truth in practical ways so that it is incarnated into

the community. Yukon Fellowship links epistemology with morality, connects belief and behavior, bridges learning with love.

> I think there is a level of care though. So often we stand side by side in this community and we work together, which is important; but sometimes we need to stand and look at each other a bit more and say, "are your needs being met?" Finding ways to articulate care is an essential part even if that's shouldering a load while we stand side by side. That's one way to show care. We respond to care, we see its value and impact and then we give it. It's part of the chalkboard answer of what we're supposed to be doing, but it is also life giving. And like we talked a little bit about, that care enables to respond. I think that's an apt description of the necessity of care. On the large scale, I think there needs to be shared vision. On a particular scale, I think care is one of the more important essentials. Intentionality and hospitality, we understand God first being hospitable to us helps us understand and grasp the nature of hospitality, which is why it's such an emphasis at Yukon Fellowship.

Keeping the "shared vision" (God's truth) in tandem with the "particular scale" (affection for each other), Yukon Fellowship is careful to particularize God's truth. God leans into the broken world, sees all the mess and says, "I love it, and I am going to tend it." This compassionate reality informs and shapes Yukon Fellowship's approach to community. The community gathers around God's truth, and then incarnates it into the community in particular expressions of the gospel's incarnation of Christ into the world. The incarnation of Christ into the world informs everything Tom does at Yukon Fellowship.

> ...[W]hen you have so many specific, very specific problems to deal with, it's a part of living it in our own lives, but students have specific needs when they come, [and] it's easy to lose track of the full scope of the gospel. So by reaching back to the creation and forward to the new heaven and earth, creation fully realized, the way I think about that – creation, sin, redemption – moving through all the aspects – incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, Pentecost, the realization of the kingdom – as I move through that, what I do, keeping in mind the end. It forms how I go about living.

Yukon Fellowship's comprehensive approach to work keeps the gospel real and practical, because their view of work is related to and is considered a part of God's story, wherein his work informs their work and thus shapes their community. Tom, with

excitement in his voice exclaims, "Now we have a mission, now we can participate with God in helping. We have a picture where we began and we now have a picture of where it's going. We have a story of how God worked, and that informs us how we are to work." God's lordship attributes of covenantal presence, authority, and control make it possible to think in terms of mutuality, responsibility, and affection as they relate to God the worker. As the worker who creates, God has an identity with, an ownership of, his creation. Thus he is mutually involved with it, though the creation is distinct from his being. He remains actively involved with his work. He is present. As a responsible worker, God takes covenantal responsibility for his creation, animate and inanimate (Ps. 86, 104; Matt. 5). He responsibly creates, redeems, and re-creates what he created. God is affectionate toward the world. "God so loved the world"[306] that his heart was moved to action. Sue believes that God's truth particularized in the gospel of Christ is what defines community as well as creates in her heart a desire for community. "If it weren't for God's work in my life, I won't know how to help other people. I wouldn't even know what community is if it weren't for grace getting me past myself. I truly believe the gospel has transformed me, and I do believe the gospel is the best explanation for reality. And I don't know what else I would say to people. And I wouldn't care."

Mutuality, responsibility, and affection permeate Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community. Tom and Sue express it in different terms (belonging, responding, and caring). They understand that if a community is to be healthy and cohesive, it must revolve around that triadic vision of community. Yukon Fellowship knows it must gather those coming to it around something larger than an abstract idea of community. It must gather them around God's reality and understanding of community.

[306] John 3:16 (ESV)

As God is mutually and responsibly and lovingly involved with and committed to redeeming his world and story, we, in reflecting his image, live mutually, responsibly, and affectionately in community. Yukon Fellowship believes that a sense of love or affection precedes our community involvement and continues after our part in it. The greatest of these is love[307] because love is the essential characteristic of God's nature.

> There is a very true sense that love precedes it [community]. I was nearly incapable of loving until I was loved. I think that's what the students respond to the most, being loved and accepted. For many it's the first time they've ever experienced it. So in a sense it proceeds, but also undergirds and upholds. It's part of true transformation. It's transformative because love casts out fear, and so many of the people who come definitely grew up with "fear motivated everything I understood." So we couldn't do any of the work we do, see the change we see, or having a space where God authentically changes people's lives if love wasn't central to what we're doing. The beginning and end [of community] is love....

Well Rested University's Understanding of Community

The final context to be explored is to identify Well Rested University's understanding of community. All full-time students at Well Rested University work, rather than pay for their tuition, and the university openly discourages debt and does not participate in any government loan programs. Well Rested University is committed to a five-fold mission of encouraging academic, Christian, cultural, vocational, and patriotic growth in its students. At Well Rested University, students experience a truly Christian environment, with opportunities to attend chapel on campus, join Christian student organizations, and take part in Christian missions, all designed to promote Christ-like character in young people. The University's Center for Character Education sponsors programs and activities that enhance the development of character and good citizenship. The mission of Well Rested University is to provide the advantages of a Christian education for youth of both sexes, especially those found worthy but without sufficient

[307] 1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV)

means to procure such training. The vision of Well Rested University is to develop citizens of Christ-like character who are well-educated, hard-working, and patriotic; while the practiced mission is educating the head, heart, and hands of its 1500 students.

Kate Helen is a Director of community life at Well Rested University, and has held that position for nine years. She holds that the "the primary source of community development is a common task."[308] Her initial understanding of a cohesive community is that the community members gather around a common focus, which is much like the understanding of Tom from Yukon Fellowship, who believes the community must gather around something bigger than itself. Kate Helen agrees with Berry's understanding of mutuality in a community. In order for the community to gather around a common task, the sense that the members belong to each and are "in this thing together" must exist. "So we see it in a church, the common task obviously is worshipping God; but the more that a community is shaped, it is shaped around something which the community is creating together." As this chapter reports, Berry gathers the community around God's truth and the idea of community mutuality, responsibility, and affection; The Director of The Institute gathers it around conviction, character, and culture and God's truth; Tom gathers it around hospitality and intentionality and God's truth; and Kate Helen gathers it around worship, which the community creates together, and which is informed by God's truth.

Helen's point is the commonality that Well Rested University shares. "A larger community like Well Rested University, obviously we do have that commonality of seeking to educate these young people; and so as employees we have that in common, but aah, you see a lot of community develop, you see the individual areas on campus develop a strong bond of unity especially around the work stations. They do achieve together,

[308] Kate Helen (pseudonym), interview by Daniel K. Chinn, Well Rested University, 17 September 2009.

they go through the swells of doing something." Kate Helen highlights Well Rested University's Character Camp to illustrate her conviction that people accomplishing a task together helps create and cultivate a healthy community:

> So a good example (for the university) is Character Camp. After they've [incoming freshmen] done something difficult like the challenge course or the workday, they are actually more cohesive because they have done a task together, they can see something accomplished, even if it's just getting through a challenge course. Or accomplishing the work set before them. But then they have that camaraderie.

Kate Helen does not believe Well Rested University is intentional about understanding community and integrating it with work. "I don't know if Well Rested University believes this. I don't think they actually do. I don't think [a work focused slogan]. Well Rested University is more about bettering yourself. It's about doing something. So it's not completely wrong or incorrect. But I think theologically they wouldn't say that it's an expression of our image, our God-given, created image as image bearers." Well Rested University believes in hard work, not necessarily because it creates healthy community, but to get the next task done. Well Rested University does not value mutuality, responsibility, or affection in its approach to community or its work program. "Which is where an institution like this suffers a little bit because it is passed down the line and people are just doing a job, they don't feel like they have any creative ownership." For Kate Helen, Well Rested University lacks creative ownership, as well as a sense of common bond. In that regard, she describes what a healthy family or community looks like.

> If families do things together, they're going to be more, they're going to have a common bond. I think healthiness has a common goal, a common vision. Everyone has responsibility. Everyone has some ownership in that. They not only have the task, but they are given a creative ability in that…in a smaller setting, in a community where they are doing something together, they can see that they all

> have a stake in it. So creating healthy communities is that arena of creative working out of something and the responsibility of ownership, and then probably just the time to enjoy it.

This reflects The Director of The Institute's representation of Berry's belief that when we casually disconnect ourselves from people and place, we do serious damage to our humanity. Kate Helen asserts that as people do things together (work, worship, celebrate) they are more human simply because they experience mutual interaction, responding to each other and limiting one another in that interplay. They thus find themselves caring for the members of the community. Well Rested University performs tasks together, not to cultivate a healthy community, but merely to finish the task and move on the next one. The students, instead of resting in the community health, sense the ever-mounting stress and expectation to accomplish more, in order for the university to succeed.

> So what we're doing is like a tighter and tighter drum. I mean, you can see this evidence in the cycles of the semesters' work. The kids come in and they are ready to hit it again, and they kind of tighten up, tighten up, they get a little bit of rest. At Christmas they're not quite as rested and they come back. So we just don't have a healthy balance. We can't live year round like we live at Well Rested University … [I]f you're just doing things to achieve or succeed, then of course you wouldn't want to rest in it, because someone's going to get ahead of you. Right?

She sums up her understanding of what constitutes a healthy, cohesive community by underscoring these four aspects: "So I think what constitutes a healthy community are those four things: a common task, creative responsibility, rest, and celebration." Her four categories parallel Berry's triadic vision of mutuality, responsibility, and affection: a common task naturally entails mutual belonging; creative responsibility bespeaks of ownership and accountability to respond to each other; and rest and celebration entail a sense of care for, devotion to, and love of those resting and celebrating together.

Kate Helen agrees with Berry in his assertion that "good work" is the connection, or love, that we establish through our interactive relationships in a particular place on the earth. Kate Helen makes the connection clear. "It's a great idea, that God has given us the ability and resources to pursue everything that he has given us that is cultural. So in dedication to that and in loving and genuinely enjoying and appreciating and taking responsibility and taking the broad picture of love… I say that is good work." She embraces the sentiment on a plaque in the entry way of the print shop on the Well Rested University campus, "Good Work is Love Expressed." Berry agrees that work must be particularized in a place, with particular tasks accomplished by a united community for the sake and health of the community.

Opposed to this comprehensive view, Well Rested University, in Kate Helen's view, possesses a dualistic approach to work. Well Rested University does not believe that work is necessarily an issue of the heart, but that what is most important about work is where it falls on the scale of good and bad work.

> I think what happens is that we try to qualify dualistically what we consider good work and what we think of as bad work. And the bad work is mundane. And again, this is not what I believe, but I'm trying to get to a starting point. I just think dualistically. It's kind of like sin. We qualify sin; there's the acceptable ones and then there is that one that you can never do. Or again, I think good work is an expression, there is the Cultural Mandate.

Kate Helen believes that some departments at Well Rested University come closer to a healthy sense of community growth than others. She sees that areas like custodial and landscaping care provide excellent examples of an intentional integration of mutual concern and responsible work and beauty:

> I think custodial does a good job. Overall our expectations of work are good here. Landscaping does an excellent job of showing that you can work and it be beautiful. And that is good. It makes everyone feel, again, like a community. It's

> worth caring for. It's what helps kids to pick up the trash and not walk on the grass. Because they see their friends working hard at it, so they want to be a part of it.

Kate Helen believes that most people at Well Rested University do not understand the Cultural Mandate from God. And that is because she thinks most employees and students at Well Rested University do not believe that, in their work, they need each other.

> Cultural Mandate can't happen alone. It has to happen in community. You know, just the giftedness, we can't all do the same thing. We're not equipped to do the same thing. We don't see things the same. We need each other. So, uh, obviously, not to separate spiritual gifts, but the way we do things, our personality, our attempting. I think it's important as a community that we try to build everyone in a viable role or responsibility. I don't think most people [at Well Rested University] understand God's sense of Cultural Mandate.

She believes this is true of Well Rested University also because it lacks intentionality in integrating work and community. "Well, I don't think Well Rested University does it as well as it can. I think what we do sometimes is that we have spots of community, and then we have large spots of work, but I don't know if we necessarily integrate it well." The Director thinks that the reason Well Rested University does not integrate community and work is because of its understanding of work. They value work, but for different reasons than building communal relationships.

> I don't think we value community, actually. What we value is work, and community happens naturally around work. I mean, you know, we probably wouldn't have ever been friends if we didn't work together. I think it's true of everybody, when they work together in the classroom, when they work on a project together and sit together, they will have some bond that ties them together. And [in] the task, and in God's providence, he actually binds us in the Spirit in a way. And you can see evidences of it. Moral Fiber Encampment is another good example. Work stations generally have, most workstations attempt to have some community within there. But as far as an entire community, between different departments and the people in them, it's a little bit exclusive.

Community, or at least some kind of bond, happens because people work together, but there is no sense that Well Rested University approaches work intentionally to create and cultivate communal mutuality, responsibility, or affection for one another. Kate Helen insists that at Well Rested University, people miss the point of community because they do not understand the power of incarnational presence.

> I don't think people quite understand it. I think, like I know that [a campus leader] has a very intuitive understanding of community and work. He really does. He wouldn't be training the supervisors the way he is if he didn't. Presence, incarnation presence is a very real way of effecting people. Does he understand the theology of the Work Mandate, the Cultural Mandate? No. I don't think he's deliberately saying, hey you guys are going to like each other. What he's saying is that you're going to be more effective. You're going to help these kids better if you learn to work with them. I don't know that he would ever say to anyone that you're going to be happier.

The main problem is the silo mentality, says the Director.

> ...[W]e do things in silos. You know, um, all we do is create a sort of competitiveness, an exclusiveness.... They'll have their little group. They can get negative in that too. They can get real cliquish in that. We think that this is the only way to do it. That's a problem. Obviously, we have some ally-building here, where they build and kinda gather around the people they like and then they have power in that and tend to exclude others. But I just don't think we are intentional about valuing community in the same way we value work. Placing Well Rested University on a one-to-ten scale as far as intentionally integrating community and work, the Director gave the institution "a three in being intentional about it."

The Director experienced difficulty in identifying employees who intentionally integrate community and work. She identified six out of over three hundred. Her difficulty in identifying more examples was due to most people at Well Rested University

being "focused on achieving the tasks and not really focused on how it affects the community." An incarnational pedagogy, Helen asserts, can move Well Rested University toward integration.

> You know that LDT [Leadership Develop Track] team model says "cultivating excellence in head, heart, and hands." It's just an incarnational, to me, it's an incarnational pedagogy. It means that you can't just educate the head. You have to, they have to be able to walk it out. And I would go back and say there is no real education in just head. It's just information. But until you change the heart, you're never going to walk it out. So this is the reason for having community and work, even if you take the work, the vocation element, out of Well Rested University and you put in only an academic element. I think this culture demands for there to be an incarnational element to their education. Meaning they must sensorally, if that's a word, they must experientially understand what they're learning. Through some senses, not just rationally. Because if it's only vicarious, second hand, it's only out here and there's not transformation, there's no real shaping. I could be naïve and overly formulative minded, but I mean, I think, uh, there is some truth across the board in that. They have to have understanding in their heart in order to really get it. Otherwise they are just spitting back information that's not necessarily changing them.

And, the Director insists, an incarnational pedagogy is not only for the students, but for those who care for them: the faculty members and work station supervisors.

> That's why when you hear faculty say, "Well they're just stupid because they can only watch videos anymore; they can't hear the way you're speaking." That's what they're, that's how they're being trained from a child on. So I think that's a little less incorrect on another person's heart, not to be able to adapt their teaching style to the learner's style. You know, with some boundaries. You're not going to accommodate every student. So you ask the students what's being taught so they can understand it. I think our students for the most part are trying to accommodate to what is being given here, uh, which depending on where you are, which classroom, which work station; they have both good and bad.

The Director is hopeful for Well Rested University, but frustrated. She is hopeful because of some evidence of the power of God's grace working to change the culture at Well Rested University. She is frustrated because she believes Well Rested University has much road to travel yet.

> So I think it's happening, it's just not as deliberate. All these are very nuanced ideas, but I'm not sure people, that they're chomping at the bit to talk about… I'm frustrated because, again, theologically that we are not necessarily creating healthy students. Um, but that would require an entire culture to pull back, not just one area. And we're not in a place we can do that yet, so I'm frustrated in that in order to be seen and heard I have to get on the carousel…. God works in spite of us. I don't think we have a healthy community. We don't… I think we have elements of community, but I never did say we have a healthy community. So yeah, we can't, it's hard to expect our students, we don't have anything to be present with them in health. But it's not just Well Rested University. I mean we're talking about a Western cultural idea, not just Well Rested University.

Kate Helen, the Director of community life, believes that Well Rested University, though it may experience the communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection, defines these aspects too narrowly. Well Rested University is a community sharing mutually the things that can unite a group of people: shared bonds, shared place, source of income, and much time, energy, and commitment devoted to the accomplishing the same tasks. Nonetheless, says the Director,

> …[I]t's hard to develop a community outside Well Rested University. And when Well Rested University students say "a bubble" that's what they mean. We're not connected with any consistency with anyone on the outside. Apart from, you know, there are some elements that do. The [a community service program] do. I think these organizations that go out into the other communities are positive. But I think anytime, and I don't know how Berry feels about this, but any time when we sink all our, everything into one sphere, and you see this in the families on campus. Their only community is their family. I don't think we can ever have the tapestry kind of feel until we understand that we are one community within a very large, world community, actually the Body of Christ. And that is part of our mutuality is the larger body of Christ to influence the world.

For Kate Helen and perhaps unknowingly for Well Rested University too, communal responsibility is a heart issue, and it is bridged to learning. Like Berry, Helen understands that ideals like education and responsibility remain mere abstractions until Well Rested University students understand that a sense of communal responsibility becomes real in

their learning when they take the facts and walk them out, live them out in real ways and places, responsively.

> I don't think any person learns from the heart unless there's responsibility. Unless they understand that they're contributing something to the whole, they're never going to be changed. Doing what they're told because they're being coerced or unless they see a value in it, and that doesn't mean they have to find intrinsic value in it, unless we're deliberately teaching that, then they're just going to do it because they have to. And most of the time that doesn't happen on any integrated level until young people leave their home environment and they begin to see what they had. And these kids will make another great step once they leave the college environment, because now all the sudden they're cleaning their toilets, buying their own food, doing their own cooking, doing their own shopping, doing things differently. As an institution, all we do is kind of massage them as they go through. If we can give them a glimpse of healthiness, you know, on some level, then that will help them put it together.

Disintegration between community and work at Well Rested University stems from a lack of genuine care for all the members of the community. The Director believes it is an absence of God's grace in its approach to integration. All the parts are in place, but something essential is missing. "The pilot's not lit. You know, the gas, everything is plumbed, but until the grace is received in our own hearts, that compassion and love, it's really hard to develop the kind of affection you're talking about. I do think there is commonality, mutuality if you will, responsibility. People are going to have common interests because they work together; but affection, it can only really come when there's shared commitment to the gospel." Students and employees at Well Rested University struggle to develop communal compassion and love because, in Kate Helen's estimation, they have not truly received the compassion of Christ in their hearts. It is still a factual abstract. They are Christians; but they miss the grace on an individual and institutional level. "Even those [at Well Rested University] who know Jesus, if they have not actually received the compassion through the grace, you know there are people who believe that

Jesus is Lord and Savior, but they are as cold as ice. And you know, that's fear I think: a protective measure of never having received God's goodness. It's missing love and affection. We cannot in the system, in the authority system we're in, we will never be able to overcome that on an institutional level."

The Director argues that there are those in the leadership of Well Rested University who believe that love for Christ is connected to doing the right thing; one's righteousness comes from doing the right thing. "I mean [the leader] has always said that the most important element here is the spiritual element. Unfortunately, I think he thinks the spiritual element is connected to doing the right thing. Which is why he loves [the work focused] slogan so much. Uh, because in his experience, the more you do the right things, the more that you are righteous. Which every human being falls to that. I mean it's not an uncommon misunderstanding."

Kate Helen believes that Well Rested University's current position is not an inevitable position. She is hopeful and knows that if Well Rested University is to understand and integrate community and work intentionally, such change will occur with one individual choosing to live mutually, responsibly, and affectionately with another individual, with the Spirit radiating it out to many others. "You know me, I'm hopeful, but I'm not stupid. What we can do is integrate who we are in Jesus individually, and that will radiate out. I have no doubt that on a grass roots level, the Spirit is radiating that out, not just from us, but many others. And that will eventually change the culture, but even on a grass roots level there has to be some organization." As change continues at Well Rested University, through God's grace, the culture of the institution will change slowly, but progressively, "kinda like ground cover, after awhile it kinda just takes over."

Summary of Findings

This chapter explored various understandings and visions of community in order to inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission. It began by examining selected literature by Wendell Berry that addresses the topic of community. Berry believes that community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared and that those sharing the place define and limit the possibilities of the lives of the others. His triadic vision is bridged together by three communal aspects: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. For Berry, mutuality is an essential understanding that the members of a membership belong to each other, and carry with them the sense that they are 'in this thing together' and therefore hold all things in common. Because they belong to each other, they are, therefore, necessarily responsible for one another. They are accountable for responding out of regard for the community health, understanding the freedom that comes from limiting and defining each other's communal responses. Mutual responsibility results, necessarily, in affection for all the members of a community: human, non-human, and the place itself. The people living in a local community with all things in common care for each other, are devoted to each other, and display love toward one another. Talking of community health is disingenuous if any part of the community is not cared for, and this includes all in the neighborhood.

In Berry's vision of community, good work is the connection that connects us to each other and to a particular place on the earth and to the earth itself. We must work, and we must work somewhere, and the people with whom we work and the place in which we work are necessarily changed and affected by the work that members in a community perform. Mutuality, responsibility, and affection are particularized through the goings

and comings of the working relationships of the members of a local community who are committed to a local history, commonality, and a local economy. The church has a place, in Berry's vision, but only as the unorganized church – the church that Jesus Christ left on earth that loves and cares for all the members of a local community. In his view, the organized church does not care for or love the land or water or animals of a place, but rather dualistically separates itself from the material, the earthy, opting instead for the heavenly and spiritual. And the unorganized church is, in the end, actually replaced by the community wherein all the members of the membership are mutually, responsibly, and affectionately committed to the human, nonhuman, and the place itself.

The report then considered The Institute's understanding of community. The Director understands community much in the same terms as Berry. Berry's most important insight into understanding community, according to the Director, is that when we casually disconnect ourselves from people and place, we do something crucial to our humanity. The Director offers his own triadic vision that provides a moral vision able to withstand the erosive backwash of our modern/postmodern culture: convictions, character, and community. What we believe develops who we are, which results in the kind of community we seek. The Director's primary concern for communal stability is consistency. He believes that community members must seek to weave together a fabric of faithfulness between what they believe and how they behave. He further insists that seeking consistency between learning and living necessitates and cultivates a healthy community. For only a sense of mutual commitment, responsible interacting, and loving devotion to a local place where local people know each other, provides the community members both the freedom and the limits to seek truth and understanding safely. God's

context, in which members weave together a fabric of faithfulness between liturgy, learning, laboring, and loving, is community.

Yukon Fellowship was then the focus of this report. Yukon Fellowship believes, again, in the same communal aspects as Berry: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. However, the Directors there communicate their understanding of those aspects through the ideals of hospitality and intentionality. Hospitality, for Tom and Sue, is the intentional creating of a safe place and space in which to invite those who are searching for truth and for answers to their questions. That space provides both boundaries and freedom. Yukon Fellowship is convinced that respected boundaries are the very element that enables the freedom for those at Yukon Fellowship. Hospitality enables community growth because the purpose of hospitality is to allow interaction between those in the place. That interaction is defined by the schedule of the day: meals together, worship together, work together, and rest/recreation together. As the members of Yukon Fellowship come and go among themselves, mutual regard, responsible interaction, and loving acceptance grow. Work is an essential aspect of Yukon Fellowship's perspective of community. Work enables the people in the place to interact with each other's lives as they work side by side on a common task. The common task is designed not only to affect the communal relationships, but to cultivate the place itself by caring for the human, non-human, and the place itself. Yukon Fellowship understands community as a thoroughly intentional act or enactment. Much like Berry, Yukon Fellowship believes one must choose intentionally to become part of a local community and to be committed to the wellbeing of every member of a local place. And communities must intentionally structure themselves in

ways that support, enhance, and enable members of the community to enter into mutual, responsible, and loving relationship with one another.

Finally, this chapter sought to report on Well Rested University's understanding of community. Kate Helen, a Director at Well Rested University believes that Well Rested University struggles to truly understand community in terms of mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Well Rested University has its own community, in the sense that its members are committed to a common goal or vision (educating the head, heart, and hands of its students). However, Well Rested University is committed to an ideal of community that is displayed by accomplishing tasks of hard work in order to supply or ensure one's own goodness or righteousness. Work is central to Well Rested University, but merely as a method to get the job done. Well Rested University has community and work but lacks intentional integration of them. Work is done, but not with the understanding that the work is contributing to the health of the community. Well Rested University lacks a sense that 'we are in this together,' beyond a commitment to its practiced mission. The mission is primary, while relationships are incidental. Responsibility is seen in terms of getting the work done, but lacks a sense that the students and employees respond to each other in authentic accountability. Well Rested University largely lacks affection or love in its model. The model of leadership is authoritarian with little regard for genuine, affectionate devotion; thus, Well Rested University functions more from fear than love. The Director's sense for Well Rested University is hopeful, in that God's grace is working and will continue to change the overall culture toward embracing mutuality, responsibility, and affection – bridges that

can connect the members of the Well Rested University community, the university work program, and the place itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could help inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks. The practiced mission of College of the Ozarks is educating the head, heart, and hands of its fifteen hundred students. The students and those who care for them, faculty and work supervisors, live and work in a collegiate community, where the students work fifteen hours a week at on-campus work stations to pay for their tuition. Consequently, understanding community and integrating community with the work program is increasingly important for both students and college employees. Presently, College of the Ozarks lacks intentional integration of community and work; there are large areas of work, and small pockets of community, with little faithful weaving of the two into a seamless fabric. Therefore, this study sought to explore Berry's vision of community, of which work is uncompromisingly a part, to inform College of the Ozarks' understanding of community and work, thus affecting its practiced mission.

This chapter will reemphasize the need and importance of this study, and review the research questions used to understand community. Next it will provide a brief review of the relevant literature relating to this study, and summarize the findings of the study. The chapter will then offer some conclusions regarding Berry's vision of community. Finally, it will offer some relevant recommendations that College of the Ozarks can

implement into its practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands of its students, and those who care for them.

Due to the lack of objective research regarding Berry's vision of community as it informs College of the Ozarks' practiced mission, this research enhances the body of knowledge that currently exists on this issue. The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could help inform the practiced mission of College of the Ozarks.

Necessity of Study

In chapter two, the review of literature shed light on Berry's vision of community as manifest in his essays, novels, and poems. From this review, three communal aspects developed that inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. As this study sought to answer the research questions, these three components were consistent in the findings on community as well.

The study was conducted in an attempt to answer the following primary research questions:

1. What is Wendell Berry's understanding of community?
    a. How and to what extent do the Gospels shape his understanding of community?
    b. To what extent do the Epistles shape his understanding?
2. How do Christian organizations that focus on the importance of community understand community?
    a. What is The Institute's understanding of community?
    b. What is the Yukon Fellowship's understanding of community?
    c. What is Well Rested University's understanding of community?

Summary of Study

In the literature review, Berry defines community as "the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[309] Berry further defines community as

> ...the commonwealth and common interest, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature. A community identifies itself by an understood mutuality of interests...it lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self-restraint, compassion, and forgiveness.[310]

From these two foundational definitions emanate Berry's communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Berry believes that we belong to each other, we are in this together, we share our life and death together, and we are members of each other. He also believes that because we belong to each other, we are therefore responsible for one another. We are accountable for how we treat each other (humans and non-humans) and for the place we share together. We limit ourselves and our expressions and our behaviors (mental, physical, spiritual, sexual, social) contributing to community integrity, rather to disintegration. Since we are mutually in this life and place together, and are responsible for one another, we are therefore obliged to care for one another, love each other, and display affection for all members of a community. Berry believes the current disease and lack of health in our communities is not inevitable or ultimately defining. He is convinced that healing of our local communities will come through the power of the

---

[309] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.
[310] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 121.

gospel of Jesus Christ. In his essay, "Health is Membership," Berry casts his vision plainly.

> So far, I have been implying my beliefs at every turn. Now I had better state them openly. I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsist, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and dwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God.[311]

Berry's presentation of God's love, as revealed in the gospel, seems less extensive than what God intended to communicate in the gospel. Berry, it seems, believes that God's love as enacted by a faithful community is the point, whereas the New Testament presents as the point God's love as enacted by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ on behalf of an unfaithful community. Nevertheless, Berry's understanding of God's love in community is helpful in that it does point us, like a mileage sign, to the reality that God's love is foundational to cultivating healthy communities.

Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community, therefore, necessarily embraces *mutuality* ("a community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared"), *responsibility* ("and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibility of each other's lives"), and *affection* ("It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves"). The ultimate reality behind these aspects is Berry's belief that everything is connected to everything, much in keeping with St. Paul's use of the connectedness of the human body to illustrate his understanding of the unified

---

[311] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 89.

church. "And to extend Saint Paul's famous metaphor by only a little, a healthy community is like a body, for its members mutually support and serve one another."[312]

Though Berry leans on Paul's understanding of the church, he rejects Paul's teaching in the New Testament about the church that Jesus Christ left on earth. Berry sees the gathered community as actually replacing the church. In his vision of a healthy community, the community is able to replace the organized church, since the church does not understand or promote a healthy, local membership. Berry opts rather for the unorganized church. He believes that Christ did leave a church on earth, but not the organized church of the New Testament, not contemporary Christianity in America. Rather, Christ left the unorganized church, because, in Berry's estimation, it extends mutuality, responsibility, and affection to all the members of a neighborhood. Berry believes that the gathered community replaces the organized church because the organized church is implicated in the damage – damage done to the earth and to the lives of a local community – that has been caused by the global economy. The unorganized church, on the other hand, the gathered community, is careful to extend mutual, responsible love to every part of the community: human and non-human. And the unorganized church refuses to participate in the caustic practices of the international, industrial economy. Unfortunately, Berry gathers the community around the mere idea of community, rather than around God's truth, which transforms individuals into authentic community: the Body united around Christ, who is the Head of the Body.

Berry's vision of community presents good work as the communal module that connects everything to everything. He posits that we must work, that we must work

---

[312] Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 155.

somewhere, and that the work we perform affects the worker, those he works with, and the place in which the work is done; as well as other places that offer resources which enables the work accomplished in a local place. Relationships, developed through work and through the coming and going of the individuals in a place, contribute to the health of a community. Berry's vision of a healthy, cohesive community entails the three communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection; and his triadic vision works because he understands and values the connections between everything. In a healthy community, nothing is separated or isolated; everything affects everything. Consequently, in his vision of community, the bridge connecting everything to everything is good work. It is work that defines the "freedom with which they come and go among themselves."[313] It is good work that gives cause for the members of a local place to come and go among themselves. Rest creates space for coming and going among community members, but Berry acknowledges that it is the doing of good work that creates the normative catalyst that moves the community in and out of itself in sustainable ways. "They [members of a local community] know that work ought to be necessary; it ought to be good; it ought to be satisfying and dignifying to the people who do it; and genuinely useful and pleasing to the people for whom it is done. The party of the local community, then, is a real party with a real platform and an agenda of real work and doable work... They are seeing that a community's health is largely determined by the way it makes its living."[314]

[313] Berry, *The Long-Legged House*, 61.
[314] Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank*, 17-18.

Analysis

The Institute

The Director of The Institute seizes upon the same three foundational aspects for community health and cohesion as Wendell Berry – mutuality, responsibility, and affection. He believes that the three words or concepts cannot be separated. Community health flows from the fact that those in the community sense that they belong to each other, that they impact one another or live in the awareness that 'they are in this thing together.' For The Director, not only do the members of a place belong to each other, but their lives, their coming and going is enmeshed in such a way that each member must respond to the others in ways that promote integration and health. He asserts that mutuality and responsibility are indispensable to community health. A community's need is not merely for mutual relationships or for responsible communing together, but for both. Given the sense that we belong to one another, it necessarily follows that we interact in such ways that our responses to each other are for the betterment of the community. The Director understands that tragedy can strike any community, and that is when a mutual, responsible commitment is most needed; but he also sees clearly that when brokenness develops in the community, the tragedy is when the community steps away from mutuality and responsibility. "You know where we stumble and fumble, and where we have heartache, where sometimes, you know, there is moaning and tragedy in the background is where on some level, in some way, we step back away from commitments to mutuality and responsibility." A member withdraws from the mutual regard for community health, and in an isolated mode betrays the integration of the community, resulting in a dis-integration or community dis-ease. Nevertheless, it is a

consistent, sometimes painful insistence and commitment to a sense that 'we are in this thing together' that moves relationship members toward one another in the midst of tragic moaning. Since the participants in a membership belong to each other, they are committed to and see the value of responding or reacting to each other in healthy, community sustaining ways – ownership necessitates responsible action.

The Director insists that God's grace is the indispensable means of integrating community mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Human will, effort, good work, or desire to produce the community aspects are futile. Like Berry, he believes the world is broken, a place of wounded relationships; but unlike Berry, he asserts that it is God's enabling grace alone that creates the desire for mutual love, as well as enables members of a neighborhood to love and connect as they ought. In contrast, Berry believes that if the community members will but make the choice to mutually, responsively love each other, they can bring about their own health. For Berry and the Director, the imperative is the same: to mutually, responsibly love one another; yet they embrace different indicatives. Berry's indicative states that if members just make the choice to connect in healthy ways through good work, community health will flourish. On the other hand, the Director's indicative proposes that community members rest in Christ's finished work on their behalf, living out his enabling grace and strength, and then the Spirit will grow in them the will, desire, ability, and wisdom to connect in healthy ways through good work, and community health will flourish. Berry and the Director function with the same meta-narrative: Creation, Fall, Re-creation. But again, Berry's point of reference is fallen man, while the Director's point of reference is God and his willingness to love a messy world and to commit to redeeming it through Christ. Even as Berry confesses that it is the

gospel of Christ that will bring healing to the world, it seems he also believes that God offers the gospel of Christ to humankind, and if humankind will but use it, the world can be redeemed through its own good work. This belief is much like Well Rested University's approach to hard work – the belief that hard work is a means of righteousness before God.

The Director of The Institute's Creation, Fall, Recreation, Consummation paradigm suggests a belief system that helps him make sense of his life in this world. As we live incarnationally in this world of broken and messy relationships, we need ways to make sense of our relational experiences. The Director insists that what we believe helps make sense of how we live. "So to get there, in some ways it's having the right theologies, the ideas that can make sense of our experience even as we live our lives before the face of God, and to realize that he does call us to be holy even as I am holy; and yet he looks at us with longsuffering and patience, love." What carries this worldview paradigm is God's grace to us in our messiness, as well as understanding that what we believe affects the way we live – thus his insistence to weave a fabric of faithfulness between belief and behavior. The Director offers his own triadic vision of community health: convictions, character, and community. He asserts that what one believes, determines one's character, which in turn determines the kind of community sought. Without convictions, character, and community, people slip into anonymity: nowhere people going nowhere. The Director, sensing the loss of personhood, is reminded of Walker Pierce's term, "getting lost in the cosmos" of the modern and postmodern world. The local communities disintegrate because of a dualistic approach to life that separates what God intended to stick together.

Yukon Fellowship

Tom and Sue, Directors at Yukon Fellowship, realize the need for intentionality in cultivating community. This intentionality creates space in a place in which the members of the community begin to sense that in 'doing life together,' they belong to each other (mutuality). There is a "shaping," or a sense that they are responsible to each other, and in that togetherness, care and affection for the community grow. The Yukon Fellowship's sense of community grows out of the interacting of the community members in learning, talking, playing, and working. This is consistent with Berry's belief that good work is the catalyst for cultivating healthy relations, since mutuality, responsibility, and affection grow out of the daily interacting that work necessarily requires. Community necessarily fractures or dis-integrates if subjected to strictly personal agendas as the gathering point of the membership. As in the Trinity, loss of individualism is not absolute. Following St. Paul's analogy of the Body, each part has its own beauty and usefulness, but only to the degree that its beauty and usefulness contribute to the wellbeing and health of the whole body. So, too, in community, each member remains an individual part but submits his or her individual agendas to the wellbeing and health of the whole membership. Although Yukon Fellowship embraces hard and good work, it does not overemphasize these efforts. For Yukon Fellowship, good work is a response to grace, not a means to grace.

The themes of hospitality and intentionality are formative in Tom and Sue's vision of community. They understand that hospitality is the intentional creating of space in a place in which to invite others to express themselves for the betterment of the whole membership. Hospitality works because, as the space is created, it is necessarily shared; and as the space is shared, there is the sense that those sharing the space belong to each

other. As they share the space together, they necessarily sense that they are responsible to each other. And as they share the space through study, work, rest, and conversation, caring grows for those in the space. Yukon Fellowship believes that the mutual responding is not happenstance. An authentic sense of community happens through intentional design, purpose, and motive. In a healthy community, work and intellect are not mutually exclusive. Knowing, learning, and understanding happen on the context of community, and work and labor happen in the context, or at least for the context, of community. There is an integration of knowing and doing. This is reminiscent of The Director of The Institute's understanding that to know something calls for responding and loving the same. For Yukon Fellowship, this is the creatureliness and human aspect of work. As creatures, we know, respond, and care, and this triadic vision finds its context in the work done for the weaving of community health and cohesion. Threads of Berry's thinking on mutuality, responsibility, and affection appear in this fabric. As people sense that they belong to the others in their community, that sense is based on knowledge of those others and of that place. In that knowledge, one is responsible to submit humbly to other members of the community, resulting in care and love for one another. For Yukon Fellowship the true purpose of community is to create a safe and welcoming space, where individuals have the freedom to enter community through which they can encounter God's grace and truth. They also can encounter God through their work, study, rest, and relationship building. Yukon Fellowship's indicative, then, is different from Berry's. Yukon Fellowship's indicative is God's grace and truth, whereas for Berry, the indicative rests on human choice and initiative. And while Berry gathers the community around the idea of community, Yukon Fellowship gathers the community around God's truth so as to

shape the community by that truth to reflect Christ. Yukon Fellowship's comprehensive approach to work keeps the gospel real and practical, because its view of work is related to and is a part of God's story, wherein his work informs the Fellowship's work, and thus shapes its community.

Well Rested University

Well Rested University believes that it must gather around something larger than itself, and what Well Rested University gathers itself around is not necessarily God's truth. Rather, it gathers itself around, by mandate of the administration, its mission. Since Well Rested University is a Christian university, there are pockets where God's truth is taught (in the Philosophy and Religion Department, some of the Humanities, the Chapel program), but God's truth is not the rallying point for Well Rested University. So Well Rested University experiences a mutual aspect but only so far as a group of people are committed to the mutual goal of educating students. Well Rested University lacks true understanding of community and how to integrate community into its work program. Well Rested University does have commonality in its vision for educating its students but sees no need for cultivating a healthy, cohesive community for the benefit of the institution, its students, or those who care for them. Kate Helen, a Director of community life at Well Rested University, believes that though Well Rested University may experience the communal aspects of mutuality, responsibility, and affection, it defines them too narrowly. Well Rested University is a community sharing mutually the things that can unite a group of people: shared bonds, place, source of income, along with much time, energy, and commitment devoted to accomplishing the same tasks; but it lacks genuine appreciation for love even within that commonality.

Kate Helen insists that Well Rested University is more about bettering oneself through hard work than it is about experiencing the gracious work of God in community life. Well Rested University believes in hard work, not necessarily because it creates healthy community, but simply because of its value in getting the next task done and helping the students pay their tuition. Whereas Berry views good work as the means of connecting members of a community, Well Rested University's approach to its work program is shaped by the theology of some of its administrators, who believe that the harder one works, the more righteous one is, and the more God will bless. Well Rested University is deficient in Berry's understanding that good work connects people in healthy ways, while Berry is deficient in understanding that good work is a response to grace, not merely the context for connecting people in a place. Well Rested University lacks creative ownership, as well as a sense of common bond regarding mutuality, responsibility, and affection. This reflects The Director of The Institute's representation of Berry's belief that when we casually disconnect ourselves from people and place, we do something crucial to our humanity. Kate Helen asserts that as people do things together (work, worship, celebrate), they are more human, simply because they experience mutual interaction. They respond to each other and limit one another in that interplay and thus find themselves caring for the members of the community. Well Rested University performs tasks together, not to cultivate a healthy community, but merely to finish their tasks and move on the next ones. The students, instead of resting in the community health, sense the ever-mounting stress and expectation to accomplish more, in order for the university to succeed. Kate Helen sees Well Rested University's approach to work as dualistic. Well Rested University does not believe that work is

necessarily an issue of the heart, but that what is most important about work is where it falls on the scale of good and bad work. She believes that most people at Well Rested University do not understand the Cultural Mandate from God, largely because most employees and students at Well Rested University do not believe that in their work, they need each other.

Community grows when people work together, but there is no sense that Well Rested University approaches work intentionally to create and cultivate communal mutuality, responsibility, or affection for one another. The Director is hopeful for Well Rested University, but frustrated. She is hopeful because of some evidence of the power of God's grace working to change the culture at Well Rested University. She is frustrated because she believes Well Rested University has much road to travel yet. Disintegration between community and work at Well Rested University stems from a lack of genuine care for all the members of the community. The Director of community life sees an absence of God's grace in the university's approach to integration. All the parts are in place, but something essential is missing. Students and employees at Well Rested University struggle to develop communal compassion and love because, in Kate Helen's estimation, they have not truly received the compassion of Christ in their hearts. It is still a factual abstract. They are Christians, but they miss the grace on an individual and institutional level. Berry and Well Rested University proceed from the same imperative: work and love; but both lack the proper indicative: we can work and love well only because of Christ's work and love displayed on our behalf on Calvary. Our work and love possess meaning and value only in the shadow of the manger and the cross.

Critique Regarding Berry's Vision of Community

I affirm Berry's vision of community entailing mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Though he focuses more on man's innate abilities than on man's need for Christ's enabling grace, Berry does shape his vision around a gospel perspective.

Mutuality, as one side of Berry's triadic vision, makes sense because the very nature of community, necessarily, entails a sense among those in a place that they share the place, and in sharing the place they therefore belong to each other. Berry believes that mutuality is a mental and spiritual condition. One must assent mentally to possessing knowledge of space and all those in the space. And mutuality is inclusive. It takes into account all the members of a community, not only the human contingent. Mutuality requires one to believe that the non-human (creatures and the place itself) are part of a healthy community too. If the creatures and land are disregarded as part of the cohesive community, then necessarily the humans of a place will ultimately suffer loss as well, since the human component of a community is dependent on the animals and land of a place. Humankind does not exist on this earth in isolation from creation. Man is created from the dirt of the land and finds his sustenance from the land and animals. To ignore the land and animals in order to participate in the global economy and the destructive practices of the military nation-state is to lend a hand to one's own destruction. We must mentally understand these connections.

There is also the spiritual sense of mutually belonging. Beyond mental agreement to an abstract ideal, one must enact it spiritually, emotionally, and consciously. Mutual relationships are not an ideal merely to believe in, but a way of living that enacts the ideals. They require a move from abstraction to the concrete, practical, and real. We must

take mutuality off the top shelf and intentionally live it out in our daily comings and goings with one another. I must truly believe and live out the belief that 'we are in this thing together,' and that makes a difference in how I live among others.

Responsibility is the second side of Berry's vision of community, and it is indispensable to a healthy community. Since we belong to each other by sharing a place together, we, necessarily, are responsible to each other. We must respond to one another, and we must hold ourselves and others in the community accountable for our responses. Such living requires appropriate boundaries and responsible freedom. Boundaries without freedom is tyranny, not community. Freedom without boundaries is chaos, leading to community destruction and disease. Responsibility in communal relationships holds boundaries and freedom in balance. We are free to express our feelings, emotions, thoughts, actions, and motives, but my expression of them must always consider the same from all other members in the community. And my expression of these things must be for the welfare and benefit of the whole community. There can be no individual agenda in community. Each agenda and personality is given freedom of expression only as long as the fitting boundaries of the community are honored. The individual responses must consider both those sharing the place and the place itself. Community health entails accountability to all the members of a local community.

The third and final side of Berry's vision is affection. I agree that affection is the inevitable result of understanding both mentally and spiritually that one's place is shared. When members of a community give mutuality and responsibility their proper regard, care for one another naturally results. Community is God's idea; it is his way of life, his way to life. We, created to reflect his communal nature, live in community reflecting

some of his attributes back to him, like light reflecting in a mirror. Love is God's essential characteristic, and therefore, as we live in community with others, the glue that binds our mutual, responsive relationships together is love for each other. Mutual regard and responsible interaction may be achieved simply by a group of people working together in commonality. But a community seeking to adhere around something greater than commonality, will cultivate mutuality and responsibility so that love for, regard for, concern for others is the goal of the commonality. Such community living fulfills the second greatest commandment – to love one another. Love without mutuality and responsibility remains an abstraction. Love must be enacted in the comings and goings of those sharing the place; love is what creates in each heart the desire to continue as a mutual, responsible, loving neighborhood. Love must function in our lives as a verb and a noun, uniting cohesively what we believe and how we live. Affection, or love, says we want to live an embodied life mutually, responsively involved with family, friends, good work, and our God who sustains our lives. Affection is that which sustains our lives for the long haul over time, as we weave together a fabric of faithfulness, a coherent life where everything is connected to everything. Without love lived out mutuality and responsibility, life is hollow and empty, unsustainable. For healthy, coherent communities to survive and flourish, the future, in the words of U2, needs a big kiss.

I support Berry in his assertion that good work is the context wherein our connections with earth and each other truly bridge together. We must work, we must work somewhere, and those working together and the place in which the work is done, are affected by the work performed. It is in the context of work that we interact with others as we share the same place, time, and work. Good work gives honor both to the

other workers in a community and to the place in which the work is done. Good work cultivates a mutual, responsive regard for those whom we work alongside. Good work must not be done beyond the reach of love, for then work can be become bad or sloppy. Work extending beyond a local people and community lacks love and, therefore, can contribute to siphoning resources away from the community, rather than circulating resources within the community as long as possible. The motive for good work is love for others in a local community, seeking to mutually and responsibly build up the community. Good work is community minded, not individualistic, for when work is performed for the individual only, it is no longer good work, but mere work with a narrow focus and purpose.

Berry's vision of the church is more complicated, as are my conclusions regarding his vision. Berry runs the risk of tossing the banana out with the banana peel. Rather than attempting to critique the church and provide solutions to his perceived problems in it, Berry simply replaces the church with his idea of community. His writings offer two categories into which North American Christianity can be distinguished – the organized church and the unorganized church. The organized church is represented by the contemporary church found on the corners of our cities and in the centers of our rural town squares. These churches are those in which the lives of its members are disembodied from the communities in which they worship. Their members have little regard for the local economy and even less concern for the local creation: creature and land. The organized church is implicated in the destruction distant corporations have wrought on the land and in local communities. Indeed Berry believes the organized church ignores the very teaching of the Bible, which they hold as their creed of belief and

practice. Scripture teaches against a dualistic approach to the physical and spiritual realities. In that light, the organized church is Gnostic in its belief and practice, holding in derision the things of the earth, the worldly, while embracing the spiritual, the heavenly. The organized church is not consistent in its belief and practice, since it is full of those who deny the things of the flesh, as they rush to eat at their favorite restaurants after Sunday services. Organized Christianity is dualistic in its convictions and practices, and therefore cannot be the church that Jesus Christ left on earth. Those of the organized church do not love as Jesus taught. Jesus said, love your enemies, and the members of the organized church will not even love their friends. Here Berry's question is relevant, "Why are Christians so mean?"[315]

Berry contends that the unorganized church, on the other hand, is what Jesus left on earth. This is the true church for two reasons. One, the unorganized church accounts for all the members of a neighborhood. The unorganized church (or the gather community) extends mutuality, responsibility, and affection to the human and non-human constituents of a local place, as well as to the place itself. Second, the unorganized church loves the earth and the good things it produces. It loves all kinds of people, though imperfectly. The unorganized church practices what Jesus taught in the Gospels: to love everybody, even those frayed on the edges. This is why Berry exchanges the gathered church for the gathered community. He believes the gathered community, in all its imperfection, comes close to the model of the church that Jesus left on the earth, because all the members are afforded the same mutual, responsive love, care, and acceptance. The unorganized church is not compliant with the community-destroying practices and

---

[315] Wendell Berry, interviewed by Daniel K. Chinn, Berry's Henry County home, Point Royal, KY, 15 July 2007.

ideologies of the global economy; rather, it functions on what The Director of The Institute calls the "economics of mutuality." The Economics of Mutuality asks the questions: "What communal practices contribute to the wellbeing of the community? What beliefs and behaviors contribute to a sustained lifestyle of the community members? What promotes and encourages a balanced, coherent life?"[316] The unorganized church answers these questions properly because it lives these practices in and among themselves in ways that cultivate and sustain mutuality, responsibility, and love.

I conclude that Berry's fundamental flaw is not that he replaces the organized church with the unorganized church (the gathered community) but that he gathers the community around the mere practice of community, not around God's truth that can shape the community into the Body of Christ. The organized church needs to be replaced on many levels. Many of the charges leveled by Berry are justified and true. The organized church does participate in the destructive practices of corporation and industrialization and specialization. The members of the organized church are dualistic, Gnostic, and inconsistent in their application of Jesus' teaching. In truth, the organized church has replaced Jesus' teaching with man-made rules and traditions, none of which comes from a regard for mutuality, responsibility, and affection in community life.

Perhaps stating that the organized church replaces the unorganized church is too strong. Perhaps Berry's understanding of the unorganized church (the community) is simply returning the organized church to Jesus' original intent. It is not a matter of replacing, but correcting. Therefore, Berry's flaw is gathering the community (the unorganized church) around the practice of community and not around God's transformative truth. In Berry's vision of the church, the community creates its own truth,

[316] The Director of The Institute interview, 14 May 2009.

namely a regard for mutuality, responsibility, affection, and good work. The trouble with such thinking is that, left to itself, the community members will not extend these community aspects as they ought. Berry's vision leans too heavily on the natural goodness of humankind to simply choose to live this way. And if a community simply would choose mutuality, responsibility, and affection through good work, then all is well. But the gospel of Christ informs us that such a view of fallen humanity is utopian. Berry, however, is not utopian in his approach to reality and community; he simply believes that we just need to love each other (the shaping influence of the gospel) but fails to embrace the gospel's empowering grace that enables us to love one another. In that sense, Berry overstates his case. He believes the world can be redeemed by gospel love (if we would but choose to love) but ignores the gospel teaching that we need divine grace and enablement to enact love in real and practical ways, ways through which God will redeem the world. Although Berry writes against abstractions, his belief in humankind's inherent ability leaves humankind with an abstraction: for a person needing to choose love but, if left alone, unable to choose love, love itself becomes an abstraction. Fundamentally, Berry's perspective confuses the indicative and the imperative of the gospel. His gospel-shaped vision of community embraces the gospel-required imperative: love one another. Yet he operates from a faulty indicative (man's ability), which ignores the true gospel indicative: Christ's enabling grace. In his literary works, Berry's characters show each other much grace, but seldom, if ever, do they point each other to saving grace that enables them to truly change, from the heart. The community wholesomeness, troubles, character, integrity, health, coherence, fidelity, mutuality, responsibility, love, and loss experienced by the characters in his novels, and about which

he writes in his essays and poems, are a result of common grace (though Berry does not use this term), not necessarily God's transformative grace through Christ. Berry's anthropomorphic indicative misses Christ's intention to redeem the world, and all its communities, through the gathered Christian church as it promulgates his message of enabling grace for communities and those living in them.

Recommendations for College of the Ozarks' Practice

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands of its students. In that light, I offer the following recommendations as practical ways in which College of the Ozarks' mission can be informed by understanding and integrating Berry's vision of community.

Familiarization with Berry's communal concepts of mutuality, responsibility, and affection is the first recommendation. College of the Ozarks is currently accomplishing this through its Professor/Teachers Academy held each January. In this academy, teachers from outside the College of the Ozarks community and professors from College of the Ozarks gather to study these aspects of integrating faith and learning. I recommend more focus on familiarizing the academic community with Berry and his vision of community. To sustain such an educational approach, College of the Ozarks could consider the development and establishment of a Wendell Berry Institute through which resources and Berryian concepts on community life could be perpetuated.

Intentional education of the College of the Ozarks community on Berry's community vision is the second recommendation. This educational process could be implemented in the classroom by developing a curriculum through which to educate the

head, heart, and hands of our students about communal mutuality, responsibility, and affection. The same information, though adapted, could become part of the required training for faculty, staff, and work supervisors. The curriculum would help broaden and deepen College of the Ozarks' understanding of intentionality, hospitality, vocation, God's truth as the community gathering point, integration of community and its work program, and integration of belief and behavior. Dr. Steve Garber's book, *Fabric of Faithfulness* could serve as a formative text for this curriculum.

The third recommendation is further campus-wide education on the nature of God's grace. The catalysts for such education would be the classroom, campus Bible studies, weekly chapel services, campus-sponsored Christian groups, convocations, forums, colloquiums, and annual training of faculty and staff on a biblical worldview. Topics highlighted in this educational component would entail understanding community; the place and value of the gospel indicative and imperative; humankind's fallen condition; the Creation, Fall, Re-creation paradigm; the nature of God's leaning into a messy, broken world and saying, "I love it;" the difference between grace and works; and the place of good work in a Christian's life.

The ultimate, long-term goal of these recommendations is to alter the culture at College of the Ozarks. Currently the culture embraces large pockets of workers, seeking to accomplish their tasks and pay for tuition; with small pockets of community, with little understanding of community and work, and nearly no intentional integration of them. The above recommendations possess the power to change that culture into one wherein community, work, and how they are integrated are more fully grasped. These concepts would not remain mere abstractions, as the students and those who care for them would

be given opportunities not only to learn the concepts but to enact them as a way of life sustained by community mutuality, responsibility, and affection. And while they learn and begin to enact these concepts, they will be living in community and working together in a place, where they will grow to understand consciously the "mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and those who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that the people have each other, their concern for each other, and their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves."

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore how Wendell Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission of educating the head, heart, and hands of its students. Because there has been so little written about Berry's vision of community and its application to College of the Ozarks, several areas of further study exist relating to this subject. As with any study, there are limitations as to how extensive the focus can be. Therefore, I recommend the following areas of study.

There are key differences of understanding between Berry' vision of the church and the church's understanding of itself. While the church can learn of that phenomenon from this study, much potential research on Berry's view of the church remains. Additional research needs to be done to determine Berry's comprehensive view of the church, as this study is limited in his research regarding that issue.

This study focused on how Berry's gospel-shaped vision of community could inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission. Therefore, research remains to determine how Berry's vision of community could inform the practiced mission of the

four other work study colleges in America. While those institutions can benefit from this study, necessary research remains in order to make practical application relevant to each institution.

Finally, there are many ways to study and understand the concept of grace. This study reflected on Berry's understanding of grace in his communal vision. The research considered specifically the relationship between the indicative and imperative of the gospel of Christ. Further study remains to explore Berry's understanding of extending grace, God's grace in Christ, the necessity of divine grace, and the place of common grace.

Conclusion

Understanding and integrating community and work will continue to assume an important role in informing College of the Ozarks' practiced mission. As College of the Ozarks remains steadfast in its mission of educating the head, heart, and hands of its students and those who care for them, attention must be given to all three aspects of Berry's triadic vision: mutuality, responsibility, and affection. One cannot be spared at the expense of the others. If College of the Ozarks remains faithful only to mutuality and responsibility, but marginalizes love, then increasingly the mission will ring hollow.

This study helps inform College of the Ozarks' practiced mission by revealing Berry's vision of community. College of the Ozarks can learn from Berry's vision, actively seek ways and means to understand and implement mutuality, responsibility, and affection. Berry can help College of the Ozarks understand community and how good work contributes to the health of a local place. And College of the Ozarks can inform its mission practice by going beyond Berry's understanding of the gospel to embrace a truly

Scriptural understanding of the gospel's indicatives and imperatives, as they apply to living in community by God's enlivening and enabling grace, offered to them through Jesus Christ. Grace is that which bridges together and enables all members of a healthy community to not only understand mutuality, responsibility, and affection, but to enact these communal aspects in practical ways, in a place on earth. A bridge may not be the first mark of a man, but surely it is one of the first marks made by a neighborhood.

APPENDIX A

Wendell Berry's Works: Chronological, Not Comprehensive

1960-1969

Nathan Coulter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960 (revised North Point, 1985). novel
November twenty six nineteen hundred sixty three New York: Braziller, 1964. poem
The Broken Ground. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1964. poems
A Place on Earth. Boston: Harcourt, Brace, 1967 (revised North Point,1983; Counterpoint, 2001). novel
Findings. Iowa City: Prairie, 1968. poems
Openings. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968. poems
The Rise. Lexington, KY: Grave, 1968. essays
The Long-Legged House. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969 (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004). essays

1970-1979

Farming: A Hand Book. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970. poems
The Hidden Wound. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970. essay
The Unforeseen Wilderness: Kentucky's Red River Gorge. Photographs by Ralph Eugene Meatyard. U P Kentucky, 1971. Revised North Point, 1991. Reissued and revised Shoemaker & Hoard, 2006. essay
A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural & Agricultural.. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1972 (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004). essays
The Country of Marriage. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973. poems
An Eastward Look. Berkely, CA: Sand Dollar, 1974. poem
Horses. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 1974. poem
The Memory of Old Jack. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich 1974. (revised Counterpoint 2001). novel
Sayings and Doings. Lexington, KY: Gnomon, 1975. poems
To What Listens. Crete, NE: Best Cellar, 1975. poem
The Kentucky River. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 1976. poem
There Is Singing Around Me. Austin: Cold Mountain Press, 1976. poems
The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1977; Avon Books, 1978; Sierra Club, 1986. essays
Clearing. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1977. poems
Three Memorial Poems. Berkeley, CA: Sand Dollar, 1977. poems

1980-1989

A Part. San Francisco: North Point, 1980. poems
Recollected Essays, 1965-1980. San Francisco: North Point, 1981. essays
The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural. San Francisco: North Point, 1981. essays
The Wheel. San Francisco: North Point, 1982. poems

Standing by Words. San Francisco: North Point, 1983 (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005). essays
The Collected Poems, 1957-1982. San Francisco: North Point, 1985. poems
The Wild Birds: Six Stories of the Port William Membership. San Francisco: North Point , 1986. short stories
Home Economics: Fourteen Essays. San Francisco: North Point, 1987. essays
Sabbaths: Poems. San Francisco: North Point, 1987. poems
Remembering. San Francisco: North Point, 1988. novel
T*raveling at Home*. Press Alley, 1988; North Point, 1989. poems

1990-1999

Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work. U P of Kentucky, 1990. essay
What Are People For? New York: North Point, 1990. essays
The Discovery of Kentucky. Frankfort, KY: Gnomon, 1991. short story
Fidelity. New York: Pantheon, 1992. short stories
Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community. New York: Pantheon, 1992. essays
A Consent. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 1993. story
Watch With Me and Six Other Stories of the Yet-Remembered Ptolemy Proudfoot and His Wife, Miss Minnie, Née Quinch. New York: Pantheon, 1994. stories
Entries. New York: Pantheon, 1994 (reprint Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1997). poems
The Farm. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 1995. poem
Another Turn of the Crank. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1996. essays
A World Lost. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1996. novel
Entries. Counterpoint (reprint), 1997. poems
Two More Stories of the Port William Membership. Frankfort, KY: Gnomon, 1997. short stories
A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems 1979-1997. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998. poems
The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1999. poems

2000-

Jayber Crow. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000. novel
Life Is a Miracle. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000. essay
In the Presence of Fear: Three Essays for a Changed World. Barrington, MA: Orion, 2001. essays
Sonata at Payne Hollow. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 2001. play
Three Short Novels [*Nathan Coulter*, *Remembering*, *A World Lost*]. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2002. novels
The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry. Ed. Norman Wirzba. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2002. essays
Citizenship Papers. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003. essays
That Distant Land: The Collected Stories. Washington, DC: Shoemaker, 2004.
Tobacco Harvest: An Elegy. Photographs by James Baker Hall. Lexington, KY: U P of Kentucky, 2004. essay
Hannah Coulter. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard. 2004. novel
Sabbaths 2002. Monterey, KY: Larkspur, 2004. poems
Given: New Poems. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard. 2005. poems

Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings about Love, Compassion & Forgiveness. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005. a gathering . an introduction. and an essay

The Way of Ignorance and Other Essays. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005. essays

Andy Catlett: Early Travels. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2006. novel

Window Poems. Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2007. poems

The Mad Farmer Poems. Counterpoint, 2008. poems

Appendix B

Interview Guide

The following questions were used when interviewing the selected Yukon Fellowship leaders. In order to gain rich descriptive interview data, this research will use a semi-structured interview protocol. Therefore, some of the questions may not be used, and others may be added if beneficial to the purpose of this study.

1. What are some of the factors that influence your understanding of community?
2. What are some of the factors that influence your understanding of work?
3. What constitutes a cohesive, healthy community?
4. How does the gospel inform your understanding of community and work?
5. What hinders you from integration of these two? How do you know what hinders?
6. What enables you to withstand the pressures of a cynical, fragmented society?

The following questions will be used when interviewing The Director of The Institute. In order to gain rich descriptive interview data, this research will use a semi-structured interview protocol. Therefore, some of the questions may not be used, and others may be added if beneficial to the purpose of this study.

1. What constitutes a cohesive, healthy community?
2. In *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, the author writes that 'convictions, character, and community nourish a vision of moral meaning that can stand against the most destructive forces of the contemporary world'. Unpack that for me.
3. What enables the Director to withstand the pressures of a cynical, fragmented society?
4. What is the Director's understanding of university students' concept of community and work?
5. How can we help college student experience consistency between belief and behavior?

The following questions will be used when interviewing selected Well Rested University Director. Some of the questions may not be used or others may be added if beneficial to the purpose of this study.

1. What is your understanding of what constitutes a healthy community?
2. What is your understanding of integrating work and community?
3. Who do you believe possesses a solid understanding of community and work? Why?
4. What does 'educating the head, heart, and hands' mean to you?
5. How could Well Rested University implement a more gospel-shaped understanding of community and work? Is there something that keeps that from happening? Why do you believe that?

APPENDIX C

Community Coherence, Health, and Sustainability

Wendell Berry's vision of community coherence, health, and sustainability[317] is as follows:

If the members of a local community want their community to cohere, to flourish, and to last, these are some things they will do:

1. Always ask of any proposed change or innovation: What will this do to our community? How will this affect our common wealth?
2. Always include local nature – the land, the water, the air, the native creatures – within the membership of community.
3. Always ask how local needs might be supplied from local sources, including the mutual help of neighbors.
4. Always supply local needs first. (And only then think of exporting their products, first to nearby cities, and then to others.)
5. Understand the unsoundness of the industrial doctrine of 'labor saving' if that implies poor work, unemployment, or any kind of pollution or contamination.
6. Develop properly scaled value-adding industries from local products to ensure that the community does not become merely a colony of the national or global economy.
7. Develop small-scale industries and businesses that support the local farm and/or forest economy.
8. Strive to produce as much of the community's own energy as possible.
9. Strive to increase earnings (in whatever form) within the community and decrease expenditures outside the community.
10. Make sure that money paid into the local economy circulates within the community for as long as possible before it is paid out.
11. Make the community able to invest in itself by maintaining its properties, keeping itself clean (without dirtying some other place), caring for its old people, teaching its children.
12. See that the old and the young take care of one another. The young must learn from the old, not necessarily and not always in school. There must be no

[317] Wendell Berry, *Another Turn of the Crank: Essays* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), 19-21. The text that follows (including all listed items) is a direct excerpt from this work.

institutionalized "child care" and "homes for the aged." The community knows and remembers itself by the association of old and young.

13. Account for costs now conventionally hidden or "externalized." Whenever possible, these costs must be debited against monetary income.
14. Look into the possible uses of local currency, community-funded loan programs, systems of barter, and the like.
15. Always be aware of the economic value of neighborly acts. In our time the costs of living are greatly increased by the loss of neighborhood, leaving people to face their calamities alone.
16. A rural community should always be acquainted with, and complexly connected with, community-minded people in nearby towns and cities.
17. A sustainable rural economy will be dependent on urban consumers loyal to local products. Therefore, we are talking about an economy that will always be more cooperative than competitive.

These rules are derived from Western political and religious traditions, from promptings of ecologists, and certain agriculturalists, and from common sense.

APPENDIX D

Going To Work[318]

1. To live, we must go to work.
2. To work, we must work in a place.
3. Work affects everything in the place where it is done: the nature of the place itself and what is naturally there. The local ecosystem and watershed, the local landscape and its productivity, the local human neighborhood, the local memory.
4. Much modern work is done in academic or professional or industrial or electronic enclosures. The work is thus enclosed in order to achieve a space of separation between the workers and the effects of their work. The enclosure permits the workers to think that they are working nowhere or anywhere – in their careers or specialties, perhaps, or in "cyberspace".
5. Nevertheless, their work will have a precise and practical influence, first on the place where it is being done, and then on every place where it products are used, on every place where its attitude toward its products is felt, on every place to which its by-products are carried.
6. There is, in short, no way to escape the problems of effect and influence.
7. The responsibility of the workers is to confront these problems and deal justly with them. How is this possible?
8. It is possible only if the workers knows and accepts the reality of the context of the work. The problems of effect and influence are inescapable because, whether acknowledged or not, work always has a context. Work must "take place." It takes place in a neighborhood and is a commonwealth.
9. What, therefore, must we have in mind when we go to work? If we go to work with the aim of working well, we must have a lot in mind. What must we know? We can establish the curriculum by a series of questions:
10. *Who are we?* That is, who are we as we approach the work in it inevitable place? Where are we from, and what did we learn there, and (if we have left) why did we leave? What have we learned, starting perhaps with the influences that surrounded us before birth? What have we learned in school? More important, what have we learned out of school? What knowledge have we mastered? What skills? What

[318] Wendell Berry, *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003), 33-34. The numbered list is taken directly from this work. In *Citizenship Papers*, the list spans from 1 to 42; I have included only the first 18 here for a brief, general reference.

tools? What affections, loyalties, and allegiances have we formed? What do we bring to the work?

11. *Where are we?* What is the place in which we are preparing to do our work? What has happened here in geologic time? What has happened here in human time? What is the nature, what is the genius, of the place? What, if we weren't here, would nature be doing here? What will the nature of the place permit us to do here without exhausting either the place itself or the birthright of those who will come later? What, even, might nature help us to do here? Under what conditions, imposed both the genius of the place and the genius of our arts, might our work here be healthful and beautiful?
12. What do we have, in this place and in ourselves that is good? What do we need? What do we want? How much of the good that is here, that we now have, are we willing to give up in the effort to have further goods that we need, that we think we need, or that we want?
13. And so our curriculum of questions, revealing what we have in mind, brings us to the crisis of the modern world. Partly this crisis is a confusion between needs and wants. Partly it is a crisis of rationality.
14. The confusion between needs and wants is, of course, fundamental. And let us make no mistake here: This is an educated confusion. Modern education systems have pretty consciously encouraged young people to think of their wants as needs. And the schools have increasingly advertised education as a way of getting what one wants; so that now, by a fairly logical progression, schools are understood by politicians and school bureaucrats merely as servants of 'the economy.' And by 'the economy' they do not mean local households, livelihoods, and landscapes; they mean the corporate economy.
15. But the idea that schools can have everything to with the corporate economy and nothing to do with the health of their local watersheds and ecosystems and communities is a falsehood that has now run its course. It is a falsehood and nothing else.
16. What actually do we need? We might say that, at a minimum, we need food, clothes, and shelter. And, if we are wise, we might hasten to add that we don't want to live a minimal life; we could also count comfort, pleasure, health and beauty as necessities. And then with the realization that it may be possible by reducing our needs to reduce our humanity, we may want to say also that we will need to remember our history; we will need to preserve teachings and artifacts from the past; we will need leisure to study and contemplate these things; we will need town or cities, places of economic and cultural exchange; we will need clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, wholesome food to eat, a healthful countryside, places in which we can know the natural world – and so on.

17. Well, now we see that in attempting to solve our problem we have run back into it. We have seen that in order to understand ourselves as fully human we have to define our necessities pretty broadly. How do we know when we have passed from needs to wants, from necessity to frivolity?
18. That is an extremely difficult and troubling question, which is why it is also an extremely interesting question and one that we should not cease to ask. I can't answer it fully or confidently, but will only say in passing that our great modern error is the belief that we must invariably give up on thing in order to have another. But it is possible for instance, to find comfort, pleasure and beauty in food, clothing, and shelter. It is possible to find pleasure and beauty and even "recreation" in work. It is possible to have farms that do not waste and spoils the natural world. It is possible to have productive forest that are not treated as 'crops.' It is possible to have cites that are ecologically, economically, socially, culturally, and architecturally, continuous with their landscapes. It is not invariably necessary to travel from a need to its satisfaction, or from one satisfaction to another.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Angyal, Andrew J. *Wendell Berry.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Badcock, Gary D. *The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Baker, Bernard. "Responsibility at Home: Wendell Berry's Quest for the Simple Life." Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve University, 1992.

Batterson, Mark. *Wild Goose Chase: Reclaiming the Adventure of Pursuing God.* Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2008.

Berry, Donald L. *Mutuality: The Vision of Martin Buber.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Berry, Wendell. *A Place on Earth.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1983.

_____. *Another Turn of the Crank: Essays.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995.

_____. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings about Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005.

_____. *Citizenship Papers.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003.

_____. "De-Colonizing Rural America: How Do You Calculate the Costs of Losing Communities?" *Audubon* (Spring 1993): 100-105.

_____. *Fidelity: Five Stories.* 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1992.

_____. *Given: New Poems.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005.

_____. *Hannah Coulter: A Novel.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2004.

_____. *The Hidden Wound.* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989.

_____. *Home Economics: Fourteen Essays.* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987.

_____. *In the Presence of Fear: Three Essays for a Changing World.* Great Barrington, MA: Orion Society, 2001.

_____. *Jayber Crow: A Novel.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000.

_____. *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstitions.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000.

_____. *The Long-Legged House.* New York: Harcourt, 1969.

_____. *A Place on Earth: A Novel.* 1st Counterpoint pbk. ed. Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2001.

_____. *Recollected Essays 1965-1980.* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981.

_____. *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community: Eight Essays.* 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.

_____. *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2004.

_____. *Three Short Novels: Nathan Coulter, Remembering, A World Lost.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2002.

_____. *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems, 1979-1997.* Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998.

_____. "Two Economies," *Review and Expositor* 81 (Spring 1984): 209-223.

_____. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1986.

_____. *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays.* Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005.

_____. *What Are People For?* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.

Berry, Wendell, and Paul Merchant. *Wendell Berry.* Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1991.

Berry, Wendell, and Norman Wirzba. *The Art of Common Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry.* Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2002.

Block, Peter. *Community: The Structure of Belonging.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008.

Bonzo, J. Matthew, and Michael R. Steven. *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader's Guide.* Grand Rapids: MI: Brazos Press, 2008.

Bullock, Helen Clarie. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson.* Charlottesville, VA: N/A, 1941.

Burleigh, Anne. "Wendell Berry's Community," *Crisis* 18 (Winter 2000): 28-33.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* The Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

Chapell, Bryan. *Holiness by Grace: Delighting in Joy that is Our Strength.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.

Childress, Kyle. "Good Work: Learning about Ministry from Wendell Berry," *Christian Century* (Spring 2005): 1-3.

Christian Century Editor. "Toward a Healthy Community: An Interview," *Christian Century* 114 (1997): 912-916.

Claerbaut, David. *Faith and Learning on the Edge: A Bold New Look at Religion in Higher Education.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.

Colson, Charles W., and Jack M. Eckerd. *Why America Doesn't Work.* Dallas: Word, 1991.

Colson, Charles W., and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House
Publishers, 1999.

Davis, Jerry. *Miracle in the Ozarks: The Inspiring Story of Faith, Hope, and HARD WORK U.* Point Lookout, MO: College of the Ozarks Press, 2007.

Donnelly, Phillip. "Biblical Convocation in Wendell Berry's Remembering," *Christianity and*
Literature (Winter 1997): N/A.

Elwell, Walter E. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984.

Esbjornson, Carl. "Remembering and Home Defense," in *Wendell Berry*, ed. Paul Merchant, 155-170. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1991.

Fearnside, Jeff , "Digging In: Wendell Berry on Small Farms, Local Wisdom and the Folly of Greed," *The Sun* (July 2008): 11.

Forrester, W. R. *Christian Vocation: Studies in Faith and Work.* New College, Edinburgh. New York: Scribner, 1953.

Frame, John. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God: A Theology of Lordship.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Pub. Co., 1987.

_____. *The Doctrine of God: A Theology of Lordship.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Pub. Co., 2002.

Freedman, Russell. *Wendell Berry, A Bibliography.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Libraries, 1998.

Garber, Steve. *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief and Behavior.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Gibbons, Reginald. *The Poet's Work: 29 Masters of 20th Century Poetry on the Origins and Practice of Their Art.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

Glennon, Fredrick, Gary S. Hauk, and E. Clinton Gardern. *Living Responsibly in Community.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997.

Goodrich, Janet. *The Unforeseen Self in the Works of Wendell Berry.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001.

Grubbs, M. A. "Wendell Berry: People, Land and Fidelity," *Border States – Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association* 10 (1995): N/A.

Gunton, Colin E. *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology.* London; New York: T &T Clark, 2003.

Hardy, Lee. *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and Design of Human Word.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Hicks, John. "Wendell Berry's Husband to the World: A Place on Earth," *American Literature* 51 (Summer 1979): 239-254.

Hostetler, John Andrew. *Amish Society.* 4th ed. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Hughes, Richard, and William B. Adrian. *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Johnston, Robert K. *The Christian At Play.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.

Kirk, Russell. *The Roots of American Order.* 4th ed. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003.

Lane, Timothy, and Paul Tripp, *How People Change.* Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2006.

_____. *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making.* Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2006.

Lang, John. "Wendell Berry's Poetry of Incarnation," *Renascence* 35 (Summer 1983): 258-268.

Leopold, Aldo, and Charles Schwartz. *A Sand County Almanac. With Other Essays on Conservation From Round River.* NY: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Lucas, Sean Michael. "God and Country: Wendell Berry's Theological Vision," *Christian Scholar's Review* 32 (Fall 2002): 82-83.

Mannoia, James, Jr. *Christian Liberal Arts: An Education That Goes Beyond.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

McEntyre, John. "Practicing Resurrection: Community and Continuity in Wendell Berry's A Place On Earth," *Theology Today* (Winter 1995): N/A.

McNeil, John T. *Unitive Protestantism: the Ecumenical Spirit and Its Persistent Expression.* Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964.

Merrian, Sharan. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 1998.

Miller, Perry. *The American Puritans, Their Prose and Poetry.* Garden City: NY, 1956.

Mouw, Richard J. *When the King Comes Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.

Noll, Mark., and David F. Wells. *Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership.* NY: Crossroads, 1989.

Pearcey, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity.* Wheaton, IL:
Crossway Books, 2004.

Perkins, Caroline. "Living Responsibly in Community: Wendell Berry's Port William Fiction," Ph.D., diss., University of Texas – Dallas, 2000.

Peters, Jason. *Wendell Berry: Life and Work, Culture and the Land.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007.

Pieper, Josef, and Gerald Malsbary. *Leisure, the Basis of Culture.* South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1998.

Plantinga, Cornelius. *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living.*
Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Poplin, David. *Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972.

Prakash, Madhu Suri. "What Are People For? Wendell Berry on Education, Ecology, and Culture," *Educational Theory* 44 (Spring 1994): 136.

Ryken, Leland. *Work & Leisure in Christian Perspective.* Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987.

Schachner, Nathan. *Thomas Jefferson, A Biography.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951.

Shuman, Joel and Roger Owens. *Wendell Berry and Religion: Heaven's Earthly Life.* Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009.

Smith, Kimberly K. *Wendell Berry and the Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace.* Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003.

Snauwaert, Dale T. "Wendell Berry, Liberalism, and Democratic Theory: Implications for Rural School," *Peabody Journal of Education* 67 (Summer 1991): 118-119.

Snell, Marilyn. "The Art of Place," *New Perspective Quarterly* 9 (1992): 29-34.

Speer, Morgan. "Wendell Berry: A Fatal Singing," *Southern Review* 10 (Fall 1974): 865-77.

Stegner, Wallace. "A Letter To Wendell Berry," in *Wendell Berry*, ed. Paul Merchant. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1991.

Strauss, Gideon. "Responding," *Comment Magazine* (Summer 2009): 3.

Tate, Allen. *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition*, in "Remarks on the Southern Religion," ed. Louis D. Rubin Jr., New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930.

Theobald, Paul, and Paul Nagtigal. "Culture, Community, and the Promise of Rural Education," *PHI DELTA KAPPAN* (Winter 1995): 132-135.

Thomas, Aquinas. *Light of Faith: The Compendium of Theology.* Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1993.

Thoreau, Henry David, and William John Rossi. *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings: Authoritative Texts, Journal, Reviews and Posthumous Assessments, Criticism.* NY: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Tocqueville, Alexis de, and J. P. Mayer. *Democracy in America.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969.

Trachtman, Paul. "35 Who Made a Difference: Wendell Berry," *Smithsonian* (Winter 2005): N/A.

Trueblood, Elton. *The Idea of a College.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

Van Dyk, Leanne. "Learning and the Life of the Pastor," *Preaching: The Professional Journal for Preachers* 24 (Spring 2009): 33.

Vitek, William, and Wes Jackson. *Rooted in the Land: Essays on Community and Place.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.

Wagner, James. "The Practice of Community." *Journal of College and Character.* 6 (April 2007): 1.

Weiland, Steven. "Wendell Berry: Culture and Fidelity," *Iowa Review* 10 (Winter 1979): 99-104.

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God.* San Francisco:
Harper San Francisco, 1998.

Wingren, Gustaf. *Luther on Vocation.* Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957.

Wirzba, Norman. *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight, The Christian Practice of Everyday.* Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.