London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood':

Community, enterprise and anti-modernity among reforming evangelical Christians in a United States city

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic study of communities, businesses and individuals in a city in the Pacific Northwest region of the US who participate in a reforming turn within evangelical Christianity that critiques the American evangelical church's emphasis on programmatic evangelism and church growth, and its association with conservative politics.

The thesis begins by introducing the ideas of 'community' and 'intentionality' as they orient individuals' ethical self-fashioning within an intentional community that participates in this turn. The thesis goes on to examine this and other groups' ethos of communitarian localism, in which people imagine the possibilities for social and ethical renewal in explicitly placial terms; largely eschewing verbal evangelism in favour of the material and ritual work of 'placemaking', and personal commitments to living as much of one's life as possible locally. We see an ambiguous posture of industry and disavowal, as people pursue transformative action in the neighbourhood, while holding an ethical presumption against all forms of power, and seeking to resist the capitalist temporalities of 'development'. The thesis examines how people use enterprise to enact their localism; showing how doctrines of ethical capitalism, understood by some scholars as 'neoliberal', but seen locally as potentially 'radical', are deployed in service of a petit-bourgeois ideal of a morally embedded small-town economy.

The final chapter addresses this subculture's cosmological and sociological outlooks, notably its anti-modernity. I argue that the turn toward 'holistic' community, symbolised in mixed-use urban space, and imagined theologically as the Kingdom of God, represents an aspiration to ethicise the public sphere, and close the gap between private and public by rescaling society to the level of interpersonal interaction. In this sociologically reflexive subculture, we see an ambition of recuperating the morally choosing Protestant individual from the distributed personhood entailed in a functionally differentiated economy and society.

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This thesis concerns the moral lives of individuals and communities who participate in a particular American religious subculture: the loose movement within contemporary evangelical Christianity that is variously referred to as 'new' (Krattenmaker 2013; Pally 2011; Steensland & Goff 2014), 'emerging' (Bielo 2011a; 2009), and 'post-' evangelical. The study's geographical focus is a medium-sized city in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States, which I am calling 'Quimby'.

The people I spent time with in the course of 18 months' participant-observation field research in Quimby from 2012 to 2014 are Christians who, in diverse ways, participate in what anthropologist James Bielo has called a 'movement of cultural critique' (Bielo 2009: 219) within contemporary American evangelical Christianity. This critique runs the gamut of church life, taking in matters of ecclesial organisation, mission, economics, politics, sexual ethics, worship style and more besides (Bielo 2011a; 2009; Pally 2011; Steensland & Goff 2014). The movement in its recognisably current form may be traced to conferences and discussions emerging within evangelical pastoral circles in the mid 1990s (Bielo 2009; Gibbs & Bolger 2005), although it sits in several longer streams of critique and reform within the churches in America and beyond (Schmalzbauer 2014; Sine 2008; Steensland & Goff 2014; Swartz 2008; 2012). The object of its critique is, loosely defined, the mainstream of the US evangelical church.

Bielo (2011a; 2009), the movement's first thorough ethnographer, has proposed that its critique centres around four major reference points: theology, evangelism, worship, and what he calls, following John Barbour, a discourse of 'deconversion' (Bielo 2011a; 2009). Theologically, Bielo identifies a posture of 'postfoundationalism', that is, a turn away from systematic, codified theology in favour of an approach centring on 'narrative', which admits of doubts and aporias in relation to the Christian story (2009: 223). Evangelistically, he explains, the turn is to the 'missional', that is, a reflective and open posture of engagement with people in the missioner's own, Euroamerican, culture, in which, as per the observations of influential evangelist Lesslie Newbigin and others (Newbigin 1989; 1986; Hauerwas & Willimon 2014), a default Christianity may no longer be assumed. 'Missional' Christians approach this culture, of which they are themselves a part, from a ground of common social concern and 'relationship-building', rather than didactic proselytism. In the arena of worship, Bielo describes a move toward incorporation of liturgical elements associated with churches in the non-evangelical traditions. Finally, the posture of 'deconversion'; in which people's shift away from the practices of the churches of

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their youth is something akin to conversion; experienced as a dramatic, whole-person turn away from the practices that once held them.

Notwithstanding the posture of critique, which, as Bielo notes, is the controlling logic behind all these disparate turns, this remains a movement in and of American evangelicalism. The questions it poses to itself – of how to engage as activist Christians with a plural and often nonbelieving world; of how to position the church in relation to politics, nation and power; of how to define spiritual orthodoxy, and how to carry it in the world – are questions that have animated America's evangelical subcultures throughout their history. Of the four signal characteristics of evangelicalism identified in David Bebbington's (1989) much-cited 'quadrilateral' definition, as 'biblicism', 'crucicentrism', 'conversionism', and 'activism', 'conversionism' has traditionally been one of its most prominent standards. The movement discussed here may be seen, at one level at least, to represent a turn away from this classic subcultural sign. Overt 'conversionism' is quailed at by many in this new-evangelical stream, while other components of the quadrilateral, notably the strong focus on the Bible, come under explicit question and nuanced scrutiny. Knowing that a posture of unmoving certainty is seen by many as (negatively) definitional of evangelical faith, many of these Christians embrace a rhetoric of indecision. Nevertheless, as scholars have noted, doubt and faith often codepend, and showing their intellectual and ethical work, as these evangelicals often do, with earnestness and passion, situates them in the tradition of pious discussion and an ongoing enthusiasm for self-searching public witness that evangelicalism has displayed throughout its historical life, from Pietism to revival. The curious neologism 'missional', too, has its antecedents, in the service evangelism and 'relationship evangelism' of overseas missions and domestic city missions, both of which traditions feed into today's movement's thinking, and of which more below.

A diverse movement of deconverts

There are multiple strands of contemporary American evangelical, and indeed broader Christian, practice that participate in some way in the broad tendencies outlined above. In Quimby, I encountered an energetic, often ethically and politically passionate, diverse subculture of Christians experimenting with new ways of holding their faith, and, indeed, of not holding it. These ranged from people from evangelical backgrounds joining mainline congregations (often with invigorating effects on those congregations), in flight from conservative teachings on gender and, especially, sexuality, to small bands of 'recovering evangelicals', many of them women, who, after many decades in conservative congregations, have gone freelance with their faith; holding home suppers instead of going to church, creating liturgies at home, practising

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'hospitality', and reworking both the ecclesial and doctrinal shape of their faith as they do so (for an example of church-without-church practice, see Bean 2014).

In tandem with their shifting perspectives and entrepreneurial energies, the people I knew would set up loosely Christian-spirituality-based events of all kinds, all the time – one group I knew was called 'DisChurch', to give you an idea of one of the dominant themes – meeting in pubs, in homes, on walks in the woods. Church buildings doubled as cafes and concert spaces, liturgies were reworked, ex-evangelical congregants painted Orthodox-style icons on pieces of found wood to hang in Episcopal churches. I attended 'alternative seminaries' in pubs to discuss anti-racist, anti-imperialist theology, meetings of 'Bootleg Pastors', church professionals in various stages of deconversion from the worlds they'd spent their working lives in, club nights run by punky Christians doing what someone called 'triage' for the church-damaged, meetings to discuss sexism in the Bible.

Christian localism

As well as the shared discourse of reforming critique towards the church, something it seemed that almost everyone in this diverse subculture subscribed to was a commitment to an idea of 'community' and, in line with this, a quasi-doctrinal commitment to neighbourhood localism. This thesis, therefore, homes in on this orienting theme, by way of ethnographic concentration on a small cluster of communities and businesses whose Christian experiments most keenly exemplified this gathering orthodoxy of 'place'. Through an emerging set of ideas about place, the group and the person, which draws on American communitarian and utopian traditions, international and community-development discourses, postcolonial critique (via the Christian and secular academies) and urban theory, among other influences, the people discussed in this thesis play out their reforming evangelical faith, and seek to resolve the ambiguities that emerge from the shifting ground of their cultural self-critique.

'New monasticism' is the name given to the evangelical-originating, ecumenically influenced movement of communitarianism that dominates the localism of this movement. The origins of new monasticism are discussed further in Chapter one. New-monastic communities are small groups of people, both singles and couples, who choose to move in to shared houses or homes close to one another, usually in low-income city neighbourhoods, in a move that those involved tend to characterise as a posture of repentance from their participation, as middle-class, mostly white Americans, in the class and race divisions inscribed into the urban American landscape (Bielo 2011a; Claiborne 2006; Rutba House 2005).

The thesis's primary ethnographic focus is a small intentional community and church that I call the Living Water Community (LW), which displays the influence of the new-monastic turn. Much of the data in the thesis was gathered while I was living for eight months as a participant observer in one of LW's shared households. My entry point to the community was church member Nate, a self-described 'field guide' to Christian localist projects, whom I met in wider new-evangelical circles. At my hopeful request, Nate explained to LW that I was seeking to do long-term ethnographic research with a Christian intentional community for a doctoral research project. In meetings, the community deliberated, before agreeing to allow me to observe them for a year – a decision which Nate formally (and friendlily) communicated to me by email, copying in all church members. For around five months, my contact with the community consisted mainly of interviews and attending Sunday worship and occasional events, before a room came available in 'the Barn' household, and I was invited to move in. This kindness the household did me was in keeping with the community's core principle of shared living. As a 'housemate' living with Anne, Mike, their two young children, Ida and Leo, and the dog, I shared in house dinners and house meetings, the common shopping budget and chores rota, and the daily life of the household. In keeping with the group's localist ethos, my physical residence in the heart of the community increased my legitimacy as a participant in their collective life, and I participated extensively in Living Water's activities, from large events to hanging out in people's homes. I was permitted to attend all group meetings, with the exception of the monthly 'family' meeting, which was only open to community members.

The thesis also looks at the work of a range of small enterprises that also participate in the neighbourhoodist turn within this movement, showing, as the small community does, a commitment to recentring social, economic and religious dimensions of life onto the small canvas of neighbourhood, with hopes for the social and moral reconstructions such realignments might bring. This is the 'missional' turn Bielo writes about (although few of my informants would have used such language, seen as church jargon): socially engaged, unproselytising, and entrepreneurial, carrying the idea of 'neighbourhood' as a conceptual holder for diverse religious and ethical hopes. Rejecting many aspects of their natal religious cultures, and seeking to be 'countercultural' to much in the wider, broadly bourgeois American world from which most of those involved emerge, these movements seek to be active in the world, and to reach beyond it, while also repenting of both missionary and 'dualist', anti-worldly thinking. 'Place' and locality offer this movement a decentring frame in which to situate its countervailing hopes: for a world transformed, yet fully itself; for communities of stringent

moral intention that enfold all, but without an imperial hand; for selves 'detoxed' from individualism, but not unjustly reduced in hierarchy. Mostly politically liberal, and many anti-capitalist, and appalled by what they saw as mainstream evangelical churches' imbrication with power and money, people made constant use of the generative energies of enterprise, and found in this as in their other generative work, an ongoing task of calibrating between humility and industry; between having effects, and being 'formed'; between rationalised planning and control-seeking, and being neighbourhood-'embedded' and ordinary.

The people whose lives this thesis follows live in various parts of the city, within its urban bounds. They are mostly middle and lower-middle income, most with a graduate-level education, and several with seminary education; mostly white Anglo American, and mostly from free-church Protestant religious traditions. Some are native to the region or town, others have come from elsewhere. I knew people of all ages, with a prominent cluster around their early thirties. People were a mix of married and single. My informants were employed in a range of jobs, with several people working in nursing, counselling and teaching, others in carpentry or landscaping, in tech and IT. A number were engaged in starting new enterprises, often in the non-profit sector, projects they pursued in tandem with a dayjob – and several wrote blogs or books, or did music, art, or web design in addition to their (often part-time) paying work. Many people I knew combined work with paying to be in some form of continuing education, often with a view to entering a new profession. Most people were busy; by a combination of design and necessity, functioning on several fronts at once.

The fieldsite

The city these Christian community builders live in is, unlike many US urban areas, compact, and comparatively easy to navigate on foot, the product of several decades of careful urban planning in the direction of what is now called 'liveability', with plenty of infrastructure for biking and public transit, and legislation to limit urban 'sprawl'. Thus the ecologically minded localists I knew, for whom the circumscribed space of the geographical 'neighbourhood' is of key importance, were undertaking their projects on a ground tilled by civic spirits similarly convinced of the value to the health of city communities of public amenities and mixed-use development. Richard Florida (2005) has noted the trend for cities to seek, through infrastructural frameworks like those described above, and encouragement of certain kinds of enterprise, to attract as residents a class fraction he has famously termed the 'creative class'. The challenge of making a city in which inclusive 'community' may flourish is one crosscut with currents of class and racial

inequality; and the dilemmas of 'place' as a potential ground of difficulty, as well as redemptive possibility, trouble the Christian localist imagination, as it seeks to find ways of anchoring the ideal at least in part in the material.

The city's ethnic makeup is predominantly white, and in higher proportion than the majority of US cities of comparable size. Although it does not have ghetto-like concentrations of people of one minority ethnicity, its substantial Hispanic, East Asian (mostly Vietnamese) and African American minorities do tend to live in particular areas of the city, in some cases for reasons of historical redlining.

The region's religious makeup

While church entrepreneurs take an interest in all parts of the country, the Pacific Northwest, along with a few other regions (the Northeast is another), is typically identified by church-growth analysts as being – like Western Europe – comparatively religiously fluid and uncommitted, a position mission-focused Christians tend to associate with a social condition of 'postmodernity', of which more in Chapter six (Kriz 2011; Krattenmaker 2013; Leo 2013). This makes it a potentially fruitful place for church innovators to work. Publishing an edited volume on the subject in 2004, religion scholars Patricia O'Connell Killen and Mark Silk agreed that the region had a reputation for religious fluidity, and that this made it a draw for 'sectarian entrepreneurs' (O'Connell Killen 2004a; Silk 2004). The book records that the region reports the highest number of poll respondents claiming no religious affiliation at all; around a quarter (compared to 14% nationally) (O'Connell Killen & Shibley 2004: 41), while two thirds of people are not regular churchgoers, 'unchurched', in the religion-survey parlance.

A sparsely populated region, the Pacific Northwest has never had any particular religious tradition dominant; it is an 'open religious environment' (O'Connell Killen 2004a; Silk 2004). O'Connell Killen and Silk assemble various reasons for the region's comparatively low levels of religious institutional affiliation: a long history of being, though sparsely populated, highly urbanised where there is population, with high levels of mobility and education levels, as well as certain more ineffable regional characteristics, such as 'individualism', a 'frontier mentality', and a population 'highly ambivalent about institutions in general' (O'Connell Killen 2004b: 183; see also Silk 2004). They also cite the region's natural beauty as a significant actor in its religious life, with outdoor recreation a prominent aspect of the region's culture and one that is commonly experienced spiritually – to, they imply, the detriment of the comparatively less awe-inspiring

human-hewn formations of the spiritual, such as churches (Albanese 1990; O'Connell Killen & Shibley 2004).

The city, neighbourhood and church, community, business and personal names featured in this thesis are all pseudonymous. The names of public figures and published authors have not been anonymised.

Some definitions

Bielo, following the usage common at the time of his study, which derives from the names given to the various parachurch organisations and meetings that were its first distilled public face, calls the broad religious movement introduced above the 'emerging church' (2009, 2011a). By the time I reached my fieldsite in 2012, this usage had largely fallen out of fashion, so in this thesis I will, following some more recent authors (Krattenmaker 2013; Pally 2011), most often refer – somewhat blandly it is true – to 'new evangelicals'. My informants, as befits the movement's temperament of questioning, deconverting, and preference for the institutionally diffuse, mostly rejected all such designations, sometimes seeking to distance from what several felt was the tainted brand of evangelicalism by calling themselves 'post-evangelical', 'recovering evangelical', or, using a term that emphasises activism over affiliation, 'Jesus followers'.

To take a definitional step back: what is an evangelical church? In the context of the US, where the spiritual marketplace (Finke & Stark 1992) supports myriad Protestant denominations, Protestant congregations are often loosely grouped under the shorthand terms 'mainline', 'evangelical', and 'charismatic/Pentecostal'. Since the 1970s, the proportion of the US population that tells survey-takers that it is 'evangelical' Christian has stayed roughly steady at around 30% (Harding 2000; Noll 1994). There is no settled definition of what makes a church or a person 'evangelical'. The term is indicative, suggestive of congregations with a certain doctrinal and stylistic bent, which participate in an individualist, populist (Hatch 1989), experiential religious ethos that can be traced to the Reformation (or, indeed, to first-century Christianity, as evangelicals often like to emphasise), and, in America, to the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Balmer 1989; Beal 2008; Noll 1994).

Scholars broadly agree that 'evangelical' denotes a faith that has a 'conversionist' ethos, that is, that emphasises the importance of the individual person repenting of their sin and turning

towards Jesus, a process often understood in experiential terms, as a moment of dramatic personal change or rebirth (Balmer 1989: x; Bebbington 1989; Elisha 2011a; Hunter 1983; Luhrmann 2004; Noll 1994; Stromberg 1993). Anthropological observers have tended to emphasise the sociolinguistic character of this evangelical conversion event, in which the converting person might be understood to speak into being their soteriological and social transformation (Harding 1987; Keane 2007). The 'conversionist' focus on the individual believer (Noll 2011) and their 'acceptance of' and 'personal relationship with' Jesus entrains two further features of the evangelical genre: an emphasis on 'personal piety' (Balmer 1989; Elisha 2011a), and on evangelism, spreading the good news (Harding 2000; Elisha 2011a; Luhrmann 2012; Noll 2011).

The primacy of biblical authority (Bebbington 1989; Elisha 2011a; Harding 2000; Noll 1994) also features centrally in most sociological definitions of evangelicalism, with some scholars defining the evangelical view of Scripture as a commitment to the Bible's 'inerrancy' (Balmer 1989; Hunter 1983: 7). Luhrmann has said that 'evangelical' faith is often understood to involve a belief in the Bible's 'literal or near-literal' truth (Luhrmann 2012: 13). Finally, evangelical faith is understood to emphasise the offer of salvation held out by Jesus's sacrificial death on the cross and physical resurrection (Balmer 1989; Bebbington 1989; Elisha 2011a; Hunter 1983; Noll 1994). Some definitions also include 'activism' as a key evangelical trait, that is, putting the gospel into practice in a variety of public ways (Bebbington 1989; Noll 2011).

As we have seen, people in this movement are chewing thoughtfully on the knots of these definitions; seeking, for instance, to modify the social performatives of 'conversionism', in part through finding new ways of imagining and conveying personal transformation, that do not rely so heavily on particular kinds of verbal performance. The Bible was close to the hearts of most people I knew, who knew it like a long- and deeply loved, sometimes difficult, companion. Their 'Biblicism' was very evident, but its nature was not one of 'literalism' or 'inerrancy', these being buzzwords of the politicised evangelicalism from which people were turning. Bebbington's final term, 'activism', was the one I noticed the most in my fieldsite: the localist's world was one of 'projects', and people's individual lives tended to be filled with moral industry, directed at self and others. As I have observed, in this subculture, an ethos of getting things done coexists in productive intellectual tension with one of humility and questions about what kind of action, and undertaken in what spirit, is good.

Evangelical genealogies: social engagement and retreat

Today's movement draws on multiple inheritances, not all of them evangelical. But this critiquing turn reprises and reworks earlier strands of critique and reformation within that tradition that it is worth outlining here, as people look to their own collective histories for pointers toward today's possibilities. One of the most obvious of today's Christian localism's intellectual ancestors is the Social Gospel movement of the early twentieth century, when the evangelical wing of American Christianity saw in the social upheaval and urban immiseration of a swiftly industrialising era a set of moral challenges and opportunities for the church, that were not those of the parallel 'fundamentalist' turn of cultural retreat. The 1908 Social Creed of the Federal Council of Churches (Wacker 1983: 319) was one prominent manifesto of a movement that sought to apply Christian ethical thought to the socioeconomic state of the nation, with a view to finding political and economic mechanisms equal to the task of improving that state.

Thus did that movement tacitly assent in the modernist/liberal idea of the possibility of human civilisational progress – as distinct from a prophetic and revivalist Christian tradition in which what mattered was the eternal fate of individual human souls, which could only be secured through personal commitment to Christ. The question, of how, and how much, theologically 'conservative' Christians should be in the world, and imagine their task as acting to ameliorate it in practical ways, was live in that period, showing itself in eschatologies that increasingly diverged over the course of the early century, with an evangelicalism that saw pious revival and social amelioration as intimately linked, as had the socially engaged evangelicalism of the nineteenth century, bifurcating into world-refusing 'premillennialist' views that largely gave up an evangelical social vision under the conviction that world immiseration would soon be followed by Christ's return, on the one hand, and a more socially engaged Christianity that took a more theologically 'liberal' outlook, on the other.

What has been called the 'great reversal' (Hall 1997) should not be stated in too simple terms. Theologically liberal and revivalist voices alike engaged in social-reform projects in the early years of the twentieth century. But there was soon to be a retreat from the public sphere on the part of a major contingent of American Protestant congregations and thinkers. In the premillennial view, human history is degenerative, and Christ returns to earth at humanity's lowest point, to inaugurate the thousand-year reign spoken of in the Book of Revelation (Harding 2000; McDannell & Lang 1988; Rev. 20: 1-10).

Divergent convictions about the nature and direction of human history, founded on contrasting views on where authority lay, began increasingly to set the parameters of institutional belonging

in America's Protestant churches in the early twentieth century. Harding tells us that the 'two loose and fluid Protestant coalitions' (Harding 2000: 63) of 'liberal' and 'conservative' (or 'fundamentalist') found their identities simplified and solidified in the wider American public imagination following the dramatic 'representational event' of the trial in 1925 of John Scopes, a high-school biology teacher in Tennessee who, in a test case brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, stood accused of breaking the state's new law against teaching evolution in public schools (Harding 2000; 1991). The theologically conservative position found itself legally vindicated, but culturally ostracised, in this much-publicised courtroom drama. Harding sees the Scopes Trial as a signal event in the 'narrative encapsulation' of fundamentalist believers by a modernist narrative of an upwardly mobile human history in which 'strict' Bible belief was rendered isolated, aberrant, untrue. Thus spurned, theological conservatives increasingly went their own way. In the decades following the trial, the institutional infrastructure of theological conservatism in America developed and grew (Harding 2000: 75-6), building up the networks of colleges, seminaries, radio stations, publishing houses and churches that were to form much of the organisational bone structure of twentieth-century evangelical Christianity.

'Evangelical' culture as it is recognised today may be said to be rooted in this period, when conservative religion increasingly realised itself institutionally away from the modernists. More precisely, though, it might be dated to the 1940s, when some theologians, writers and ministers began to act vigorously to reframe conservative Protestantism in the public mind: 'pragmatic' 'institution-builders' – as opposed to the more purist and separatist-minded among the conservatives, known throughout as 'fundamentalists' (Wuthnow 1988: 179) – these 'evangelical' innovators established organisations and outlets, such as the National Association of Evangelicals in 1943 (Wuthnow 1988: 174), the magazine *Christianity Today* in 1956, Fuller Theological Seminary in California in 1947, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 1950, and several campus ministries and other missions organisations (Harding 2000; Putnam & Campbell 2010), to promote a kind of assertive middle way between a sequestered and anti-modern 'fundamentalism', and the liberalism of the mainline. Mid century, then, theologically conservative Christianity in America came to reengage with the modernist world with which it had fallen out so publicly in 1925, mainly through a proliferation of parachurch institutions and media outlets, aimed at evangelising. This middle ground, between the cultural separation of fundamentalism and liberal modernism, was the first movement that came to be known as 'new evangelical', and its institutional creations, and activism conducted in open tones of civility, pre-empt today's movement.

Missions: dilemmas of service and evangelism

It was perhaps in the field of overseas missions that perennial questions of the relation between pious salvationism and action in the world were kept most evidently live in American evangelicalism mid century. With today's Christian localism having conceptual roots in reflexive, indeed 'missional' turns in contemporary missiology (Bielo 2011a), Christian missions, an object of intense moral ambivalence among almost all the people I knew, are nevertheless important ancestors to its life-posture; in view of localists' preoccupations with social change, practical ameliorations in people's lives, and the relationship between Christians and those not of the faith with whom they share the world.

Christian missions, even evangelical Christian missions, have never been only about verbal and textual evangelism. In accounts of North American Protestant overseas missions (Carpenter & Shenk 1990; Hutchison 1987), scholars have noted how, among missionaries internationally, it was the Americans who were known for their social and economic activism, offering numerous educational, agricultural and social projects alongside, and sometimes instead of, textually communicated evangelism. Writing on the influence of American evangelicals on post-Word War Two missions, Richard Pierard writes of an 'emphasis on practical action, boldness, and observable results' (Pierard 1990: 179). Hutchison (1987) shows the ongoing debate within twentieth-century American missions overseas between 'evangelism' and what was then called 'civilisation', between gospel speech and social action. The idea of exemplarity, of missionaries being as a city on a hill, was always there; something that today's localist movement embraces, while also having an elaborated sense of being such in a spirit of humility, and no little cultural repentance (not being 'colonial' was a core concern of many people I knew); of how the process of learning to live as an exemplar was itself core pious work, the formative work of a lifetime.

In 1918, Hutchison tells us, the Rockefeller Report laid out a posture for what came to be known as 'ecumenical' missions, in contrast to 'evangelical' ones. It concluded that missionaries needed to focus less on theology and doctrine and more on sharing Christ through service (1987: 149). The report also argued for a repudiation of the wrongdoings of Western powers in the places of colonisation, and the importance of sensitivity towards other religions. Patterson (1990) writes of the 1932 Rockefeller-funded 'Layman's Inquiry', which spoke of spreading 'the Christian way of life and its spirit' through 'quiet personal contact and by contagion' (1990: 88), rather than through explicit evangelisation. Van Engen (1990) tells us how ideas of 'holistic mission' were increasingly influential in overseas missions from the 1970s, with non-Euroamerican voices, such as that of Rene Padilla (1990: 218) (father, as it happens, of one of the speakers at a localist conference I attended in Seattle), arguing for greater

'contextualisation' of the gospel, in the context of a missions conference in Lausanne in 1974 which emphasised the importance of mixing together social action and evangelism.

Domestically, too, there is an evangelical tradition of 'holistic' missions and 'social action churches' active in the American city, more recently (but still predating the current turn) supplemented by theories of 'relational evangelism' (Unruh & Sider 2005). Unruh and Sider note, against outsider stereotype but certainly evident in my fieldsite, that 'even evangelicals are ambivalent towards evangelism' (2005: 18), and, notwithstanding pressures to publicly witness to their faith, have a 'deep-seated cultural resistance to promoting religious change in others' (2005: 19).

The evangelical left: twentieth-century edition

When the civil rights movement emerged in America in the 1950s and 1960s, challenging violent racism, racial discrimination and segregation with nonviolent civil disobedience, much of it led by the black churches, white evangelicalism – itself, like most American churches, an institutional product of segregation – did not, in general, respond with enthusiasm (Swartz 2012; 2008). However, by the late 1960s, something like an evangelical political left was in evidence on the campuses of the (white) evangelical universities and in campus ministries on non-Christian campuses and, in the early 1970s, campaigning organisations, publications, and intentional communities began to form, notably the Post-American community in 1970 and Evangelicals for Social Action in 1973, which took as their Christian remit the public pursuit of 'justice' in the political and economic realms ('social justice').

Evangelicals for Social Action came out of a meeting of white and black evangelical leaders, mostly men, held in a YMCA in downtown Chicago at Thanksgiving 1973, which produced the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern (Swartz 2012). Framed as a confession of the sins of the evangelical churches, this Declaration exhorts the churches to recognise God's call to 'defend the social and economic rights of the poor and the oppressed'. The document, which makes repeated use of the first person plural, states that the evangelical community has been responsible for 'perpetuating' the 'institutional structures that have divided the Body of Christ along colour lines', and that it has failed to condemn 'the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system'. It challenges evangelicals to show 'repentance' through confronting injustice, and to 'proclaim' and 'demonstrate' God's justice 'to an unjust American society'. 'We must attack the materialism of our culture and the maldistribution of the nation's wealth and services', and recognise the US's role in unjust trade and development arrangements,

reconsidering 'our' living standards in the sight of God and 'a billion hungry neighbours' (CDESC 1973).

The evangelical left of the 1970s emerged in large part from within the higher-education and parachurch infrastructure that had been developed in the postwar period as the institutional basis of the newly outward-facing subculture of America's theologically conservative Protestants. Swartz (2008) discerns a pattern among some young, comfortably off, highly educated white evangelicals in this era, in which a delayed response to the civil rights movement, usually formulated at university, prompted individuals' involvement in campaigns against racial discrimination, and thence into wider postures of political challenge to economic and racial inequality, and war.

Christian higher education institutions in the 1970s played host, albeit typically a few years after the secular universities, to displays of anti-Vietnam war protest, with radical pacifism bedding in as a core Christian left principle, alongside economic and racial justice. Swartz (2012; 2008) reports that the vast international missions infrastructure of American evangelical missions that existed by the 1970s meant that a generation of white American evangelicals had contact with, in particular, their hemispheric neighbours in Latin America, at a time when social and political movements challenging European and American imperialism were prominent. Kids on college-vacation 'mission trips', he argues, were exposed, not only to the sufferings of the poor abroad, but also to accompanying critical discourses about their country's part in those sufferings, and the entanglement of American corporations and indeed churches in creating the conditions of economic subordination they were witnessing.

An eye to racial and economic inequality at home informed the movement of some young, mostly white, educated evangelicals into poor inner-city neighbourhoods, which were newly ghettoised by the immense postwar acceleration of suburbanisation enabled by the road-building boom and residential-development policies of that era (Jackson 1985; Teaford 2006; Teaford 1993). These city-ward pilgrims moved in the hope of living in racially integrated, Christian resistance to the status quo. Swartz suggests that a general upward mobility of evangelical families and institutions alike, the former helped by the GI Bill and low-interest student that enabled students of modest means to attend newly academically prestigious evangelical universities such as Wheaton College (2008: 27), enabled young people of that tradition to feel the economic and societal security of position necessary to consider the possibility of this kind of reflexive critique against the tradition.

A notable feature of today's American evangelical left is the influence of Anabaptism, the Radical Reformation tradition that came to the US, sometimes via Russia, from Germanic Europe from the seventeenth century, following persecution. At least two of the signatories of the 1973 Chicago Declaration, academic theologians John Howard Yoder and Ron Sider, were Mennonites, members of the strand of the tradition that derives from the teachings of Menno Simons, a Dutch sixteenth-century Anabaptist preacher. Yoder had the year before published *The politics of Jesus*, a study of the Gospel of Luke and Paul's Letter to the Romans that makes an Anabaptist argument about the relationship between Christians and politics, to the effect that the church should stand in prophetic witness against the wrongdoings of power, and model another, nonviolent, way with its own community life. This intervention was thrilling to many young evangelicals newly attuning to the (as they saw them) moral shortcomings of the patriotic centre-rightism of the churches of their origins.

Some critics at the time challenged Yoder and Anabaptist political stances for being, although radical in one sense, in their calling out as sinful the actions of the state, also too aloof and idealist as regards possible responses to the status quo. The question of what kind of politics a 'radical' Christian left politics can be, implied by these contrasting angles on Yoder, remains today, as *The politics of Jesus* is popular with a new generation of Christian radicals. A declared commitment to nonviolence, or pacifism, is central to the Anabaptist tradition, and it is one of the features of the faith that has forged and reinforced the link between evangelical political radicalism and traditions such as the Mennonites.

All these strands, from drawing inspiration from the prophetic refusals of Anabaptist pacifism, to anti-racism, repentance from wealth and class segregation, and, of course, the practice of relocation to the poor parts of inner cities, much of all this emergent from a context of Christian higher education, are familiar features of today's movement, although today's movement, as per Bielo's outlines above, enfolds more theological and ecclesial questioning than did its 1970s predecessor.

In 1975, one of the best-known Christian left groups of the period, the Post-American, moved to a Washington, DC neighbourhood, and changing its name to Sojourners (which it still is today). The name, the group's website says, refers to the biblical idea of 'God's people' as sojourners, that is, pilgrims – 'fully present in the world but committed to a different order'.[1] As counterculture evangelical communities such as Sojourners settled in in poor urban neighbourhoods, they often undertook some form of community organising or development, as

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[1] http://sojo.net/about-us/history.

part of their commitment to being involved in the lives of the oppressed. 'Community development' as a sector of non-profit enterprise expanded between the 1970s and 1990s, and social-justice Christians participated, notably Evangelicals for Social Action, which undertook several projects over the course of these decades (Swartz 2012; 2008; Carpenter 2014: 273). John Perkins, an African American pastor and activist, and one of the Chicago Declaration signatories, had in the early 1960s been a pioneer of community development *avant la lettre*, when he had returned with his wife to the Mississippi of his childhood, which he had fled as a teenager in the 1940s after his brother was murdered by white police. In a poor neighbourhood of a small Mississippi town, his wife and he established what became over the next decade a multifaceted ministry to the local African American people, including a children's daycare, a health clinic, a housing co-op and a thrift store (Swartz 2008: 168). Perkins campaigned on specific issues of economic exclusion affecting black people in the area, and was involved in school desegregation drives, suffering police violence as a result.

Perkins' example of Christian community work that included provision for people's material needs, as well as soul-saving evangelism, in peaceful defiance of economic and racial inequality, made him an exemplary figure for much of the evangelical left (Swartz 2008). He is a figurehead to today's Christian localists, and I saw him speak at churches in Quimby when I was there. In 1989, Perkins set up the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), with the founding principles of 'relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution'.[2] The CCDA's model of urban renewal (of which more in Chapter three) is founded on promoting affordable housing and mixed-income neighbourhoods, and encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation (Elisha 2011: 204-5). Its emphasis on skills-sharing across class and race divides, voluntarism, and the encouragement of home ownership and local enterprise make it typical of US 'community development' culture as it has developed since the 1960s (Baggett 2001; Elisha 2011a: 204). The first 'r', of 'relocation', refers to Perkins' belief that the relocation to deprived neighbourhoods of what Elisha glosses as 'middle-class' Christian families is important to their renewal, moral and spiritual as well as economic (2011a: 205). The CCDA, and the politico-religious three Rs of its tagline, are an important orienting institution and philosophy for the current wave of urbanist evangelicals.

I have spent some time outlining the progressive strands in American evangelicalism in the 1970s partly because the movement described in this thesis is a direct descendant of this politico-religious 'moral minority' (Swartz 2012). Especially in the area of intentional community, groups that began in the 1970s and earlier have guided those of recent generations seeking to build small, mutualist communities in 'the abandoned places of Empire', in the striking phrase of the

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[2] http://www.ccda.org/about.

publication that laid out a manifesto for today's 'new monasticism' (Rutba House 2005).

Time, place, and political possibility in left-evangelical thinking

Swartz notes the co-incidence of postwar American evangelicals turning outward, to modest social engagement, and the falling from favour of premillennial theology in the universities and other institutions of evangelical culture (2008: 33-5). While, in the other temporal direction, the Social Gospel of the early twentieth century shared in the historical progressivism of the wider political culture of the day, 1970s left-evangelicals' view of time and the nation's moral state was less directional than either view. People spoke of the 'Kingdom of God', as something *both* eschatologically in the future, and unrealisable in its entirety before Christ's return, *and* as a temporal state that Christians should strive for, in present-day action for justice, reconciliation and such (Swartz 2012). This multidimensional usage is also in evidence in today's movement (Bialecki 2009; Bielo 2011a).

Some authors, within and outside the Christian left, have seen, either in this eschatology or in the movement's general posture in relation to time and public action, limits to the possibilities of progressive evangelical politics to effectively tackle the injustices it opposes (Bialecki 2009; Carpenter 2014; Swartz 2008; Warner 2014). My own sense about the 'Kingdom' concept, similar to Elisha's (2011a), would be that this protean concept offers a range of ways to talk and think about Christian social ambition. Absent the confidence that political process might be harnessed to a project of moral progress of some kind, as Social Gospellers may have had in an earlier era, the American Christian left of the 1970s and today appear to be thinking not so much temporally, as morally and spatially. Taking up positions of exemplarity in opposition to the structures of injustice, building an alternative community on city ground that the rich have fled – these have been guiding projects, and enacted metaphors, of these two Christian lefts. The discussion in Chapter six further explores what kind of politics, if any, are entrained in today's Christian localism.

A nightmare on the brain of the living: the 1980s 'culture wars'

The 1970s evangelical left were the first theologically conservative Protestants for several decades to take their religion into the public square. Swartz (2008) speculates that in doing so, they set an example for socially conservative evangelicals to do the same, who were to do so with much greater immediate success and higher profile in the decades to follow. For the generation

of progressive evangelicals born after Reagan took office in 1980, a majority of my closest informants, the 'Religious Right' was to be the defining paradigm of church and state unholy mixed.

The evangelical right, coalescing in the late 1970s over issues including abortion and prayer in schools, did not in the main feel the ambivalence over doing politics that was in evidence in parts of the left, and its public-religion star soon began to rise. Robert Wuthnow (1988) cites among the factors responsible the television ministries of conservative pastors such as Jimmy Swaggart, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell (1988: 195); religious opinion polling, which increasingly presented to the public the religious identities of 'evangelical' and 'born again' (1988: 193-4); and the election of 'born-again' Democrat Jimmy Carter to the presidency in 1976.

One-term Carter notwithstanding, this was the beginning of the era when 'evangelical' and 'conservative' became discursively knotted together in the American imagination – a knot that was not to loosen for at least twenty years – as the political lobbying, voter mobilisation, and public-education campaigns of the various parachurch organisations that became collectively known as the 'Christian Right' won marked success in claiming the political and legal spheres as rightful arenas for campaigning on 'moral' issues. 'Moral' here denotes matters of sexuality and kinship (divorce, women's status, homosexuality, pornography, above all abortion). Also engaged by these and other groups as matters for urgent public promulgation were anti-modernist positions on time, anthropology, and epistemic authority; as 'creationist' views of the past and dispensationalist ones of the present and future were elaborated, for example in the cultural spheres of museums (for creationism) and popular literature (for end-times prophetics[3]).

The media profile and enduring imaginative imprint of the 'culture wars' that began in the 1980s are undeniable, and Putnam and Campbell's recent survey of contemporary American attitudes to religion argues in favour of the emergence, beginning in the 1980s, of a 'God gap': an alignment between high levels of religiosity and right-leaning, indeed specifically Republican, politics (Putnam & Campbell 2010).

For today's progressive evangelicals, the Christian Right corrupted the Christian message. What the public-facing fundamentalists of the 1980s onwards may have imagined as a courageous rearguard defence of Christian values in the American public realm appears to a portion of the generation of younger evangelicals who grew up with such figures as household names to be just one dimension of an edifice of worldly power that is, in their view, antithetical to the message of

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[3] For example, the works of Tim LaHaye and Hal Lindsay.

the gospels (Boyd 2005; van Steenwyk 2013). The American flag by the Baptist altar, the celebration of the military on the noticeboards of non-denominational community churches, and, from the early 2000s, the famously born-again evangelical Methodist President George W. Bush on the news speaking of crusade and, implicitly, of America bringing light to the world in the context of war and preparations for war are, for them, signs of an American Christianity corrupted and coopted by American 'Empire' (Boyd 2005; Claiborne 2006; Van Steenwyk 2013).

Where the political evangelical campaigners of the 1980s were fighting for, among other things, the place of (their understanding of) Christianity in the state's legal and constitutional structures, the rhetoric of today's evangelical left is a move in the opposite structural direction and, perhaps, a return to evangelicalism's more typical historical rhetorical form, as the movement formulates and draws on existing diatribes by theologians against the degeneration of their faith into mere 'Constantinism' and 'Christendom' (Boyd 2005; Hauerwas & Willimon 2014 [1989]). In this discourse, the decline of regular Christian observance in America, traditionally a source of worry to the churches, is not something to be mourned, because it means that what is passing is the period, which dates from the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine, of Christianity's capture by the state, or 'Empire', as it has been realised in overweening polities from first-century Rome to modern-day world-dominant America (van Steenwyk 2013). This movement's declared hope is for the church to stand morally and politically distinct again, as a city upon a hill (Hauerwas & Willimon 2014 [1989]; Yoder 1972).

Given these currents of thinking, which are typically framed in terms reactive to the American church's recent ancestries, one of the themes of this thesis will be how the new evangelicals I knew framed and addressed the question of how to 'be the church' in the world, how to stand aloof – as the Christian right so rebarbatively failed to do – from power, yet have effects in the world; humbly, to both affect and be affected.

Outworkings of the sixties: comfort and conservatism

In the decades after 'the long sixties' (Putnam & Campbell 2010: 80), when, famously, a proportion of the generation born in the postwar baby boom came of age and flamboyantly brought expressivist, apparently antistructural, (mostly non-Christian) revival to diverse parts of the country's cultural terrain, America's evangelical churches took themselves in two distinct, but related, directions. The institutional and discursive qualities instilled in the churches in these years were to form the ground of much of the critique brought by today's reformers.

In their 2010 study *American Grace*, Putnam and David Campbell apply a seismic metaphor to the cultural upheavals of what they call the 'long sixties', and their apparent effects on American political and religious attitudes. They present the 'rise of religious conservatism' in the 1970s and 1980s as the 'first aftershock' of the 1960s social 'earthquake', in which they see a portion of the population reacting in religious terms against dramatic challenges to social and kinship norms, and consenting to align this reaction with a political affiliation: 'beginning in the 1980s, Republicans gained an advantage among highly religious voters' (2010: 375).

But by the 1990s and 2000s, Putnam and Campbell claim, this alignment had produced the sixties' 'second aftershock' (2010: 120): a turning away from religion by a substantial proportion of America's younger generations, who had only ever known the world of the 'God gap', in which religion and right-wing politics were closely aligned (2010: 378). From the early 1990s, they observe, 'Religious Right' was coming to be viewed, across the generations, as a 'pejorative' label, as religious-opinion surveys were starting to register increasing proportions of people declaring no particular religious affiliation (2010: 121-2). It was in this same period, the early 1990s, they observe, that social attitudes towards gay relationships were becoming more accepting, even as the Jeremiahs of the Religious Right were inveighing against homosexuality. The authors posit a connection between this divergence of attitudes, and the growth of non-affiliation among people coming of age in this period, when being religious seemed to many to mean being both right-wing and anti-gay (2010: 129-30; see also Kinnaman & Lyons 2007).

Evangelical church practitioners can be copiously productive of sociological data on generational attitudes and affiliations. David Kinnaman, president of evangelical polling organisation the Barna Group, has co-authored two books (2011; 2007) on the attitudes of under-30s to Christianity. These books, and others in the genre (e.g. Kimball 2007), combine sociological data-gathering and analysis with reformatory polemic, aimed at other church practitioners. The phrases that form the chapter titles of Kinnaman and Lyons' *Unchristian* (2007): 'judgemental', 'hypocritical', 'anti-gay', 'too political' – are the pejorative terms most commonly used by the authors' survey respondents about the church. They reflect a discursive context strongly coloured by the religio-political culture wars. The nature of the politics that is now emergent from the constellation of church entrepreneurs, theologians and culturally ambiguous evangelical-heritage lay people in this reaction to that period is, of course, not clear. However, one of its most interesting elements, a quasi-utopian, somewhat governmental communitarianism of neither left nor right (sporadically open to radical leftist inspirations), is a central theme of this thesis.

While one outworking of the sixties, then, was a reactive conservatism that the new evangelicals are now reacting against in turn, less prominent outside the church was another, equally significant product of that disaggregating, individualising era: the construction, from the mid 1970s, of the comfortable church. By the mid 1970s, it appeared that the boom in church building and expansion that the denominations had briefly enjoyed in the 1950s had been a high-water mark for American church vitality. Among the societal structures challenged in the long sixties were the churches; even after the fires of apparent cultural revolt had died down, it was clear that the baby-boom generation weren't going to church with the constancy that their parents' generation had (Miller 1997). The anti-institutionality of this generation meant that denominational affiliation substantially loosened. So the religious market, faced with a leaner, more mobile client base, was constrained to think more strategically about ways to attract and retain consumers.

It is the comfortable church, born, some would say, in 1975 in suburban Chicago, where Bill Hybels first convened Willow Creek Community Church in a theatre (Sargeant 2000), that represents for many of today's reformers the corruption into which the church in America has fallen. The churches that adopted what became known as a 'seeker sensitive' (Sargeant 2000) model for 'church growth' were taking a pragmatic approach to the challenge of getting people through the door and coming back. As Hatch (1989) has argued, the American religious landscape has always been a competitive and quasi-commercial place. But the 'seeker' churches of the 70s onwards were distinctive in the way that they comprehensively embraced a business model, in particular the rationalised, numericalising techniques of market research (Sargeant 2000). As pastors used marketing procedures such as direct mail and surveys (2000: 101) to gain a more exact sense of who their potential consumers were, and what they might want in a church, what a church looked, sounded and felt like shifted (Wolfe 2003). Auditoriums grew plushy, music highly accessible, teachings shorter and more informal, church facilities diversified and proliferated, and worship and its adjuncts were pitched towards meeting what the jargon came to call church consumers' 'felt needs' (as distinct from 'true needs', which are for the gospel, and are thought to be meetable only once the felt needs have been met) (Sargeant 2000; Wolfe 2003).

Sargeant, the author of a 2000 study of the large, consumer-friendly, often nondenominational, doctrinally spare churches that dominate much of the American evangelical scene, remarks that 'the ideology of the shopping mall church' 'expresses the idea that religion has become a privatised, consumer good' (2000: 131). He quotes Bill Buford, founder of the Leadership Network, a church-leadership parachurch organisation that the new-evangelical movement was

to have its beginnings in, drawing an analogy between the shopping mall in its relation to 'corner grocery stores', and the new 'large churches' in relation to the small, neighbourhood church. Quoting from a Leadership Network publication from 1990 – in a curious irony, five or so years before a recognisably new-evangelical movement started emerging within the organisation – Sargeant reports the organisation explaining that 'the large church', because it is able, 'like its cousin the shopping mall', to provide 'specialised services for target populations', represents 'the future of the American church', achieving more 'market penetration, innovation…leadership [and] financial muscle' than the small, local church (Sargeant 2000: 107).

It is this vision of church – the business that grows its income base by catering to consumer wants, squeezing out smaller competitors – that stands as a terrible figure of worldliness in many new evangelical reformers' polemics. Drawing in part on Puritan and other ascetic Christian traditions (Shi 1985), and mirroring bourgeois discourses of anti-consumerism which celebrate the 'simple', the local and the small-scale (Berry 1991; Shi 1985), reformers raise a cry for the non-comfortable church, a church that does not mass-produce an easy-to-digest, unnutritious consumer product. The critique is expressed above all in terms of *scale* and *space*, pointing up the social geography of post-war consumer-capitalist America that the comfortable church was born into.

Moral geographies

Buford's market-leading 'large' churches are able to be so big because they are usually situated in suburban and exurban areas, where, by 1990, just under half of Americans lived (Luhr 2009: 8; Sargeant 2000: 39). The arrival of the mass-produced motor car, and freeway construction after the Second World War, had enabled the growth of the suburbs, and a demographic shift southwards and westwards, to newly suburbanised areas around 'Sunbelt' cities such as Houston and Atlanta, in the largely white bourgeois exodus from the soon-to-be-postindustrial city described earlier. This vast demographic movement was enabled by the country's postwar consumer abundance, unprecedentedly affordable housing, and federal subsidy for home ownership (Teaford 1993).

Teaford (2006) writes of the 'decentralisation' of retail in the 1950s and 60s, following bourgeois populations as they fanned out from the urban cores. Offices followed population and retail, and new de-facto cities ('edge cities') grew up. Meanwhile, historic urban cores suffered loss of investment and tax revenue, deepening the poverty of the majority non-white people living in them. Though a small bourgeois counterculture did spearhead a 'back-to-the-city' movement

from the 1970s (Lees *et al* 2008; Teaford 2006), in general, the overwhelming bourgeois trend before the 1990s was outward, to suburban areas characterised by residential zoning (Jackson 1985), large amounts of space and, Luhr argues, dominated by the values of privacy and consumption, in the context of the nuclear family (Luhr 2009: 10).

Teaford concludes his study of metropolitan life in America since the Second World War by describing the country's metropolitan landscape as 'fragmented', with the old topography of a city surrounded by a halo of suburbs giving way towards the end of the last century to more region-wide urban geographies, in which retail and business increasingly takes place along 'corridors' defined by the routes of interstate highways (Teaford 2006), rather than being centralised in downtowns. He concedes some bourgeois return to the city at the turn of the century, but argues that the main story remains one of 'post-urban', automobile-scaled development, populated by people largely sorting into socioeconomic and racial enclaves and affinity groups.

It is to the specifications of this sociogeography that the contemporary evangelical 'megachurch' is built and scaled (Rhodes 2013). While several writers have remarked on the imaginative trope of 'the city' in evangelical thinking (e.g., Coleman 2009; Elisha 2011a; Livezey 2000), it is less usual to see a reference to the idea of the suburbs, ubiquitous though they are. Bielo (2011c), however, writing about new evangelicalism's own back-to-the-city movement, does note how powerful an image 'the suburbs' are in the American imagination. They certainly are for many bourgeois new evangelicals, for whom where one lives and how one organises one's life there are vital aspects of a person's moral self-formation. An important part of today's reflexive evangelicals' critique of their natal religious culture is a critical moral commentary on the demographic sorting of the built environment that American capitalism, the country's housing and infrastructure policies, and its abundant resources, space and technology, created in the decades since 1945. Bill Buford's corner store versus shopping mall analogy was one made, frequently and explicitly, by localists I knew. Their new evangelical 'deconversion' was above all from the large-scale commercial to the small, independent and local, where they saw integrity reside. In this, their moral critique tracks with much contemporary urban-planning orthodoxy, and indeed the idea of the city promoted in 'creative-class'-attracting kinds of urban policy, focused on city centres, neighbourhoods, and ecologies of small retail businesses. The work to disentangle commercial logics of place from other, more immaterial hopes, is thus an ongoing one for these localists.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the Living Water Community, and its project of nurturing individual ethical formation through long-term mutual moral pedagogy in 'relationship'. The group's organisational framework of consensus-seeking meetings and other structured encounters is addressed as a site of careful intragroup work to bring individual passions and intentions, and the moral community, into alignment with one another. The group does not view this as an easy, or indeed an ever completed, task, and one of its key Christian values, 'reconciliation', encapsulates the sense that the ongoing work of drawing together interiorities and the group, in 'peacemaking', is this world's paramount good. The group draws on techniques and procedures derived from business and popular psychology, Christian sources, neuroscience and self-help to help direct the work of reconciliation. Ambivalent about the organisational frames that set out the group's protocols of interaction, people's simultaneous commitment to spontaneous individual sincerity, and to the church as the collective Body (of Christ) made for a discursive and sometimes demanding regime, that produced intimate bonds and a succession of disconnections in parallel with each other.

The second chapter turns to Living Water Community's neighbourhoodism, setting this group's productive engagements with its home neighbourhood in the context of the broader neighbourhoodist turn, tracing ideologies of localism to longstanding American ideas about the spiritual life of cities and small towns, and noting the novelty of this turn, in which the heterogeneous urban space is newly imagined as, in its very heterogeneity, a potential ground for moral cohesion. The chapter looks at LW members' and their neighbours' engagements with the physical ground of neighbourhood, through collaborative projects of public art and craft, and proposes the ritual character of much of this 'placemaking', in which collective physical action seeks to create temporally independent durations in which 'community' may be realised and felt.

In Chapter three, the focus is on the more programmatic end of this localism, in the form of community-development projects in the neighbourhood, which draw on 'asset-based community development' (ABCD) theory to encourage more coordinated neighbourhood interventions on the part of neighbours. The chapter looks at Christian localism's ambivalent postures of activism and disavowal in a wider lens of a city culture of local activism, urban renewal, and the complex possibility of 'gentrification'. It discusses how discourses drawn from international-development thought, in addition to domestic community-development traditions, offer techniques that reflect the core localist dilemma, of how to seek change from a ground of non-'colonial' humility and

'embedded' local experience. The relation of community building to capitalist time is addressed, as people strive to 'know' themselves collectively, both experientially and from an altitude of governmentality (Foucault 2006), in order to see and exploit their 'assets' with a view to increasing local value. The question arises of what neighbourhood uplift looks like in a context where mobile capital threatens the bounds of place-defined 'community', and the value that saturates material things cannot easily be tied to persons over the long term.

Chapter four is the first of two on social enterprise, as one of the ways that Christian localists find to act in the social world from a ground of diffuse, non-proselytising mission. The Cascade Free House bills itself as a 'charity pub', one of the first of its kind, offering a 'menu' of nonprofits for customers to choose alongside the food and drink they buy. I propose the pub, which is festooned with reminders of its novel business model, and of pictures and text and volunteers promoting the message of social good, as a site of a ritual of sacrifice. In the rite, people connect to the transcendent through giving an offering to the beyondness of 'charity', before consuming a feast together to conclude the rite, which itself creates 'community', both through giving life to the idea of the sacrifice's recipient, generalised charity, and through doing so in a physical context of commensality and devotion, in which volunteers physically manifest 'charity' through talking with customers about the charities, while physical objects – t-shirt, merchandise, and of course food and drink – circulate the idea of giving. This is mission rendered as corporeal and commercial witnessing to an ethic of giving, sacramental and pedagogic.

Chapter five looks at localist social enterprise in a wider angle, following two projects of food and drink service and distribution combined with vocational training, to show how entrepreneurs in this movement draw on doctrines of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and other development theory as conceptual tools to help them create businesses that exemplify their hopes for the emergence of 'holistic' local economies. Localism's fervent hope, that the ground of place might act as the site of a 're'-integration of distinct spheres of social and economic functioning, is reflected in the ambitions of these for-profit businesses, which imagine the work of ameliorative giving and that of economic productivity and profit-making best realised through being brought into identity in single, 'values-based' businesses. In this vision, altruistic giving, neighbourhood connectivity, individual empowerment, and customer satisfaction are patted down together into a flattened field of the good. The localist vision of social enterprise draws on CSR and cognate discourses of globalism to pursue a contrastingly domestic vision of a pre-industrial self-sufficing American township composed of a morally responsible, and moderately capitalistic, citizenry.

The final chapter looks at the theological, political, and eschatological viewpoints held by my informants in these new-evangelical, locality-facing Christian communities. It notes the subculture's inventive 'liturgical' turn in worship, and, observing pockets of sacramentalism, draws out some theological adumbrations of the movement's dilemmas of piety and inclusion, verbalism and unvoiced, materiality-mediated belonging. It outlines new evangelicalism's historical vision, of a world tipping away from an era of modernity into one of postmodernity, and reflects on the work this concept does in orienting some of the new evangelicalism's classic evangelical dilemmas, mentioned at the start of this Introduction: of how to hold, civilly, a universalist faith amid plurality, of how to relate to power, of what counts as orthodoxy, and how to live within it. In a vision of the world in gradual release from 'modernity', a faith focused on 'propositionality' and language-mediated belonging recedes, opening wider vistas of potential inclusion, and in which worldliness may be associated with declining and corrupt institutions of power, and not the neighbourhoods we inhabit, or the material ground and human bodies we all share.

The chapter proposes a new-evangelical vision of politics in which the fragmentary temporality of what is known as 'Kingdom now, not yet' (Bielo 2011a) eschatology reimagines the large-scale socioeconomic world as a site of momentary instantiations of interpersonal ethics, in which good action can be exemplified and, in tandem with work to relocalise collective life, an alternative to the agonism of politics may be engendered.

Chapter one

'Reconciliation is the centre of our work': self and relationship in intentional Christian community

This chapter introduces the Living Water Community (henceforth LW), a Christian intentional community and church of twenty adults at the time of my fieldwork, who live in a mixture of cohoused, nuclear-family and single-person households within a few blocks of one another in Otago, a comparatively low-income Quimby neighbourhood. When I moved in to the largest of the community's houses, the Barn, in the summer of 2013, the community had been living in its chosen neighbourhood for five years. LW is typical of a movement within the new-evangelical turn known as 'new monasticism' (Bielo 2011a; Rutba House 2005; Sine 2008). Drawing inspiration from a long American tradition of Christian communitarian experiment, as well as from the motif of pre-Reformation monasticism, this movement is guided by a notion of Christian 'discipleship' as involving long-term commitment to 'community' (Bender 2003). This means life lived in close proximity to other church members, in explicit contrast to a conventional model of weekly church attendance. Most new-monastic-influenced communities, LW included, have a strong ethos of localism, in which the commitment to the monastic value of 'stability' includes a commitment to 'place', typically an urban, lower-income area (Bielo 2001b, 2011c). These Christians enter into 'community' with a strong sense of the necessity of living life differently, in 'counterculture' to 'individualism' and 'consumerism'. Within LW, this conviction was expressed in a condensed idiom of psychotherapy, addiction recovery, politics adumbrated as 'justice', and – above all – interpersonal ethics, in which the goods in each of these spheres ('health', 'justice', 'love') parallel and even merge into one another.

The chapter will discuss the ideology and practice of community in LW, and address questions of personhood and ethics as they display themselves in the systems, attitudes and conflicts emergent in the group as it strove to attain community. While these communitarians conceive their project in terms of a turn against 'individualism', I argue that what we see in their moves to create circles of mutual ethical pedagogy in the midst of daily life is, above all, a project of the moral reform of individuals; part of the new-evangelical turn's wider ambition to find ways of gathering together the morally continent self back from its partible distribution across disparate parts of the large organism of global capitalism. In this course, long allied yet formally countervailing ethics of the self – toward submission of the self to others and to God, and

towards the self's cultivation – inform practices that imagine and seek to attain a consonance between individual and group.

'Community' as it is understood in this subculture represents an unambiguous good; a warm, face-to-face kind of association that contrasts with the impersonal affiliations of modernity. Raymond Williams (2011 [1976]) has noted that 'community' corresponds to the *Gemeinschaft* term in Tonnies's famous *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* distinction, with 'society' tending to stand for the latter term, which involves less 'direct', less 'total', and more 'abstract' relations among persons (2011: 66). He notes a lexical fuzziness: that 'community' can denote both 'the sense of direct common concern', and an actually existing social arrangement, which may or may not conform to that ideal (see also Love Brown 2002). 'Unlike all other terms of social organisation, [community] seems never to be used unfavourably', he notes.

'New monasticism': virtue ethics and a contemporary Christian communitarianism

Probably the most high-profile of the figures promoting the new monastic movement is author, speaker and sort-of pastor Shane Claiborne. (People I knew would sometimes make jokes about 'Claiborneagains'.) Claiborne's 2006 book *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* was cited as an influence by almost all my LW informants, and a number of them had visited the Simple Way community he founded in Philadelphia. *The Irresistible Revolution* urges the author's own cohort of middle-class, mostly white, North American evangelical Christians to remake their Christianity in prophetic challenge to what Claiborne frames as an overly comfortable American church culture, through living thrifty, reciprocal lives in shared-life communities embedded within poor neighbourhoods. New-monastic-style communities have also drawn inspiration from other Christian traditions, looking especially to the Catholic Worker 'houses of hospitality' (Fisher 1989; Miller 1973); the ecumenical, but Catholic-originated, l'Arche network of community homes where people with and without learning disabilities live together; and Anabaptist models, such as the neo-Anabaptist network known as the Bruderhof.

An edited volume that came out the year before *The Irresistible Revolution*, titled *School[s] for Conversion: Twelve marks of a new monasticism* (2005), adumbrates most directly the new monastic ethos. The book was put together following a conference of Christian communitarians, new and old, evangelical, Roman Catholic, Anabaptist and other, which met under the auspices of a Christian intentional community founded in Durham, North Carolina in 2003, called Rutba House. The book, manifesto-like, lays out 'twelve marks of the new monasticism', which include peacemaking and conflict resolution, living in 'geographical proximity' to others who 'share a

common rule of life', 'intentional formation…along the lines of the old novitiate', and – the first of the 'marks' – 'relocation to the abandoned places of Empire' (2005: xii), meaning moving to poorer parts of town as part of a posture of defiance against what is seen as an unjust power system, in which rich and poor are kept apart, and individuals seduced from prophetic resistance by the imperative to seek personal wealth.

The key source for this language of 'monasticism' and 'Empire' is the final page of Catholic moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's antimodern lament, *After Virtue* (1984 [1981]). MacIntyre writes that, during the 'Dark Ages', there were some 'men and women of good will' who 'turned aside from the task of shoring up the Roman imperium' and instead 'set themselves to achieve...the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained' through the period of darkness they were entering. He goes on to say that in our present time, when, he says, the barbarians are no longer at the gates, but in government over us, 'what matters...is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained'. His final line: 'We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St Benedict' (1984: 263). Via the meditations of a US Baptist theologian (Wilson 1997), MacIntyre's monastic proposition entered US evangelical discussion circles, flowing together with communitarian experiments such as the Simple Way. *School[s] for Conversion*, which was written by a mixture of church practitioners (including members of the Simple Way) and academics, dovetails the academic and practical conversations, and the language and concepts it employs have been highly influential in the formation of communities like LW.

Against what he views as the hopelessly fragmented moral landscape bequeathed by what he, and many in this movement, call 'the Enlightenment Project', MacIntyre makes a case in *After Virtue* for the revival of an Aristotelian virtue ethics. He defines a 'virtue' as 'an acquired human quality' (1984: 191) that makes us able to achieve goods internal to practices, 'practices' being a 'coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity' (1984: 187). Central to this idea of 'practice' is that it involves certain kinds of relationship, for instance those of apprenticing in a skill. For MacIntyre, a person's route to virtue is through the tutelage of the tradition within which they find themselves. This idea of persons receiving a kind of apprenticeship in the virtues as part of a community of practice, within 'a living tradition' (1984: 222), has been influential among theologians (Hauerwas 1981; Hauerwas & Willimon 2014 [1989]) whose thinking about the church has informed the intellectual temper of this movement.

The 'monastic' identity is held loosely by LW, as it is by most groups influenced by the new monasticism. Some monastic nomenclature is used, such as 'novice' (the novice programme was overseen by an 'abbot' and an 'abbess'), but important differences include an egalitarian structure, and the existence of couples and families within the community. The monastic value of 'obedience' was conceived of in free-church evangelical terms, as mutual 'accountability', not subordination in a hierarchy. This ecumenical movement draws from diverse traditions for models for its anti-worldly communitarianism. The editors of *School(s) for Conversion* (2005) remark in their introduction: 'not all monastic movements were within the Roman Catholic communion. The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century sought to establish a community of authentic Christian witness over and against the corrupt state churches of Europe' (2005: ix).

Cities upon a hill: utopians and anarchists

The new monastic movement sits in a long American tradition of community-making. One author has termed 'the impulse to form highly cohesive communities knit together by a common ideology and a shared vision of social harmony' 'a constant in American history' (Boyer 1997: xi). Several authors have noted the recurrence of communitarianism, and intentional communities, throughout the history of the American state (Kanter 1972; Love Brown 2002; Pitzer 1997), among the most famous of these being the Oneida Community, the Shakers, Brook Farm and the Fourierists, Robert Owen's New Harmony, and the Amana Colony (Pitzer 1997).

Susan Love Brown has written that intentional communities may be understood as a 'variety of revitalisation movement peculiar to state societies' (2002: 153), and that as such they constitute 'indigenous forms of cultural critique' of these societies (2002: 158). She cites as an example a community mentioned admiringly by my LW interlocutors: Koinonia Farm, in rural Georgia, where in the 1940s Southern Baptist pastor Clarence Jordan and others opened a farm and religious community where black and white people lived and worked together. Koinonia stood as a sign of nonviolent, apostolic-inspired living in the midst of racial segregation, in moral challenge to it. Within the contemporary movement, 'community' is undertaken in this critiquing spirit; understood as a challenge to what people in the movement sometimes referred to as 'the domination systems', following the coinage of American theologian and pacifist Walter Wink (Wink 1992, 1998). In one LW member's words, community is a 'posture of resistance to the domination systems that say that you are the centre of everything, that you are [both] awesome and deeply incomplete, [so]: buy things'. We see in this quotation this movement's conviction that consumer capitalism, and its practices upon the individual person, promulgate a wrongful

notion of personhood. There is an implicit politics here ('posture of resistance'), but the focus is on personhood, and the possibilities for individual action.

Several authors have called intentional communities, and their aspirations, 'utopian' (Sutton 2003 & 2009, Friesen & Friesen 2004, Pitzer 1997, Fogarty 1990, Moment & Kraushaar 1980, Kanter 1972 & 1973, Fellman 1973). New monastic groups tend to adopt what is known as a 'now, not yet' eschatology (of which more in Chapter six), in which the Kingdom of God is thought to be instantiated in moments of love and peace on earth, although its full realisation will come only with Christ's return (Bialecki 2009; Bielo 2011a). The temporality of this vision does resemble the time compression that might be said to be characteristically utopian, in which action is 'both method and goal' (Mannheim 1991 [1936]: 25). It also echoes the 'prefigurative' temporality of some 'anarchist' activism, in which protesters in movements such Occupy enact in the course of their (literal) 'demonstrations' against existing power relations, the relations among people they hope for in the future, thereby instantiating 'the new in the shell of the old' (Graeber 2004: 7), or, in the words of Stine Kroijer (2015), describing activists in a similar movement, 'bodily *figuration* of an otherwise indeterminate future' (Kroijer 2015: 90) (see also Hardt and Negri 2004). Indeed several of my informants, and some founder-members of LW, described themselves as anarchists.

The ambition of a community such as LW, to be, like Koinonia Farm, a 'demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God' (as a sign outside the farm read, in a photo a LW member showed to me), involves another feature that scholars of utopian communities have identified: a relationship with rules and systems in which 'order' is an important feature (Kanter 1972: 39), often resulting in copious planning and scheduling structures (1972: 41-2), and yet in which rules and systems are conceived as things to be overcome. Seligman *et al* (2008: 111) write that 'utopia…involves both the perfect realisation of all rules and the boundary-defining laws of order, even as it proposes a world where boundaries would be meaningless. In a sense it posits an order beyond order'. In LW's communitarianism, there exists an anxiety about systems, and a parallel proliferation of systems. Kanter says of utopian thought that 'it assumes…that communities can be built in which inner motivation is congruent with outer demands' (1972: 55). Order and harmony, spontaneously emergent, is the hope; a hope that organisational structure both points to, and reveals – frustratingly to its creators – as yet unrealised.

A covenantal community

Like the early Puritan settlers and other American conventicles (Frohnen 1996; Lutz 1990; Noll

2011; Stein 1992), LW are a covenantal community. The Anabaptist influence on LW, through the Mennonite identity of its two initiating members, Al and his wife Sally, is one important influence behind the group's covenant model. Historically, Anabaptists have gathered together under covenants, in recognition of the 'new covenant' between God and man in Jesus (Littell 1958). Franklin Hamlin Littell (1958) writes that the early Anabaptists formed themselves as 'a vigorous community of discipline' bound by covenant, in contrast to the 'religious individualists' (1958: 37) of some of the Reformation's other strands. The place of 'individualism' in this movement is a complex one, however, as I will argue below.

Simon Coleman states that 'covenantal relations characterise families, clans, and conventional religious groups, articulating a logic of moral involvement and long-term mutual obligation' (Coleman 2004: 422). Members of LW saw their covenant as a sign of their commitment to bondedness over time, with attendant expectations of mutuality. The covenant exists as a sixteen-page document on a shared online drive, and it is recited together annually, at a retreat weekend. The process of 'covenanting' as a new member takes place with a ceremony at the annual retreat. The signing of the covenant does not involve any paper, but is signified by the joiner writing their signature on 'the quilt'; a fabric picture, sewn by Sally, of a tree with a stream issuing from it, with a sun and fluffy clouds in the blue sky behind it. There are names scribbled on the trunk of the tree, in the sky, and in the stream. Founder members signed the trunk, subsequent joiners other parts of the scene (one person, who had talked about his difficulties 'committing to' groups, and who did leave, signed a cloud).

Explaining the quilt, people told me that they'd wanted to have something that said they were committing to the group, but that they didn't want it to be a 'legal document', or to have people 'sign on the dotted line'. This bespeaks the community's ambivalent attachment to the Protestant idea of the centrality of inner commitment registered publicly in words (Harding 1987; Keane 2002; 2007; Stromberg 1993).

The Protestant valuation of sincerity, of persons meaning it above all, may be seen both in the decision to have a written covenant, and in the queasiness people felt about having members literally sign on to it. The felt danger, noted by other anthropologists of certain Protestant outlooks (Engelke 2007), that text will lose its connection with immaterial meaning, may be seen in the physical separation of the two parts of the 'legal' document through the intervention of the quilt. The quilt's aesthetic charm, and its status as a thing of craft, not law, represents the 'relational' drive of the community; its wish to pull people back to the interpersonal entrainments of the covenant's statements, rather than to the statements themselves. Thus materiality, marked

as such, is used to point toward the immaterial – the relational spirit, not the letter, of the covenantal law.

Five waffle irons and a cabin in the woods: LW beginnings

New monastic and other communitarian ideas were strong currents in the various new-evangelical-style congregations that were springing up in cities around North America in the mid 2000s. An archetypal such congregation is Imago Dei, a Pacific Northwestern church made famous by new- evangelical author Donald Miller's fictionalised memoir, *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* (2003), in which a boy from a small-town evangelical world moves to a lively city and discovers value pluralism, social-justice campaigns and alternative lifestyles at the local liberal-arts college, thereby rediscovering his faith by way of sloughing off the narrow ways of his conservative church upbringing. Churches in this mould were among the congregations and conferences that Al and Sally Hunter, a fiftysomething Mennonite couple from small-town Kansas, spent time at in the months after they moved to Quimby with a plan to start an intentional community – with the aim, in Sally's words, of 'settl[ing] in some neighbourhood that needs a loving presence…and learn[ing] how to love each other'.

Al and Sally's hope was for a community that was, as Al put it, 'integrated'; living 'simply' and, above all, together – which, in the first instance, meant living within easy walking distance of each other, specified in the covenant as 'within a five-minute walk'. The community encouraged members to cohouse, and the covenant states that 'sharing life in our homes' is 'a powerful context for ongoing conversion'. At the base of it all would be the idea that, in Al's words, 'we do this together, we understand being in Christ together, [it's] not just about individuals'.

The Hunters had lived in Kansas for most of their adult lives, Sally a nurse and Al too for many years, until he became a pastor at the large Mennonite church that the couple attended. The pair had done missions and service work in Latin America, including as part of a medical mission in Paraguay. The Kansas church was quite 'traditional', Sally told me – a warm and kind community, but as time went on, and especially once their three children were grown, 'we just, we always imagined something that…for me, maybe the biggest desire was to live my values more fully. I just felt like there was still a pretty big disconnect between the way I lived my life and…what I really cared about.' They had a nice big home they'd built themselves, and ten acres of land. 'It just got too uncomfortable being so comfortable.'

So the couple moved out west, and spent three years as 'houseparents' in a Mennonite shared home for young people doing volunteer work, while Sally retrained as a counsellor. This experience of community life further convinced them that community was what they wanted to do, and they moved to Quimby and began meeting potential joiners. By the spring of 2008, through word of mouth and a website, a core group had formed. The group began meeting in the couple's rental home to eat waffles made by Sally – at one point, it was estimated that the Hunters owned five waffle irons – and 'dream and scheme' about the community they were going to build together. They began by telling each other their 'stories', getting to know each other. Then the collection of ten or so strangers began thrashing out what the community would look like, over weekly meetings. The first year's covenant of membership came out of one long Saturday in April 2008 spent in a cabin in the woods, working out something everyone could live with, through rounds of discussion, vetoes, and amendments. Community member Emily remembers: 'we had just a ton of documents that we went through and did that with', over 13 or so hours. In another participant's words, it was 'a hell of a time…damn hard to do' – 'we had eight to ten people all trying to throw wildly disparate ideas into the pot and try and refine something that would represent us all'. The idea was that everyone would commit to this document for one year, from such time as the group found and moved in to a neighbourhood, which was the next big collective decision to be made. After detailed deliberation, they chose Otago. Chapters two and three will examine the group's relationship with the neighbourhood.

Living life together

Community members were a range of ages, with early twenty-somethings predominating. Employment-wise, the group was a mix of people in caring professions – nurses, a social worker, counsellors – and a smattering of carpenters, a teacher, some fulltime moms. By a year in, there were around twenty adults, a figure which has stayed roughly stable since. The covenant drawn up at the beginning was revisited at the end of the group's first year, at which point it was decided to have two kinds of membership, 'vowed', and 'practising', to reflect different levels of readiness to commit for the long haul (ten years' commitment had been mooted). The monastic value of 'stability' was central to the project, with the long term being felt necessary to put down roots in the neighbourhood. But not everyone was comfortable with a long commitment, and so two kinds of membership were established. After three years, this was revisited, as some felt that the system had created a 'two-tier' membership. 'Vowed' and 'practising' were abolished, and one category of membership, 'covenanted', replaced them. However, ambivalences about the stability doctrine were to endure, belied by the single membership status.

The group's commitment to thrift, and its suspicion of the institutional, means it has a prohibition against having a church building. The closest the group therefore comes to have a meeting place is the house known as The Barn (the shared houses all had nicknames, I think to avoid them being named for the people who happened to own them). The Barn is one of Otago's few large homes, bought because it was big enough to accommodate gatherings of the whole church. Inhabited when I was there by its owners, the Hass family – mom, dad, two kids and a dog – and me, but formerly shared by several community members, The Barn displays the community's identity in its melding of artefacts of public and private life. It has a socially porous character, with the whole community having access to the combination code that unlocks the front door, and people frequently popping in and out – to use the printer, borrow the car, do a spot of babysitting, or bring round shared groceries from the local CSA.[4] The living room is frugally furnished with comfy chairs and sofas of diverse second-hand provenance, including a futon for guests. The covenantal quilt hangs on its wall. With a whiteboard, flipchart and projector, the room accommodates businesslike and public uses as much as its sofas and kids' toys do domestic ones.

A core conviction within LW is that it is through 'relationship' that personal moral transformation happens. Participation in organised encounters among community members is thus centrally important. One of the commitments set out in the covenant is 'to share our time with one another, including full participation in the community schedule and calendar'. This schedule includes a monthly 'family meeting', where the group does its decision-making, and hangs out together, by way of a carefully time-managed sequence of presentations, creative performances, and light-hearted interludes. 'Gathered worship' takes place on Sunday afternoons, and is arranged into two groups, as it is felt that 'large' groups (more than ten or so adults) are not conducive to relationship-building. Much thought about individual personalities and their fruitful conjunction goes into making decisions about groups, which are changed up regularly.

Shared households are encouraged to eat together and single-family and single-person households are arranged in 'clusters' so that they can share meals with other households, and include non-church members. Households hold house meetings, on a similar model to the.church-wide family meeting, in which decisions about, say, what food the household should buy (several households pooled their food budgets) are made, and small relational rituals undertaken, such as the practice of offering people 'affirmations' and 'pet peeves' –

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[4] Community-supported agriculture – a share in farm produce.

that is, telling a person something you have appreciated about them, and, with the peeves, sharing something that gets on your nerves in cohousing life. The community also has weekend-long biannual retreats. Sometimes they hire facilitators to lead retreats through various exercises, often around identifying personality traits and interaction 'styles'. There are frequent programmed storytelling and 'getting to know you' slots within a retreat weekend's busy schedule.

In addition to Sunday worship, family meetings and house meetings, and monthly neighbourhood outreach events, there are small-group meetings; fortnightly meetings of three people of the same sex, in which people pray with and for each other, in the words of the covenant, 'confess' to one another, 'shar[e] our intimate selves', 'process difficult decisions', and help each other along in their 'spiritual formation in Christ'. They are seen, approvingly, as contexts of high 'vulnerability', in which people trust one another with emotional and spiritual self-exposure. Along with households, small groups are responsible for each person's 'annual review': a process of reflection on each person's 'growth' in the past year, framed in the following questions: 'What gifts does this person bring to community life? How have you seen this person grow in the past year? What do you experience as challenges or areas of further growth for him or her?' Someone once described the annual review to me as an opportunity to 'chart your progress over time'. An element of the review is a financial review, though not everyone did this.

The group's framework of mutual encounter and accounting sits at the heart of what 'community' means to many members of LW. I asked Al what he meant by 'community' in an interview in the 'Green House', which he shared with his wife and two thirtysomething singles, who lived in the converted garage. The brightly painted corner bungalow has an extensive vegetable garden and, with windchimes and firewood stacked outside the door, is a picture of warm and rustic welcome. We ate homemade tomato soup, made by Sally from tomatoes Al had grown, with bread and butter and corn chips and Finnish mustard, gifts from another couple in the community. There were eggs, too, from the household's chickens. As housemate Craig cooked in the background, I asked Al what the value of living 'in community' was.

> I suppose: it brings out the worst in you…if there's any hope of maturing, it brings my
> materials bubbling up to the surface, so we can deal with it… [the Mennonite community

house where he and Sally had been house parents] was a really enriching experience, in part because it was very challenging, people would confront you on your issues…But ultimately, because it's …about being members of one another, members of a body…we are all bodies, and so the [Pauline] Body of Christ image makes sense, that this is the interrelationship of people who are striving together towards spiritual growth …we call it the school of conversion, because it is part of what's changing me from my former self to my desired self, [or] where God wants to take me in my growth, to be more and more godly, less selfly.

In practical terms, 'community' meant spending 'enough time together that we really know and are known by one another'. Al contrasted this with ordinary church, where congregants spent an hour or so a week together. Temporality was as much key to community as were geographic proximity and the discipline of frequent encounter. Al was a people person par excellence; he talked to everyone. So it surprised me once when, recounting an interminable train journey back from Montana (LW people tried not to fly), he told me about all the Hollywood blockbusters he'd watched to pass the time. Don't you talk to people? I asked, thinking of his incorrigible friendliness. No, never. You're not going to see that person again! My extroversion, he said, is directed at building relationships. And 'relationships' take time.

LW has a value, enshrined in its covenant, of consensus decision-making for major decisions. In the meetings, a show of raised fingers is used to create a visual tableau of the community's mind on a matter. There is no voting; the options for dissenting members are to voice their 'concerns', but 'submit' to the consensus, unless it is a matter of conscience, in which case they may veto. Sometimes, if an issue is proving tricky to find a consensus on, further meetings are convened to work it through. The sense that most people had, that deciding things took a long time, could be understood as a consequence of the kind of community LW was trying to be: one which held the Protestant and modern value of sincerity (Keane 2007; 2002; Seligman *et al* 2008; Trilling 1972) strongly, to a point where it was hoped that individual volition might furnish the glue of social togetherness – the individual being an agent ideally made tender by the mutual discipleship of 'community' (Bender 2003). In this view, being 'the Body' did not involve an individual's will being overridden without a chance for that individual to perform sincere speech; to witness, in classic Protestant style, to the fact and content of their inner conviction. And the mechanism for overriding minority wills also involved those individuals testifying sincerely to their acceptance of the consensus view, in tandem with their disagreement with it, thus retaining sincerity on all fronts.

LW's discourse and structure of life was filled with explicit anti-individualism, from its committee convened to change the lyrics of several songs in the community songbook from taking an 'I' to a 'we' perspective, to frequent talk of 'the Body', and homilies about 'detoxing from individualism'. One key element of this is the practice of 'mutual discernment', in which persons faced with a big decision get together with others in the church to, in the words of the covenant, 'listen to the Spirit together for direction'. The idea, my housemate Mike told me, is to build deep relationship, such that you can get to the point where you can 'speak into' each others' lives; influence each other. I asked him whether, if someone in LW had a big decision to make, he would expect them to draw him and his wife Anne into that decision-making. Yes, he would. This was actually a bit of a 'rub' for him, he said – 'I sort of have that expectation, and I've had to realise not everyone is there yet, not everyone is willing to make vulnerable these decisions … and invite others into that.' He continued: you 'have to lay down' some of your anxieties about such things 'if you're gonna take on a philosophy of community that is vulnerable, and believes that we're better together than we are alone.'

Mindful of the scepticism some members felt about mutual discernment, discussion during one of the community's 'novice night' education evenings I attended focused on communicating the value of mutual discernment. The theme of the evening was the church as the 'family of God'. The atmosphere in the meeting was the usual LW mixture of familial and businesslike. Al and Emily were giving each other back massages (a carryover from Al's own family traditions), some people had their dinners with them, there was much cheery, teasing banter, and there was a flipchart and a marker pen, and a time schedule.

So, people, said Jared, who with his wife was running the meeting, what are the attributes of a 'healthy family'? Suggestions were offered: 'love', 'trust', 'communication', 'common goals'. Al suggested 'accountability' – 'if I get outside of my stated values', people around me can help me get more 'congruent' with them again. Unlike your 'biological' family, the family of God, Jared explained, was a 'choice': you choose to forge bonds of love with 'strangers', who became 'family' as you bound with them in service of a common purpose, following Jesus. Jared took the group through the relevant bits of the covenant. The value of stability was a 'key piece', he said, which enables us to build 'relationships of deepening trust'. He talked about the features of LW that were family-like – the common fund, the family meeting, giving each other prayer and encouragement. Ok, so consensus decision-making was probably not what most families did, he conceded. But, we want to be a 'healthy' family. 'Sharing all important decisions' is vital, he

explained: through the community seeking God's will in discernment, the spirit of God is revealed in the group. The group so convened is more than the sum of its parts.

Part of the point of calling it 'family' was to underline how community wasn't about seeking out an affinity group, but about being committed to people, whoever they were. As one community member, Nate, pithily put it during the discussion, community is 'like family' – and family 'can be a bitch!' (Emily had phrased it more gently: 'Family is the people who, you're stuck with them, but that you care about.') One person told me how friends of hers couldn't understand why her household of mostly young, childless people, would commit to having regular meals with a large church family who lived a few doors away, come what may. The friends thought that 'friendship should just be natural'. In response, she'd said 'well, it's not friendship, it's family!'

Kanter (1973, 1972) has noted the ambition commonly expressed in utopian communities and communes to become a 'family' of sorts; and the 'family of God' idea has been taken up by American sects before now (for example Stein 1992). Nevertheless, Kanter notes, they are not quite so, more 'something between communities, organisations, families, and friendship groups' (1973: 401). The question of what kind of family the family of God is turns on the poles of 'choice' and its opposites. Choosing was an important motif in people's moral discourse about themselves, with ethical decision-making typically expressed in terms of 'good' and 'bad' 'choices', evoking an image of the self as a serially selecting entity. Nikolas Rose (1999) has noted the contemporary understanding of 'citizens as autonomous individuals who must actively construct a life through the practical choices they make about their conduct' (1999: 190). Indeed, 'modern individuals are not merely "free to choose"', Rose says, but '*obliged to be free*, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice' (1999: 87). This compulsion to freedom was disturbing to many people I knew in this movement, and some expressed explicit antipathy to the normativity of 'choice', even as they routinely expressed their moral selfhood in its terms. Nate would talk about community as part of a posture of 'choosing not to choose'; in which one submitted to the disciplines of group life as part of relinquishing the selfhood of the sovereign consumer.

In her study of the 'chosen families' of gay women and men in 1980s San Francisco, Weston (1991) has noted the binary that exists in American thought between kin, understood as unchosen, and friends, who one chooses. LW's usage draws on this binary to propose 'family' as an arena of 'choosing not to choose'. By being a family, LW offers a route into lack of choice ('you're stuck with them!'), thereby creating a site of moral self-disciplining through a redeemed kind of choosing: in which one chooses, over and again, to associate warmly with everyone in the group, to 'speak into' others' lives and receive the speech of others into one's own, to meld

one's intentions with those of others, to 'intentionally' build bonds of 'love' with people one never would have chosen to, say, marry, or even take advice from. (The discipline of the small groups enforced mutual mentoring regardless of chosen friendship affinities. Some people found this difficult, while others felt 'challenged' by it, in a good way). The choosing self thus remains central: a person who showed their commitment by dutiful participation in group activities, but showed no zeal for relational work, would likely not be thought to be participating in the 'family' fully.

Bell and Coleman (1999) describe the 'Western ideal' of friendship (as opposed to family) as 'involving…voluntarism…and freedom from structural constraints' (1999: 10). Recalling Kanter's 'something between communities, organisations, families, and friendship groups' (1973: 401), the family of God may be seen as a proposal of relationality based on a kind of purified association akin to that described by Bell and Coleman, but framed as an enduring bond of internally willed obligation. Anthropologists (Cannell & McKinnon 2013, Carsten 2003) have argued for a softening of the contrast between 'Western' concepts of the person, thought to be understood as an individual above all, and other societies' supposedly more embedded concepts of personhood, noting the existence of Western ways of being that reflect less hermetic understandings of the person than those imagined in the strongest versions of the thesis of Western ontological individualism. As we have seen, my informants in LW were, like the viewpoint challenged by Cannell, Carsten and others, convinced of the strong individualism of American culture, to which they counterposed 'community'. It was this conviction of the iron grip of individualism that informed their vision of the need to create a social organism that made sociality inescapable, while it was an ontological individualism of their own that conceived the sinews of this organism as being made from the stuff of mutually disciplined individual wills (as opposed to connections enforced through 'legalism', or hierarchy).

Founded on neither 'nature' nor 'law' (Carsten 2003: 154), the two primary routes to kinship cited by Carsten, the family of God is constituted through the paradigmatic Christian virtue, 'love', which is imagined as a product of virtuous intention, that becomes felt through its practice. Indeed, the family of God stands, with its biblical derivation in the idea of a new life in Christ, for the transcendence of the bonds of 'substance' and 'code' (2003: 162). Much as this movement embraces concepts that connote social embeddedness, invoking 'tribe', 'ritual', and 'tradition' as part of their neo-traditional turn, there remains the purification drive that expects individual intentionality to do the work of familial connection that 'substance' and 'code' do under less stringent regimes.

'Reconciliation is the centre of our work'

In LW, 'knowing' and being known were key elements of what community was about, with intimacy founded in knowledge and intention both sign and goal of the ongoing work of 'building relationships'. Indeed there was a sense in this peace-witnessing community that mutual knowing was the key machine of peace: the core 'work' the group set themselves in their covenant, of 'reconciliation', its centrality repeated each week in the opening words of gathered worship, which include the phrase 'reconciliation is the centre of our work', appeared to be in large part a process of mutual self-report. Even – especially – difficult, tension-ridden speaking and listening was thought to bring trusting intimacy, which itself was understood to be something potentially redemptive – love.

In their study of 'ritual', Seligman, Weller, Puett and Simon (2008) propose two contrasting 'orientation[s] to action': 'ritual' and 'sincerity', in which ritual offers a 'subjunctive' frame of action; an 'as if' (2008: 7) shared world, that is in contrast to 'sincere forms of approaching the world' (2008: 8), which, in contrast to the 'as if' frame, 'project an "as is" vision of what often becomes a totalistic, unambiguous vision of reality "as it really is"' (2008: 8). One of the distinctive elements of the new evangelical turn is its move away from some of the key performances of sincerity central to evangelical forms, such as giving one's testimony and evangelistic witnessing, and, in deliberate contrast, its embrace of 'ritual' marked as such, for example eating of a Seder meal at Easter to commemorate Jesus's Jewish context, or parading the Eucharist.

But the sincerity 'orientation' remains, and may be seen in a community such as LW's understanding of its ethical function as a site of ongoing work of reconciliation. 'One typical feature of sincerity', Seligman *et al.* observe, is 'the proclivity of people to reflect deeply on their ideas, to make them explicit and orderly', through interior self-scrutiny; 'constantly question[ing] and justify[ing] their motives for action' (2008: 115). While members of a group such as LW are often satirical and disparaging about the sincerity practices of the evangelical mainstream, the group's understanding of community as a site of potential interpersonal abrasion and conflict, which then can be 'worked on' through speech revelatory of inner states, is an example of the sincerity orientation.

People would tell me that the intimacy I witnessed among community members was the product of years of relational 'work' of reconciliation. One former resident of a well-bonded-seeming household told me once with an indulgent eye roll, oh, you wouldn't believe the relational work

we've done over the years! Relationship work was often underway in LW: in the words of another member, putting a less enthusiastic gloss, 'Every day in LW there is something'. Sometimes I would come in on pairs of people talking intently. Some people made dates to get together to 'practise reconciliation' if they were having a tension or dispute. My housemate, Anne, would fairly frequently programme into her schedule meetings for reconciliation. Sometimes a mediator was involved, chosen by the leadership team.

A biblical template for reconciliation, Matthew 18: 15-20, is specified in the covenant. This is the place in the gospel where Jesus lays out how to deal with conflict in a community: one-on-one in the first instance, then drawing in other members of the church if resolution has not been achieved in the private encounter. In line with this, initiating reconciliation was as much about articulating one's own grievances as it was seeking forgiveness when you had aggrieved another, so reconciliation wasn't typically about making peace in the first instance, but about performing sincerity. Once, Emily was explaining to me about the community's relational norms, and she said they had an aspiration to 'normalise conflict'. I'd quibbled: surely you mean normalising conflict's *resolution*, not the actual conflict? No, we mean normalising conflict. That is, recognising it as normal and being open about it. Looking over the minutes of a family meeting, my eye was drawn to a minute that recorded that two people didn't 'enjoy one another'. There was a slot in the meeting for pairs of people to offer brief tales of conflicts and their resolution. And, there were the 'pet peeves' and 'affirmations'. In each of these practices, there was an expectation that truth-telling about interior states was the route to peace – even if, necessarily, a long route. And people were clear that it was about interior states: explaining pet peeves to me, Anne indicated that they were more accounts of one's own feelings, than statements of empirical problems.

One practice that some people liked to use in their reconciliation work is a technique created by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, called Nonviolent Communication (NVC) (see Rosenberg 2003). NVC lays out a parsimonious style of talking about grievances that aimed to excise all accusation ('violence') from the process of talking about conflict, by limiting statements to plain reports of one's emotional 'needs'. This lexical discipline distilled much of the implicit philosophy of reconciliation, in that it proposed self-reflexive truth telling – 'sincerity' – as pure of violence. Like consensus decision-making, reconciliation along NVC lines offers an implicit rejection of both legal and political ways of resolving disputes. It refuses, as 'violence', the creation of extra-individual routes to resolution, making sure that the integrity of each individual self involved is not compromised by mechanisms that might override its truth-telling. Rather than the existence of plural truths being intrinsically a source of difficulty, it is imagined in NVC that the performance of multiple individual sincerities is itself a possible route to peace.

One day, I accompanied Nate and Anne to a panel discussion on intentional community run by the local Quaker Volunteer Service. Those gathered were mainly people involved, or thinking about getting involved, in mostly Christian-based intentional communities. Nate talked about community as a challenge to the 'systems of domination', prompting some discussion about the 'program' that had been 'downloaded into our psyche' by these systems. Anne spoke about how a good way 'to start rewriting the program' was to use community to 'hold up a mirror' to the oppressive structures that are within us, as well as in power over us. She cited the LW covenant commitment that reads: 'when the powerful oppress the vulnerable, we commit to show up, to listen, to speak the truth and to pray'.

Sometimes, she said, the oppressor can be yourself. She took an example from her life in LW, when people in the community had told her that she was 'oppressing someone' in the community, and so other people 'showed up, listened', as she and the other party met to reconcile; they 'spoke the truth' and 'prayed for us', and all this 'unlocked' the 'relationship'. Listening instead of fighting, it's a 'powerful tool', Anne said. An older woman in the audience reflected that in these kinds of encounters, people are developing 'skills'; to speak, to *name*, what's going on in relationships. People agreed it was part of a stance against the domination systems to 'name' when bad things are happening.

As per the value of 'naming' things, people within LW made a point of putting conflict out in the open, even memorialising it as part of the ceremonies of collective self-knowledge which formed part of the group's ritual repertoire. For example, at the end of the year, a handwritten wallchart went up in The Barn showing what had happened in the community over the year. People getting new jobs, couples getting together, newcomers arriving, and the positive emotional responses to them, were recorded. The sadder side of life was in there too: the day that Craig's dad died, the day that Emily and Ronan broke up. And, conflicts: one day was marked as the day that Jennifer moved out of The Barn and was happy, because she hadn't liked living there – two houses were drawn, with a stick-figure Jennifer skipping gaily from one to the other.

In Anabaptist traditions, the Matthew 18 template for 'spiritual government' within the covenanted community is understood in terms that include the idea of 'admonishment'; that is, the idea that going to someone and confronting them if they have wronged you has a quality of discipline (Littell 1958). LW's covenant does contain the language of 'admonishment', but the discursive emphasis was very much on the reconciliation, that is, the relational process between the parties involved, not on the perceived wrong. In verse 17 of the Matthew passage, which a book on Christian intentional community produced by people in this movement calls 'Jesus's process for reconciling relationships' (Janzen *et al* 2013: 113), Jesus lays out the final stage in the

process of dealing with a community breach: 'If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector' (NIV). Some traditional Anabaptist communities have taken this to mean excommunication, 'shunning' individuals and families who do not submit to collective discipline (Littell 1958: 86). The 'Ban' is not, however, a part of the Anabaptist heritage that this movement has embraced. 'Reconciliation' is spoken of, rather than discipline. Not once in my time in LW did I hear the option of exclusion being discussed, although I did hear that someone had almost been asked to leave some years ago. Indeed, if anything, 'reconciliation' was sometimes pursued somewhat relentlessly.

Communitarians in this turn place strong emphasis on seeking the spiritual formation of reconciling work: in the words of one communitarian handbook, 'to reconcile and forgive every offence between us, maintaining the peace of Christ' (Janzen *et al* 2013: 116). But what if people don't want to keep up the relational work?

Departures

In practice, only some people slotted comfortably into this relational regime. Thus there emerged a pattern of a core of people who were 'stable' in the community, and a penumbral membership of shorter terms, many of whom expressed a view that spontaneous affection was a better foundation for relationship than 'intentional' relationship-building. Although, as people would remind me, LW was much more stable than many similar communities, which often fizzled out quite quickly, the church was not, the 'stability' commitment notwithstanding, an especially stable group. Of the seven people who chose to become 'vowed' members at the end of the community's first year, in 2009, all but one were still members in the intentional community in 2014. But of the 11 who at various points before the category's abolition were defined as 'practising' members, only four remained in 2014. When the 'vowed' and 'practising' categories were merged into one 'covenanted' membership in 2012, 14 people became members. Of these, five had left the community by 2014. From the end of the community's trial year, in autumn 2009, to 2014, the community had 25 members. Of these, 13 were still members in 2015. So, around half of those committing to remain had left, and around 12 further people, according to the group's records, had between 2008 and 2014 availed themselves of one of the options for uncommitted exploration.

Leaving the community without using mutual discernment to make this decision was a point of contention. One such departure happened while I was living with the Hasses. A couple, the

Ehrlichs, who had been with the community for around 18 months, were thinking of leaving. They had had some informal meetings with church members, but it was clear that they had more or less made up their minds to go. Anne shared with me her misgivings about this, in view of the covenant expectation of mutual discernment. The previous summer, three other people had left membership, also without mutual discernment, and Anne was increasingly wondering what being a 'covenanted' member of LW meant to people. She speculated: perhaps they were thinking of what they'd agreed to as a kind of 'growing towards' full commitment, or an 'exploration of' such commitment? She reflected sadly that this was an area that she herself would need to 'work on' and 'grow in' herself, perhaps through having some discernment meetings of her own.

For the Ehrlichs' part, it had been difficult for them to get along with what one of them referred to as the 'schedulised' nature of LW's shared life. The roster of meetings had been 'draining' for them, and the planning that was necessary to make sure that everyone met regularly seemed to them to militate against the spontaneity they valued as an important ingredient in 'relationships'. The two of them preferred to act 'out of a place of passion', rather than 'obligation', Dean Ehrlich told me. One of the things they struggled with was the meetings. A conscientious and kind person, who took whatever she was doing quite seriously, Sophy Ehrlich told me she had come to dread the meetings, and the long slog toward consensus. She had found it hard to concentrate, and started to think, if I'm not here mentally, why am I here physically? One of the things she lamented about the family meetings – which were programmed literally to the minute – was that she was a person who 'takes time to process', and so she didn't feel able to participate meaningfully in the time allowed. It felt wrong to her to not be 'fully present' to a situation. I asked Dean once if he thought having a group was important for a person's faith. No, a group is essential, he said. It's the structure that's the problem. But how does a group stay together without structure? 'Because it wants to'. This answer recalls the 'voluntarism…and freedom from structural constraints' of Bell and Coleman's 'Western ideal' of friendship.

Sophy and Dean's comments show a commitment to immediate sincerity of feeling that the community's structured demands appeared to both encourage and thwart. More than finding the meetings boring, it seemed that Sophy found them distressing, because she wanted to 'be present to' things, to bring the whole of her self to whatever she was doing. This will to sincerity was experienced by her, it seemed, as both duty and desire. But depth involvement in one's relationships was equally an important value for those people, like Anne, for whom LW's setpiece interactions were an indispensable part of being 'in community'. Sally, too, was saddened by how many people resented the meetings burden – she liked the meetings, she said –

'these are my people', and she wanted to spend time with them. There seemed in both the Ehrlichs' emotional exhaustion at the demands of community, and Anne's distress at people's unilateralist departures, a common expectation of interiority thoroughly engaged with the social; no room permitted for facework (Goffman 1955) or action that did not engage persons at a deep interior level.

Although Anne's invoking of the covenant might be interpreted as a defence of LW's legal framework, it seemed that it was not people's failure to follow the letter of the LW law that disturbed her – the Ehrlichs did concede to having a meeting with the church to discuss their departure, which Anne didn't go to, as it seemed to her moot, since the pair were leaving anyway. What she minded was people not taking covenant-ordained mutual discernment to heart. Without such interior commitment, the hoped-for melding of intentions in community could hardly work. Al also expressed unease at people leaving without mutually discerning. Discernment helps us grow, he remarked, as he carved me a napkin ring (everyone in the community had one, and a napkin sewn by Sally). The point was to open yourself out, to make yourself 'vulnerable' to others.

For those most wedded to this necessarily processual model of community, the group's discursivity was a source of wry pride – I remember Sally once exclaiming with what sounded like loving exasperation: 'we can't agree on anything!' For others, it was too much to ask – in the words of one half of a couple who left: 'we're just done processing'.

Living intentionally: ethics and self-knowledge

Key to the work of ethical self-fashioning within this and other new evangelical communities was the concept of 'intentionality'. People frequently declared their intent to be 'more intentional' in practising some aspect of quotidian life in a particular way. As a disposition, intentionality, the deliberate orientation of one's intent towards behaving in certain ways, is much like self-discipline. It is distinctive, however, in its reflexivity. Much of the work of 'intentionality' is exhortatory; one declares one's intentionality, or, more often, one's *intention* to be intentional, and this declaration acts as a confession (one has not yet been intentional) and an exhortation to self and, implicitly, other. In intending to intend, one displays one's commitment to moral choosing as such, to acting well *on purpose*, and in so doing reminds oneself and others that being deliberate in one's doings is as important as the ethical qualities of those doings themselves. Intentionality may also be understood as the active mode of 'sincerity', in line with both the subculture's emphasis on 'practice' over stated conviction, and its enduring care for interior states. Through

'intentionality', particular ethical aims are, in a sense, put in their place, enframed within the larger project of a person's self-formation in the virtues.

Reflexive intention and self-knowledge form the key dyad of self-responsibility in this subculture. In the new evangelical imagination, an important facet of moral personhood is a managerial and quasi-clinical reflexivity about one's own functioning. People get an ethical handle on themselves through working to assimilate expert knowledges about the psychological and social self. Rose (1999) writes about the dissemination of psychological knowledges in 'advanced liberal modes of government', such that 'the practices of everyday life can be organised according to the ethic of autonomous selfhood'. He writes of 'therapeutic' 'technologies' that people engage across a wide range of situations, from legal to medical to professional, which represent 'a certain rationality for rendering experience into thought in a way that makes it practicable, amenable to having things done to it' (1999: 90).

Before moving in to a LW house, everyone had to fill in a detailed online questionnaire. The questionnaire asks for 'stories' to illustrate the kind of person you are, and for an account of what 'inspires' you, what your 'gifts' are, etc. The respondent is invited to use the popular Myers Briggs personality test, if they wish, to give a sense of their personality. Thus practices of witnessing to the sincere, and evidentially validated, self begin before a person moves in. The email acknowledgement says: 'Thank you for your vulnerability and enthusiasm in filling out this questionnaire'. 'Vulnerability', as we have seen, has in this subculture the character of a virtue – as a deliberate posture, rather than a susceptibility, it implies a person's willingness to put their personhood to the service of love-knit community.

Personality tests were popular 'tools' of self- and community organisation in this new-evangelical world. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator derives sixteen personality types from combinations of four basic personality 'preferences', while the Enneagram is a schema of 'ancient' origin that posits nine interlocking personality types. Both tests are popular in the business world, as well as in church circles. Myers Briggs, which people had typically first encountered in college or seminary, was widely familiar, with most people seemingly knowing their Myers-Briggs 'type'. This type is expressed as an acronym, beginning with 'I' for 'introvert' or 'E' for 'extrovert', the two options for the first personality preference, which the typology calls 'favourite world' – i.e., which 'world', the 'inner' or the 'outer', the individual prefers to focus on. The rest of the acronym is made up of letters indicating the person's 'preference' regarding how they 'take in' and digest 'information', and how they make decisions, and their relative enthusiasm for each of these two activities. Anne once explained to me the two preferences for taking in information: as

'discrete blocks of data', or as 'webs of meaning'. Both the Enneagram and the Myers Briggs make reference to the individual's relationship with an 'outer', or 'outside', world. Another popular framework was the idea of the 'highly sensitive person' (HSP). People were used to giving quasi-diagnostic account of themselves, they knew which learning and communication 'styles' they 'did well with', they could tell you which 'gifts' – leadership, empathic listening – they had, and which they did not.

Neuropsychology also offered useful templates for pragmatic self-management. In one gathered worship, Craig presented a homily on 'mercy', invoking ideas about the brain to make his moral argument. He presented the idea that 'mirror neurons' prompt humans to mirror other people's emotional responses, and thus to see things from the other person's point of view. He also cited 'communication studies' that showed that emotions are 'contagious'. 'I really want homilies and teachings to change us', Craig said feelingfully, as he encouraged us to 'capitalise on' the opportunity for spreading goodness that was furnished by these capacities in our very brains. People talked about this in practical terms, such as 'de-escalation' in work situations, with clients. These references to work contexts are indicative of the holism and managerialism of this subculture's approach to moral character, in which appropriate professional behaviour is not generally marked as distinct from virtue in personal life, emerging as it does from the same scientific evidential base, and conforming to the same absolute moral principle (empathy, compassion). Managing one's own and others' emotions was not a matter for either epistemological or vocational boundaries.

Michel Foucault (1997 [1994]) writes, famously, about 'technologies of the self'; which he defines as 'technologies which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (1997: 225). There is a sense in which people in this subculture approach their own functioning – using the language of 'energy' sources, 'information processing', 'overstimulation' – from a perspective of themselves as operative and useful organisms, whose responsible management is enabled through the application of, to use Foucault's language in relation to the arts of government, 'a whole complex of savoirs' (1997: 142) about the organism and its operation. Rose (1999) argues that people living under the ethico-governmental regime of contemporary Western societies, in which individuals are constrained to be free to self-cultivate, are, citing Abraam de Swaan, 'proto-professionals' (1999: 87), that is, they organise their lives according to 'the basic stances and vocabularies' of

professionals, as they are 'responsibilised' into particular kinds of self-care (1999: 88). The diverse technical vocabularies of self that people in LW applied to their projects of self-fashioning bore out this imperative.

Diagnosing one's personality type, undergoing exercises and 'experiments' to stretch cognitive muscles to ethical ends, perhaps through keeping a watch on one's responses through journalling or discussion, and engaging in the self-disclosures of reconciliation processes and small-group testimony, are the technologies of the self undertaken by people in this subculture. Foucault argues that it is with Christianity, and the centrality of 'truth obligations' (1997: 242) to that religion, that self-examination became a public discipline (1997: 244). He remarks that in Christianity, 'Each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to try to know what is happening inside of him, to acknowledge faults, to recognise temptations, to locate desires; and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community… a purification of the soul [is] impossible without self-knowledge' (1997: 242).

The early monastic writings drawn on by Foucault in his excavation of Christian ideas about self-discipline show the monk expected to keep watch over the 'smallest movements of consciousness, his intentions', such that he 'stands in a hermeneutic relation to himself'. The necessary context for this self-knowing is the 'permanent verbalisation of all [his] thoughts' to his monastic overseer (1997: 248). 'The permanent verbal' (1997: 248), then, is an 'ideal' of conduct in which thoughts are verbalised, within a context of a monastic situation of obedience, and 'an analytical and continual verbalisation of thoughts' from that position of obedience to a superior within the monastic hierarchy (1997: 249). This is a scenario these evangelical 'monastics' would doubtless recognise, albeit on a model of mutual 'accountability'. 'Speaking and transcribing…our thoughts' (1997: 248) is certainly what LW do, or aim to do. Note how in Foucault's description, self-knowing, self-discipline, and public self-witnessing are knotted together in mutual reinforcement.

The managerial turn

In this intentional community, which seeks to bring interior and public selves into consonance, there is also an explicit drive to recentre the work, spiritual and domestic spheres of an individual's life on the common territory of 'community'. I would argue that in this, we see some of the habits of the 'holistic' contemporary American workplace (Lambert 2009) applied, with the retention of some of that context's rationalised, even productivity-focused, outlook on the management of

persons, although bent to the community's own, non-commercial, personal- ethics-focused purposes.

Lake Lambert (2009) has noted that corporate management thought has long been intertwined with spirituality in the US context, while several authors have noted the central place of the management of the affective and spiritual life of workers in contemporary management theory and practice (Hochschild 2003 [1983]; Lambert 2009; Rudnyckyj 2009), of which inculcating practices of self-management is a central part. In his study of 'corporate spirituality' in the US (2009: 21), Lambert (2009) examines the trend for companies to promote an idea of a 'holistic workplace', where reading groups, 'personal development programs' (2009: 33), spiritual retreats and other techniques are used to frame the workplace as a spiritually meaningful context for workers. Lambert notes that while nineteenth-century industrial 'welfare capitalism' – which drew inspiration from that era's proliferation of utopian communities for some of its schemes for community living – often showed an overtly spiritual face, over time, behavioural psychology began to predominate among ideas promulgated within business for the thriving of personnel and companies (2009: 30). 'Relationships' (2009: 31) came to matter more within the workplace, and to become a kind of currency of management, while the application of psychology to the corporate body itself, as 'corporate culture' (2009: 34-5), amenable to analysis and modification, emerged alongside attention to the psychology of employees.

Lambert views the contemporary corporation that seeks to be a "holistic workplace" as 'the new *oikos* of our time', using the New Testament Greek term for the 'household', meaning sometimes more all-embracing than in its contemporary Western usages; the 'centre of economic production, faith, and family life'. This corporate drive to holism he sees as part of a 'quest for higher productivity' (2009: 21). I would argue that what we see in the personal-managerial protocols of a group such as LW is a reallocation of these corporate management techniques to another aspirant *oikos*, that of the integrated 'community'. Although the corporation's capitalist goal is not the aim of such a community, groups such as LW have adopted, via the mutual imbrication of evangelical academia, spiritual self-help publishing, and business worlds (Lambert 2009; see also Thrift 2005), norms about and 'tools' for self-formation and group life that emerged in part from contexts where seeking 'productivity' was the primary goal. In reorienting these ideas toward community life, they bring to that life a certain businesslike character.

One example of this is the personal, or sometimes family, mission statement. 'Success literature' (2009: 93) writer Stephen Covey is the source of this idea, which several of my informants had adopted. One couple's family mission statement, for example, says that, 'compelled by God to

love', the family of four 'promote[s] the spiritual, physical and emotional health of our family and our community'. Jared told me that self-care at the level of body, soul and relationships was 'what we, as a family, really want to see'. In this we see a quasi-professional reflexive posture toward one's own life, a public testimony of intent, implicitly accountable, as well as self-governmental (Foucault 2006).

Covey features in the work of Rudnyckyj (2014; 2009), who writes about training programmes that bring a mix of Islamic ethics and Western management ideas and popular psychology to the project of spiritual reform of the employees of a government-owned Indonesian steel plant, which was preparing for possible privatisation in a context of increasing global competition. The programmes are representative of a wider drive within the country to orient its workforce to the pressures of globalised economy – Rudnyckyj tells us that the Indonesian president invoked Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (2013 [1988]), with its 'lessons for self-government', as good advice for a country seeking to attain "national dynamism" (2014: 110). Rudnyckyj (2009) calls the mixture of 'Islamic and capitalist ethics' in the training programmes he studies a 'spiritual economy' (2009: 105), in which an array of pedagogic resources are aimed at 'inculcat[ing] individual accountability, responsibility, and self-management' (2009: 107). 'Spiritual reform is … designed … to elicit an ethic of self-government… referred to as "built-in control"' (2009: 118). The programmes 'involved work on the self that sought to create "economies of affect" in which techniques to "manage one's emotions" and relate better with coworkers were introduced' (2009: 119).

We might see parallels between this very different context and LW's pastoral expectations of self-management through knowing oneself through various expert taxonomies, and undertaking practices, such as annual review, mutual-discernment decision making, journalling, and other reflexive, and mostly discursive, practices aimed at one's spiritual 'growth'. Rudnyckyj points to a 'link between labour, individual accountability, and religious piety', which he says is 'constitutive of a spiritual economy' (2009: 128). In the LW context, I would argue that 'labour' is not the main aim, but where in the Indonesian context, 'work' is rendered into 'worship', in LW, the 'work' of self-honing personhood, through 'intentional' 'relationship', is seen as a primary religious duty. Self-management and self-responsibility, framed by Rudnyckyj as facets of a 'neoliberal' ethics, are seen as self-evident goods in the LW context, to the extent that it is felt that ordinary life ought to be shot through with a methodical commitment to periodic self- scrutiny, and attention paid to strategies for improvement. This might be viewed as Weber's Protestant work ethic (Weber 2005), but applied to the work of self-formation – labour in a vocation that is one's own spiritual growth.

Charles Taylor has proposed that in the eighteenth century in Europe there emerged, especially through the thought of John Locke, a figure of the 'punctual self' (Taylor 1989: 163), that is, a self that is able to take a 'radical stance of disengagement to himself or herself with a view to remaking' (1989: 171). This self 'objectif[ies]' itself, taking 'control' over itself through 'disengagement' (1989: 160). This posture of disengagement, he says, derived from earlier Enlightenment thinkers, such as Descartes. One important feature of the contemporary Christian communitarian movement described here is its ideological opposition to precisely this 'Enlightenment' posture, its conviction of the hubris of habits of mind that take a bird's eye view of the world and one's place in it. And yet, people trained themselves to act on themselves, to be both intentional and effective. This tension, between seeking the embedded life and the reflexively examined one, relates to implicit questions about the status of the individual in relation to 'world' that underlie this ambiguously individualist movement.

Taylor has also made a distinction between what he calls the 'buffered selves' (Taylor 2007) of modernity, and the 'porous selves' of the 'enchanted world' (2007: 27) that he argues prevailed in societies that had not undergone 'disenchantment' (2007: 29). Porous selves inhabited a world replete with spiritual forces, and in which 'the line between personal agency and impersonal force was not at all clearly drawn' (2007: 32). A porous self might become inhabited by spirits, as in possession (2007: 35). But a buffered self is not vulnerable in the same way – 'for the modern, buffered self, the possibility exists of … disengaging from everything outside the mind' (2007: 38), a self that experiences a boundary that marks 'inner' from 'outer'.

On the whole, the selves of new-evangelical community are not very permeable. Selves that are spoken and written of in terms of, for example, 'taking in information', or 'spending time in' one's interior world, are uncontroversially imagined as things with carapaces. LW people weren't entirely buffered: people heard from God within themselves, and the work of discernment involved distinguishing God's voice from one's own (see T.M. Luhrmann 2012 for a discussion of an American evangelical milieu where more attention was paid to this work). Several people told me they believed that demons were real, and one person mentioned that spiritual ill could travel across generations in a way that was neither psychological nor genetic. But in their day-to-day use of the technologies of the self described above, not only were the selves people inhabited worked upon according to assumptions that they were buffered, indeed potentially

hermetic (as in the very prevalent self-diagnoses of introversion), but there seemed to be a prevailing moral anxiety about being too buffered.

In evoking the condition of porous selfhood, Taylor writes of the person feeling 'vulnerable or "healable"…to benevolence or malevolence…which resides in the cosmos or even beyond it' (2007: 36). As we have seen, people in LW spoke often of making oneself 'vulnerable' to the thoughts and feelings of others, using the word to denote a good – indeed, almost safe – state to be in, and there is a sense in which mutual discernment might be understood as work to overcome buffering, to allow the interiorities of others (including but not only the Holy Spirit's) to pour into one's own, and enable a mutual flow. As in psychotherapy, 'healing' was imagined to be emergent in spoken relationship.

What appear to these communities to be the moral perils of the modern self are hermetic isolation, and the rather opposite-sounding danger of fragmentation. Both are locally understood as 'individualism'. The fragmentation part of this is the moral nightmare (to them) of organic solidarity (Durkheim 1984), in which persons are distributed across a global economic system, component parts of a whole whose organic character makes it monstrous. Some of the work of Christian 'community', therefore, involves pulling the moral person back together, and making them *more* of a self-responsible, 'intentional', individual, and less of a thing distributed across a large system. But another part of the work is to make that reconstituted person less sealed off from other persons, to make thinner the membrane between their self and other selves. Although constant self-work as a self-fashioning, reflexive, indeed 'punctual' self might appear opposite to ambitions for transcending self, increasing one's porosity in relation to other selves can hardly be begun if the parts of oneself are flung to all the corners of the globalised world, through imbrication in systems that separate spheres.

'Love wins!'

Offering an afterword to an anthropological discussion of Christian notions of personhood, in which the terms 'dividual' and 'individual' featured as contrasting models of the person, Michael Lambek (2015) suggests that the two models might be viewed as 'mutual dimensions' (2015: 402) of human experience and relations, rather than contrasting kinds of person. In challenging the debate to push further, he asks: 'what's love got to do with it?' He notes that 'love' is a 'key symbol' within Christianity, and the 'tremendous salience' of the idea of love in Western cultures (2015: 398). Love, Lambek remarks, is a notable 'manifestation' of 'dividuality' as well as being

an 'index of "modernity"' (2015: 395). With love thus framed as a value both highly modern and highly dividual, Lambek presents it as a potential key to the question of how one of the two contrasting perspectives on the person comes to win out over the other in a given society.

As American Christians in an evangelical tradition, my Quimby informants frequently invoked 'love'. Blue and white mosaics stood in LW's members' windows, proclaiming to passing neighbours, 'Love Wins' – the closest the group got to text-based evangelism. 'Love' was something for a person to 'grow in' through the pedagogic refinement of the 'school of conversion'; love's growth necessarily involved a person's repentance from 'individualism'. LW's mission statement includes the phrase 'sacrificially loving our neighbourhood' – sacrifice being, of course, the preeminent Christian act.

So, what is 'love', and what are its effects on personhood? In the answers I got from LW people, it was care, attention, self-giving – not so much a feeling, as a baseline commitment to the other. Some people emphasised sacrifice – which, as the case of my housemate Mike, was simply the difficulty of honing the 'skills' necessary to behave relationally in ways that didn't come naturally to him. Mike said that it was 'part of my job' to 'cultivate' his relationship with the 'God of love'. The more he did this, 'the more loving a person I become', and so 'those [interactional] things become more natural'. Love may look like work sometimes, but it is also a force: in Mike's impassioned words – 'love is powerful, love breaks down walls, love is more powerful than conflict, and false assumptions – love wins, you know!'

Love 'breaks down walls', it is akin to getting to know people, it is sacrificial work. I would argue that in the Christian (and of course not just Christian) value of 'love', we see a relationalism that both countervails against and coopts Taylor's buffered self. What one might call the 'individualism' of the local ethos of 'intentionality' and self-scrutiny is brought into service of community-creation. LW's practice of mutual discernment, and its several fora for 'speaking into one another's lives', point to an ambition to use the stuff of the self-reflexive individual to create a supra-individual thinking Body. The family of God is bound in love, as other families are, and what this 'love' looks like is in part mutual governance.

In the very different context of highland Papua New Guinea, among a small community called the Urapmin, who converted to charismatic Christianity, seemingly rather suddenly, during a revival in the 1970s (Robbins 2004: 1-2), Joel Robbins (2004) describes a situation in which the 'relationalism' that prevailed in that society before the incorporation of Christianity sits uneasily alongside the 'individualism' of the Christianity they have taken on. 'Relationalism' he defines as when a society accords 'paramount value' to relationships among persons, rather than vesting value in the social whole, as in 'holism'; or in individuals, as in 'individualism' (2004: 292). He

describes what Urapmin relationalism looks like: 'people spend much of their social energy recruiting others to their projects of building villages and assembling gardening groups, hunting parties, and football teams…Structurally very fluid, this kind of social life demands that people pursue relationalism as a value – for if they do not work to create and maintain relationships, they are likely to find themselves without many' (Robbins 2015: 184). Christianity, with its individual person as the unit of salvation, brings 'individualism' to this relationalist context, and the condition of carrying at once the expectations of both the 'values' (Robbins 2015) of relationalism and individualism creates strain among the Urapmin, who feel themselves very sinful whenever they find themselves trying to engender the (sometimes aggressive) relational connections the traditional morality demands.

Robbins describes a ritual of contemporary Urapmin life, in which people gather for a dance, called 'Spirit disko', where some people become possessed by the Holy Spirit. This possession clears out the sins from their hearts, and renders them exhausted and purged at the end, finally free from the 'heaviness' of sin. The dance is typically flailing and violent, and the atmosphere seems to excite desire and aggression, and thereby to express the sinful 'wilfulness' that it also purges (2004: 287). Robbins remarks that this rite appears to briefly resolve the tension between traditional and Christian expectations of the person, by legitimising 'wilfulness' as desire for the Holy Spirit.

In LW's verbal work of relationship, such as its meetings for reconciliation, I argue that we see sources of conflict, indicators of difference among individuals in the community, having their sting drawn by virtue of their thorough confession and display. Like the wilfulness that is engendered and spent in the Spirit disko, the conflict that is anathema to 'community' is 'dealt with' and 'worked on' in rites of 'healthy communication' that take away conflict's danger by making it ingredient in the attainment of peace. What LW meetings seem to be about more generally is the performance of individual selves as sign of their own overcoming through 'community' – as long as a person is in the room, giving detailed self-account of the ways in which they diverge and disagree, their individuality is paying in, as it were, to the collectivity, which self-constitutes each time it is gathered together.

Whereas for Urapmin, inhabiting a world not long 'modern' or dominated by individualist values (see Bialecki *et al* 2008 for a discussion of how Christianity tends to look individualistic in non-modern societies, and to oppose individualism in societies, such as the US, where individualism has long been a paramount value), 'relationalism' was to be suppressed in favour of care for the individual soul, in this American evangelical context, performances of self-report were to be carefully directed toward the 'building' of 'relationships'. Forging connections among persons

was *the* task for these communitarian Christians; reformed personhood could not proceed without it. As I have said, 'individualism' in LW members' understanding was something like isolation, a lack of connections. LW people and other communitarians frequently used the language of 'webs', and 'weaving', 'sinews', and 'connection', and explicitly connected this with Christianity. (Nate would speak of the intrinsic relationalism of the Christian God, in the *perichoresis* of the Trinity, which he, in line with some commentators, called a 'dance' among the three persons of God.) Where Urapmin had to remind themselves not to create connections in the old ways, the ethical demands on LW have them urging themselves in the opposite direction; toward making sure they regularly convoke together, meet for walks, repeatedly pour their self-testimonies into the common pot, all in the service of 'growing in love'. Relational connection was the thing that LW members had to push themselves toward, much as Urapmin felt they ought to abstain from it.

Robbins (2015) has argued that 'values' such as individualism, relationalism and holism exist in tension with one another in societies, vying for domination. He argues that in the Christian cases he knows, individualism has tended to 'encompa[ss] relationships and relational values in the most valued domains [of social life]' (2015: 189). Louis Dumont writes that, in 'opposition to holism, we call individualist an ideology which valorises the individual…and neglects or subordinates the social whole' (Dumont 1986: 279). LW members would declare themselves holists by that definition, however their small-scale holism is in service of the edification of the individual, and the idea of individuals as component parts of a giant social whole, as in persons' imbrication in organic solidarity, is in fact obscene to them. It is important to recognise that the ethical self-projects of these communitarians are conceived as an ethico-political challenge to the holism of the world economic system. As we see in Nate's claim for 'community' as a stance against the 'domination systems', and these systems' claims that the individual is incomplete without consumer products, a core element of this project is to rescue morally choosing individuals from the person-scattering vastness of the capitalist economy. It is above all against the holism of large-scale postindustrial society that LW people undertake their community work. Does this mean that a Christian ontological individualism is the paramount value for them, with the relationalism they apparently strive for subordinate? I think it does – however, in their expectations of consensus and 'love', we see glimpses of something more oceanic, less buffered, than the selfhood we see being constructed in practices of micro-self-management.

The Christian self and the church

Introducing his magnum opus on the Indian caste system, which he exegetes as a preeminent case of holism, Louis Dumont (1980 [1966]) argues that the major contrasting ideology, of individualism, is specific to Western civilisation. He sets out the individualism credo that 'each particular man in a sense incarnates the whole of mankind. He is the measure of all things', such that 'ontologically, the society no longer exists' (1980: 9), and notes that this ideology emerged in conjunction with 'the modern development of the social division of labour, of what Durkheim has called organic solidarity'. Thus the paradox, that the idea of utterly autonomous individual persons takes hold just as people become more dependent on one another for their daily needs than ever before. 'Modern society', he says, 'acts as a whole and, at the theoretical level, thinks in terms of the individual' (1980: 11).' It is that paradox that, I argue, anguishes the Christian individualism of LW members and others like them, and prompts them to seek a kind of *lack* of interdependence on the large scale, so as to reconstitute the bonds of need at the 'relational' level of the local community, in conditions in which whole individual personhood can be brought to all encounters.

Elsewhere, Dumont has proposed the Christian foundations of the 'inworldly' individualism of the modern world: 'It follows from Christ's and then Paul's teaching that the Christian is an "individual-in-relation-to-God"'. From this, there flows a 'dualism', between the individual-in-relation-to-God, and the world as it is: 'the infinite worth of the individual is at the same time the disparagement, the negation in terms of value, of the world as it is'. He also writes about Christians 'meet[ing] in Christ, whose members they are' (Dumont 1985: 98), however this 'brotherhood of love' (1985: 99) is part of the anti-worldliness, for it 'transcends the world of man and of social institutions' (1985: 98). Thus the Sermon on the Mount offers an 'outworldly message' (1985: 101). Bundled together in the early Christianity that restorationist movements such as this one seek to return to, are individualism, anti-worldliness, and the brotherhood of love (see Bender 2003: 22).

It is explicit in LW and other such communitarians' ideologies, drawing as they do on the 'primitivist' (Littell 1958) Anabaptists, who so definitively refused worldliness in their commitment to the purity of the individual-in-relation-to-God, that what Dumont calls the 'outworldly' individual needs to be reclaimed from a 'world' of power structures and corrupted churches. They would like to attain what Dumont calls 'outworldly' conditions, but to do so in the world, and transform it thus. But such sects, striving to be 'the union of outworldly individuals in a community that treads on earth but has its heart in heaven' that Dumont called a 'passable formula for Christianity' (1985: 99), are also, in these contemporary, 'new monastic' iterations, pondering the worldly formations of the holistic churches with open minds.

Writing on Anglican Christians in the Solomon Islands, Michael Scott (2012) challenges the idea, prevalent in the anthropology of Christianity, that Christianity simply tends toward an 'atomistic' view of the person (2012: 3). Recounting the story of a conflict between the Melanesian Anglican hierarchy and a person in the Arosi region of the island of Makira who presents himself as a healer, able to bless water and forgive sins (2012: 7-8), Scott urges anthropological attention away from that element of Christian thought that takes the person as an 'individual-in-relation-to-God', with socially disembedding consequences (2012: 6), to attend to a more complex Christian inheritance of ideas about the person. The controversy among the Melanesian Anglicans derives from their differing views on the idea of apostolic succession; with the local episcopal hierarchy believing that an unordained person did not ordinarily have the right to perform the 'works of the Spirit', as they stood in too low a relation within the hierarchy. Scott says that this shows a 'participatory model of Christian personhood' (2012: 13), exemplified in the idea of the church as the Body of Christ. But this is a model that has, Scott argues, long been 'in tension with itself' (2012: 16), as Paul's image of the Body seems to entail *both* an encompassing hierarchy of kinds of membership, corresponding in the metaphor to parts of the body, *and* at the same time all Christians are 'in' Christ and one another, each in a direct relation with Christ (2012: 18-19).

Thus Scott draws our attention to the existence within the 'participatory model' of Christian personhood of 'two sites of Christian power and authority' (2012: 19), one of hierarchical 'holism', in the sense Dumont uses that term, and another, of 'individualism', in which each human unit is in direct relation to God, on an equal plane of being to all other individuals. In an earlier version of his paper, Scott described the 'holistic ecclesiology' (Scott n.d.: 18) of some Christian communions, in which the church, not the individual, is the 'primary unit of salvation' (n.d.: 17), with the binding agent being sacramental belonging, initiated in infant baptism (n.d.: 18). But Christianities that put the 'parts' (persons) before the 'whole' (the church) are, Scott charges, often the ones that anthropologists study, and so the individuating capacities of the faith come to the forefront in those analyses. Scott writes of the Radical Reformation's devaluation of 'institutional churches and sacramental systems' that goes in tandem with its celebration of the apostolic age, prior to the existence of institutional churches. 'This ecclesiology puts the parts before the whole', he says, while noting that it is easy to exaggerate this 'dichotomy', and overlook the strong emphasis many Radical Reformation churches lay on the spiritual community of the church (n.d.: 21). The point is that the part/whole tension resonates throughout Christianity.

In contrast both to the allegedly thoroughly individual-focused Christianity of, for example, Pentecostal and revivalist groups (n.d.: 19), and to the holism of the Anglican bishops Scott

describes, groups such as LW emphasise the dyadic relation between the individual and God, but conclude that the ethical work involved in being such an individual requires the mutual pedagogy of the church. The uncompromising ontological individualism of the early Anabaptists, who refused both the mediating church and the protection of the state – to the point of many of them being killed by that state – necessitated mutual support in close fellowships. It is this idea, of church as shared ethical pedagogy, that prevails in this contemporary movement. The point of the church is the formation of the individual. Thus we have a subculture in which the idea of 'the church' as a whole, 'the Body', is emphasised in the context of a movement strongly opposed to institutionality, and any sniff of Dumontian holism.

People in LW tended to despise – not too strong a word in many cases – the large institutional structures of the American evangelical church, and many of them had a horror of 'too much structure' within their own church, and while there was some sacramentalist thinking (see Chapter six), the idea of an institutional mediator for relations with God was generally recoiled from. I remember one conversation with my housemate about a document that had been circulating in the church known as the 'giftings spreadsheet', in which individuals were invited to identify their 'gifts' in an attempt to define who was doing what roles in the church. Mike spoke of his 'fear' of turning 'an organic, biological organism' into

> An institution, a mechanical structure – and that's what I dislike about traditional church, that it's gone from something so biological to something mechanical … we set up this system … to accomplish this task…It's easy for that machine to take over our identity, so that we just accomplish things …when [the spreadsheet asks] "Who's gonna do this role? Who's gonna do that role?"…some little alarm goes off in me that says we need to be really careful to not mechanise what we do with rules, and tasks… So you say, OK, Mike, you're good at teaching, so now you're the teacher. And so I develop a system to become a better teacher, and all of a sudden I'm not looking at how do I love Sam and Steph next door?... Because I've got my little task in front of me.

The priesthood of all believers is seen to be threatened here, with the individual potentially broken up in service of the group's needs for efficiency and 'accomplishments', their formation subordinated to the needs of the 'machine'. In the Anabaptist model of the church *Gemeinde* (Redekop 1989), the small, close-knit, pious group encouraging one another in discipleship (Bender 2003), the people I knew saw a possibility of 'holism' but absent the hierarchical, encompassing character that, for Dumont, was what defined it as such, and which characterises the 'whole' that is the global economy, or indeed an overly rationalised group of the kind Mike worried about.

The part/whole tension that Scott identifies in Christian understandings of the individual in relation to the church was felt in LW, which also held aloft a millennial kind of hope for some kind of resolution of the two, through group intimacy in shared practices, and 'the permanent verbal' (Foucault 1997: 248). Being in community was a 'detox from individualism', while also being a forum for careful self-cultivation in mutual pedagogy. True holism, as in the old churches and the global system, remains worldly and, thus, problematic for these communitarians. But this is a movement that also makes a point of being at home in the world. Thus, the next chapter turns to the material and social practices of localism that LW undertakes, and the spirit in which it does so might be said to have certain mutely encompassing qualities.

Chapter two

'The glorious mundane'[5]: life in the neighbourhood

'The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood' – John 1: 14; trans., Eugene Peterson, The Message *(1993)*

'They find a remedy because they seek it together' – Durkheim, The elementary forms of religious life *(Durkheim 1965 [1915]: 387)*

'Enclaves suck' – Nate

The LW community, which consisted of nine households when I lived there in 2013-14, moved in to the Otago neighbourhood of Quimby in 2008. The first of them – sixteen adults and a baby – moved in to three houses (two bought, one rented) within three short residential blocks of each other in the summer of 2008, a few weeks before Lehman Bros went bankrupt, and a financial crash ensued. In the recession that followed, Otago was among the many American neighbourhoods where homes were repossessed in large number, with a significant proportion of local homeowners still in negative equity several years later. It is a low-income neighbourhood. At the time of my stay, its population was predominantly white working class, with a significant minority of Latino and East Asian residents, and the local elementary school ran a Russian-language immersion programme that drew in families from Quimby's Eastern European minorities.

As communitarians influenced by the 'new monastic' turn in new-evangelical Christianity outlined in Chapter one, LW have a strongly localist mindset, with members speaking the Christian localist language of 'incarnation' and embeddedness, convinced of the redemptive potential of engagement with the material and social ground of 'place'. New evangelical localists, of which many new-monastic-influenced groups, such as LW, are an example, undertake to live together in an area, usually urban, and usually poor, with a view to centring as much of their lives as they can on that area, getting to know their neighbours, joining in with local activities, and generally becoming part of the fabric of the place (Bielo 2011b; 2011c; Sparks *et al* 2014). The new monastics' 'abandoned places of Empire' idea points to the 'justice' dimension of localist

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[5] Nate used this phrase to refer to day-to-day living in the neighbourhood; to denote the spiritual importance of the ordinary.

thought, in which middle-class people seek to repent of their personal part in the economic and racial segregation of the American city by moving, usually to the centre city from the suburbs, to slough off their privilege and identify, long term, with those from whom they have been segregated.

This philosophic and practical localism is a prominent facet of a religious posture that, as part of its 'cultural critique' (Bielo 2009) of the American evangelical mainstream, urges American Christians to, in effect, embrace the world around them – be that through campaigning on matters of 'social justice', or through a new openness to the rituals of the pre-Reformation churches, or both (see for example Claiborne *et al* 2010; Haw 2012). The movement's neologism, 'missional', which it uses to denote church engagements with the nonchurched world, points in its lexical ambiguity – in what ways does 'missional' differ substantively from 'missionary', or indeed 'evangelistic'? – to the fact that the new evangelical turn is still, in Bebbington's (1989) famous terms, an 'activist' faith, but one whose activism is somewhat altered; no longer at ease with the postures and practices associated with those older terms. What kind of difference 'missional' makes is part of what is examined here.

The localists' language of 'neighbourhood' is a powerful concept in part because it holds together several conceptual pairs that exist alongside each other in new evangelical thought in somewhat strained relation – the personal-ethical and the political-social, the ideal and the material, and agency and patiency. Certainly Christian localists such as LW seek, as evangelicals do, 'transformation', of both self and other. What I will explore over the course of this and the next chapter, however, is the ambiguity of the localist vision, where we see a kind of recessive activism, in which people apply industrious effort to the work of transformation – in the physical plant of 'place', and in the social relations around them (as well as, most importantly, their own inner 'formation') – and yet key to this work is a humility and a delegatory posture, that insists that the work is not, should not be, their own. These Christians, many of them at the 'radical' left, or more often antipolitical, end of the political spectrum, as far as they can get from the ambitious politicking of the Christian Right, and often having read postcolonial critics of American 'Empire' and Euroamerican relations with the wider world, are keenly aware of the colonial imbrications of Christian missions, and so people commonly talk about the importance of not being 'colonial'. Rejecting on the one hand the enclaving of the 'Christian bubble' and, on the other, offensively 'colonial' engagements with nonbelievers – which can look like a noisy party in the local park with skateboarding competitions combined with invitations to come to Jesus, as one local church did – Christian localists turn to urban-planning theory and ideas about

'liveable', mixed-use communities to imagine ways of being in 'the culture' that do not turn people – for many, this includes themselves – off Christianity as a way of life.

But they are not quietists and, I argue, their religion is not a private one, for all that they do not evangelise as such. The transformations they seek are relational; societal at the level of the interpersonal. They concern themselves with the physical fabric of place in part as a repentance from evangelicalism's idolatry of words, as they see it, and in part for governmental (Foucault 2006) reasons; taking on projects of 'placemaking', to use the planning language they have adopted, as routes to bringing about new kinds of relations, both in the repeated moments of collaborative action that constitute the act of placemaking, and through, they hope, the mediations among persons that will be furnished by the good places thus created. In the somewhat condensed temporality found in this turn, these two aims – 'relationship' through collaboration, and 'relationship' through life shared on common, well-tilled ground, are often run together. This elision has also in part to do with the localist vision of the good neighbourhood, which is a site of engaged collaborative citizenship. Drawing on the virtue ethics propounded by MacIntyre, much localist placemaking instigates rituals and routines of shared practice, such as by creating public artefacts that need regular upkeep by more than a small number of people. These recessive activists focus keenly on the local, I argue, as part of a decentring of their ambivalent 'missional' agency, in the hope of redeeming both 'place' and the very ambition of mission.

Foucault (2006) wrote that 'what government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men and things' (2006: 135). 'Employing tactics rather than laws' (2006: 137) in the 'disposition of things' (2006: 135) is part of what the Christian localist project involves, attending as it does to 'men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources…the territory with its specific qualities…customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking' (2006: 135-6). In noting this, we should not lose sight of the motivations of personal piety that draw people to neighbourhood living. But the commitment to 'loving' a particular place, much like the communitarian commitment to loving everyone else in the 'family of God', was frequently expressed, and a pragmatic and entrepreneurial spirit drove most people to engage questions of the disposition of people and things in their local area, and with a confidence in the transformative possibilities of placemaking.

As Bielo (2011a) has observed, American Christian localism has its programmatic elements, with groups typically making detailed researches into the demographic profiles of possible neighbourhoods to settle in. The localists Bielo was observing were 'church planters'; people with funds from a 'sending' organisation, such as an established church, intending to set up a

new church and make it into a going concern. This is in contrast to a group such as LW, which has neither funding sources nor ambition to set up in church business, in fact vehemently rejects the businesslike business of church planting of this kind. Nevertheless, when the group set to choosing a neighbourhood, not long after it had thrashed out the first covenant, the process it followed also involved rationalised practices, alongside prayerful visits to neighbourhoods to get a feel for the area. People would be deputed to go off and pull up information on a neighbourhood to present to the group to get a sense of a given place's level of 'need', for example indicators such as the number of children in local schools in receipt of free school meals.

But they weren't only looking for need. One church member recalled looking for somewhere with 'signs of preparedness', of what the group had at that time, she said, called 'relational infrastructure', already in place. Such 'infrastructure' might be physical, she explained, such as sidewalks where people could stop for a natter, or it could be intangible – a general sense that people in a neighbourhood 'know each other, or are open to knowing each other, because I really like a sense of – "we're here together, we're watching out for each other"'. Poorer neighbourhoods such as Otago, she thought, were in a better position to make these kinds of connections among neighbours than were richer ones, as their life circumstances meant that poorer people were more readily aware of their need of others.

In common with others in this movement, LW use the language of 'parish' to denote their chosen home, and the idea of churches' local belonging more broadly. The preoccupation with 'place' means that localists tend to be mapmakers, carefully marking out their precise 'parishes', which are small: the doctrine of the 'walkable neighbourhood', drawn from 'new urbanist' and other planning thought (see Duany *et al* 2000), is important to localists, who seek to encourage a mentality and infrastructure of localism that would see people centring their lives on areas a mile or so wide, in which shopping, socialising and even working could take place within walking distance. The map on LW's website shows two shaded areas: one, an area of around 800 m^2, marked as 'our residential parish'; 'where we live, school and stroll', sits on top of a broader shading which encompasses 'the wider realm of neighbourhood life that we participate in', about two kilometres north to south and a kilometre east to west. This wider area encompasses some of Otago's shopping district, to the south. All LW's households are within the inner area – five minutes' walk from each other.

The group calls its chosen patch 'South Otago'. With its bungalow houses with large yards, quiet streets, and tall Doug Fir trees dominating the skyline, South Otago is pleasantly bucolic,

if a little ramshackle in places. It is sandwiched between 66th Boulevard, a through-road dominated by used-car lots, strip joints, cheap convenience stores, and the odd rather mean-looking dive bar; and the freeway to the east. The wider neighbourhood has a longstanding reputation for poverty and, in the recent past, crime and some gang violence, attracting unkind nicknames that have never quite gone away, in spite of neighbours agreeing that things are incomparably calmer than, say, they were twenty years ago. The neighbourhood is one of six areas of the city designated for urban-renewal investment.

The community's interactions with neighbours took a range of forms – there was a monthly slot that the group made sure to fill, of neighbourhood outreach of some kind. Over the years, activities have included a regular summer 'splash day' for kids in the park (games with water hoses), bike-repair surgeries, helping with the elementary school's annual craft night and its after-school programme, joining in the annual creek cleanup, and volunteering with the local environmental non-profit's tool- and seed-lending 'library'. One year, the group built sandboxes for families who wanted them, another time they did yard work for people. There are parties – the annual 'fry-in' is one, when children from the neighbourhood dig up the Green House's potato patch, and neighbours fry the potatoes into chips for a then-and-there street party. Then there is the occasional big project of placemaking work, in collaboration with neighbours, of which more below.

Mostly, though, LW members' 'lived reality' (Bielo 2011b: 277) in the neighbourhood is unmarked and ordinary – as the localism ideology intends – and the group's insistence that they are neighbours just like anyone else holds good. There were a number of friendships with some of the more isolated or vulnerable neighbourhood residents, from a bipolar man in whose yard a LW member parked her RV, and helped him keep house, including through the extensive growing garden she tended in his backyard, to a long-term resident of the neighbourhood whose home was in seemingly semi-permanent danger of repossession, and who the community helped with bills and emotional support. Bill, a characterful semi-itinerant jack-of-all-trades who squatted the neighbourhood's foreclosed homes, was a ruffianly friend of the community, whom the community enjoyed and welcomed, while mediating peace between him and the occasional neighbour whom he rubbed up the wrong way. Then there were the non-Christian localists, a considerable contingent of neighbours who were active in various local conservation and placemaking efforts. These people were at the forefront of several projects of placemaking with which LW members were involved.

Community-in-action: the art of placemaking

When thirty or so residents of South Otago spent a Saturday in June 2013 painting the intersection at 68ᵗʰ and Winters, it truly was a neighbourhood effort. The painting was jolly, convivial work, as people stooped with rollers under the day's hot sun, colouring in an elegant stencil of four trees, one per intersection prong, twined together in the middle in a Celtic knot, the outline of which had been painstakingly drawn onto the road early that morning. The trees were designed by LW member (at the time) and carpenter Dean, while the knot was designed by a neighbour. Another neighbour had used graphic design techniques to create a stencil scaled up to map onto the space. Dean told me he'd hoped they'd find a neighbour, ideally one who was 'really rooted' in the neighbourhood, to do a design in the first place, but as it was no one came forward until later, when the neighbour suggested the knot at the centre. North to south were painted two fir trees, one sky blue and the other pale green, their shape mirroring the handsome dark indigenous Doug Fir trees that stood high above the neighbourhood's modest bungalows. The designs east to west were deciduous-looking and fluffy in yellow and orange, also representing a native species. Several turquoise birds fluttered out of the trees; one – my favourite touch – made it out of the design's tarmac frame, up onto the sidewalk. The image became a brand of sorts, and at the street party that accompanied the painting, there was face-painting for kids and adults in the tree motif, and Sally made a stencil of the design for people to put on tote bags and t-shirts.

As neighbours painted the ground, a little girl who lived a door away from the intersection sold homemade lemonade to raise money for the community seating area that was being built next to the intersection. There was a raffle, with prizes donated by the owners of the local convenience store, who offered homemade Fijian curry, and by other local businesses. First prize was a free wheel alignment at the local autobody shop. People sat chatting in camping chairs, while kids (and some adults) played with pavement chalk, skipping ropes and a hose, inside the barricades the community had hired for the event. Some people wore 'Hello, my name is…' stickers, which, someone told me, Al had gone round playfully sticking onto people as he passed. A barbecue grill and salad bar were on hand to keep painters and spectators going. There was coffee, too, and a big urn of homemade spearmint tea ('lightly sweetened', the handwritten sign said), and music from speakers set up on one corner on a desk dragged there for the purpose. Propped against the desk was a whiteboard seeking suggestions for a nickname for the intersection. There was a sign-up sheet for a neighbourhood email list, and tacked to an A-frame sign was a hand- drawn map of the fifteen small residential blocks of the immediate surrounding area with housing units lining each street. 'Where do you live?' the map asked, and several people

had written in their and their families' names in the relevant boxes. The thirty or so people present, who spanned all ages from elderly to infant, were mostly white, though small numbers were Latino, African American, and East Asian.

As the painting drew to a close in the mid afternoon, Al, whose home stood on the southwest corner of the intersection, climbed up onto the roof of his house to take pictures. From the roof, he shouted out thanks to the people who had put the event together, finishing up with LW member Jared Armstrong, who, along with some neighbours, had done much of the organising. Jared, from an earthbound position, did some more thanks, including of the city (whose representative was present), then he invited everyone to gather around the intersection. We shuffled into a rough circle around the painting. Jared invited the group to 'shout out our hopes' for the intersection. In keeping with their deliberate recessiveness at neighbourhood events, not wishing to dominate, no one from LW did. Someone offered the hope that it would make the road safer. Someone else hoped that it would be 'beautiful', and 'bring people together'. The atmosphere was content, appreciative – I noticed one man, burly, with big headphones on, standing there looking a little awed by it all. 'This is amazing!' he muttered, shaking his head. But it was not a particularly demonstrative group, and Jared said he'd wait a bit longer in case anyone had any more. He waited a little, then echoed the hope that it would bring people together, and that neighbours would do more together. From his roof, Al added in a strong voice his hope that, as 'we do more together', we as neighbours would come to see that, although we're different colours and all shapes and sizes, we're not so different after all.

When I spoke with Jared about it later, he emphasised how much the event had been the work of many neighbours, and described the motivation for the event as 'building … this village mentality of how can we work together on projects, and how can we care for one another?' 'For me, the intersection repair' is about 'how can we rediscover what a true neighbourhood is, and what true neighbourliness is?' The painting had indeed been a major exercise in neighbourhood cooperation, involving fundraising, city liaison, sponsorship-gathering, and a mixture of people had been involved, several of whom had thought about doing something similar in the past, although LW people had got the ball rolling this time. Painting roads had become something of a tradition in Quimby, which was the home of a somewhat hippyish community-arts-focused non-profit that promoted placemaking, DIY culture and self-building, and which had ties to an annual event in which volunteers across the city simultaneously painted patterns on road intersections all around the city. People called this practice street 'repair', on the grounds that standard, automobile-focused road design represented a kind of damage wrought on the common space of

neighbourhoods by its priority of efficiency of movement over the fostering of pedestrian interactions.

Six months earlier, LW had led the first major community placemaking event of its time in Otago. The 'little free libraries' (LFLs) were wooden boxes, set on stakes outside willing neighbours' homes, who then filled them with books for passers-by to pick up and return at their leisure. The project was initiated by LW's diffident literature enthusiast, Emily, a poet and an English teacher, who had seen it done elsewhere in bookish, community-minded Quimby.[6] Al, who, like several other LW members, is skilled in carpentry, sourced the wood and built the boxes, which were appealingly shaped with sloping 'roofs' like tiny houses. LW members and others, including myself, then went round the neighbourhood to the ten households who had agreed to host a box, and banged them into the ground together. None of the boxes went to the homes of LW members, the idea being that this was not about LW imposing something on the neighbourhood landscape. The neighbours then decorated their boxes in styles of their choosing.

When all ten boxes were finished, LW and neighbours made an event of it, biking around the compact neighbourhood on a bright Saturday in February, visiting each 'library' and filling in votes on slips of paper to choose our favourite design. The winner was announced at a party at the home of one of the library hosts. At the party, neighbours mingled, a happy tangle of chatting adults, pets padding around, and kids racing among piled-up bikes and stacks of books ready to go out to their new homes (the local elementary school, and neighbours, had pitched in with some funds and book donations). Cakes had been made, decorated with icing that read 'I love books!'

The success of the little free libraries was such that a year or so later, a community-development non-profit partnered with the local environmental non-profit to do another tranche of ten or so boxes in the same area, creating what one resident wryly commented might now be little-free-library saturation point. The social-engagement benefits of the book boxes were explicitly stated in a document produced by that non-profit to accompany their launch, which I flicked through at their stall at the farmers' market. Among the 'testimonials' was one from a woman who said that she liked how the boxes 'help strangers form relationships – even if they only last a couple of minutes'.

In *Art and Agency*, Alfred Gell (1998) offers an account of 'art' that seeks to be truly anthropological, in addressing itself to the question of how artefacts that are commonly thought

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[6] The 'little free library' brand is in fact now international, beginning with a community initiative in a town in Wisconsin in 2009. https://littlefreelibrary.org/history.

of in the West as 'works of art' operate, not in terms of their aesthetic properties (which he notes is an ethnographically specific idea), but as 'social agents', which 'mediat[e] social agency' (1998: 7). Gell 'propose[s] that "art-like situations" can be discriminated as those in which a material "index" (the visible, physical "thing")' (the art object) 'permits a particular cognitive operation which I identify as *the abduction of agency*'. Social actors infer, or 'abduct', the agency of other social actors through observing a material object that indexes, in some way, that agency. Gell explains that the operation by which social actors discern agency through art objects is indexical, and not an operation either of 'calculus', or of language-like symbolising (1998: 13). In performing socially in this way, such indexical objects can, Gell argues, be understood as 'agents' (1998: 19). And, he suggests, we tend to treat them as such: the 'inferential schemes' people bring to "indexical signs' are, he says, very like those we apply to social others (1998: 15).

The artwork as mediating social agent is embedded in an art 'nexus' (1998: 12), a net of relationships among social actors who stand in relation to one another as 'agents' and 'patients'. The elements of this nexus are as follows: there is the art object, which is the 'index'; there is the 'artist', who is held to be responsible for the index's existence and qualities; there is the 'prototype', which is what is held to be represented by the index; and finally there is the 'recipient', the social actor/s 'in relation to whom' the index is inferred to exert agency, or themselves exert agency 'via the index' (1998: 27). Any of these can be agents or patients in relation to each other, and Gell illustrates various possible formations, from the straightforward 'Index A[gent] –> Recipient P[atient]', in which an object exerts agency over a spectator, who is thus in a patiency relation to the index (1998: 31), to 'Recipient A –> Artist P', the formula for artistic patronage (1998: 39), as well as much more complex, tree-structured relations with multiple elements.

In the case of the little free libraries (LFLs), one of the first things one noticed about the little boxes is that they were shaped to look like homes, with pointed roofs that signalled not only houses, but old-fashioned, almost fairytale-like houses. They were homes for books, actual books rather than representations of them, and so 'recipients' of the LFLs could also be agentive in relation to them, by contributing a sign of themselves or their household with a book donation – or, indeed, by borrowing one. The 'take a book, bring a book' principle on which the 'libraries' worked meant that the inhabitants of these homes-for-books were highly migratory around the neighbourhood, enacting a principle of generalised gifting and, perhaps, a kind of hospitality, at once. As themselves indexes of individuals and the connections and convictions they claim, books are powerful artefacts.

Donating a book was a way of offering an avatar of oneself to the community; it could also be whimsically imagined as giving that part of oneself a home in the community. In any case, it enlisted neighbours in acts of communion through mingling avatars of selves in tiny 'houses' that stood outside people's homes, right on the boundary where private property meets the public street. Such avatars could then be brought home and read, their content 'digested' within the private home; an incorporation of neighbours. Intermediate between an adult's and a child's height level, the boxes are partly aimed at children, a kind of wholesome, educational antidote to less healthy objects of pester power, and intended to encourage reading. Either way, Emily said, she had this idea people would 'curate' their box with books they were especially interested in, though in practice, she noted, it hadn't turned out quite like that.

The other major signal of household identities was the decoration of the boxes by the hosts. These decorations indexed the households; the bikearound of the neighbourhood that inaugurated the LFLs drew attention not only to the boxes, their designs and designers, but to the fact that each was different, and indexical of the household that decorated it. Thus the whole network, strung across ten neighbourhood households, was a way of establishing the principle of individual-in-communion-with-community by having structurally identical book boxes, iconic of homes, which in their surface decoration were distinct from each other, signalling individuality – which was explicitly recognised in the competition for best design, also of course a sly vehicle for neighbourly encounter, or at least name-learning. All were open to passage across the book-house's threshold; hospitable to neighbours' books and generous with the books already in them.

In the terms of the art nexus, then, the index of the book box was agent in relation to its recipients, the passing public, which in turn abducts from the index the agency of 'the community' in the index's making, in the evidence of the artisanal skill and collective organisation presumably required to make such a network of things. But in this case the recipients are imagined to be the same people as the artists, meaning those responsible for the index's making, so there is also the inverse relation, Recipient A –> Index P, a sense of being agentive in relation to the boxes, which is heightened by the interactive nature of the piece, in which the proper recipient response to the book box is to take an element of it and put one's own into it, thus actually becoming an artist as an individual level in relation to the index. The fact that several members of the community paid in books and funds to help make the LFLs happen also made this in part a classic artistic patronage relation, as explained above. A curious element of the LFL setup is that one of the index's prototypes, the book, is actually incorporated into the body of the index. Thus peculiar relations, such as Index A –> Recipient A –> Prototype P may emerge, in which the index invites abductions of (the

community's?) social agency, as both home and place of exchange for avatars of personhood, such that the prototype for the index that signals 'books', an actual book, is acted upon by recipients, passers-by induced by the index to join in the game of taking an actual book out of one of these boxes and putting in another. Part of the point of all this is to, as Emily implied, have people share aspects of themselves with neighbours, through the mediation of books, in which view the books are the index and the book's donor the prototype, its borrower (and later consumer) the recipient, who in donating themselves, then becomes agent as well as patient.

The idea, it would seem, is to generate a sense of nexus-in-motion, to engender, through people's interactive appreciation of the layered LFL artefact, of oneself as a neighbour as someone with both agency and patiency in relation to an ongoing cycle of interaction for, in a sense, interaction's sake. The chief signals of the LFL as an artefact – its iconicity of home, and the books within, connoting communication, education, and an invitation to know other selves – were condensed together in the artefact, which was, in the words of the leaflet put out to prospective hosts, 'permanently anchored on your property, flush with the sidewalk, facing the street' – that is, moored in actual persons and standing on the exact threshold between them and the wider social world, opening outward. They thus multiply indexed 'community', with 'community' enfolding the intent (abducted by viewers from the evidences of the index) to bring people together with a common lattice of communication resources, the exercised agency of actually making and installing the indexes, and the dance of giving and receiving that the indexes ordained.

As we see from Emily's comment about how the intention for boxes to index their owners through their contents, as well as their decoration, had not worked out quite as planned, the indexes, once in public existence, did not signal quite as they had been intended to – and, indeed, their popularity, with the second wave turning up a year or so later, meant that some boxes became rather depleted, with not enough books to go round, making the more empty boxes index something other than community reciprocity and fullness. Out in the world, social agents' interactions with indexes can alter or diminish their indexicality.

Gell writes of the decoration of things as part of a wider repertoire; that of the 'technology of enchantment', the myriad of ways that people find to beguile themselves and others into doing what needs to be done for living. Decoration, he says, is thus 'functional' (1998: 74). He notes how people speak of decorated things as being 'animated', and he ascribes this animation to the interplay among the different motifs within a pattern; the way that patterns multiply the number of parts of an artefact, ensuring part-to-part and part-to-whole relationships for the eye to be

captivated by. Of this animation, he observes: 'decoration makes objects come alive in a non-representational way' (1998: 76). The street painting, of four differently coloured trees, knotted together in the middle in a Celtic knot, was both representational and a decorative pattern. The roots of the four different trees pitched under and over each other in the knotted pattern, difficult to disentangle with the eye, attention-keeping as a result. Gell says that patterns, by virtue of their complexity, 'generate relationships *over time* between persons and things', because, cognitively, a person can never fully work a complex pattern out, and so there is always a pleasing puzzle to come back to (1998: 80). He calls this 'unfinished business', drawing a parallel with exchange, in which it is the time lag between receiving something and reciprocating the gift that creates the connection between persons, bonded together by an ever-renewed 'imbalance' in the accounts of gifting and receiving (1998: 81). (This Maussian (2002) model of exchange is, incidentally, exactly the logic according to which the localists sought to encourage exchange within the neighbourhood; the immediate cut-off of commodity exchange was anathema to them precisely because the final accounting made in each transaction did not allow such ties to develop.) Patterns 'slow perception down…so that the decorated object is never fully possessed at all', and so the attempted possessive relation continues, which amounts to a 'biographical relation' between the 'index', which is the decorated thing, and the 'recipient', its viewer (1998: 81). A pattern demands attention.

There was a way in which the intersection painting was, I think, intended to enchant its viewers, to fascinate and frustrate them, to keep them coming back to ponder, enjoy, and perhaps imagine adding their hand to, the mark left by 'community' in action. Covering surfaces with patterns was a big part of localist practice, with wall murals also popular (and, indeed, tattoos on bodies). As well as exerting the agency of decorative art as Gell describes it, by being something people could let their eyes puzzle over together over time, offering a focus of common pleasurable absorption, such patternings of the local environment could also be understood as *representing* that 'biographical relation' that is founded on the 'unfinished business' of incomplete exchange among social actors; subtly inculcating a joy in the never-resolved knots of bound-togetherness that was the localists' conception of community. Gell writes of the 'adhesive qualities of surface decoration' – it is just this kind of social stickiness localists want their environment to have, to capture and keep people, happy to be so engaged, and with a sense of unresolved action, more always to do. Patterns, Gell says, 'bind persons to things' (1998: 83), and there is no question that this project was part of a larger intention to bind persons to the place of Otago, to forge ties that bind. The localists I knew would talk frequently of 'weaving' together a 'web' of love and care, and there is a well-favoured song in the LW songbook called

'Bind Us Together', in which people sing to God to bind them together, 'with cords that cannot be broken'.

Gell writes about Celtic knots in particular, as an example of 'apotropaic' patterns; patterns that protect the agents behind them, neutralising threats. This they do by so intriguing and compelling a threatening figure such as a demon that the creature is utterly unmanned, caught in the pattern and unable to attend to anything else, such as for example the task of being a threat to the pattern's originator (1998: 84). Although they were not officially allowed to publicly claim intersection painting as a traffic-calming device, I remember people approvingly mentioning how they'd noticed drivers slowing down to look, not speeding through the neighbourhood as people hated. Happily focusing and absorbing the community, and unmanning and bewildering threats, through catching and slowing them in its enchanting webs, did seem to be the agentive purposes of this collaborative street art. Generally, it seemed to work, though a report that someone had been seen doing wheelies on the newly painted painting showed not all threats were automatically ensnared by the agency of the index – a reminder, like the occasional appearance of 'inappropriate' material in the book boxes (including the odd overtly evangelistic Christian tract, which LW members were not pleased about), that an index can flip from agency to patiency in a social nexus. Equally, abductions of agency from indexes are not subject to social oversight, and the rumoured judgement of one neighbour, that the painting was about neighbours trying to raise the value of their property, was a sign of how all kinds of agency may be abducted from indexes outside of those imagined by the artists and, in some ways, the creation of indexes can make vulnerable the social actors responsible for the index, through, for instance, 'volt sorcery', a relation notated by Gell as Recipient A –> Prototype P, in which a recipient of the index uses the index to damage its prototype (the classic example being a voodoo doll). Gell gives the example of images being defaced (1998: 40). If an LFL were to be vandalised – and in the time I was there, their power as devices of enchantment held, keeping back potential defacers – then one of its several prototypes, the idea of 'community' itself, would have been attacked, wounding the artist (the projects' initiators, and the LFL's host) by virtue of their Artist A –> Prototype P relation (1998: 38-9) to the idea of 'community' as a real thing to be represented. In attacking the index, a volt sorcerer attacks a prototype that is a product of the artist's agency.

The street painting was representational as well as decorative, and the four trees that dominated the painting had their clear prototype in the trees that represented the region; a very popular motif for all kinds of Quimby branding, of which there was a considerable amount. As we saw, the pattern itself became a brand, in a way, of the neighbourhood, through its reproduction on

bags, t-shirts, facepainting. The 'artist' of Gell's schema was the neighbourhood community, that social entity that the localists (not just Christian ones) contrived to create through convening such events as the street paint. Who was the recipient? One might say the community was the recipient too. The painting itself, complex, brightly and evenly coloured, accurately proportioned, indexed the community's own capabilities as a group, able to project its knotted-togetherness onto a space designated to be non-place space (Auge 1995), to make of non-place space an enchanting object, a projection of social cohesion, an assertion of roots, and an invitation to absorption on a surface intended to be only surface, smooth for speed of transit away.

LW members brimmed with placemaking ideas. I remember one day in the kitchen of the Barn coming across a handwritten list, written by Al, of possibilities for building things with neighbours for the neighbourhood to enjoy. Al's vision was of a social space densely patterned with the infrastructure of community life – a seesaw, more homebuilt gathering spaces by the side of the road – the ideas took up most of the sheet. I once asked Al what he thought a good Otago would look like. He replied 'If I think of it in physical terms… there's a small playground on *every block* [my emphasis]'.[7] Among the purposes of placemaking action is to create occasions that can become stories, stories of neighbourhood, and to populate the landscape with mnemonic artefacts that can be scaffolding for common memories. Part of the explicit point of events such as the annual potato 'fry-in', for example, was to furnish memories in common.

In his celebrated essay 'Walking in the City', Michel de Certeau (1984) writes of the role of stories and legends in the making of places. 'Local legends' create 'habitable spaces', he says, by offering people 'ways of going out and coming back in'. He contrasts technocratic power, which likes to scrub out such associations, with 'superstitions', 'semantic overlays that' 'annex to a past or poetic realm a part of the land the promoters of technical rationalities and ~~financial profitabilities had rese~~rved for themselves' (1984: 106). De Certeau writes of the 'makeshift' quality of 'stories about places' (1984: 107), of the fragmentary and diverse character of 'stories' and 'memory'; offering place as a palimpsest of shifting, fragmentary, affective bits of story and association (1984: 108). De Certeau's 'habitable city' is, he says, under threat from legend- annulling technocracy: 'stories are becoming private'; increasingly, legends are only allowed in the home; in the words of a Rouen resident he quotes, outside the home, there 'isn't any place special' (1984: 106). As in their work to build natural habits of association within their own church community, LW members active in the neighbourhood seek to roll back the works of the 'promoters of technical rationalities' by applying their own technical rationalities of research, technique and planning to creating an embedded world anew, through placemaking.

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[7] The blocks in this part of town were sometimes barely three houses long on each side.

There is here an ambition toward meaning-saturation, toward creating neighbourhood as a place full of absorbing stories and patterns. Sites for gathering and reflection proliferated in South Otago in the years from 2013. Aside from the street painting and book boxes, there was also, facing out onto the intersection painting, 'the bench', a half-circle cob structure with a gourd stove inside it, and a crazy-paved floor decorated with brightly coloured blue pebbles to match the birds on the painting, a community noticeboard across from it, and, most ambitiously, a community fruit-tree orchard, complete with a wooden meeting place, created from scratch in the years after I left, on the ground of an unused lot. This last, which was a collaboration among some LW members, the local environmental non-profit, and other neighbours, won city and non-profit funding. Part of the placemaking hope is to facilitate the 'going out and coming back in' of de Certeau's local legend-places, that is, enabling people to reflect and attend, as well as to congregate, and in so doing to briefly exit the flow of business and reenter their doings rooted and refreshed. Where de Certeau writes of stories about places as being made up of 'fragments of scattered semantic places' (1984: 107) the patterns and nodal points created by localists such as LW do not enter time and memory in this piecemeal, incidental way. They are *interventions*. They are not intended to have the privacy, the idiosyncrasy of memory as de Certeau describes it ('places are…pasts that others are not allowed to read' (1984: 108)) – they are very much to be accessible, to be enjoyed by all.

You might say that LW and their kin in similar communities elsewhere, and nonreligious fellow travellers in Quimby's ecovolunteerist subculture, are working to create 'anthropological place' (Auge 1995 [1992]); places where memories can be read, as distinct from the 'non-places' of circulation and exchange that funnel people, products and units of information among sites in a world of 'spatial overabundance' (1995: 32). '[Anthropological places] want to be – people want them to be – places of identity, of relations and of history' (1995: 52), Marc Auge writes. Of anthropological place, he says, 'all the inhabitants have to do is *recognise* themselves in it when the occasion arises' (1995: 44). Creating just such an always-already-so place, a place of mutual recognition, is the localist project as it is played out by groups such as LW, with their establishment of neighbourhood traditions and dogmatic focus on the immediately local. Regarding the latter, Auge suggests that self-sufficiency has always been a 'myth' (1995: 37-8), in the sense of a useful orienting idea.

Literally orienting places, ideas, and people, are the stuff of this placemaking localism. Auge seems to echo de Certeau in his observation about 'monuments', that 'strangely, it is a set of breaks and discontinuities in space that expresses continuity in time' (1995: 60); the marking of passages in and out of condensed local meaning, be it with physical markers or stories told (LW

did both). Meaning can reside in nodal points as well as built structures: Auge remarks that 'the point of intersection' is an important component of anthropological place (1995: 57), a point seemingly recognised by localists who make art on road intersections. He notes too the temporal dimension of place and locality, as he, recalling Durkheim, connects sacredness to memory and notes the on-off cyclical nature of ritual action in place (1995: 59). Christian localists I knew did not explicitly see their projects in terms of creating sacred places, but they did seek to both create memories that would engender expansive communitarian sentiment, and to bring people back, cyclically, to collective action on common ground.

The production of locality

In an essay on 'the production of locality' that forms the final piece in a volume about globalisation, Arjun Appadurai (1996) argues that this 'production' is ongoing work, even in contexts where modernity's various attenuating pulls are not operative (1996: 179). He makes a distinction between 'locality' and 'neighbourhood'. 'Locality' he sees as a 'relational' and 'contextual' thing, a 'phenomenological quality' (1996: 178), 'emergent from the practices of local subjects in specific neighbourhoods' (1996: 198), which, crucially, may or may not be realised in a given physical context. 'Neighbourhood', by contrast, is more concrete, denoting actually existing 'situated communities' (1996: 179). The production of locality, as 'an ideology of situated community', a 'property of social life' (1996: 189), and a 'structure of feeling' (1996: 199) is, Appadurai says, becoming harder under conditions of, among other things, greater mobility (1996: 191). But, he says, it has always been 'an inherently fragile social achievement' (1996: 179), even under conditions where there is not much inter-regional movement. It takes continued work to 'produce and maintain' the 'materiality' of 'locality', which, he says, helps to engender it as a 'structure of feeling' (1996: 180-1).

He observes that actions on the physical space of a place, such as housebuilding, mapping terrains and paths, and tending fields and gardens, work to spatially produce locality, through 'the socialisation of space and time', as do naming places and things, and techniques for marking seasonal time (1996: 180). And, such work must begin at some point – in a deliberate act of what Appadurai calls 'colonisation', when concerted action is taken to begin the creation of place, in the face of uncontrolled others, including nature and other people (1996: 183). He speculates that rites that commemorate acts of placemaking might be ways of anxiously remembering that first 'colonising' incision (1996: 184). He goes further, suggesting that 'violence' is implicit in the production of neighbourhood, in that this initial exertion to begin the creation of place requires

some kind of intervention in an existing space, and the formations of life and land within it (1996: 184).

I would like to argue that Christian localists' repeated work to create place in the neighbourhood shows a recognition of this idea that creating a local 'structure of feeling' involves ongoing work to fashion the physical world in ways that create the local. Al would often talk about building neighbourhood 'identity' with projects such as the street painting. And regular work, too, that marked 'seasonal time' in the way Appadurai argues was necessary for the production of locality: the street painting needed to be repainted each year, as it scuffed, while of course places where plants and trees grow have their own infinitely repeating cycle.

Gardening is a popular choice for localist community action, of which the orchard is an ambitious example. The ubiquity of gardening in localist endeavours points, I would argue, to a desire to counteract any 'violence' implicit in neighbourhood-making action, by focusing the action on tending and encouraging the growth of that which is, in principle, emergent from the existing ground – even if, as in the case of the 'depaving' projects run by a popular Quimby non-profit (whose utopian tagline was 'from parking lots to paradise'), in which volunteers lever up asphalt and replace it with gardens, violent destruction is aimed at the materials being removed and replaced with plants. (One person I knew talked about his unease at the glee with which some people seemed to approach the task of bashing up paving slabs.) Gardening is a way of working on one's urban environment that makes social space in the senses Appadurai intends, while in a sense appearing not to. Horticulture in general can be seen as reclamation, restoration, return to the land, it appears as a kind of obedience – and, once cultivation has begun, an identification with flourishing. It is humility rather than industry – or industrious humility; in which the violence of making locality is counteracted by the very form that placemaking takes.

Regarding Appadurai's 'socialisation of space and time' through acts of 'naming' places and things, and punctuating time (1996: 180), LW's mapping activities enfolded ritual tasks, training people to fit place into the sacred calendar and into their affective frames. At Lent, Nate made a map of the neighbourhood for LW members to mark with coloured post-it notes the good and the bad that had happened in the neighbourhood over the past year. The map was handdrawn on a large piece of fabric and hung on the wall in the Barn, ready for people to come and pin notes on over the course of Holy Week. Different coloured notes were used for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, on which days respectively people marked, in Nate's words, 'little exoduses and liberations', 'laments', and 'hopes and prayers for the year to come' – on the good side, a birth, perhaps, or a reduction of local speed limits; on the 'laments' side, a

sexual assault, or a neighbour's rent arrears, for example. With this artefact and practice, locality was built as a 'structure of feeling' in church members, as the map rendered the square mile or so into a 'neighbourhood' simply by representing ('naming') it as such, and then set that neighbourhood in a biblical and temporal story frame into which the subjectivity of the people pinning their memories onto the map was also enfolded. This, then, is another facet of placemaking; making existing places into sites of meaning within subjectivities.

A lot of localism as it is enacted in festal performances of placemaking has to do with knowability, a key localist ambition, in the sense of intelligibility. Neighbourhood work parties are a way of people meeting each other, and they are also a method for making a landscape readable, and creating cross-references in and on the land. In an article on placemaking and memorial in Madagascar, Maurice Bloch (1995) explains how villagers build wooden houses following a marriage, and stone memorials following a death, and clear cut forests, all in order to achieve 'permanence', social reproduction, and 'clarity', in the face of the fragility and impermanence of human life. There is certainly a sense in which the planting of an orchard in Otago – which, in Appadurai's terms, is an act of locality-formation that involves violence as well as nurture (the assaults on 'invasive species' to clear the land before seeding, for instance) – is a way of seeking clarity. The orchard, as it was conceived by the volunteers who planned it, would be an educational and a food resource, and a site of community connection, through both the work undertaken to create it, and people's enjoyment and (literal) consumption of its fruits. Thus, its physicality would carry within it social meaning on at least three planes; socially produced, it would be legible, knowable. (There was even an element of literal legibility planned in an idea for educational signage about the trees and the ecosystem.) What the place had been before, an 'empty' plot, full of blackberries, which were a non-native and therefore unwelcome species, was illegible, meaningless, unclear (and uncleared).

In Bloch's context, the death of individual people appears to be the thing that social labour, such as placemaking ritual, strives to transcend. For these American Christian localists, and their non- Christian fellows in these projects, the opacity of the modern, differentiated and zoned city is the thing that threatens, as it can snatch away both individual people (through mobility) and social meaning (through changed uses and the wrong kinds of development) unless continual cultivation is applied to the project of creating and maintaining congruent spaces and groups that reflect one another. Placemaking challenges social death, if you like.

Charisma and interconnectedness

Discussing living in the neighbourhood with Al one day the week before the intersection painting, he told a favourite story, about the 'Amishman' who was asked if he was a Christian. 'If you want to know if I am a Christian, you should ask my neighbour.' Al repeated this to me as we sat drinking homemade lemonade on the deck outside his house that members of the church had built as a surprise gift. We had a view of the potato patch, and out over the intersection. Al greeted several people walking by. Referring to the two big windows on the side of his house, Al remarked, with self-aware humour in his voice, how good the windows were, for seeing what was going on in the neighbourhood. Mutual attention and support were at the heart of what being a neighbour ought to be. The Green House hadn't always been so verdant and welcoming – when the LW people bought it, it was very run down, lived in by a deeply chaotic family, in which, neighbours told me, the young men of the family would physically fight constantly, and one neighbour told me she worried for their mother's safety. It was a lot of intensive renovation work to transform the house into the hearth it was now. Al was a highly convivial and fixerly presence in the neighbourhood, whose patchy employment as a classroom assistant and retraining nurse meant he had time to spend simply being in and around the neighbourhood, making connections, kept an email list of about a hundred neighbours, to which he sent things like reminders of the next food-bank pickup date and invites to street parties. An important element of the LW ethos was to enable neighbours to meet *each other* – what LW sought was to help build interpersonal connections within the neighbourhood, *not* necessarily between themselves and neighbours, but among neighbours. Thus they hosted dinners to which they invited a range of neighbours in a close radius.

Our chat over homemade lemonade had been a break in working on the 'bench', the cob structure by the side of the intersection that Al had been building for several months, but was long-term unfinished because it was part of this group's posture of recessive activism not to build things without neighbours' involvement. Al had to sit on his hands until someone wanted to join in the laying of paving slabs. After a couple of hours 'helping' Al with the slabs I went with him to Vinny's store for a smoothie – Al wanted to show me Vinny's. It turned out Vinny's store wasn't a Quimbyish trendy coffee shop, as I'd expected, but the local Jiffy Mart convenience store, facing out onto the scrappy main road of 66th Boulevard. There were two Rock Star energy drink vending machines in the window, which was plastered with the prices of the cheap cigarettes on sale inside. Inside, there were the usual rows of giant bags of chips, technicolour candy, and two-litre bottles of soda. There was an 'adults only' magazine section. A TV was on silent in the corner.

But Vinny also had a smoothie bar set up at the front of the small store, and some plastic tables and chairs where people could sit and enjoy their milkshakes and smoothies, made with posh Italian syrups. Al and Vinny greeted each other with warmth and banter – twice the price for you, Mr Al! Al explained to me as we sat down with our drinks that Vinny had been licensed to accept food stamps, but that he'd been letting people have things on credit and then letting them pay when their stamps came through at the end of the month, and so his licence had been revoked and now, Al says, he makes most of his money on cigarettes, and has to sell porn, and booze, and crack pipes to get by. The smoothies were a new venture of his. Al was evidently determined to lend his support to this venture, as indeed were other LW folk, who would bring houseguests to share a smoothie at Vinny's.

As we talked in the store, Al told me about the neighbourhood's demographics. We picked the neighbourhood, he said, by looking at the schools data. That data seemed to show a high proportion of Latino people, which was good as he and his wife spoke Spanish from her years in Paraguay and their work with a Mennonite NGO in Central America. And there had been, but a lot of our Latino friends, he said, lost their homes after the 2008 crash. Demographically, he said, it's not as diverse here as we would have liked. There are East Asian families, it's true, but in that case the cultural and language barriers are so great it's difficult to build community there. Customers came in, and Al and Vinny both made cheery banter.

Engaging Vinny, Al pointed to some toy animals hanging on one of the walls – hey, donate this for a raffle prize? He complimented Vinny on his wife Beatrice's 'amazing' cooking, could she make one of her curries for the food on Sunday? These requests were integral to what Al was trying to do – he wanted to build a community of reciprocity. A couple of times while I lived in Otago, LW and other folk went over to the Jiffy Mart for a dinner, at Al's instigation – he arranged for eight or so people each time to pay ten dollars a head for a Fijian Indian curry, cooked by Beatrice.

Supporting and encouraging local businesses was a key part of what being a good neighbour involved. One year, LW members, along with some neighbours, compiled a 'Welcome to Otago' booklet to give to new neighbours, and gave out coupons for local businesses with it. Noticing that the coupons hadn't been getting used, Al wrote an email to the community suggesting another option, which got closer to what they were trying to do in any case. 'A better idea when new people move in, they get a 'zine, but instead of saying "Here's some free coupons", we could say, "I would like to take you guys out this Friday night to Vinny's Espresso for drinks", or

"Buena Vida [the local Mexican] for supper." This is far more relational than the coupons that don't get used, and our friends, the merchants, get some business, and we can even introduce the new folks to the merchant, and everything is farther ahead in the world of interconnectedness'.

For Al and other LW members, building 'interconnectedness' was at the core of neighbourhood life. Sometimes, Al intimated that as well as countering the negative, horrors might even be averted by neighbourliness. About six months before I moved in with LW, a young man who lived on 64th, the core area of LW's 'parish', had gone to a local shopping mall and shot dead two people and himself. Apropos of nothing one day, Al pointed me to look out the window. What do you see? That's how far Andrew L.'s [the killer's] yard was from mine. They were touching. Perhaps if he'd have known people in the neighbourhood, been connected to people, things might have been different.

Discussing the motives for the urban interventions of missioners to the nineteenth-century American industrial city, Robert Orsi remarks that, for them, 'the problem of moral life in the city…was that no one was watching' (Orsi 1999: 18). Omri Elisha (2013) has noted the will to knowledge of urban evangelicals, citing 'the imperatives to care, to ask, and to know', which 'inform evangelical efforts to construct coherent notions of place out of what are otherwise perceived as the messy, fractured realities of secular society' (2013: 319). In a 2009 article on 'urban charisma', Thomas Blom Hansen and Oskar Verkaaik, noting that 'modern urban life is … characterised by a constitutive unknowability' (2009: 8), argue that there are certain types of people in the modern city who act, extra-institutionally, as connectors and brokers and nodal points for connectivity across the 'unknowable' expanses of the modern city. Though the world of hustlers and fixers in vast, postcolonial cities they evoke is a rather different context to Quimby, their theme of 'knowability' is suggestive in relation to Christian localist action. Figures such as Living Water's Al, ever-present in the neighbourhood, making connections among neighbours, offering nodal points for connection by throwing celebrations, inviting help on work projects, etc, are weavers of webs of social meaning and mutual recognition among people who happen to live in physical proximity to one another. Rendering the unknown socially known is a core hope of the Christian localist project.

Blom Hansen and Verkaaik evoke a context of 'popular neighbourhoods' in which certain agile and socially compelling figures in the urban landscape are able to form and reform networks of influence, and sustain formations of what the authors call 'charisma', through which resources, favour, and indeed their opposites can travel. Neither institutional nor stable, what they call

'urban infrapower' is 'durable and informal networks of resources and connectivity' (2009: 13); 'a web of connections and structures of solidarity… desire and affect that traverse communities and neighbourhoods'. Infrapower is 'brokerage', 'facilitat[ing] economic flows through connections, obligations or friendships' (2009: 20).

Al facilitated 'economic flows' through cultivating relationships, for example encouraging people to patronise local merchants such as Vinny, in part through telling stories about the kind of thing Vinny is trying to do – smoothies over crack pipes, the story of the food stamps. The point of giving out coupons to local stores was to encourage people to spend locally, and get to know their local merchants. The 'relational' aim takes precedence over the economic, as shown by the shift in position over coupons – however, when Al spoke of 'interconnectedness', what he meant was something thicker than sentimental contact; the economic tie was part of that connection, helping to make it a stronger tie than mere friendliness. The hope was to induce reciprocity, not free-gifting, to create social lattices of Maussian density. Blom Hansen and Verkaaik argue that claiming knowledge of a city, and being 'able to create narratives about the city and its people' (2009: 8) are part of what gives a person charisma in the city. They describe the person with urban charisma thus: 'we also want to retain charisma as a name for specific registers of conduct, in this case conduct by different "urban types", i.e. people whose gift it is to know the city and to act decisively, with style and without fear. These figures distribute certainty, they … demonstrate new potential and possibility' (2009: 8).

Al, a 'broker' absolutely, amasses *and distributes* knowledge of the neighbourhood, seeking to be known in the streets of South Otago, not for personal grandeur, but for nodal purposes, to strengthen the social web. His personal charisma is incontestable, but he is also an important sorting place for neighbourhood information and resources – through his emailing list, and his offline connectivity across different kinds of neighbours. And the charisma is of a particular kind. Watching Al make connections in Vinny's store, or, as we walked the neighbourhood and he kept his eye out for people and things (we came across an abandoned futon once, which he was immediately on the phone about, knowing a particular friend needed one), I thought of it as a kind of 'distributing charisma', in which the sense of life and involvement and hope that he exudes never fully settles on his own person, but fans out in a person's affective experience, to involve the whole social scene. Thus, whereas Blom Hansen and Verkaaik see the charismatic in the city as 'convert[ing]' the city's mysteries into a 'resource' (2009: 8) for self-creation, what I saw when LW members such as Al were out and about in their chosen home was an operation of 'knowability', of rendering legible, that was akin to lighting up a portion of circuitboard, to enable people to see the connections.

Al has an acknowledged special skill in this pastoral-socially formative technique, but the whole group of LW had it too, at least in moments. The group's practices of moral attention, liturgical and in everyday life, and the atmospheric outcomes of their collective and individual efforts to cultivate 'relationship' and 'reconciliation', produced moods and motivations among people, myself included, that didn't, to my knowledge, have Christian evangelistic effects on nonbelievers, but did create social facts on the ground: both moments of 'community', in which connections among neighbours were made in the affective moment, and commitments to 'getting involved' subsequently.

The social work of the work party

However, energy within LW for outreaches ebbed and flowed. Sometimes, it seemed like it could be hard for LW folks, several of whom had rather quiet and diffident personalities, to keep going out there, week after week, forging connection. Before the potato fry-in one year, Al sent round an email to LW members. After asking people to remember to bring 'lawn chairs and a creative condiment' for the fry-in, he rhetorically asked: 'What is the goal?' The first goal, he said, was for neighbours to meet each other. 'When people pass on the sidewalk on any given day, there is no expectation or culture of stopping to have a conversation, so we may at best recognise people we see from time to time but have no idea who they are or what common interests we may have'.

He referred to the intersection paint. What they were seeking with events like these, Al reminded everyone, was 'interconnectedness', like the roots of those trees:

> Instead of being a bunch of dots in the middle of the intersection, we envision becoming something like the Celtic knot – the visual beneath us. Interconnectedness – meeting the one who gives piano lessons, has expertise in painting, loves to watch football, fixes cars, collects china dolls, loves the Rollers [local soccer team], teaches math, just moved in, loves *Arrested Development*, pastry chef, etc...

The second goal, he said, was:

> For the neighbourhood to have a broadening sense of who 'we' are (not LW, but South Otago) and also a sense of tradition that helps establish positive identity and camaraderie. It engenders that sort of 'Yeah, in our neighbourhood we do stuff – like that annual potato-fry' … It increases the sense of 'place', making it not just the geography but includes the faces of those who with us call this 'our place'.

He ended by urging people not to 'clump' together with familiar faces, but to 'use the opportunity to introduce people to one another', and gently reminded that sometimes he could use some 'minglers as backup'. 'God bless our growing, glowing neighbourhood', he ended.

In Al's idea, community events would tie together the encounter between unique individuals (pastry chef, *Arrested Development*, etc) and a performatively-forging community identity, visually condensed in the brand of the knotted trees. I suggest this represents a Durkheimian hope of creating, through collective action, the experiential ground on which social solidarity might be built. Durkheim's theory of human religiosity is laid out in his classic *Elementary forms of the religious life* (1965 [1915]), where, drawing on the reports of English and American ethnographers (Lukes 1985: 452), he uses the ritual practices of Aboriginal Australian tribes as examples of what he imagines to be 'the most…simple religion' (1965: 13), on whose foundations all other, so he believed more 'advanced', religions were built. In this universalising, social-evolutionary account whose methodological flaws and conceptual overreaches have been much noted (Lukes 1985), Durkheim offers an account of the relationship between acts of assembly and the idea of the sacred that follows a similar sociological logic to that driving some of the most performative of today's Christian localist interventions.

Durkheim writes of the aptly named Indigenous Australian 'corrobbori', a ritual gathering that brings together people who, outside such gatherings, are normally widely dispersed and have little contact among themselves (1965: 246). In the corrobbori, people experience and express intense sentiments, sentiments occasioned precisely by the coming together of many people normally dispersed, which are then reinforced by others expressing similar passions (1965: 247); these 'effervescent social environments' are, in Durkheim's view, where 'the religious idea' is born (1965: 250). Durkheim's contention is that it is the coming together of persons in 'an assembly united by a common passion' (1965: 240) that engenders in them a felt sense of the collective, and in so doing confers a moral strength on participating individuals. There is a periodicity to this: 'the group periodically renews the sentiment which it has of itself and of its unity; at the same time, individuals are strengthened in their social natures' (1965: 420).

I would like to suggest that the localist communitarians I met and observed mustering themselves and their neighbours together to enact the setpiece events of collective placemaking labour and celebration that were remembered, anticipated, and told and retold as evidence of 'community' happening, were acting on a kind of Durkheimian vision of human collectivity. I am not arguing that events such as the intersection 'repair', or the orchard work parties, or the potato

dig and frying party, necessarily did have the effects of fortifying people's spirit of collectivity and making them fizz with passion for their common cause, but that the localists who contrived such events – and remember, what the localists themselves would never allow me to forget, that event-contrivers and event participants were often the same people – thought, like Durkheim, that they would have such effects. The language of the movement was quite explicitly and reflexively Durkheimian, in its talk of 'creating community', and community-as-verb talk: this, the ground of shared action, is where 'community happens', people would say.

The kind of impassioned atmospheres that Durkheim describes as characterising the corrobbori are not atmospherically similar to the orderly work parties of LW, but the idea of them as opportunities for individuals to gain some kind of psychic unity with others, and with something beyond themselves, is held by those helping to make them happen. The synchronicity of working physically on a common project could be viewed as an analogue to the 'songs and dances' of the expressed 'collective sentiment' (1965: 247) of the corrobbori.

Durkheim observes that 'assembl[ies] united by common passion' feed and revive a group's 'common faith by manifesting it in common' (1965: 240), reinjecting life into 'sentiments' that would otherwise lose their intensity (1965: 241). Like Durkheim himself, the ceremonial localists I knew took a somewhat functionalist view of bringing people together to act in common. Durkheim's further view, that 'religion', in the sense of beliefs and practices in relation to 'sacred things', emerges from such assemblies' punctuation of ordinary time and ordinary monadic human existence, may have its Christian localist analogue in a sociologically inflected formula I saw very occasionally being invoked (in written form – it didn't come up in conversation), of 'behaving –> belonging –> believing'. Their view of the sacred is very different from Durkheim's view, which is of the sacred as a category quite opposite and apart from its antonym, the profane. Localists speak little of 'the sacred', but things and actions associated with a morally fortifying sense of the collective are things and actions that they, as a rule, hope and work to see proliferate and, indeed, permeate. There was a sense in which at least some of the localists I knew imagined that, somewhere down the line, religious commitment might issue from acting repeatedly in ways that built community.

But localist projects of placemaking are also part of a volunteerist American subculture in which community-building action is validated by a seal of practicality; a guarantee that, whatever else it is, a particular collective intervention is *useful*. This usefulness might be quite diffusely defined; as community 'wellbeing', for instance, but some kind of (ideally measurable) practicality is important as an underwriter of public community-building actions. Jerome Baggett's (2001) study of evangelical housebuilding charity Habitat for Humanity (for which two members of LW

worked at the time of my fieldwork) offers a nuanced picture of an organisation that projects public religion through what organisation founder Millard Fuller calls 'the theology of the hammer' (2001: 61), a 'doctrinal minimalism' in which what matters is showing God's love through practical action, not specific beliefs or religious practices (2001: 62). Habitat, Baggett writes, 'provides rituals of common purpose for [people] to enact' – 'love in action', in the organisation's native terms – which can bring diverse kinds of people together precisely because of the cause's 'sheer practicality and common sense' (2001: 36). This is public religion that anyone can get involved in, because the 'theology of the hammer' includes everyone, united under the seal of practicality. Baggett writes that many of Habitat's supporters see what the organisation is doing as 'real religion', because it 'gets things done' (2001: 198). He views this as a sign of a faith that has 'become rationalised to a certain extent' (2001: 199).

Members of groups such as LW, in their neighbourhood interactions, behave like organisations such as Habitat, to the extent that they adopt rationalised goals to bring people together. For example, meetings to plan the community orchard focused on statistical information about fruit and vegetable consumption in the neighbourhood (the city published census information about such consumption house-by-house, I was told). In part guided by the expectations of grant-making bodies, work-party localism concentrated on its governmental dimensions, to frame its projects as useful 'dispositions of men and things'. But the value of usefulness was a native point of view in any case: in Anne's email to LW seeking support in the orchard project, she remarked that 'if the project is birthed as it is currently being dreamt, it will include so many layers of benefit: fruit trees providing a local healthy food source, native pollinator insect habitat, educational resources, green space at the intersection of the Greenway and the Pines Trail, a gathering place, opportunity for neighbours to work side by side to improve this place we call home.' I would argue that it is this seal of usefulness that in these American contexts acts as a necessary warrant for ritual collective action that has community-building effects.

Baggett evokes the affective power of a Habitat building operation through his description of a 'blitz build' (2001: 33) on a Native American reservation in South Dakota, led by Habitat's founder, and by former president Jimmy Carter. A blitz build is a large amount of building squeezed into an intensive period for maximum dramatic effect, in this case a week. Baggett describes the enthusiastic atmosphere, the easy laughter, the range of types of people involved (including, crucially, the homeowners, working alongside the 'overwhelmingly middle class' (2001: 37) volunteers), the sensory stimulation of the active and physically demanding situation, all typical ingredients of work-party localist events in Quimby I had known. 'The point was to create a sense of community as well as to complete the building project' (2001: 34), he notes.

Baggett applies Victor Turner's concept of 'communitas' to the scene, a state engendered by participation in the build of 'immediate, non-hierarchical relatedness' (2001: 37). He notes in particular the de-differentiating effect of the shared labour, everyone kitted out in the same work clothes, the variety of reasons for getting involved transcended, in a sense, by the work itself.

Baggett's account shows how Habitat's emphasis on practicality entails an almost sacramental attitude towards the material world of hammers, houses, and building materials. He quotes Millard Fuller calling Habitat houses "sermons of pure truth", and volunteers seeing their clearing a patch of brambles as a sign of the Holy Spirit at work (2001: 199). He notes that the physical structures built by the volunteers 'are described in…incarnational terms' (2001: 60); 'sacramentally', and observes that 'these statements depict the act of volunteering…as a manifestation of the sacred itself' (2001: 200).

Baggett refers to the act of housebuilding as 'secular' (2001: 200), but rendered 'sacred' by the 'rationalisation' to which Habitat has conformed, as a religious organisation aiming to appeal beyond the religiously committed. Rather than see the material action of Habitat volunteers as intrinsically 'secular', I would like to argue that what we see here is a real sacramentalism around collective, physical labour. The religiously committed people who initiate and undertake these projects see such labour as grace-filled and transformative, on the theological model of the Kingdom 'now, not yet', described earlier. And it is made so by virtue of its apparent practicality. Elsewhere in his study, Baggett notes that, in the context of 'inequitable class divisions that are the effect of the capitalist market', the efforts of voluntary-sector organisations such as Habitat, laudable though they undoubtedly are, are vastly 'insufficient' to tackling the country's housing problems (2001: 244).

Drawing on these two observations from Baggett, I would like to suggest that the practical cast of Christian localist placemaking activity, which, in its theologically underdetermined, sacramental-pragmatist, and 'relationship'-focused ethos, is very close to that of Habitat as Baggett describes it, is intrinsic to its ritual and religious character. It is the aura of practicality, rendered in the materiality of work tools, of ground shifted, of materials planed and driven into place, that offers this activity its religious warrant, as a good work that, being so, might be a route of redemptive transformation. Baggett calls this kind of activity 'rationalised', yet I would argue that placemaking work is not so much rationalised action as religiously formative action that uses the materials of instrumental action to achieve religious aims – those of personal and collective moral transformation. 'Sweat equity, volunteering, and tithing are structured components of [Habitat] because, *along with their practical importance*, they function as enacted manifestations of partnership – of the Kingdom – as it already exists' (2001: 57, my italics). I would add that it is in

part the 'practical importance' of these features that, in this American culture, lends them their evidential qualities as signs of the Kingdom of God.

'Living above place'

Christian localism has its dedicated organisations, that contribute theorisation, conferences, and encouragement to the movement. The movement as a whole shares in the wider new evangelical turn's anti-modernity, with its explicit horror of the separation of spheres, made concrete in American urban geography. Images of groundlessness and fragmentation as characteristic of modern life, and as both cause and kind of moral failure, are pervasive. One localist I knew, Jim, who lived in a once-poor area of inner North Quimby with his family and a desperately indigent local couple they had taken in, referred, in a video he shot for the Christian localist organisation, Neighborhood Circle (with which several of my informants were involved), to the non-neighbourhoodist life as the 'helicopter lifestyle'. A book written by influential localists about 'parish' living invoked the idea of 'living above place', along with 'individualism', as key to what was amiss in church and life in America today (Sparks *et al.* 2014: 15).

Discussing 'neighbourhood' in the pub with Jim one day, he told me that living 'in the neighbourhood' was 'not supernatural' – which I took to mean not something abstrusely theological (new evangelicals, pious as they are, typically distance themselves from anything that appears too religion-y) – it was simply 'pragmatic'; a 'philosophical system that helps one to live in a congruent way', in 'integrated relationships'. This, he said, was instead of wearing a 'mask', and skipping from place to place in a 'privatised metal box' (a car), 'amputated' from the human, animal and plant world around us.

At the annual conference of Neighborhood Circle, one of the plenary speakers and the organisation's cofounder, who had downsized the suburban megachurch he pastored to become an intentional community seeded in a small town's downtown, engaging the community in part through the eight local businesses they'd started there, spoke on his favourite topic: zoning laws. We can challenge the fragmentation of our lives by bringing it all together on the ground of 'place', he said. Intrinsic to this change is 'develop[ing] the practice of plunging your hands into the earth'; engaging with the land, not hovering above it. Training all of your life on the same spot makes you need God more, he explained, because you are giving up the impunity that comes from having a life scattered across different domains. He quipped: how can you forgive someone 'seventy times seven', as Jesus commands, if you don't 'share life together' long enough to do so? But this kind of integration was 'illegal in our country', because of 'how the built

environment is structured', such that 'work, shopping and home' are separated out into different places. Living a 'shared', 'bodied' life in 'the neighbourhood' is literally illegal, he said.

Neighborhood Circle holds design 'charrettes' and meetings to brainstorm ideas about integrated development. Much of their thinking parallels the 'New Urbanist' school of urban planning, which explicitly connects a mixed-use layout with an idea of the ideal American small town. Duany *et al* (2000), for example, note that 'the classic American Main Street, with its mixed-use buildings right up against the sidewalk, is now illegal in most municipalities' (2000: xi). Duany *et al* rail against 'zoning', which they remark as central to suburban planning, and which they define as 'the segregation of the different aspects of everyday life' (2000: 10). Central to the idea of 'neighbourhood' as a kind of 'symbolic opposite' (Bielo 2011b: 277) to 'suburbia' is this idea of mixed uses, and of public gathering places/spaces. A neighbourhood, according to the New Urbanist literature, has 'a clear centre' (2000: 15) and an edge, with the centre a public space, with some kind of focal point, such as a public building, a park, or even an intersection to mark the middle. It is a 'five-minute walk' from 'edge' to 'centre' (2000: 247) of the neighbourhood – the hope is that all a person's 'basic, daily needs' should be able to be met by walking the neighbourhood. Interviewing one localist-minded seminary teacher, I asked him where he lived, expecting to hear much enthusiastic talk of the neighbourhood. But he said that where he and his family currently live, there's 'no neighbourhood'. He said there was an apartment complex nearby, but that they had 'no neighbours', it was 'nowhere'. This was how he described living in a Quimby suburb, adding that he and his wife felt a 'pull to move back to the city', as it is 'so easy to do place and locality there'. Another person I knew, while recognising the value of engaging with people in suburbia, said for her own spiritual health, she knew she mustn't live in a suburb.

City neighbourhood as small town

American missionary Christianity has had its imagination captured by the city ever since the nineteenth century, when industrialisation brought modern urbanism into being, and the condition of the industrial cities of that era presented evangelists with a new and powerful object of desire and moral concern (Orsi 1999). Robert Orsi (1999) notes nineteenth-century depictions of the city as 'the vicious destroyer of the common good, of family life and individual character', 'counterposed…to an idealised image of small-town life' (1999: 6). He cites the work of temperance, revivalist and other Christian reformers to 'perfor[m]…the small town in the city', notably through norms of mutual supervision. Writing of nineteenth-century urban missions such as the YMCA, Orsi notes a 'distinctly Protestant anti-urban poetics in which the pre- or

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anti-urban became the moral and aesthetic ideal' (1999: 18). This has been one strand of evangelical thought about cities – as places of trouble, occasioned in part by their anonymity, that are amenable to redemption through Christian intervention. American Christians have found in urban spaces richly compelling paradoxes: in 'the popular American genre of Christian narratives of city redemption', Orsi writes, the city is typically portrayed as dirty, depraved – and yet it is 'precisely into these dark, filthy depths that God comes' (1999: 11). The city is a place of need, and thus of salvific potential (see also Coleman 2009). Such a view lingers: Elisha observes that, still, 'for many evangelicals, cities represent redemptive potential on a grand scale' (2013: 314).

But what seems distinctive about this contemporary iteration of evangelical city-fascination is the determined positivity, noted above, that it evinces in relation to the city as an entity, quite in contrast to its predecessors' 'anti-urban poetics'. This partial reconfiguration of the evangelical gaze is made possible by the existence, and centrality to the modern evangelical experience (Bielo 2011b; Luhr 2009), of the suburb, that preeminent configuration of postwar American housing. It is the suburb, the incubator of the kind of evangelicalism within which this movement was birthed and against which it frames its reformatory project, that has set the terms on which the movement can be understood. The existence of the neither-nor zone of the suburb has made possible a key conceptual element in neighbourhoodism: the dovetailing of the pastoral and small-town ideal, with the idea of the city. While Orsi notes the long pedigree of evangelical attempts to create the small town in the city, I would argue that there is a distinctive claim made in the current movement that the city's very cityishness, signalled in racial diversity and a lively jostle of mixed uses, is itself at least potentially wholesome. The close-knit and self-sustaining small town of agrarianist and other American anti-urban discourses folds together in the localist imagination with the intimate, life-filled urban neighbourhoods of Jane Jacobs-style anti-modernist urbanism. The small town and the inner-city neighbourhood, which would have had radically contrasting faces to an earlier generation, look alike in contrast to the single-use and uniform profile of the suburb.

Orsi writes of a historical and contemporary American mental geography in which a 'border' exists, between the '"inner city"' and 'the middle-class domains', and of the existence of an American tradition in which people, especially the young, experience 'spiritual significance' in crossing that border (1999: 9), seeking both self-sacrifice and self-discovery (1999: 8, 9) in the pilgrimage to the city, a site of life more 'real' (1999: 8, 10) than that of their bourgeois places of origin. I recall a conversation with Nate, one of LW's most impassioned anti-car localists, about a book he'd read, M.P. Baumgartner's *The moral order of a suburb* (1988), a sociological study of an

affluent suburban community in New York state. He told me about it as I drove eastward to visit a suburban church one Sunday morning, with him in the passenger seat (he doesn't drive on principle). As we left LW's chosen neighbourhood, and entered the scattered and boxy, semi- rural development of the areas beyond the city line, he told me about the book's argument, that the peace and quiet of the suburb as a social space was the result of a culture of 'moral minimalism', in which conflict is avoided because, in effect, people are avoided. The suburb thus described is a place of weak social ties and transience, where neighbours keep each other at arm's length. To Nate, moral minimalism was a travesty, a terrible refusal of the potential redemptions of community.

Nate's critique of the suburb, and the general localist conviction that the suburban paradigm of work and home life in separate spaces is bad for social cohesion, echoes earlier critiques of the city. Fischer (2005) reports of Louis Wirth that (in Fischer's words), the 'diversity of locales' of work, family and recreation, 'weakens social bonds', making 'moral consensus' 'difficult' (2005: 46). Now, localists imagine a kind of moral maximalism as a possible destiny of the city itself. The image of an individual closing their garage door at the end of the day, shutting themselves off from the social world beyond their private home, was frequently invoked by people I knew, often in a spirit of self-criticism. The garage door, as metonym of the suburb, represented the opposite of the kind of densely interactive local life a group such as LW advocated and tried to practise in their urban context.

Bielo (2011c) has noted the 'city-positive' (2011c: 21) tone that new evangelicals tend to take, in contrast to the negative figurings of earlier generations of missioners. He writes that 're-urbanized Evangelicals foster an optimistic… at times romanticized, view of the city' (2011c: 21). A popular intellectual touchstone of today's Christian localism is the work of renowned twentieth-century urbanist writer Jane Jacobs, who wrote in defiance of the grand-scale modernist projects of infrastructure building and slum clearance epitomised in the 'urban renewal' work of mid-century New York city planner Robert Moses (Gopnik 2016). Jacobs's engaging and celebratory evocations of the 'intricate sidewalk ballet' (Jacobs 1961: 50) of the busy urban street, in which it is precisely the heterogeneity and tumult of city life that makes places safe and good to live in, has traditionally represented a contrasting tradition of thought about the city to the venerable American tradition of anti-urban moral sentiment, in which the city stands as a place made dangerous and potentially immoral by its comparative anonymity and flux (Orsi 1999). In a sign of how these once-countervailing discourses about the city come together in this localist ethic, Christian urbanists explicitly celebrate city sidewalks as places of potential human interaction, echoing Jacobs's famous defence of 'eyes on the street' (1961: 54)

and a diverse urban streetscape. Central to the idea of 'neighbourhood' in this movement is both a desire to recreate an idea of small-town America in the heart of the city, and a celebration of the city itself, as a site of something at least potentially lively, heterogeneous and inventive – 'creative', in the lexicon of contemporary urban renewal (Florida 2005).

One of Jacobs' targets for criticism was the freeway-building projects of mid century, which, like similar works across the country in that era, including in Quimby, destroyed some poor urban neighbourhoods. The construction in the early 1970s of the freeway that bisects Otago's town centre is seen by many people in this movement as having dealt the death blow to the commercial and civic life of what had once been a thriving independent town. LW members felt this story keenly. Anne reposted an article about this history on her Facebook page with the following comment: 'The vision of what this place used to be haunts me. I don't think, even as we work towards a better future, that we have sufficiently lamented and grieved', and 'what's happened in Otago is just a microcosm of everywhere.' LW members want Otago to return to its pre-freeway small-town-like state. The 'Welcome to Otago' booklet opens with a map and a page of local history: 'Otago was a thriving small town with two pharmacies, a bakery, and ten churches'. The booklet recalls the streetcar line that in the nineteenth century had connected small towns such as Otago to Quimby, before the rise of the motorcar made the lines obsolete. 'In the 1970s, we lost most of our town centre to the construction of the freeway', it reads. Thus localism here is very much a restorationist vision of neighbourhood-making.

Bielo (2011b) argues that the evangelicals who spurn the suburbs for the city are seeking to 'purify' the 'disorder' they find in the poor neighbourhoods of the city, through 'attaching themselves' to it, while disparaging what they see as the false 'purity' of the hermetic suburb; 'disorder mistook for order' (2011b: 279). But in the localist narratives I heard in Otago, there was less of a sense of wanting to purify disorder, than of finding in the heterogeneity of the city, in its mixed uses and populations, the sometimes demanding, sometimes rewarding, conditions of life that might enable formative living, conditions that the segregatory organisation ('purity') of the emblematic suburb impeded. Infrastructurally, cities were problematic for localists, but it was at the level of the city neighbourhood that the potential moral depredations that urban scale brought could be worked on and the fabric of city be rendered back into small town, without losing the creative disorder that made the city a stimulating alternative to the suburb.

Writing on 'socially engaged evangelicals' in suburban Tennessee, Elisha uses the language of 'utopia' (Elisha 2011b: 243) to describe what the urban-focused evangelicals he knew were reaching toward as they engaged in projects of urban renewal. He writes of Christian urbanists' 'desires of utopian integration and urban renewal' (2011b: 238), as, like the urbanists I knew,

they undertook their engagements with and in cities with a 'practical theology' of 'essentially ushering the kingdom into the world', in which verbal evangelism is not enough; what is being sought is transformation on and in the ground. In the view of Elisha's urbanists, however, the 'world' and the kingdom of God were very distinct from one another. In the case of the localists I knew in Quimby, whose way of holding their faith was much less socially conservative than that of Elisha's informants, the sense of the city as a place of danger was much less pronounced; the 'city-positive' (Bielo, citing informants, 2011c) attitude being uppermost. 'World', for them, was to be found not in the fabric of neighbourhood, however downtrodden, but in the infrastructure, actual and ideological, of modernity, infrastructure which it was the localist's task to bypass and subvert in favour of recreating anew the social relations of the pre-automobilic (and perhaps even preindustrial) town.

Theologies of place

On the day of the Otago intersection paint, I got chatting with Nate, who had just got back from visiting the pastor who'd spoken at the localist conference, who had downsized his church to make it a neighbourhood intentional community. He'd shown Nate around. Twenty thousand people live in that downtown, Nate remarked to me, while sixty thousand work there. The hope, he said as we watched the painters paint and the kids play in the safely cordoned road, is to 'get those numbers closer together', and for people to have reasons to stick around after work, hang out in the neighbourhood, 'have a pint' together.

Bielo has argued that urbanist Christians who relocate from suburban areas to city neighbourhoods, though they critique the American evangelical subculture as vassal to the institutions and philosophies of 'modernity' (Bielo 2011a), nevertheless exhibit signs of their own participation in both 'modern' and what he calls 'late modern' subject positions (2011a: 176-7). 'Their everyday practice', he observes, referring in part to the highly rationalised practices of neighbourhood researching and 'measurement' his Ohioan localists undertook in preparation for church planting, 'belies a complete break with their past' (2011a: 177), as members of an evangelical subculture whose cultural 'modernity' they aim to challenge. Bielo judges the 'sense of place' cultivated by the Christian localists he knew, who had intentionally relocated to poorer city neighbourhoods with a 'missional' purpose, to be 'intricate, nuanced, but ultimately mediate' (2011b: 267). In the end, he says, the point of cultivating 'dwelling' in a place is as 'a means to the…evangelical end of "reaching the lost"' (2011b: 267). At the same time, he recognises that localists' critique of suburban conservative evangelicalism amounts to a 'lived subjectivity'

(2011c: 10), as people move in to inner-city neighbourhoods, engage with cultural others there, and cultivate a 'sense of place' that renders these mission fields into 'home' (2011a: 193). Of course, Bielo is right to recognise that in a way evangelical localists' cultivated 'sense of place' (2011a; 2011b) is not an end in itself. But, for the localists I knew at least, living 'incarnationally' in one place was felt to be an intrinsic spiritual good. The sacramental qualities of performative work-party placemaking were something new for them, and very far from the verbal and textual ceremonies of most people's Protestant hinterlands.

Which is not to say there are not precedents for Christian missions that focus on the body of the city, and are content to stay on the ground of the material with their neighbours, and not overtly evangelise. Like today's localists, the Salvation Army of the nineteenth-century American city were 'circumspect in sharing their witness' and keen to show tolerance of the beliefs of others (Winston 1999: 8), while also working to 'sanctify the commonplace', to make '"a house or a store or factory…just as holy a place as a church"'. LW shares in the heritage of missions which take as their remit practical ameliorative action in the world, as well as or indeed largely instead of, verbal or textual evangelism (Bornstein 2003; Carpenter & Shenk 1990; Hutchison 1987; Unruh & Sider 2005: 136-7; Winston 1999).

One of the inspirations for today's localists is the Catholic Worker movement, a communitarian experiment made up of 'houses of hospitality' in cities and some farms, which was started in Depression-era New York by Catholic convert Dorothy Day and itinerant French mystic Peter Maurin (Fisher 1989; Miller 1973; Summers Effler 2010). The Catholic Worker's radical pacifism and anti-rationalist ethos of hospitality and shared living make it deeply attractive to many in today's movement. As part of a study of a range of American spiritualities in relation to 'place', Belden Lane (2002) has analysed the Catholic Worker's engagement with place, noting paradox at work: both a 'personalist conviction' of the need for 'a profound sense of rootedness in space', and a commitment to a certain worldlessness and precarity, in line with the 'wandering, homeless Jesus of early Jewish Christianity' (2002: 191). He also notes their 'rich sacramentality' and 'exacting asceticism' (2002: 200) at work at once, with 'place' celebrated and dug into, but voluntary poverty also extolled.

Today's localists, opposed to 'consumerism' and seeking to live 'simply' share in some of that asceticism, in a worldview in which the idea of 'incarnating' in 'place' – living locally, and spending minimally on one's needs so as to have more to share with neighbours in need – stands in opposition to the worldliness of 'consumerism'; that form of engagement with the material that is morally invalidated by its divorce from the interpersonal. Lane identifies as a tension the

Catholic Worker's embrace of both 'precarity and permanence' (2002: 191) in relation to the material world. As it plays out in today's Christian localism, I would argue that this pairing reflects an ideological decision to site both placedness and spiritual independence from worldliness in the same category, with their opposite standing as the 'abstraction' (Berry 1991; van Steenwyk 2013) of modernity's infrastructures and systems.

Elisha (2011b) has also noted a doubled relationship with 'place' among the evangelical localists he knew, for whom relocating to the city had connotations both of the 'exilic frame', of having one's root somewhere beyond world, and the drive to immersion (2011b: 248), to be utterly rooted in place. The tension Elisha identifies, between a 'sojourner'-like posture of being at a remove from worldliness, and a commitment to immersion in the local and the material, might be said to be intrinsic to Christianity itself, and of course the story of Jesus's own incarnation plays out precisely that tension. Christianity poses and makes creative use of paradox, and it might be said that one of the thrusts of localist thought is to enliven awareness of the productive tension here; to 'despiritualise' faith, in the local lexicon. Lane (2002) has noted how 'the kataphatic tradition [in Christianity] rejoices in discerning the presence of God in the singularity and "thisness" of various places' (2002: 241). Lane's study draws out a central tension between placedness and placelessness – or, better put, between specific, inhabited 'place', and abstract, ungrounded 'space', in Christian spirituality. The early American Puritans, he reports, were somewhat torn between being in a particular place, creating the 'city upon a hill' that they believed God had ordained for them (2002: 143), and being pilgrims and strangers in the world. He offers too the example of the Shakers, a pious covenantal community whose famous artisanal productions were impelled by a conviction that they were making things 'emblematic of the simplicity and perfection of that world to which this one dimly corresponds' (2002: 168). From the arrangement of their settlements to the style of their handicrafts, the Shakers sought to render things without superfluity, as their heavenly prototypes. Shakers undertook placemaking rituals and were generally very concerned with the material world, in its potential as a faithful correspondent to the immaterial. The material as potential sign of perfectedness thus has a pious American heritage, with the spiritual aestheticism of the Shakers apparently resolving the 'tension' between the unworldly and the material through rendering places and things as signs of something beyond them.

Ingie Hovland (2016), reviewing recent work on evangelical Christian placemaking, draws on Feld and Basso's (1996) suggestion that local ideas about 'dwelling' represent ways of connecting 'locality' to 'life-world', and suggests that evangelical placemaking is an example of 'locality' and what she calls 'faith-world' being 'simultaneously' fused and unfused (2016: 5). In saying so, she

challenges the view (Coleman 2009) that associates evangelicalism with a preference for 'space' – locality and life-world unfused – over 'place' (the pair of them 'fused'). She concludes that evangelical Christian placemaking projects show a mixed approach to materiality – a wary embrace. 'Evangelical placemaking results in a simultaneous, double edged, fusing and unfusing of situation and setting, which it seems to me we cannot label either dis-placement or, reversely, thorough emplacement. It is a simultaneous taking apart and bringing together of faith and place' (2016: 22). My argument, witnessing the reverence for neighbourhood places of the Quimby localists I knew, would be that the placemaking turn in US evangelical Christianity represents an assertion that the saturation of place with moral meaning might (literally) prepare the ground for a future in which 'faith' and 'place' are not such separate categories.

Noting the new evangelicals' idea of the Kingdom of God breaking in to the world in moments, Hovland remarks that this 'gives evangelical placemaking a heterotopic quality, with two different spaces intersecting in one place', complicating, she believes, hope and utopia with a serially renewed reminder of the incompleteness of this world. 'Evangelicals', she remarks, 'learn to live with another possible space always in view' (2016: 18). While this may be true, it was my sense from my localist informants that their particular zeal was for the world-filled life, for intentionally settling into a posture in which their hopes were not sequestered in the next world, but partly realised in this one. Part of the movement's doctrine of the small-scale has to do with making a point of the modesty of one's moral ambitions, such that within the narrow geographic parameters set out, comparatively substantial transformation may be achieved. The ritual temporality we see in much of their placemaking action also creates a succession of actually existing arenas of transformation.

But 'missional' localists hold an ambivalent posture in relation to the world they embrace in the neighbourhood. The next chapter will look at community-development projects undertaken in LW to set localist activism on a more rationalised footing. In these, localists' enthusiastic engagements with the material and social world are faced with questions about temporality, and what kinds of good may be attained and for whom in conditions of social inequality. Questions of gentrification and the embeddedness of localists within a market-dominated urban situation emerge for activists, whose ethical projects of placemaking intersect with political and economic processes.

Chapter three

Neighbourhood community development: recessive activism and ironies of urban renewal

The Christian localism I witnessed in action in Quimby and, secondarily, in the localist movement's cultural productions more broadly across the American churches (e.g., Sparks *et al* 2014), is organised around an aspiration of long-term physical copresence and coaction on the part of Christians with the various others of the city, the poor in particular. The previous chapter told a story of how one group of localists I knew lived in their chosen neighbourhood of Otago and sought to 'build community' there, in part through collective ritual placemaking action. It introduced the key term of 'neighbourhood', as it is used by localists themselves, as a distinct imaginative category that condenses ideas of 'the city' and its imagined opposites of the small town and the village, producing a particular kind of urban pastoral in contemporary American evangelical thought. Neighbourhoodism's philosophical partner, the gospel of particularity over abstraction, was alluded to as an important dimension of this critiquing turn in American Protestantism, of which more in Chapter six.

In this chapter, remaining in Otago, I turn to Christian localism's more programmatic face, following localists as they engage in projects of neighbourhood community development in spirits of hope and disavowal; pursuing personal and social transformation by engaging alongside their neighbours in working on the physical, economic and social space of 'neighbourhood'. Part of the charisma of 'neighbourhood' for these localists is that the small-scale social space that it represents offers, by virtue of its size, the possibility of a condensation of ethics and politics, such that virtuous action may be understood as the active agent in social change.

What we see in this localist action is a sense of mission doubly counterweighted: on the one side, by a sense of repentance from crude evangelism, which has the effect of rerouting mission's strivings into projects of practical action in the material world (not an unusual approach, including among evangelicals: see for example Carpenter & Shenk 1990; Hutchison 1987; Unruh & Sider 2005; Winston 1999); and, on the other side, by a sense of obligation to be recessive and receptive in relation to the neighbourhood. The projects of action in the material world are themselves subject to countervailing currents, as localists both act to achieve material improvements in the infrastructure of neighbourhood – because the good is understood to encompass certain kinds of material as well as spiritual life – and oppose the transfer of that

value into economic realms that escape the bounds of 'community' in which that value was nurtured.

The localists' community-development philosophy, emergent from an indigenously entrepreneurial and capitalist evangelical culture, uses the language of 'assets' and 'capital' to denote human capabilities that might be rendered into various forms of community good; however, the mobility and growth capacity implied by those capitalist terms is simultaneously refused in the localist philosophy, which seeks to manage capitalism through a philosophy of embedding value locally, enlisting trained personal virtue as the embedding agent. 'Transformation' and 'renewal' are the lit tapers guiding Christian localism; but change is deeply ambivalent, indeed often to be resisted (as where it looks like intrusive 'development', or gentrification), and having practical effects in the world is itself a matter both of desire and disavowal.

Neighbourhood engagement: 'joining in' and knowing

After five years in Otago, LW members felt like, and were, ordinary neighbours, first and foremost. Sometimes, people would look back on LW's early ambitions in this pleasant, if modest, neighbourhood, and discern in their own attitudes signs of what people in this movement refer to as a 'Messiah complex', from which they ruefully repented. A spirit of civility (Hunter 1987) and humility was central to the group's ethos, as was a scrupulous desire to survey the neighbourhood around them and find it good. In this neighbourhood-positivity, genuine local identity commingles with the recessive ideology that is integral to Christian localism. Some in the movement cultivate a disposition of near-reverence in relation to the idea of 'the neighbourhood'. I sometimes saw this in the meetings of the local, loosely formed chapter of Neighborhood Circle, which typically focused their discussions on 'what God is already doing' in a given place. One evening, a tiny localist church I knew that had settled a mile or so west of LW's patch of Otago was the focus of one of these meetings. In the meeting, the main topic of discussion was a gardening project in a parking lot just off the main road. The parking lot had previously been rendered dirty and noisy by vehicles driving into it to get around the traffic lights, and so a young neighbour had decided to sow flowers and plants in the lot's borders to act as natural brakes, and she had had commissioned a cheerful yellow mural of 'love bombs' to be painted on a wall adjoining the lot.

On any given day of work, most of those weeding and tending this brightened patch were members of the tiny church, even though the church had had nothing to do with organising the project. The thrust of the Neighborhood Circle discussion was, therefore, about the group's participation in something already underway in the neighbourhood – the group was 'joining in' with what was 'already happening' there; this, the meeting agreed, was precisely what 'incarnating' in a neighbourhood should be about. I later heard the story of the parking lot's transformation retold by others. On one occasion, the reteller of the story didn't even mention the church that had helped with the parking lot, instead intoning with studied respect the names of the cluster of neighbourhoods the group had settled in.

Much of what 'being in the neighbourhood' entails is cultivating a way of being in which agency lies with those around one, the neighbours among whom one has seeded oneself, not least so that *they* might work changes on oneself. People spoke often about 'listening to' the neighbourhood, including one former LW member, a spirited talker, who vehemently said to me once – never mind miracles, all that, what did Jesus do? He *listened*. The trope of 'listening' is instructive about the kind of business localists like LW feel they have in 'the neighbourhood'. Listening is recessive, in a way, but of course it is also a method of data collection, a kind of acquisition. I remember Sally regretfully reflecting once how, after all this time in the neighbourhood, she sometimes felt like they knew the neighbourhood barely at all. Had I, in my researches, got a sense of the neighbourhood, she wondered. There were important patches of not-knowing – for example, the community struggled to get to know the East Asian families in the neighbourhood, who did not engage much with neighbours outside their communities, partly for language reasons; and some church members regretted the existence of the Russian-language immersion programme at the local elementary school, because it brought in families from other parts of Quimby, meaning there was a significant population of people at the school whose lives were not based in Otago. 'Knowing' was both affective – 'relationships' – and statistical – mapping, surveys, the kind of researches the group had done before moving in, and continued to do when they wanted to educate themselves about particular 'justice' issues in the neighbourhood, such as sexual exploitation, or homelessness. LW's was an ethnographic gaze, simultaneously phenomenological and cartographic, in which inhabiting was an ongoing act of living-to-know, and knowing was understood as mutually ethically transformative, with mutual (and ongoing) ethical transformation the reason for it all.

'What would you like to see here?' Imagining South Otago

In summer 2013, after five years of doing once-monthly outreach events in the neighbourhood, some members of the LW community, emboldened by the success of the intersection painting and the 'little free libraries' projects, felt it was time to explore with neighbours the possibility of planning, together, more comprehensive improvements in the immediate neighbourhood area of a square mile or so. And so a few months later, the first meeting of the South Otago Project met in the living room of the Barn, the large house at the time lived in by the Hass family and myself. Neighbours gathered over pizza and cups of tea to discuss working up a plan for future community projects.

Community development was in the air in Quimby's large and vibrant volunteer sector, aided and endorsed by a city administration with a history, dating to at least the 1970s, of interventionism and support for third-sector initiatives relating to the urban landscape and quality of life. Numerous groups were engaged in community-building activities in Quimby, including, in the Otago area at the time, a nascent business association, a community-development consultancy, and a housing association that had social support and community-building programmes folded into its remit. As a comparatively low-income neighbourhood situated within the bounds of a city with a longstanding reputation for urban interventionism and environmental activism, Otago has over the years been intensely subject to the planning gaze. The area has a conspicuously incomplete central retail hub, a consequence of low levels of commercial investment interest due, it is said, to low median incomes. It also has a lingering reputation for crime, from earlier decades when gang violence was a problem, and there remains an ongoing reality of sexual exploitation around the motels of 66th Boulevard.

Otago's comparative poverty has meant that, since 1998, the neighbourhood has been one of the city's six designated 'urban-renewal areas'. In an urban-renewal area, the city's urban-renewal agency raises funds for investment in 'capital improvements' in Otago, such as storefront renovations, streetscape improvements, and infrastructure projects, through a system known as 'tax-increment financing'. This works by the city freezing the assessed value of properties in the area from the beginning of the period for which the area is designated an urban-renewal area (usually around 25 years), and then borrowing the money for the capital improvements on the back of the expected leap in assessed property values, and thus property taxes, at the end of the period of capital investment. As well as funding for various 'liveability' projects, urban renewal also means residents can get help with mortgage deposits and home-improvement, both of which some LW members took advantage of.

Not long after the South Otago Project meetings began, there was a flurry of critical media coverage about urban renewal in Otago, partly in response to the announcement made by the incoming mayor that he was 'in the business of placemaking'. Commentators, pointing to the rather empty and gappy character of Otago's central retail district, argued that Otago had not yet seen much return on the $96 million of urban-renewal money spent since 1998, with one article rather dramatically referring to the neighbourhood's underwhelming centre as 'the hole in the heart of everything'. The urban-renewal agency's policy of buying up property and land and then retaining it, off the normal tax rolls, until a suitable buyer is found, meant that twelve acres in the centre of Otago was owned by the agency, inactive and awaiting investors who, in the main, were not yet sufficiently convinced about the area's demographics to set up shop there, although several innovative small businesses have thrived there in recent years. This had led to discontent with the pace of change in Otago, with neighbourhood activists, Christian localists among them, frustrated by the lack of progress. All these devoutly wished for a sweet spot to be found, and retained, between just enough development to bring local fortunes to a 'healthy' point (signified by the arrival of a nice grocery store), but not so much that the area's character changed, with excluding consequences for locals.

Meanwhile, a lively collection of nonprofits has put the interstitial spaces created by Otago Central's commercial suspended animation to imaginative use. One day when I was out walking, I saw some brightly coloured signs on one of the central district's empty lots. They said: 'What Would You Like to See Here?', and there was a barcode image one could scan with a smartphone to visit the website. It turned out to be the site of a firm contracted by the urban-renewal agency to crowdsource ideas for what to do with the several vacant lots that it owned, while they awaited buyers. The website was full of jovial, semi-serious suggestions, for example involving whimsical art and shipping containers. In 2014, a local housing and community-development non-profit installed a photo exhibition in the space, which they called a 'story yard', celebrating local businesspeople, while other projects to fill the gaps include a farmers' market, and a field given over to a popular troupe of petting goats.

Notwithstanding the laments of localists, Christian and non-Christian like, about the failure of the central district to attract investment, it was just this kind of small-scale, time-out-of-time, commercial and paracommercial activity that localists most celebrated, and their frustration with the slow pace of development was crosscut with local pride stung by the failure of media coverage to appreciate these parts of the Otago story. People, it seemed, valued action that presaged and, as such, enticed, development (it would not help Otago to gain investors if the media painted it as a hopeless case), yet it was the clear modesty and lack of will-to-expansion of

such projects, in some ways their charming antithesis to 'development', that validated them. Unlike the renewal agency, which actively sought raised property values, localists seemed sometimes to seek a kind of value outside capitalist time.

Like Quimby itself, Otago is mapped, over and over – by community-development nonprofits, by startup enterprises, by the fledgling business association, by transportation planners, by ecological charities, by local media, by neighbourhood activists. In the eight months I spent in the neighbourhood, I was aware of five neighbourhood development projects, whose documentary productions featured a map or maps of the neighbourhood: depictions of what was, what had been, and what might be. Three further projects got going a couple of months after I left: more maps.

The South Otago Project

In undertaking the South Otago Project, the group gathered in the Barn in November 2013 was thus joining the ranks of a substantial number of associations and agencies that saw inductively researched and planned placemaking in Otago as an important moral and organisational project. The meeting was preceded by a modest street party and free pizza from a woodburning oven courtesy of Al's son-in-law, who had parked up his award-winning pizza cart in the Green House driveway for the evening. Twenty-one neighbours came, invited via a mixture of doorknocking, word-of-mouth, and Al's mailing list of local people. The meeting was facilitated by Jared Armstrong, whose day job working for a Christian housebuilding charity had schooled him in current philosophies of 'neighbourhood revitalisation'. Like several LW members, Jared had experience of development work and overseas missions, including in Sudan, where he had taught agricultural techniques. Jared was a confident communicator; in the meetings that ensued, he was nevertheless careful not to be seen to be leading or pre-empting the group's decisions, but merely facilitating the group's own work.

He opened this first meeting by emphasising that the project, which was to be guided by a written plan that would be drawn up from the inputs of the community, was about 'relationships', not 'programmes', and set the frame of the discussion in resolutely positive terms: 'We have a fantastic neighbourhood; Otago is a great place to live'. This is not, he said, about turning a 'bad neighbourhood' into a 'good neighbourhood' – it's about building on the good things that are 'already happening' here, making an 'awesome' place even – he laughed – 'awesomer'. He went on: we want to uncover and make the most of the skills, knowledge and 'gifts' local people have, and the things about the area that

neighbours treasure, so as to promote 'quality of life' for all. What does quality of life consist of? A mixture of 'social cohesiveness' – 'neighbourhood events, spending time with each other' – and more material things, such as access to food, green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, 'thriving businesses'.

He reminisced about what people in the neighbourhood had done already, such as the running by one resident, who was present at the meeting, of a local grocery-buying club, and of course the major collaboration of the intersection paint. The neighbours present were enthusiastic, mirroring Jared's celebratory language, and offering suggestions of things that might be done – a neighbourhood music centre, someone offered, vegetable gardens for people to share, said someone else.

Then, up on the living room's projector went a map of the neighbourhood, an 'asset map', compiled by LW member Nate, who had learned about asset-mapping through Neighborhood Circle. The map showed six categories of local 'asset'. These included 'economic assets' (cafés, the farmers' market, a bar, a couple of grocery businesses), and 'infrastructure and physical assets' (a park, a bike trail, the creek, the light-rail station, and a couple of publicly funded streetscaping projects in the business district). Under 'cultural assets', Nate had marked the Little Free Libraries (along with the names of the householders who tended them), the local environmental nonprofit's tool-lending 'library'; and the intersection painting (marked by a snowflake icon). 'Institutions, agencies, professions' covered the school, the neighbourhood association, and the environmental nonprofit. A separate category denoted 'networks of relationships', all of which were churches. One of these, LW, was not marked, as all the other assets were, by a point on the map, but as an entire shaded area, denoting the area over which the church's nine households were situated (though on a later version of the map, this shading was gone, with LW not shown at all).

The map, Nate explained, was a 'tool' for 'kindling your imagination' and for 'communication'. It prompted some debate, which continued in subsequent meetings, about the project's scope, with some people querying the very small area (a little over a square kilometre) covered by the map and the proposed plan. One person noted the existence of a large, mainly subsidised-rent housing complex just below the plan's proposed southern boundary, reflecting that that represented a large body of people from diverse backgrounds (who, people recognised, were underrepresented in the meeting), who might benefit from neighbourhood-improvement projects, plus there was the encampment of homeless people by the creek, also slightly beyond the shaded area. Others, Jared included, pushed back on these criticisms, arguing for the value of starting small, of not spreading oneself too thinly.

Al explained the genesis of the current project in a survey that he, Jared and a few others (all LW members) had undertaken the previous year, for the local elementary school. The school had wanted to gather from the local community ideas for how it might serve the area beyond its education remit, and had engaged a local faith-based non-profit community-development consultancy – whose coordinator had, as it happened, helped to introduce LW to Otago – to train people to carry out a survey of local residents. The small team conducted a door-to-door survey of seventy or so residents to, in the words of a document produced by the team, 'develop a profile of the area's perception of itself'. Neighbours had been asked what they liked about the local area, what they'd like to change, what skills they personally had to offer to the local community, and what they'd like to see the school do. The skills people most popularly suggested they could offer included gardening, cooking, building work, teaching arts and crafts, and being a 'social connector'. The idea now, Jared explained, was to set about harnessing these assets in the community, and to address the 'priority areas' the survey had identified, which included 'neighbourhood relationships', 'physical environment', and 'economic opportunities'. Jared suggested to the meeting that the next step, if people were willing, could be for a steering committee to be formed, to go out and get 'buy-in' from the wider community.

There were two more living-room-scaled meetings held before it opened out into public meetings where the final content of the project's written plan would be decided. As I was no longer in the fieldsite when those meetings took place, this discussion will focus on these initial meetings only. Something that was emphasised by Jared and others involved was the neighbourhood-based makeup of those involved in the project. At the project's second meeting a month or so later, which was of the self-selected 'steering committee', Jared was joined in coordinating the project by Ashleigh, cofounder and cochair of the local environmental non-profit, Restore Otago, which undertook an impressive array of local beautification projects and gardening and DIY resource provision to the community. Ashleigh was not a LW member nor indeed a Christian, and throughout the South Otago Project, LW as an entity did not feature, although several LW members were involved. Fourteen people came to the steering committee meeting, of whom six were LW members. Of the non-LW people, around half had been involved in neighbourhood projects of various kinds in the past, and everyone apart from an enthusiastic couple new to the neighbourhood knew one another. Everyone was white – the need for diversity came up at every meeting, and plans were formulated to have flyers for the eventual public meetings in Spanish and perhaps Vietnamese, if a translator could be found.

The meeting opened with an icebreaker exercise, in which participants were asked to identify their 'gifts' of the 'head, hand, and heart'. One woman reported that she'd discovered the man sitting next to her was good at math, so perhaps he could help her with the accounts if she were to reopen the thrift store she used to own; another person said he could offer guitar lessons in exchange for someone to do work on his house. People talked reflectively about themselves, and the skills they had, and the atmosphere was friendly, sometimes banterous, and conducted in a key of hope.

Gifts of the head, hand and heart: Asset-based community development

These three Hs, of the head, hand and heart, were familiar to me; they had been the focus of a workshop I'd attended at the Neighborhood Circle annual conference – it, and the organisation that had coordinated the school-initiated local survey, were both keen advocates of an approach to community development called 'asset-based community development', or ABCD. The ABCD approach involves starting from the premise that a neighbourhood is full of untapped 'assets', many in the form of residents' own capabilities. It has its origins in new approaches to community development that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (Green 2010; Macleod & Emejulu 2014), and rose to prominence with a 1993 book by two community-studies scholars at Northwestern University, John McKnight and John Kretzmann. *Building communities from the inside out* presented case studies from across the US of what the authors viewed as community-building success stories, identifying the source of their success as a posture that takes the local community itself as a starting point for local improvements, rather than looking to larger-scale outside agencies for help in the first instance. The website of the ABCD Institute, based at Northwestern, makes clear that the pair's observations of what they came to call 'asset-based' community work emerged from a context of 'diminished prospects for outside help', and that their formulation of ABCD had struck a chord in a context of 'federal budget-cutting and downsizing in favour of local and state initiatives' (ABCDI 2009a).

ABCD projects, which may be conducted by agencies in the non-profit, state or private sectors, begin with inductive research. A local community is identified in a (usually urban) space, and its residents' opinions on the quality of life in the neighbourhood canvassed, usually by way of a fairly open-ended face-to-face interview, sometimes called a 'listening' or 'learning' 'conversation' (ABCDI 2009b). Green (2010) refers to the 'capacity inventory' stage (Green 2010: 7), where people's capacities are elicited through interviews, community events, etc., and the 'mapping' of assets, such as local institutions (2010: 8).This elicitation stage is intended to enable local people to gain, through their participation in the research, a reflexive sense of their neighbourhood's

profile, and their own place within it. Community meetings and the identification of goals to work towards typically follow from these preliminary inductive stages. ABCD projects do not abjure local-authority or state support for community projects, but their ideological grounding is in an idea of what McKnight has called, in language full of Christian resonance, 'abundant community' (McKnight & Block 2010) – an idea of residential populations as sites of economic and moral potential, realisable through collective, practical action toward common goals. Kretzmann and Puntenney (2010) note that part of the ABCD rationale is that through these processes, a community can put itself in a position of 'strength' in relation to outside agencies such as funders, having determined its own objectives, and framed these goals without reliance on a 'negative' view of the neighbourhood drawn by outsiders (2010: 115).

Opening a volume on community development through asset building, Green (2010) explains 'assets' in terms of different kinds of 'capital' – social, human, cultural, environmental, for example. 'Assets are considered capital because investments in them generate additional resources or benefits for the community' (2010: 6), thus, in each of these areas, it is understood that, if 'invested' in the locality, diverse kinds of 'asset', or 'resource', have the potential to increase value there. ABCD's encouragement of neighbours to view everything and everyone in their neighbourhood, including themselves, as a potentially productive 'asset' shows ABCD as natively capitalist in its outlook. What matters is keeping the increased value local.

Critics of ABCD itself have seen in it a neoliberalisation of community welfare, in which doctrines of self-help through enterprise are elaborated in implicit challenge to the idea, receding from influence in both US and European public life, of a public welfare framework. Macleod and Emejulu (2014), writing on ABCD in Scotland, argue that the theory is rooted in 'American neo-Tocquevillism' (2014: 431), noting the approach's 'communitarian reading of…Tocqueville' (2014: 438), in which the voluntary associations that Tocqueville famously celebrated are encouraged as a firming foundation of civic virtue and American democracy. These authors trace the emergence of asset-based development theories to the US in the 1980s and 1990s, and a context of 'right-wing retrenchment and the dismantling of many…social welfare programmes under President Reagan' (2014: 436). They see ABCD emerging as a support to a political view that is unenthusiastic about state welfare provision and sees entrepreneurial action in the free market as the best solution to poverty. Their central, critiquing argument is that ABCD, showing a deep distrust of the state and scepticism about its potential to aid society, 'privatises public issues as poverty, inequality, and asymmetries in power' (2014: 436). As the approach works by invoking a vision of the combined 'skills' and efforts of individuals creating solutions to problems, these authors query its ability to attend to the question of the distribution of power

(2014: 444). They also see ABCD as 'an iteration of an ongoing American project to advance a politics that is antielitist, anti-institutional and, consequently, highly individualised and hyper-local' (2014: 435).

Few gathered in the Barn for the South Otago Project meetings would, I think, have declared in favour of the market as a salve for poverty, and several would have passionately critiqued such a view. There was little horror of the state, either – part of the ambition of ABCD projects such as these is to establish community-action identities such that these self-realising entities can then attract support and funding from city agencies, among others, for community improvements – as in the example of the community orchard discussed in the previous chapter, in which city and voluntary association were thoroughly entwined, with the city in the role of what Rose (1999) calls 'the enabling state' (1999: 142). But there was certainly a commitment to the ethical as the rightful frame for social change, and, in line with this, institutionality, in Quimby's activist communitarian culture, is recessive, with funders typically expecting just the kind of individual-focused, affectively and morally framed associational action as the South Otago Project team were undertaking in the Barn living room to validate any project to begin with. The implicit connection drawn by Macleod and Emejulu between state provision and the mitigation of power inequalities in society was not drawn here; the task of inclusion and ensuring what people tended to call 'equity' rather than 'equality' was an ethical task for individuals in community to shoulder; and thoughtful, ethically directed attention to others was what was required to challenge what people would nevertheless typically identify as 'structural' injustice. Indeed it was philosophies, such as localism, that seek to base social arrangements on interpersonal ethics, not large-scale systems, that was seen as the true antidote to power disparities.

'A neighbourhood of choice'

In the steering group meeting, Jared put some slides up on the projector from a planning manual called 'How to Create a Great Indy Neighborhood' (LISC 2006). The key to building what the document called a 'healthy neighbourhood' was, he said, to begin positively, with 'what's right about your neighbourhood'. He drew our attention to the page that laid out '11 principles of healthy neighbourhoods'. Among the attributes listed were an 'active citizenry', a diverse mix of associations, collaboration among sectors, a diverse business environment, an emphasis on 'intellectual and moral education', a plethora of aesthetic and artistic activity, and homeownership (2006: 3).

Looking at the sketch of an imagined 'healthy' neighbourhood displayed on the projector, Sandra, the neighbour who ran the popular local grocery-buying club, noted the police station and business district shown as part of the theoretical neighbourhood, and commented that this plan was clearly imagined for a larger, more infrastructurally diverse, space than the tiny residential area of 'South Otago' this group had identified. As before, others defended the project's small scope, on grounds of realistic 'capacity'. 'Capacity' is an important ABCD term: discussing the question of scope with another steering committee member on a neighbourhood online forum between meetings, Anne had offered an estimate of the number of households – about five thousand – enclosed by the boundaries of the map as Nate had presented it. Even within what were, she agreed, narrowly drawn limits, the group's 'capacity' would be barely enough to 'make a dent', she had written. Thus, she suggested that in 'phase one' of the plan, the group should focus on 'our relational network', and then see where things might go from there. Back in the meeting, Jared also argued for keeping things concentrated: 'in a smaller space you'll see the impact more visibly'. Compromise was reached, with the group agreeing to make the original main-road limit more of a 'blurry line', leaving the potential for engagement further south.

The point, in any case, was to imagine what might be, not to feel constrained by what was. After the healthy neighbourhoods presentation, Jared led the steering committee in a 'seven-minute exercise' of imagining our 'ideal neighbourhood'. Using felt-tip pens and Jared's children's toys that he'd brought over for the purpose, we broke up into groups and drew what we'd like to see in a neighbourhood. One group drew a wheel-shaped settlement, in which the spokes were residential, radiating out from a business district at the hub; the other two drew something more higgledy-piggledy. No-one drew a grid system. Growing gardens featured heavily. People also drew a co-op grocery, a preschool, a tool-lending 'library', a performance space, a skatepark, a brewpub, a coffee house, all closely knitted together with 'walkable' streets, as Jared's meeting minutes recorded.

As we sat with our model neighbourhoods laid out on the living room floor, Jared remarked that of course there wasn't much we could do about the layout of the streets in real life, although things like the intersection painting did go some way to tweaking 'fast, grid-oriented' infrastructures in a more 'human-oriented' direction. But there were things we could do: have a roundabout installed,[8] for instance, or start a centrally located coop nursery, or a coffee shop. He talked about space in the neighbourhood; the empty lots, the 'blackberry-infested' empty plot by

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[8] One (non-Christian) localist activist had in fact managed to design and get built a mini-roundabout just next to the tool-lending library owned by Restore Otago, behind a row of shops which had benefited from urban-renewal money, as part of an urban-renewal design competition.

the creek where a community 'edible orchard' might one day come to pass (it did). He gave the example of his own backyard: there are six yards at the back of my house, all separated by fences, he said. Just think of how much space that is…let's start thinking about 'how we can use all this space together'. Concluding, Jared laid out the stakes to the group. 'Our neighbourhood is either going to be for [the] special interests' of developers, or 'we as neighbours' can 'come together with *common* interests'. What we want to create, he said, is a 'neighbourhood of choice'; such that people who may have moved here simply because it was affordable, would stay because they liked it; because it had become home, and so they would want to 'invest their time and talents' here. Building a neighbourhood that was 'more healthy' would, he said, enable this to happen. The idea of having a written plan was to have a 'living document' that could accompany the community as it 'buil[t] our neighbourhood'. It could be done, he concluded – this neighbourhood's been planned before; it can be planned again.

'Learning conversations'

An important element of the reflexive, imaginative work of asset-based development is trying as much as possible to know the mind of the community, to 'build relationships'. Thus the final task in preparation for the public meetings was for each member of the steering committee to conduct 'between five and ten' 'learning conversations' with neighbours. The point of these conversations was to find out what 'gifts' and 'capacities' local people had, what 'dreams' and 'concerns' they had about their neighbourhood, what 'leadership' potential and 'strong relationships' already existed locally, and which might be capitalised on for future community development. Jared passed out a sheet to the group explaining the ideal technique to employ in conducting these conversations, whose purpose, the sheet said, was to 'help determine the neighbourhood's revitalization potential'. The sheet offered pointers about 'effective listening', putting an interlocutor at ease by finding common ground before moving on to the elicitation process, and for taking notes on the conversation in a way that didn't spoil the natural flow of conversation. 'Rather than sharing a message', Jared said, what's important is to show people that they are being listened to.

The information gathered through the learning conversations would, he went on, enable the project to 'cross-pollinate', to begin to formulate a 'shared vision', and then start to 'add structure', in the form of 'action groups' that would form around the priorities – food availability, say, or education – that the listening processes had identified. Jared went up to the whiteboard, sketching out the stages in the 'roadmap' ahead. In the meetings of the wider

community that would follow – at which there would be potlucks, perhaps a band – further people would 'speak into' the plan, and identify the 'actionable projects' they wanted to carry forward.

Another month later, at the final living-room meeting before the public meetings, people reported back on the learning conversations they'd had. The meeting started late because of a LW-initiated chili-cooking competition in the neighbourhood – 'It says a lot about everyone here in this neck of the woods that we have such an event in the dead of winter!', said Jared. A preliminary set of 'action areas' to bring to the public meetings were written on a flipchart, based mainly on the results from the school-commissioned survey, and a survey done by a community-development consultancy that was also active in the area. Among the areas the group decided to 'build energy around' were 'housing improvements', 'road safety', 'food security', 'gardening', 'relationships and connectedness', 'crime', 'economic improvements', 'entrepreneurship'. Each thematic area would have a table dedicated to it in the public meeting, where ideas would be pooled from attendees and fed into documents that would result in the written plan.

The reporting of learning conversations was framed by Jared in terms of 'story' – he invited people to offer a 'one- or two-minute story' that was 'inspiring' from the conversations they'd had. Al spoke movingly of meeting the stepsister of a man who'd recently been shot dead in the neighbourhood, and of inviting her to join him as he went house to house on the chilli competition trail. He reflected on this rare opportunity: 'we're so insulated in wintertime, we don't get out and mingle much'. It had been a meaningful encounter – there could, of course, be no sense made of what she'd been through, but just to be able to tell her she was not alone, that was something. Other people said it had been difficult to have the requisite number of learning conversations, 'people aren't home in the daytimes', one person remarked. Jared reflected that it was often harder to get people to talk about their dreams for the neighbourhood than about gripes and problems. One of his learning conversations, though, had been with a Russian man he'd met in the street, who was in the neighbourhood because his child was in the Russian-language immersion programme at the school. He had heard bad things about 'No-go Otago' (a lingering nickname the area had first acquired in the 1990s when it had a reputation for crime), that the area had a gang problem. But, he'd told Jared, he got a good feeling from this place – he was a former police officer, and it didn't feel like gangland to him, on the contrary, he thought the place seemed: *interesting*. Jared, reporting back to the group, let this man's intrigued feeling about Otago stand; a pregnant signal of what might be.

The main purpose of these report-backs seemed to me to be less practical than affective, as the broad areas of action were largely drawn from the school-commissioned survey and the one

done by the non-profit mentioned above, though people were also adding to the list during the meeting. It seemed that relatively few conversations had been done, in the end. But those that had had been narrativised as signs of the power of relationship, and hope. Jared reflected how the learning conversations had shown 'people's desire to know each other', and that what would matter as the project went forward would be not this meeting, but the 'relationships' that ensued, the 'building [of] trust' in the neighbourhood. Stimulated by the inspirational stories offered by Al and Jared, the group's conversation turned enthusiastically to how good an area Otago was, in spite of its rough reputation, and the meeting closed on a high and practical note, with tasks allotted for the setting up of the first public meeting. Someone reflected: 'this group is very different from our neighbours' – 'they don't seem like they want to get involved'. It's true, indefatigable social-connector Al reflected. Most people aren't interested. They like the idea of knowing their neighbours, but they won't go to meetings or events. Yes, Jared agreed – community development takes time. 'We're blazing a trail' here – it takes twenty years for a neighbourhood culture to change, he reflected. 'We're planting trees, y'all! Not seeds, trees!'

The imagination of participation

Asset-based community development operates under similar logics to what is known in the international development world as 'participatory development', an approach to development adopted by NGOs and donors, including the World Bank, from the 1980s onwards, that sought to stimulate the involvement of project beneficiaries in framing development interventions, with the aim of giving them more control over the processes that affected them (Cooke & Kothari 2002: 5; see also Leal 2010; Scherz 2014). 'Community-owned' development became a standard aspiration of development work, coinciding in the 1990s with the recession, internationally, of state-funded social-support programmes (Scherz 2014: 38). One influential version of participatory development was Participatory Rural Appraisal, or PRA, used in village settings across countries where development agencies operated. As Henkel and Stirrat (2002) explain it, PRA 'centres around a…communal construction' by project beneficiaries of 'visual representations of reality, i.e., the construction of graphics, such as maps, matrixes, diagrams and calendars' (2002: 179). Tania Li (2011) outlines the PRA process as it operated in development projects she observed in Indonesia, in which a local community is identified as such and encouraged to represent itself to itself, often being formed into groups to do so (2011: 61), 'to reveal their geographies, histories, livelihood strategies, and institutions' through 'maps, diagrams, charts and lists' (2011: 60). The mapping is a key element of this reflexive representational work. In her study of PRA-influenced programmes led by Christian NGOs in

Zimbabwe, Erica Bornstein (2003) remarks that 'the incitement of desire for change and for development itself is a crucial aspect of development' (2003: 119), an important part of the process of community formation through 'participation'.

Li describes a PRA scenario that, typically, is framed in such a way that the development consultants involved are encouraged to experience in themselves a relinquishment of power, as the participants, the locals, are correspondingly empowered (Li 2011: 60). Going further, Bornstein notes that by focusing on the local community as the source of solutions, the PRA discourse erases both the political economy that makes 'development' both necessary and possible, and the NGOs themselves, putting in their place a discourse of 'self-reliance' (2011: 129). There are some echoes here of the positionality of neighbourhood activists such at the initiators of the South Otago Project, whose firm ethos is one of recessive organising, of being no more than the facilitators of a grassroots neighbourhood movement. Several times it was impressed on me that there was no distinction between the people setting up the South Otago Project process and the neighbours who joined and helped to run it. The project's process merely offered a frame in which a group of locals might form itself, and imagine what it was and could become. One key contrast with the kinds of projects that scholars of PRA have written about is, of course, that the LW members who initiated the process were indeed mere neighbours themselves; all resident in the neighbourhood several years, and with no institutional affiliation driving the project. And, their fellow neighbours involved were fully localists as much as they were, as confident and connected as the LW members who, it was clear, were not viewed as any different from them for the purposes of this or any other neighbourhood project.

Nevertheless, though independent actors, the Christian localists from LW were operating voluntaristically from a classic evangelical ground of multiple normative inputs from Christian institutional sources, from the Christian housebuilding non-profit that Jared worked for and drew much of his organising expertise from, to the local charity that helped churches reach out to communities using ABCD, to LW itself, whose organising frameworks of dialogue and planning gave its members solid training in practices of collective decision-making and action oriented toward social renewal through mutual self-accounting. These institutional entities were holders and purveyors of a complex ethos of humility and activism, in which social transformation was understood to emerge from a kind of epidemiological spread of that same activist humility, incubated in scenarios of collective self-representation, such as were the project's meetings.

Henkel and Stirrat (2002), opening an essay on the cosmology of participatory development, note that development is a "frontier" of what they call 'the modern project' (2002: 169), and they imply that the participatory model, in pursuing community 'empowerment', at the same time works to undercut some of its own modernity, by, for instance, celebrating 'local' and 'indigenous' knowledge, over abstract, technical knowledge imported from outside (2002: 171). Outlining the core PRA activity of collective community mapping (2002: 180), they note the idea that the map as 'instrument of knowledge production' and power is, in PRA, apparently in the hands of the 'subaltern', not, as is more historically usual, in those of the coloniser or administrator (2002: 180). This is how PRA might be understood as offering empowerment to its participants. A similar hope of reclamation might be seen in the imaginative mapping practices of the South Otago Project. As we saw in the previous chapter, people in this localist turn hope to see urban space suffused with mixed uses. The imaginative process of mapping, in which people who are not urban planners draw the outline of, to borrow the words of the urban- renewal agency's signs, what they 'would like to see here', can be seen as a kind of subaltern reappropriation of the signs and signals of planning, and one in which the ethical ideal of 'community' is both agent and product of the mapping process.

But there was, as Jared was careful to say, no serious proposal that the basic physical layout of the neighbourhood could be altered. The point of such an exercise was for the community to know itself as such, in terms of the communitarian aspirations it put to paper in the mapping exercise. Such aspirations, by challenging the framework of grid and zoning and freeway, spoke an indigenous and local word against modernity. And with this community empowerment central to the exercise, the point, in a sense, was (at least at this stage) *not* to create a blueprint for practical change, but to represent community precisely by representing something that could not be achieved under the present dispensation, but only by the imaginative work of the community as constituted in the act of that imaginative work. Importantly, ABCD is about what neighbours can do for themselves, without bringing in outside agencies, at least initially.

Li notes the doubled usage of the concept of 'community' in participation-influenced development circles; in which 'community' is both assumed as a pre-existing ground of action, and framed as an ideal for a group to work itself towards, through practices such as mapping. This echoes Rose's observation that in communitarian thought, 'community is to be achieved, yet the achievement is nothing more than the birth-to-presence of a form of being which pre-exists' (1999: 177), and Bornstein's remarks on PRA in Zimbabwe, that it depended on a 'necessary fiction' of there existing a 'unitary, coherent community to be developed' (Bornstein

2003: 120). She remarks that 'community is both the target of development and its hoped-for result'; an assumed entity and the utopian aim of interventions (2003: 125).

The governmentality of community

Alongside the reflexive representational work of convening-community-to-build-community, the 'modernity' element the analysts of PRA note was also present in the South Otago Project meetings. It lay in the group's use of the tools and markers of empirical research, such as inductive surveying, and indeed maps, which project the neighbourhood as a terrain on which to practice and plan – some of what Rose has referred to as 'devices and techniques' that 'have been invented to make communities real' (1999: 189). These recall the 'discourses of measurement' that Bielo, following Ralph Cintron, observes being used in the neighbourhood analysis work of his 'missional' church planters in Ohio (2011a: 160-62). Bielo remarks that 'church planters envision the mission field as a managed socio-geographic space' (2011a: 163), and discerns in their measurement-work an aspiration towards epistemological encompassment. He says of mapping that it implies a kind of comprehension, a claim to navigate and manage (2011a: 162) what is, he says, in fact unmanageable space. He reports that his interlocutors were well aware of the limits of knowability, that demographic statistics couldn't tell the whole story, and indeed they invoked those limits as a reason for 'being there' (2011a: 164) – much, of course, as ethnographers do.

In my context, similar impulses are present, but with an added PRA-like element of reflexivity, in which people are encouraged to view themselves, neighbours all, as objects of management; to use Foucault's words, as 'men and things' (2006: 135) to be aligned with other people, wealth, resources, territory (2006: 136), etc., in ways that will optimise their 'welfare' as a 'population'. This is what Foucault calls 'government'. In this kind of governmental view, people are encouraged to see themselves from 'the perspective of population' (2006: 140).

Writing on the role of maps and censuses in the administration of European empires in Southeast Asia, Benedict Anderson (2006 [1983]) argues that these technologies of power, along with museums, enabled the formation of a 'totalising classificatory grid', which offered social worlds and places to the colonial administrator as domains of, in principle, definable, placeable, and countable entities. This 'human landscape of perfect visibility' is a 'world …of replicable plurals', of 'series' of types of person, such as 'Chinese', or 'nationalists', for example. In it, 'the particular always stood as a provisional representative of a series' (2006: 184). Though they function as stimulants to collective self-sentiment and their scrupulously small scopes intend to

banish temptations to any crude ideas of generality, in their form, ABCD asset maps do participate in this logic of series and replicability, of kinds of things and persons. 'Perfect visibility' is an expressed intention of these cartographic projects, the redeeming hope being that that visibility might be mutual among all.

As Bielo has noted (2011a), much of the logic of new-evangelical localism begins from an ideological starting point of anti-modernity, but, as he has also pointed out, modernity is ingredient in many new-evangelical practices nevertheless. Localists, as we have seen, work hard to experience neighbourhood phenomenologically, as something in which they dwell, rather than hover above. And yet the localist project itself requires a disposition of hovering, through the bird's-eye view (and modern technology) of the map, and thus for subjects to maintain a doubled positioning in relation to the special space of 'neighbourhood' to which they commit themselves.

Bornstein remarks that 'implicit in the PRA experience are assumptions that there is a local knowledge that can somehow be extracted from a community', and can be 'disaggregated from the non-local' (2003: 123), a point that evokes localism's peculiarly telescoping optic, in which local knowledge is both abstractified through processes of rationalised research, and essentialised as utterly local and embedded. This is an example of a broader new-evangelical ambivalence about the right relationship to cultivate in relation to the abstract and the generalisable, categories so tarnished, as many new evangelicals see it, by the colonial attitudes of the mainstream churches and their 'modernity', yet impossible to live meaningfully without. Theirs is a form of the anxiety noted by Mary Poovey (2004): 'an uneasy relation between empirical data and universal or abstract theories informs even the most basic epistemological unit of modern knowledge projects, which I have … called the modern fact' (2004: 183).

The South Otago Project's ABCD-inspired 'learning conversations', carefully framed with bullet-pointed instructions for elicitive technique, exemplify the will-to-knowledge of the localist movement, in which people act as something like ethnographers at home, operationalising interpersonal rapport to gather knowledge that can be objectified as data about the neighbourhood as a social entity. There is also an operation upon the interlocutor's subjectivity. Jared's phrase 'rather than sharing a message' is a reminder of the affinity that learning conversations have with evangelism, with this careful listening to a purpose a kind of inverse image of those similarly programmatic conversations initiated and framed with the purpose of sharing one's religious testimony. With the language of 'dreams', 'gifts', etc, the conversations ideally reframe neighbours as carriers of dreams and gifts, in a kind of conceptual encompassment parallel to the enveloping in evangelistic discourse described by Susan Friend Harding (2000) in her famous account of being witnessed to by a Baptist preacher. Or, as

Bornstein says of PRA techniques, they 'claim to discover the unknown, yet in practice they solicit known expectations' (2003: 121), while Henkel and Stirrat (2002) cast the toolkit of community maps etc as a 'grid', which the 'local people' can then 'fill in as they like' (2002: 182). As with mapping, so with identity – the 'empowerment' offered in the 'participatory' techniques these authors analyse involves, they argue, participants being 'afford[ed]' certain 'subject positions' by the development framework itself. In view of this, that assembly of techniques may itself, they argue, be understood as a kind of 'governance' (2002: 179), akin to what Foucault calls 'subjection' (2002: 178).

Henkel and Stirrat (2002) dig back into the conceptual backdrop of the participatory-development concept. They trace the concept of 'participation' itself to an early modern religious usage, meaning 'the participation of man in the infinite grace of God' (2002: 173), noting that during the Reformation lay 'participation' was newly expected, for instance, in the taking of communion, and reading the Bible for oneself. They cite 'subsidiarity', the principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level of an organisational hierarchy, as another Protestant innovation, pointing to the Protestant expectation towards anti-hierarchy and self-governance. Thus they argue that 'the Protestant Reformation…placed a moral imperative on participation', not only in a relationship with God, but in 'the duties of the community'. They argue that participation as it appears in contemporary development thought offers a 'secularised' (2002: 174) version of this imperative. The authors focus on the work of Robert Chambers, a high-profile advocate of participation techniques, and of PRA in particular (2002: 179), noting Chambers' focus on 'personal conversion' as the key to the practice of development, as development practitioners' individual selves are, Chambers suggests, changed through their facilitation of PRA programmes (2002: 177).

As we saw above, in Jared's introductory thoughts about what 'quality of life' in the neighbourhood would look like, 'social cohesiveness' was cited first, before any material or infrastructural features, and elaborated as 'neighbourhood events, spending time with each other'. This enthusiasm for social connection was very much shared by the South Otago Project planning group, who lamented the apparent indifference of the mass of neighbours. 'Active citizenry' was cited in the materials they were using as a contributory definition of neighbourhood flourishing. ABCD's focus on the 'assets' of individuals, its assurance that no one does not have some skill of the head, hand or heart to offer, draws the focus to individuals and their potential contribution to the neighbourhood flourishing. ABCD, like much participatory development, is first and foremost an ethical procedure, before it is one aimed at achieving material ameliorations, which consequently tend to be deliberately modest in scope

and geographically narrow in their remit (as befits a neighbourhoodist ethos). Because the ideology of PRA required that 'problems and their solutions were to come from within the community' (Bornstein 2003: 126), limits were set on the scale of problems that could be tackled.

Erica Bornstein's 2003 study of two Christian development organisations that use PRA methods in Zimbabwe focuses on the religious qualities of the PRA development discourse, noting that it 'sacralises the idea of "community" and transforms development into a religious act'. She discusses 'the sage of participatory development' (2003: 122), Chambers, and his influential emphasis on the personal. She quotes Chambers on 'wellbeing', a capacious state including "love", "choice", "spiritual" and "social" "experience", as well as material matters such as "living standards" (2003: 123). This mirrors the discourse of 'health', and the 'healthy neighbourhood', that orients the ABCD-led development work we see in Otago: the positing of a corporeal-spiritual-social state whose holistic character can have a somewhat sealing effect on the discourse, in which a series of unassailable positives are bundled together and made to affirm one another, potentially concealing points of fracture, competing claims, and hierarchies among goods.

Bornstein notes the consonance between Chambers' integrated idea of 'wellbeing' – which includes the personal condition of development workers, as well as target populations – and Christian development's ideas of 'holistic development' and its emphasis on 'personal relationships' in 'lifestyle evangelism' (2003: 123). She also notes that 'participation' involves NGO workers themselves, and their own dispositions in the world, noting the conceptual focus on development as a process that brings out individuals' and communities' 'potential' (2003: 132). They 'became part of the community, and walked with the people', quoting a local NGO official, 'you [the development worker] are actually living it', alongside the people you are serving (2003: 127), 'they walked with the poor and lived development' (2003: 130). This exemplary participation was, in a sense, a substitute for verbal and textual evangelism: instead of preaching and Bible distribution, one of the NGOs she studied communicated Christianity 'through a style of life encompassing material and religious ideals embodied in development' (2003: 52).

In the neighbourhoodist vision as it is enacted in projects such as the South Otago Project, we see a kind of ingathering of selves and neighbours, through a combination of the elicitation of self through the inductive methods of 'listening', or 'learning', 'conversations' and the bodily investment of self ('sweat equity', in the language of Habitat for Humanity (Baggett 2001)) in projects of community labour. Rose, writing of a broad shift in contemporary political thought

away from the state in Western societies, notes the move toward responsibilising citizens to act governmentally, on themselves and others: 'politics is to be returned to society itself, but no longer in a social form: in the form of individual morality, organisational responsibility and ethical community' (Rose 1999: 174-5).

Some writers on participatory development view the ethicisation of the social in terms of the rendering 'technical' of sociopolitical matters. Li (2007) makes such an observation in relation to participatory development projects involving people living in border villages on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The process she describes involves the creation of a 'new collective subject', a 'community', that would 'assess, plan, reach consensus, and think of population and natural resources as entities to be managed'. The 'proposed technique' for creating such a subject was the villagers being taken through the sequence of community-development actions, such as assessing the community's resources, preparing development proposals, applying for funding, etc. (Li 2007: 132). This points to the formal circularity of community development, in which matters of resource distribution, the organisation of projects, etc, are matters to be figured out by 'participants' in accordance with a framework which exists in part to shape those participants as a body of people defined as a 'community' by virtue of that participation. This reframing of the subject positions of those involved, as members of a 'community' tasked with certain projects of governance, sets limits on how those matters can be viewed, i.e., as technical, rather than political, matters.

The ABCD expectation that participants be neighbourhood-positive is germane to this, and in light of the idea of participation as a moral virtue or duty (Bornstein 2003; Henkel & Stirrat 2002). Positivity feeds into the formation of the community as a conceptual entity, and acts as a spur to ethical action, that is, to offering one's 'assets' to the ongoing realisation of that community. Positive thinking, like the very common American evangelical-entrepreneurial trope of having a 'dream' for something, is ethical and pragmatic – ethical because pragmatic – thinking that works to propel further action at the level of the individual.

The contexts in which Bornstein, Li, and Henkel and Stirrat observed participatory development at work were, of course, very different from the Quimby one in which the South Otago Project team were drawing up their plans. My point in drawing these comparisons is to argue for situating projects such as the South Otago Project in a zone of ethical governmentality, as per Rose's point about the devolution of governmental responsibility to citizens, in which the formation of ethical community is the primary goal. In a contrasting scenario to the developing-world and major NGO institutional contexts of the authors cited above, the participants in Quimby's local neighbourhood projects are typically already enthusiasts for volunteer action,

graduate-educated and confident in the language and techniques of public engagement. Their own disappointment that their community engagements did not typically reach well beyond such groups was palpable, however – LW members' keen hope was to see the neighbourhood's social and racial others coming together in community projects. Writing on ABCD, Macleod and Emejulu (2014) note that it has been said that 'the assets agenda, through a relentless focus on the positive…may…marginalise critical analyses of structural inequalities' (2014: 446), and suggest that ABCD could even deepen such inequalities, as the procedural emphasis on meetings and consensus-seeking discussion could have the effect of marginalising those community members whose time availability and personal preferences might make them less able to offer the active participation that the approach expects.

Communitarian visions: politics as ethics

Nate, who was one of the small group of LW members in whose eye the idea of a local neighbourhood planning project had initially twinkled, was an enthusiastic reader of Robert Bellah *et al.*'s sociological study of the American moral condition, *Habits of the Heart* (1985), which argues for a keener national sense of citizenship, of people's responsibility to 'cultivate civic virtue', so as to 'mitigate' the 'tension between private interest and the public good' (1985: 270), and 'together seek the common good' (1985: 271). Such schemes as the South Otago Project are, in the first instance, trainings in such citizenship, in which people pursue civic virtue, their own and others', through activity that stimulates attention to the group both via the panoptic viewpoint of mapping and inductive research, and through the phenomenological experience of action on the ground of neighbourhood, which is validated by virtue of its proposed practicality.

Habits of the Heart takes its title from Tocqueville's famous term for the 'mores' (1985: 275) that shape the American national character. The trait of 'individualism' identified by Tocqueville as key to that character is seen by the book's authors as a potential danger to America's freedoms and institutions (1985: vii), and thus as one that needs to be qualified by a resurgent civic republican spirit, in which people engage as citizens, reaching beyond their private worlds. Tocqueville's famous 'associations' (Tocqueville 2003: 596), the voluntary organisations whose prevalence and vitality in America so impressed the French traveller, are thought by Bellah *et al* to offer an opening for that engagement, along with 'social movements' and, echoing the communitarians I knew, what these authors call 'communities of memory' (Bellah *et al* 1985: 212).

Writing on 'community' as a concept in recent American ethico-political discourse, Rose (1999) has noted the importance of Tocqueville's remarks about associations in *Democracy in America* for American communitarian thought, which, he says, 'take[s] a characteristic socio-ethical form' (1999: 179), in which changes on the social plane are sited in an 'ethical field' (1999: 179). He understands 'community' in this context as a proposed 'territory' between the vying, incomplete authorities of the state, the market, and the autonomous individual (1999: 167), noting how communitarian-minded thinkers frame it as a kind of 'natural, extra-political zone of human relations' (1999: 167-8), which operates conceptually as a 'counterweight to' politics (1999: 168). Pointing to the neo-Aristotelianism of contemporary philosophers of 'community', including new monasticism's inspiration Alasdair MacIntyre (1999: 169), Rose notes that an Aristotelian focus on virtues suggests an idea of the need for a unified 'moral community', and that the project of a communitarian such as MacIntyre represents a 'paradoxical' 'politics of virtue'; a call to 'political action' whose aim is the creation of something (community) that counters and neutralises politics (1999: 170).

Projects of collective ethical self-formation such as the South Otago Project seek to enfold people into frameworks of epistemology and reasoning in which individuals' reciprocal exchange of 'assets' and their commitment to 'participation' in the form of deliberative meetings and collective labour are imagined as the right grounds of polity and social functioning. In so doing, such projects represent an ethicisation of politics. It is this rendering of the political and social as matters, ultimately, of interpersonal ethics, that can be seen in the debate in the meetings over the project's geographical scope: while some participants, such as Sandra, the grocery-club founder, queried the need for a precise, close-in boundary, assuming, as she said, that most people in any given space won't be directly participating in any case, Anne and others saw the numbers of individuals enfolded in the framework as what mattered; the potential, at least, for everyone to participate, to personally affect and be personally affected.

Here, one is reminded of Christian Smith's (1998) diagnosis of the 'personal-influence strategy' as a key evangelical perspective on the social terrain, in which people are committed to the idea that 'the only truly effective way to change the world is one-individual-at-a-time through the influence of personal relationships' (1998: 187). Smith identifies the 'relationalist strategy of social influence' (188) (glossed by Elisha as a 'social ethics of relationalism' (2011b: 253)) as a distinctive feature of evangelical approaches to social issues. I would argue that the evangelicals gathered in the Barn's living room held an outlook on the social suspended somewhat between a strong iteration of this view, and a more structural perspective. They knew well that social structures and forces combined to mean that individuals being kind to one another, sadly

enough, did not on its own redeem the world. But in their tendency to view worldly forms of power in fairly dark terms, of 'domination systems' and what, drawing on Paul, people referred to as 'the powers and principalities' (see Chapter six for more on this), they tended to imagine much concerted movement away from conditions (such as extreme localism) that would enable the personal-influence strategy to have measurable effects, as potentially morally problematic. Thus, the personal-influence strategy approach to questions of social organisation – what I have called the ethicisation of politics – remained a firm current in such projects as these.

'Should Suzy's Bar have closed?': anxieties of gentrification

At the time of my fieldwork, Quimby was receiving fairly high annual numbers of inmigrants from other parts of the US, with consequent rises in housing demand and increases in property values. Otago, with its scrappy central district and low median incomes, was not yet experiencing rising values, but a report commissioned by the local state university, which had an active urban-planning department, noted that it was among the neighbourhoods in the 'danger zone' for 'gentrification', and proposed possible mitigations. 'Danger', because rising rents could mean displacement of poorer residents from their homes, in the classic gentrification sequence. In the central-eastern parts of the city – another urban-renewal area – that were historically and recently African American, for reasons of their proximity to the docks where many black Quimbyers had worked, and practices of mortgage redlining and other discriminatory practices, displacement had become a major story, and these neighbourhoods' changing demographics had sparked political rows over specific illustrative incidents. These included the arrival, subsidised by the urban-renewal agency, of grocery stores that catered to white, middle-class demographics, and proposed street architecture changes, in the form of new bike lanes, which residents saw as catering to the area's newest residents and overlooking the needs and preferences of the old (which was not to lose a lane of automobile traffic space in rush hour).

Such controversies point to the tensions inherent in projects, publicly planned or birthed from volunteerist aspirations, intended to modify and, by their enactors' lights, improve, the urban environment. Material modifications in a landscape could raise land values, with socially excluding effects, and they could impose a style on a neighbourhood that did not suit the majority of its residents. Both dilemmas cut to the tensions inherent in the Christian localist project, which, as we have seen, seeks to operate in the social and material world in ways that augment value ('assets', etc.), but does not wish that value to escape the physical and moral boundaries of 'community', and which seeks to create a neighbourhood 'of choice' for all.

Lees *et al* (2008) define gentrification as 'the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use' (2008: xv). These authors note that the term, which originally denoted the rehabbing of run-down old houses in poor city neighbourhoods by middle-class and affluent people, sometimes known as 'pioneer gentrifiers' (2008: 10), can now refer to a range of processes, including the investment of capital, sometimes by city administrations, in poor parts of a city with a view to drawing people with money to the area (2008: 9). In the original definition, which the authors call 'classical gentrification' (2008: 10), adventuresome middle-class people invest time and labour in renovating dilapidated housing stock in poor neighbourhoods to live in themselves, which over time has the effect of raising property values in those neighbourhoods. In these classic gentrification scenarios, the increase in a neighbourhood's property values is, the authors argue, typically an unintended consequence of the actions of the 'pioneer' gentrifiers, who see their lives in the inner city not in economic investment terms, but in terms of living 'a nonconformist lifestyle' (2008: 34). These gentrifiers, they write, 'were interested in keeping a socially mixed neighbourhood', 'were concerned with homelessness and public or low-rent housing' (2008: 25), and sought 'diversity, difference, and social mixing' (2008: 207).

This, then, is gentrification as historical irony, but changing the social mix of an area through a mix of economic and infrastructural means can be public policy, too. Lees *et al* offer accounts from North America and Europe of local governments, seeking, under "the friendly banners of regeneration, renewal, or revitalisation" (Wyly & Hammel 2005 quoted in Lees *et al* 2008 198), to use mechanisms, including tax increment financing, to 'diversify the social mix and dilute concentrations of poverty in the inner city through gentrification' (2008: 198). In terms of commercial motivations, these authors quote Damaris Rose (2004) arguing that the 'livable' city is now a powerful brand, and so cities compete to market themselves as harmoniously diverse places to live (2008: 199). They also note the changed role of the state and local governments in relation to gentrification, in which such public agencies' regulatory role in relation to the market is muted, and cities now act 'as entrepreneurial agents of market processes and capital accumulation' (2008: 49).

There can be social-ameliorative motives too: Lees *et al* offer accounts of government projects to move middle-class people into poor areas, partly because their higher incomes will generate higher tax takes, and partly for their presumed greater amount of 'social capital' (2008: 200), seen as beneficial for the area. In an American context, the public Hope VI Program 'has been used to socially mix (read "gentrify") public housing in order to break down the culture of poverty and the social isolation of the poor' (2008: 203). The authors argue that US cities, reliant on

property taxes, regard it as 'fiscal pragmatism' to pursue policies that increase the percentage of homeowning middle classes in their central cities (2008: 205). Some local governments, like the urban-renewal district in Otago, which also offered help to buy, in part to increase homeownership levels, offer financial help for rehabbing homes (2008: 29-30).

This idea, of the social value of seeding middle-class people among the poor, is explicitly shared, according to Elisha (2011a) by the venerable Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), a close ally and precursor of the localist subculture I am writing about, with several personal connections among them (the CCDA is briefly mentioned above, in the Introduction). The CCDA's tagline of 'relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution' (Elisha 2011a: 205) (in which the final 'r' in this sequence refers to skills-sharing activities in the ABCD-type mould, rather than anything state-driven) stands behind a range of programmes in which the stable presence of middle-class families in an area is part of a range of strategies for economic and moral uplift. Elisha notes how John Perkins, the organisation's African American founder, pastor and social-justice campaigner, much admired in Quimby, advocates for the residence in urban neighbourhoods of middle-class families 'to stimulate economic growth and civic pride in poor communities by taking residence' (2011a: 205, Elisha's words). 'Affordable housing, mixed-income neighbourhoods, entrepreneurial incentives, and job creation' (2011a: 204) make up the CCDA vision.

The Christian localists I knew, connected in with these institutional currents, were explicitly opposed to the neighbourhoods they were living in becoming middle-class enclaves. As mostly middle-class incomers themselves (along, it must be said, with a good proportion of their neighbours, though no one I knew was affluent), their view of their neighbourhood positionality was strongly ambivalent. They knew well that they fit a certain gentrifier mould. Some of them had relocated from ampler homes, rehabbing small Otago bungalows, several of which had been in slum-like conditions when they moved in. They valued, devoutly, their proximity to cultural diversity, and cultivated lifestyles – of 'simple living', etc. – that they explicitly thought of as 'countercultural'.

People I knew, in LW and other localist communities in Quimby, would express their ambivalence by satirising young, white, middle-class Christians like themselves, as such people undertook beautification and placemaking in city neighbourhoods. A typical instance of this storytelling against oneself was the story told by an attendee at a workshop on gentrification I went to (of which more below). He said that friends of his were planting tulips in an inner-city neighbourhood they had relocated to, when some young African American locals drove past in

an SUV, and yelled at said tulip-planters: 'Hey! I learned a new word! Gentrification!' Bielo has noted the general disposition of self-satire in this movement (Bielo 2011a: 65-7), and it was a sincere humour of self-questioning.

It could be a tough call, being in the neighbourhood with high hopes for some slow and sweet redemption of place, including in its material ground, while at the same time conforming to the ethic of humility, and submitting oneself fully to 'neighbourhood' as found. Indeed, resistance to gentrification was sometimes invoked as a reason for community development work along ABCD-type lines. In an article he wrote about LW for a Christian magazine not long after they moved to Otago, Nate had cited the ABCD approach as a way of preventing the church from becoming a 'catalyst for gentrification'. Jared, in the South Otago Project preparation meetings, echoed a claim I'd heard at the Neighborhood Circle conference, that one of the reasons for this kind of organising was to get a community strong so that it can be ready to challenge gentrification when it threatens.

The moral materialism of this Christian localism and how it relates to the errant value of capital is, like the movement's mixed posture of humility and industrious activism, complex. Bielo has said of the new-evangelical 'missional' localists he knew in Ohio that they are 'unavoidably implicated in gentrification processes' (2011c: 20). He cites the work of Sieber (1987) on 'brownstoner' gentrification in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s. Sieber outlined a classic gentrifier profile of someone from the middle classes who moves to an urban neighbourhood (often from a background in the suburbs or small towns) (Sieber 1987: 54), enthusiastic for restoring and preserving a neighbourhood's historical features, for beautification, cleaning and greening and celebrating the 'natural', and who seeks local political reform (Bielo 2011c: 19). The New York 'pioneer' gentrifiers had a 'vision centred on themes of renewal, cleansing and purification of a fundamentally disordered and polluted city' (Sieber 1987: 52). They 'substantially changed the aesthetic face of the neighbourhood, through building renovating and restoration, and greening' (1987: 54). Bielo notes points of diversion between his Christian localists and Sieber's gentrifiers, for instance the fact that the latter opposed commercial development, while Christian localists tend to strongly support local businesses (2011c: 19). But on the other counts, Bielo says, they fit the profile.

Sieber (1987) saw the back-to-the-city movement of the 1970s and 80s as part of a movement to celebrate nature that was partly made possible by the decline of manufacturing in cities, which, he says, was what had propelled much of the anti-urbanism in American culture, and the flight from the cities, in the first place. With manufacturing's decline in the central city, the city had become again a space in which the pursuit of 'the traditional bourgeois values' (which included

'individualism', 'voluntarism', and 'democratic localism') (1987: 62) was possible, and where the country-in-the-city could be performed, partly through projects of greening. Bielo's implicit argument in drawing on Sieber's New York material is that the urban pastoral of his missional Christians recalls that earlier movement's project to decityify the city.

The core trope of Christian localism, 'neighbourhood', does some resolving work on such matters of taste and expectation. Lees *et al* (2008) have observed that early-stage gentrification is often undertaken by individuals as a 'reaction to [what those people view as] the repressive institutions of the suburbs' (2008: 209). In 'neighbourhood', which as we have seen means diverse and vibrant 'city' as much as it connotes communitarian cooperation, city and small town ideals come together in a pincer movement against the reviled spaces of the suburb. To the extent that 'neighbourhood' can resolve several traditionally countervailing imaginative versions of human community, localists are able to imagine a cultivated space that does not exclude anybody. But it is delicate work, and localists do not escape their own suspicions for long.

One of the most popular workshops at the Neighborhood Circle conference was entitled 'Confessions of a Gentrifier', and was led by a young member of faculty at the seminary hosting the event. Fittingly, outside the window you could see cranes, and new 'condos' under construction in this postindustrial central-city neighbourhood, once full of warehouses and now a site of trendy consumption and rising rents. The seminary had itself moved to this neighbourhood from the suburbs a few years earlier, partly, a faculty member told me, so that its students would have the 'formational' experience of taking public transportation to class, where they would be compelled to encounter the various others of the city.

The session's convenor opened with a personalised story about his own changing neighbourhood, once 70% public housing, but now challenged with rising rents and displacement of poor people to the suburbs, as people like himself – on all counts apart from race (he was Asian American), he said, he fit the 'gentrifier profile' exactly – moved into this 'up and coming' neighbourhood. He went on to rehearse a potted history of racism and economic inequality as it had played out on the American landscape, beginning with the 'white flight' to the suburbs following desegregation. He told the familiar story of urban sprawl, as affluent whites fled the city – 'two-hour commutes, pumping utilities out into the desert', 'race and class separate us'. Then, the reinvention of the central city from the 1980s – business districts, mixed-use developments, light rail networks, drawing the affluent back in. This 'urban renewal' was, he said, 'government-sanctioned gentrification': the displacement of local people, often people of colour, as property values rose as a consequence of development. Bill, a likeable and passionate 'Christian anarchist' who I knew from Quimby (who was to go on to pastor a church for

homeless people there), exclaimed that the white return to the inner city was like 'Manifest Destiny' over again.

The speaker told a tale of two neighbourhood bars. One, Suzy's, was popular and locally owned by African Americans, a well-loved place that nevertheless had a reputation for incidents of crime and rowdy behaviour. Across the street from Suzy's was a newer bar, hip and pricey, and only ever frequented by whites. As the area changed with rising property values, Suzy's closed, and local feelings were mixed. 'Should Suzy's have closed?' the presenter asked, rhetorically. The CCDA would say, he said, that some places in a neighbourhood, damaging places, do need to go. He left the question about this specific bar hanging in the air, as its closure stood in illustration of the morally ambiguous socioeconomic reality of gentrification.

As the session drew to a close, the speaker asked the group: 'What does it mean to cultivate the shalom of urban community, while respecting place?' Packed into this question were several of Christian localism's core dilemmas. Shalom – a capacious biblical word frequently used in these circles to mean a generalised 'flourishing' (another popular term) which encompassed ideas of peace, health, and wholeness – was the goal of any Christian urban intervention, while 'place' was the principle of particularity that this movement embraced in philosophical opposition to 'abstraction', and specifically the highly rationalised and standardised approaches to mission that people had encountered in other evangelical contexts, which in their evangelistic efforts failed to recognise the specific characteristics, needs and preferences of the people they targeted.

A Quimby community activist and ABCD trainer remarked that the key thing was inclusion: you needed *everyone* in a neighbourhood to be part of decisionmaking about that place. We need, the convenor said, to 'work for shalom *in identification with* our neighbours'. So, for instance, we can help by supporting local immigrant businesses, which are often the first to suffer from gentrification. Seek out your community's existing assets, he urged people, find out who is producing food locally, and then help them, network on their behalf if they want that, perhaps by assisting them with online promotions, that kind of thing.

The hope and conviction expressed in this meeting was that community-building action might strengthen local bonds, making concerted resistance to exclusionary changes in the neighbourhood's fabric more viable. The speaker remarked that building community connections early, *before* gentrification sets in, can be important in enabling more concerted collective action further down the line. He gave the example of a local campaign group that had worked to persuade a chainstore to commit to a certain amount of affordable housing in a local development it was considering, and to hiring locally. 'It takes an organised community', he

remarked, to get action like that to happen quickly. Another localist I spoke to said the only way he'd seen to tackle gentrification was through, in essence, organising: 'if the neighbourhood members themselves have a civic infrastructure to make decisions together about how they want to … live there twenty years from now, after their artistic work and their life together creates a flourishing place.' He spoke about collective decision-making, and neighbours 'learning how to become an identifiable people together', through that solidarity, born of shared creative action, finding ways to 'innovate solutions for being able to remain there when gentrification begins to happen'.

Part of the point of community-development schemas such as the ABCD-led South Otago Project was to resituate agency in the hands of the local people already present in the neighbourhood, with the ideal of making sure that what 'shalom' looks like is what locals want to see. But, as the critical accounts of 'participation'-led programmes show, such frameworks, their inductive research methods notwithstanding, have a tendency to enfold local people in a set of ideas that originate with the development workers or, in this case, with the people initially seeking to 'build community' in their chosen neighbourhoods.

Ambivalent futures and the localists' value dilemma

Do localists want to see a neighbourhood change or not? And where do they situate agency in relation to such change? When the local-newspaper article about the Otago urban-renewal area's failure to thrive did the rounds of the online community forums, Jared sent a link to the article to the South Otago Project committee, captioned with a single-line message – 'Thankful to be part of a group (that's YOU!, US!) living out a new story within our beautiful neighbourhood!' Discussing the article on a hike in the mountains with some LW members for Jared's wife Ellen's birthday, another LW member, Emily, lamented the point the article seemed to be making, about why things like the local-food-focused grocery chain that many LW members liked hadn't yet come to Otago – that developers are looking for a certain median income before they will want to open a store in a given neighbourhood, i.e., that gentrification has to happen before somewhere can have nice amenities. I said that I'd heard they were even more interested in educational attainment than median income, and she laughed – oh, really? They're looking for people like me, then – poor but snobby! We laughed.

Things like the grocery store, and a good coffee shop, were indeed devoutly wished for by some in LW, in part, I concluded, because of the commitment people held to staying local and not going too far afield for their daily routines and pleasures. People oscillated between satirising

their own tastes and linking such desires with gentrification, and believing that such amenities were things to be enjoyed and shared by all.

The concept introduced by Jared in the South Otago Project meetings, of a 'neighbourhood of choice', was that community action, initiated from a ground of positivity, could create a virtuous cycle in which ordinary citizens created changes in their neighbourhood that made them more keen to live there, and to continue to act productively on the place for its flourishing. Thus in a sense the action of neighbourhood improvement was not envisaged as ever stopping – while at the same time major change in the material fabric of the place, such that property values increased, was not seen as desirable at all. The movement was caught on the horns of a temporal-material dilemma.

I recall a dinner-table conversation with the Hasses in which Anne speculated about whether in the future LW members might be able to put the houses they owned in the neighbourhood 'in trust', so that some houses might be kept affordable. Her husband Mike had his doubts, saying that it could hold property values down, which would be unpopular with neighbours. On one occasion, when someone on a neighbourhood website advertised a rental property for a fairly steep price, Al posted an admonition on the site, saying: 'I think you are asking more than our neighbourhood can expect. Perhaps you'll find a wealthy family to rent to (?), but I am concerned about affordable housing for folks here'. As Quimby's population grew, the spacious character of the neighbourhood was changing, with a noticeable contingent of large new homes going up around the neighbourhood (of which the Barn, people wryly acknowledged, had been one of the first), sometimes two to a lot, in contrast to the bungalows with large yards that formed the majority of older homes. I remember Anne and Emily being frustrated by a friend and ex-LW member's decision to sell his home opposite the school to a developer who, they felt sure, would put two big new houses on the lot.

There was, then, a frustration with the onward course of the housing market, and its effects on Otago's affordability and character. What the group wanted was for the community, themselves and others, to work hard on the material fabric of the neighbourhood to render it pleasanter for all, but for renovation and renewal to be possible without pulling in exclusionary economic processes. Recalling the neighbour who griped that the intersection paint was motivated by the possibility of raised property values for Al and Sally (which seemed very unlikely to me), the misconception points up the quandary of localist placemaking as a social-justice project in a wider context where income inequality exists. As a project of ethics, not politics – of ethics instead of politics – this localism is, I would argue, limited in its ability to attain the challenge to 'outside interests' that Jared suggested it might become.

The localists' sense of futurity was very different from that of the city's urban-renewal agency, whose tax-increment financing for its revitalisation (gentrification?) projects involved financing the present and near future by speculating on the long-term future – on the understanding that investment now would make that future possible. The instrument shows a faith in the power of investment to yield return, that is, raise overall values. One of the signs of this localism's ambivalent attitude towards the market economy is its refusal of such capitalist futures. Ambivalent, because this is at the same time a project-centred ethos that renders components of the social world as 'assets' and the connections among them as 'capital' (social capital), and whose language of 'dreams' and 'potential' urges a view of community as a social entity striving to make more value from itself.

When they reflected on how it could be hard to generate enthusiasm among neighbours, Jared had reminded the neighbourhood planning project's steering group that this was a long-haul thing: planting trees, not seeds, he'd said. 'Stability' and commitment to the long term are, as we have seen, core values of localists. But time here is not capitalist time, it is human life-cycle time, over which, localists hope, aloofness will disappear, and affective bonds will form that will firm the fabric of place against the pressures of that other temporality.

Chapter four

Sacrifice and consumption in 'the world's first charity pub'

'Have a drink; change the world.'

'The mechanism of sacrifice…is the means of concentration of religious feeling; it expresses it; it incarnates it; it carries it along.' Hubert and Mauss, Sacrifice: Its nature and functions *(1964: 60)*

The previous chapters have discussed the new-evangelical turn in Quimby as it has played out in expressions of communitarian localism in one corner of the city's new-evangelical subculture. The Living Water Community's work to knit together moral community within its own body and among its neighbours, using the materials of intending persons active on the ground of 'locality', understood as a site of moral discipline, offers an example of one dimension of this movement's pious activism in the world. This chapter and the next will address another facet of new- evangelical action on the social ground: social enterprise. Social entrepreneurs here might be understood as moral entrepreneurs; entering the marketplace as transactors in ideas of the good. This chapter looks at a particular moral enterprise that has created a ritual space, a 'non-profit pub', as a site of commensality and of ritual giving, in which ideas of the good are tightly circulated onsite through words, images and, most focused on here, a ritual assembly of economic transaction and physical consumption that claims transformative effects on participants and in the world outside the ritual space.

In this project, the focus is on the consumer as ritual actor; the chapter following this one will look at the producer end of the moral-enterprise process, and propositions for a kind of redeemed capitalism attained through the localist hope of collapsing the separate spheres of economy and individuals' lives on the ground of the local. The subjects of both chapters engage with persons by way of materiality and economic exchange in the public social space, as part of this turn's anti-ascetic 'holism'; in so doing they are faced with and seek to resolve their subculture's besetting ambivalences: about the market economy, and about the place of the church in a plural society.

'The world's first charity pub'

The Cascade Free House is, in its own promotional words, 'the world's first charity pub'.[9] The pub opened in May 2013, a stylish commercial addition to a pretty street in the East Quimby neighbourhood of Claremont, minutes from one of the city's major east-west arterial roads, yet, like much of residential Quimby, pleasantly quiet, and fragrant with home gardens. Claremont is situated in an eastern swath of the city where, until comparatively recently, the city's small African American population was clustered; a consequence of both proximity to the dockyards where historically much of that population had been employed, and decades of unofficial racially discriminatory 'redlining' mortgage policies. The neighbourhood, which is low- to middle- income, with a recent history of infrastructural neglect and poverty, is nevertheless attractive and leafy, with Craftsman-style houses with ample yards, some of which, abundant with foliage and homemade sculpture, sport signs indicating their certification as 'backyard habitats'. The street on which the pub opened was at the time of its opening already becoming a notable enclave of elegant bars and restaurants, most in a rustic-style idiom, among other instantiations of the local bourgeois consumer culture, including a bike-repair shop, a yoga studio and an urban gardening coop.

The pub is housed in an attractive two-storey wooden building, painted in shades of brown and cream, which dates from the 1900s and, the owners claim, did unofficial service to the community as a shebeen during Prohibition. Now, the frontage is strung with fairy lights and there are wooden chairs and tables and a sculpture of a bicycle out front. The pub's unusual business model, which is recognised as a non-profit by the state but is not accorded tax-exempt status by the federal Internal Revenue Service, involves it acting as, in the words of the entrepreneur who conceived it, a 'fundraising department' for a rotating selection of local charities. The idea is that the pub donates the net profits from sales of its pints and restaurant-style food to the charities, as selected by each customer, who picks out which of the charities they wish their money to go to from a charities 'menu', on the reverse side of the food and drink menu. Since the pub opened, a non-profit brewery, which also serves restaurant-style food, has opened a mile or so away on a similar model, and other 'philanthropubs' exist in other parts of the US.

The pub is one component of a three-part community space in the building: adjacent to the pub is a 'swap 'n' play' children's play space, where families can bring and borrow children's toys and clothes on a community-building 'honour' system, and above it is the Claremont Dance Hall, a

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[9] The use of 'pub' rather than 'bar' is deliberate: in Quimby's beer culture, which is extensive, epicurean, and somewhat rationalised, 'pubs' are the norm; part of the city's general commercial posture of cultivated Europeanism, and intended, I think, to connote an atmosphere of warm conviviality and some distinction as regards food and drink quality.

handsome events space, whose hire helps to fund the pub. One of the groups that meets regularly in the dance hall is the Cascades Community, a small church of about a hundred people, which holds its weekly Sunday worship followed by a potluck meal there. The space hosts a myriad of other regular events, including children's concerts, a regular square dance, puppet shows, comedy, and exercise and dance classes.

'Tearing down the walls'

The Cascades Community started in 2008, its late twenty-something-aged founder members native Quimbyers who, after some years in higher education elsewhere, decided to come back to the city and settle in this particular eastern corner. When I met them in the early 2010s, the community had a predominantly thirtysomething profile, mostly white and highly educated, and fairly cosmopolitan for Quimby, with a smattering of congregants with roots in other countries. The pastor, Keegan, who is also the pub's director and one of its original creators, is clear that he and the community's other founders had felt 'led' to form in this particular part of town: like other Christian localists, he was enthusiastically specific about the exact geographical quarter they were settling in. Using language derived from market research which, I surmised, came from his seminary training, he described to me the emerging 'psychograph', or 'sociograph' of the area: 'spiritual-but-not-religious' people who were settling down, starting families, and seeking something. Members of the Cascades Community had bought the building – whose appearance on the market, just as the group were seeking a space in that exact neighbourhood, Keegan recalled in providential terms – with a vision for creating a gathering space for the local community. The building's different elements – the pub, the events space, the play space and the church community – are all legally distinct entities, but there is crossover among the people involved in each of the enterprises, and in practice it appeared to me that the building operates as a community hub for the church's social circle, as much as it does for the broader local community.

Keegan told me that the pub idea had started as a bit of a joke – his church is affiliated to the Foursquare denomination, which has historically been very much at the temperance and 'purity' end of Christian attitudes to alcohol and other worldly pleasures. But, he explained, once they got to thinking about it, it had seemed to make sense – a pub represents 'food, drink, connection'; a place for 'community', 'family-friendly'. They had always known they wanted to have some kind of business that was open seven days a week, and a pub was potentially more flexible over the course of the day than a coffee shop, as coffee tends to be associated primarily with mornings. Besides, drinking is not 'unbiblical', he reflected. There's a lot of things the

church has historically said were problematic – among the examples he gave were drinking and money – and, he said, we're trying to 'redeem' those things; to remind people they're good, even beautiful, so long as you don't abuse them.

The idea was always to have the business be non-profit; a way of 'finding common ground, finding common grace' with the wider community. Keegan was eager to emphasise that the pub was not a creation of the church, rather, it was an outworking of various individuals' understandings of what faith life in practice would look like. The pub, he told a group of localist Christians who had come to see what was going on with the project in the final months before it opened, was a 'secular nonprofit', not a 'religious' space.

The pub received a fair amount of publicity when it opened, locally and indeed nationally. Keegan was adamant that he wanted people to 'steal this model' – he very much saw a future in which Cascade Free Houses, or their equivalents, could be found all over Quimby and beyond. Like most entrepreneurs in that city, his formulation of the business's vision drew on the city's particular brand: he would cite the thriving craft-brewing sector (the most breweries of any city in the world!), and the extensive non-profit and volunteering culture, to sharpen the image of the pub as a natural, even rightful, outworking of local civic talents and virtues.

The argument of this chapter concerns the Cascade Free House as a site of sacralised transaction. Keegan would speak of 'tearing down the walls' between the church and the wider community. Creating and naming the pub as a 'secular' space signalled his tacit acceptance of the status of 'religion' in the modern Western imaginary as an optional category sequestered from the public sphere, and the 'secular', in contrast, as the broad and public lands on which all might meet. What he and others involved in the pub project were engaged in was, in this view, not 'religious', because it was properly public, that is, secular. Implicit in the curious framing of 'tearing down the walls' as a restatement of a boundary between the 'religious' and the 'secular' (as in the claim that the pub was not a religious, but a secular, space) is an ambition for some kind of diffusion of something native to the 'religious' sphere more broadly into the community.

But Keegan was clear that this diffusion would not be of the traditional Protestant verbal evangelising sort; while the denomination, for its part, though rather taken with the pub project, had made it clear that it had no intention of itself owning a pub building. The pub as Keegan and others involved conceived it would be a place, not only of material pleasures and conviviality, but of collective moral consciousness-raising, where people would experience, through the 'menu' of charities, the presence of charity representatives now and then, and the whole thematic thrust of the place, a connection with the common good, and be in some way changed by the encounter. In the organisation's own language, it 'is a place where people in the community can learn more

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of these outstanding non-profit organisations and discover practical ways they can become involved in transforming our world and improving the lives of others'.

When I first met Keegan, grabbing a coffee in the final hectic six months before the pub opened, he told me he'd been ready to 'lose people' (i.e. congregants and other fellow travellers in the pub project). We 'mould it in the most intentional way that we can', he said, but, you know, things never turn out just how people expect. The pub's opening would be a 'big transition', he said, and some people would be disappointed. Disappointed how? Oh, you know, that it's not this amazingly cool place, or that people won't come and 'get saved' over a pint of beer. He had indicated to the church, he said, that that kind of thing was very much not the goal; that the aim was for it to be a community space, a place to build relationships. In a promotional video about the pub done for a local newspaper, Keegan mentions how 'religion' is one of those words, and ideas, that can divide people. Whereas with something like the dance hall (upstairs from the pub), for instance, you are creating a familiar, community space for everyone. In his conversation with me, Keegan noted in celebratory tones how many of the people involved in the project weren't to do with the church. I asked him what the spiritual vision of the pub was, then, if it wasn't to have a place to break out the Bibles, as it were. He replied that it was to create 'an environment [that is] raising awareness and support for Kingdom organisations'; organisations (the charities) that stand for 'compassion', 'love', 'justice'.

'A new wave of business and mission'[10]

Keegan was in his early thirties when we met in autumn 2012. He was an immediately likeable person, friendly, easeful company; clearly energetic and driven, but not in an overweening way. When I first saw him, he was up a stepladder, fixing a light in the main bar space. He had been on the go for months. One of the venture's distinctive features was that it aimed to (and succeeded in) opening debt-free, thanks to an enormous quantity of volunteer engagement over the four years of its preparation, partly but not all given by members and friends the church. The project received some public money from the city's urban-renewal agency, for works on the hundred-year-old building, and substantial monies were raised through online crowdfunding, but it was the many hours of volunteer labour, donated materials and professional expertise that enabled the debt-free opening which, Keegan explained, was so that they could begin donating to the charities from the moment they opened.

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[10] From the pub's website; what it claims to be pioneering through its distinctive business model.

Quimby, as a city, exemplifies the vigour for forming 'associations' famously observed of Americans by Alexis de Tocqueville (2003 [1835]: 596). Both volunteering and enterprise are prominent parts of the city's social landscape, with local newspapers publishing annual lists of the top one hundred Quimby nonprofits, and the t-shirt memento of a day's work volunteering – often sponsored by a consumer business – was a staple item of clothing for many. When making presentations about the pub to Quimby media and audiences, Keegan would often repeat the datum that, not only did the city have the most breweries in the US, but it also had the most nonprofits of any city in the country – the pub, he would say, was a way of 'leveraging' those two sources of Quimby pride for the 'common good'. This idea, of packaging together giving and consuming, is also a familiar part of the local social fabric, from supermarkets soliciting charity donations at the checkout, to the imbrication, through sponsorship and donations, of businesses with a wide range of third-sector projects. In the case of one well-loved local grocery chain, which made much of its commitment to the local, the five-cent reusable bag refund it offered could be given to one of three nonprofits local to each branch's neighbourhood. The city supports several non-profit cafes – one, which is part of a national chain, operates on a 'pay-what-you-can' model, for the purpose of 'rais[ing] awareness' of food insecurity in the US,[11] and offers volunteering opportunities for people on low incomes, a model that at least one startup cafe I was aware of was hoping to adopt. Not long after the pub opened, the state recognised the new legal category of 'benefit corporation', or B-Corp, in which a business binds itself legally to seeking certain public-benefit goals, as well as shareholder return.[12] Thus Quimby's consumer economy – and, presently, its legal framework – offered a context in which the combining under the umbrella of one business entity of transactions traditionally assigned to separate sectors of the economy was an agreed, and increasingly prominent, public good, its comparative novelty still, however, adding a charisma of counterintuitiveness to such businesses' doings.

Gifted labour and sacrificial economics

Part of the work of building the pub as a place that inculcated the moral value of 'getting involved' was underway from the beginning, in the place's literal construction through gifting. A mass of volunteer labour was used to renovate what had been a dilapidated building – that this gifted labour saved costs considerably was understood as part of the project's overall virtue, since the pub's stated aim was, after all, to give away money. I joined in a couple of times at the

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[11] http://paneracares.org/our-mission.
[12] http://benefitcorp.net/.

painting and decorating stage. When the place opened, resplendent with sleek, varnished-wood furniture, the bar room filled to bursting with eager punters, Keegan remembered this, and pointed out to me what I had contributed – you helped to create this, he urged. The unique efforts of individuals were emphasised in this project. People donated furniture and appliances: for some time after the pub opened, one could pick up flyers explaining the project's vision and seeking donations. One such flyer was looking for a: 'door', 'toilet', 'oven', 'Visa machine', 'mop and bucket', 'forks, knives, etc.'. Rather than having investors who would demand financial returns, the pub followed the internet crowdfunding formula of having a scale of rewards for donations, with a category known as 'founders', givers of donations between $1,500 and $2,500, who would get a beer a week or a day for life (Keegan: 'Every time you come in, we pour you a glass'), and their own monogrammed pint glass to display behind the bar. Donors of smaller amounts were known as 'partners'.

The project's public profile made much of the pub as the product of countless people's freely given, and often exhausting, labour. The website featured photographs of the filthy chaos of the building before renovations were complete; and Keegan gave a speech to a local TED-talk franchise in which he told an inspiring story of constructive hopes dashed (being stuck on the sidewalk, just as snow began to fall, with an expensive new oven that wouldn't fit through the front door) and regained (he called around, 'the community' pitched in to disassemble the oven and get it safely into the kitchen). Volunteers' glad contributions stood in doubled relation to the ideal of community giving that the pub aimed to represent: that people were willing to gift their time and sweat to the project bore witness to the inspiring nature of its mission; at the same time, their work, being voluntary labour for the common good, was a component part of what the project was: a materialisation of accumulated gift-giving. It could also be understood as a kind of sacrificial economics, such as Harding (2000) notes in her account of donations to the Reverend Jerry Falwell's ministries. In sacrificial giving, one 'vacat[es] the commercial economy' and 'enter[s] another realm, a…sacrificial economy in which material expectations are transformed' (2000: 109), and persons are released from careful budgeting of time and money by participation that 'allies them with God in his concrete miraculous work on earth' (2000: 123).

The rhetorics of voluntarism employed in the pub's publicities about its own construction implied a providential character to the work, by framing volunteer participation as a kind of wonderful and repeated surprise, rather than as a project to be organised – again echoing the language of sacrificial giving Harding writes about in her Baptist context, in which gifts to God (via the ministry) are themselves understood as God at work in the world (2000: 122, see also

Scherz 2014: 125 on 'providential fundraising'). Of course, such explicitly religious language would not have been articulated by the pub, but the sense of the pub as representing a parallel economy of freely gifted work for the good was central to its consumer brand, with people drawn to participate in that good by making some contribution to it, be that varnishing a bench, donating a living room table, as some acquaintances of mine did, or eating and drinking there as a consumer. Being at the producer or the consumer end of the business were alike positions that involved making some kind of offering to the project; gifting one's individual contribution to the construction and reconstruction of the pub as a condensed site of the 'common good'.

The gifted labour was materialised in the pub's aesthetic of the wooden and the natural; the pub was filled with the products of craft, not industrial manufacture, such as a finely planed flourish of 280-year native Western American redwood tree trunk that made the bar top – the wood material making it feel 'like home', in the words of one enthusiastic blogger. The pub's identity as gift *of* 'the community' was signalled in its material components almost as much as was its primary identity of gift *to* 'the community'.

The 'donacounter': consumption and altruism

The pub was busy most days and nights, as far as I could see: Keegan's hope to create somewhere that was a social hub, seven days a week, seemed to be being achieved. On display next to the bar was the 'donacounter', a wooden structure that housed a row of test-tube-like glass vials, one for each of the pub's sponsored charities, in which were dropped wooden tokens to show the relative takings of each one. Above each banquette on the opposite wall was a framed photograph illustrating each of the charities – a young person making music illustrated the charity that engages young people in music production as a way of helping their self-esteem and social skills, a smiling African American man with a young boy beaming happily on his shoulders stood for a charity that offers trained, paid mentors to children deemed 'at risk'. Behind the bar is a blackboard with a chalked running total of money that has gone, in Keegan's words, 'out the door' to the charities. On one occasion when I was there, underneath the running total were written '#believe', and '#keepitgoing'. The pub keeps a public running total of its earnings for charity, totted on blackboards in the pub and displayed on social media. Each month, the pub tweets an image of board members writing the cheques for each of the charities. The pub's tagline is 'Have a drink, change the world', and t-shirts with this message hang above the bar (other 'merch', including iPhone skins, is available online). It is also written on a large, low wooden table, painted red, at the back of the room, near the small children's play area.

At the time of my fieldwork, there were seven charities on the pub's books; the first of a regularly rotating sequence of organisations. Two of these, Habitat for Humanity and Trees for the City, a non-profit which organises parties of volunteers to plant street trees, were themselves organisations dedicated to the kind of performances of gifted labour discussed above. Of the total seven, six had some aim of ameliorating the moral and material condition of individuals living in poverty or exploitation: a microcredit scheme in Central America, a sheltering and mentoring project for trafficked girls in Southeast Asia, several mentoring programmes for young people from local poor communities (one such programme used the tagline 'Invest in friendonomics'). The language used to present the charities to the pub's customers mixed in concepts of gifting as pure compassion ('charities') and philanthropy (the 'Do-gooder Pale Ale' was a signature beer available at the pub) with a more developmentalist philosophy, as in the 'have a drink, change the world' and '#be the change' tagline and hashtags. The charities were largely locally based; this was a core feature of the pub's ethos, to engender virtuous engagements among neighbours.

The pub's non-profit identity provoked the occasional ambiguity. I remember overhearing a customer asking, semi-jokingly, whether his pint would be tax deductible – no, no it wouldn't. The experience of being a customer at the CFH was framed as a win-win, in which one can enjoy, even indulge, oneself, and know that one is thereby doing good in the world. But sometimes the giving element seemed more to the forefront. The first time Keegan and I met to talk about the pub, I bought a meal as well as a drink for myself (his drink was free as part of the pint-a-day deal offered to 'Founder' investors), and he thanked me for buying myself food. Months later, when I attended a Meetup event about socially responsible business held at the CFH, where Keegan explained the pub's story to social enterprise hopefuls, one of the other attenders and I split a meal. Keegan looked sharply at us: 'You're sharing?' he said, with what seemed to me to be a flash of annoyance (the pub has since introduced an extra cost for those splitting a meal).

Dolan (2007) has written about the market in fairtrade flowers grown in Kenya 'as a site of moral commerce', noting that 'ethical consumption forms an important aspect of self-formation in a context of neoliberal globalisation', in which consumers 'articulate moral sensibilities through the labour of shopping' (2007: 240). This construction of virtuous identity, even self-transformation (2007: 248), through consumption choices, is a key element in the bourgeois consumer economy in which the CFH was embedded. Dolan further argues that fairtrade 'complicates the distinction between the sacred and the secular and the gift and the commodity as…consumers and NGOs weave webs of obligation through the medium of the market'. On these 'borderlands of altruism

and self-interest' (2007: 240), purchases may be understood as acts of moral obligation (2007: 251), even as they are acts of consumption.

But whereas in the case of fairtrade consumer products, the fusion of giving and consuming is balled together as a coherent consumer experience, with consequences for the consumer's sense of their own ethical identity, I would argue that in the case of the CFH, the pub, as a ritual site of redemptive transaction, keeps the contrasting elements of the core transaction, its giftiness and commodityness, distinct; the counterintuitiveness of the pairing constantly reiterated in the place's discursive interior, which is full of slogans and images reminding consumers of the 'aletruism' (an oft-used publicity pun) that one is enacting by transacting there. The pub's ritual effectiveness resides in the place's processes holding in stimulative tension the ideas of indulgent consumption on the one hand, and righteous – indeed morally obliged – gifting on the other, and customers must be kept in mind of both at once. Being cheap is not an option: within the ritual space, one plays the game, which is to enact indulgence and generous gifting in the one transaction that holds the two together in miraculous simultaneity. Thus the attainment of the gift-commodity simultaneity remains the pub's ritual achievement, and not something incorporated into the customer's self-identity, as it is in Dolan's fairtrade case.

At the same time, the pub did also appeal to consumer sensibilities about charitable action as something more naturally commingled with material and consumer pleasures. In his study of Western societies' relationship with consumer goods, which traces aspects of current-day 'consumerism' in those societies to early Puritanism's ethos of emotional and rational self-accounting intermingled with Romantic, Platonic and Deist strains of thought, including nineteenth-century American New Thought, Colin Campbell (1987) suggests that contemporary consumer culture involves an ongoing provocation of the imagination and fantasy, such that consumer goods provoke a kind of hedonistic reverie in people, who seek out products not to so much to gain 'satisfaction' from them, but to gain 'pleasure from the self-illusory experiences which they construct from their associated meanings' (1987: 89).

Campbell sees emerging from movements such as Cambridge Platonism an emotivism, in which feelings, such as 'the tender emotions of pity and compassion' (1987: 118), come increasingly to be taken as the main signals of someone's inner goodness, with a person's 'sensibility' becoming a guide to their ethical standing. Such sensibility might be expressed in 'charitable acts' (1987: 120), which, in this view, held more validity than professions of credal faith. In this view, too, in which humanity, sparked with divinity, is essentially good, the bodily pleasures, including eating and drinking, are to be enjoyed, not reviled. Campbell

notes the combination of the 'intense worldly activity' of the Puritans with the Cambridge Platonic 'cult of benevolence' (1987: 122), in which altruism combines rightfully with a pleasure-taking in oneself. This combined inheritance of self-reflection produces an 'ethic of sensibility' (1987: 146), in tandem with the growth of the idea of 'taste', and Campbell proposes a modern-day outworking of these influences in pleasure- taking in consumer goods as occasions for both hedonistic and ethical imagination. Certainly these cultural strains, along with more ascetic inheritances, may be seen at work in contemporary bourgeois American society, and in the regnant common-sense within which a project such as the CFH seeks to engage its customer base.

Volunteering pub-licity

One of the pub's main purposes was to be a kind of display and performance space for civic virtue. In the pub's own words: 'We see our pub as a community centre for change and action where people can come to not only enjoy great food and drink, and give a little to the charity of their choice, but also learn how to take action and start to "be the change they wish to see in the world"'. As part of this virtue-action performance space identity, the pub had a system of volunteering, open to all, in which 'volunteer pub-licists' [sic – a pun] performed front-of-house welcoming duties. The core brand of nonprofiteering was riffed on throughout the organisation's marketing, down to the laminated notes on tables asking people to 'bus' their own tables to 'keep our nonprofits high', and Keegan emphasised how he and other board members did not make any money from the pub, with everything going to running costs, contingency funds, and of course the charities. The pub did have paid bar and kitchen staff, but I noticed not all punters were aware of this, and some thought everyone involved was unpaid.

One afternoon in the hectic early months of the pub's life, I did a shift as a volunteer, putting on an apron with the pub's logo and the words 'volunteer pub-licist' on it, and standing at the door ready to welcome customers and explain the pub's concept to them. I was given a crib sheet to guide my patter, which explained about the charities, and how the paid staff was small in order to keep labour costs low and thus give more to the charities. After four hours with comparatively little to do (because paid staff were doing most of the actual work), I wondered about how practically useful the volunteer role was.

Chatting with someone connected with the pub some weeks later, I mentioned my volunteer shift, and the person I was talking to asked: did you hear any 'world-changing conversations' on your shift? I wondered a little at the question, which she repeated in various ways as we chatted,

seeming a little regretful that this was not, yet, such a prominent aspect of the pub's life. Ultimately, she said, they wanted to get people from the charities volunteering – because you need a human face, a conversation, a *presence*, don't you, to get connected in to other people's problems? Customers could get inspired by talking with the people from the charities who were volunteering at the pub; inspired not only to give, but to 'get involved', to volunteer their time. These were the 'world-changing' conversations she'd been getting at. People might even get so inspired that they would start their own charity one day, she mused hopefully.

The pub's communications claimed that having volunteers in-house helped make the place profitable (for the nonprofits). However it seemed that in this as in much else at the pub, for example the manner of donating – being asked 'and which charity would you like?' at the end of each food or drink order – what was sometimes styled as pragmatic action was in great degree dramaturgical; a choreography of invitations to join a collective performance of giving, consuming and producing.[13]

Sacred performance and mixed economic logics

The Cascade Free House is a theatre of giving and consuming, in which consuming is giving, and the opportunity to give is consumed. During one of my meetings with Keegan in the pub, he told me about a book they were reading in the church, *Amusing ourselves to death* (1987 [1985]), Neil Postman's 1980s diatribe against television, and what he saw as the debasing effects of modern media on public discourse. Keegan called Aldous Huxley, to whom Postman refers extensively in his book, a 'prophet', for his famous dystopia of a population lulled by cheap amusements. It was not the only time I had had a conversation with Keegan or, indeed, others connected with the pub, where I had come away with a sense of my interlocutor's deep-set moral aversion to the consumer technological society – even, in this case, as Keegan composed his voluptuously descriptive promotional tweets about the pub's menu as we spoke, wryly noting his own 'hypocrisy' in using as a tool of consumerism the technology for which he was expressing such strong moral distaste. The business of the pub was consumerism, but it was consumerism redeemed by being brought into conjunction with something like its antithesis. Still, Keegan ribbed himself, lightly, as a 'hypocrite' – as with other new-evangelical commercial ventures, the CFH was constantly playing on the (im)moral valencies of consumer economics, itself gamely selling consumer goods for profit, but for profit that somehow leads to its own redemptive negation (as, in this case, the profits 'go out the door' to the redemptive category of 'charity').

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[13] The pub is currently raising funds to start its own brewery.

Although the great majority of media and individual commentaries on the pub I encountered were positive, I occasionally heard people express unease with the non-profit branding, and reflect that greater good might be achieved through more direct intervention with disadvantaged people, than through the mediation of an organisation contributing to yet other organisations. Although very few people, apart from some Christian localists, seemed to take any interest in, or even to notice, the pub's religious connections, I would like to argue that these (occasionally) critiqued elements – the pub's self-branding, and its intermediary role – are elements key to the pub's identity, which is as a kind of liturgical space, in which two kinds of ritual action are undertaken – a performance of exchange that is a redeeming version of ordinary commercial exchange; and moral pedagogy, in the form of customers' discursive interactions with the charities, and the idea of the charities, to which they donate in accordance with the pub's liturgical format.

One critic of the pub, who was a Christian, said rhetorically – look, either be a pub, or be a church. Which is it? I would like to argue here that the pub *is* a kind of church, in that it is, intendedly, a site of sacred performance; performance that is intended to effect moral transformation within participating persons, and enacted within a material environment made sacred by being both site and product (through gifted labour) of transactions that remoralise the commercial economy. The pub was explicit about being a performance space. Its identity as a place of community and edification was as prominent in its publicities as was its not-for-profit economic model. It was a place, more than a principle. Three economic logics coexisted in this space to produce a model moral economy, made up of Maussian gift economics, pure gifting/traditional Christian charity, and consumerism. While the logics might formally cut across each other – the pure gift seeks no return, and yet much of the pub's iconography and instruments of engagement, eg the founders' glasses, evokes the circulation of value among a community – they are put to work as reinforcements of each other in the physical space of the pub, with 'community', which surely means reciprocity, evoking altruistic giving, and vice versa.

Rather than the pub's core transactions involving any attempted enactment of Mauss's 'total social fact' (2002), in which exchange is not bifurcated into self-interest and altruism, the pub offers a site-specific collective performance of the two ideal-typical modes of exchange imagined by classic Western thought on these matters, the gift and the commodity, thought in the Western tradition as radically contrasting kinds of exchange (Parry 1986: 458), juxtaposed together as a novelty, a kind of cockeyed miracle, whose obvious peculiarity draws a person's attention, and (ideally) prompts them to reflect on the moral valences of giving and consuming. Further, the disinterested-giving thread among these two itself condenses various contrasting visions of

selfhood in that tradition, with its combination of ideas of self-denial through giving, of self-construction as an ethical person through giving, as with Dolan's fairtrade flower-buyers (Dolan 1987), and of the performance of an 'authentic' self, this last through the conceit of each customer choosing the charity closest to their own 'heart' and identity.

As the site of ritual transactions that draw together these contrasting logics, the physical space of the pub itself – as opposed to its core transactions, which perform the combined gift/commodity flourish – stands connoting the Maussian gift, in its 'founders'' pint glasses, and gifted and worked-upon furnishings, with giving persons' selfhoods circulating back to them, in named vessels and the literal furniture of community. Thus the place stands as a material instantiation of 'community' as a site of ever-circulating, personhood-infused reciprocity, which, however, as the pub's core transactions show, is at the same time imagined as being composed of something very un-Maussian, a miraculous sticking-together of the opposites of commodity and gift.

All this happening in the one concentrated space has the effect of making the various logics appear to reinforce one another. The pub's charisma lay in the way in which it played with its divergent economic logics, juxtaposing them in striking ways. It was a place, in a way, of broken social-economic chains, its power pooled within itself, within its ('secular') walls, as the flows of value in various kinds of transaction – 'charity', commerce, reciprocity – were cut off at each end and then rearranged together as hybrids, thereby losing the connection with the transactive world outside the pub, and concentrating within it, as ritual elements, the moral connotations of the various parts.

As an economic achievement, the pub's work was modest, although certainly not to be sniffed at – an average profit of $2,700 per month, divided between six and nine charities. As the pub's few detractors pointed out, even leanly done as it was, it costs money (including in this as in many cases, some public money, through the city's urban-renewal funds) to set up any kind of business, and it would be some years before it made for the charities what had been raised for its initial foundation. But the pub's aims were larger and more diffusive than brute financial figures – this, as I have said, is moral and ritual enterprise, in which the aim is the inculcation of voluntarist virtues in individual persons, and their engagement in ritually redemptive consumption. There were two transformative processes at work: in the transactions themselves, which confounded the expected logic of 'consumerism' by making consumption appear to be identical with charitable outlay, and in the diffuse pedagogy of the place itself, which connoted 'community', and in which, ideally, 'world-changing conversations' took place, or, at the least, encounters with 'the charities'

through promotional materials which communicated celebratory messages of giving and recipients' lives 'transformed'.

Total consumption and the valencies of alcohol

One of the most imaginatively compelling features of the Cascade Free House format was the juxtaposition of the #aletruism idea with the kind of consumption available there. Apart from the odd promotional t-shirt, there was nothing to consume in the Cascade Free House that you could keep. (And as for the promotional t-shirt, as a unit of brand identity, its departure from the premises is the extension of the Cascade Free House out into the world, not the passage of a product to a different part of the consumer chain.) The kind of consumption on offer, eating and drinking, is total consumption; consumption in the sense of incorporation, where the thing is destroyed in the consuming (Dietler & Hayden 2001; Mintz 1992), and thus has no further social use or circulation. Notwithstanding the pub's evocation of local community reciprocity, the model does not enfold any concept of provision in return, of longue duree feasting and counter-feasting (how could it?).

And then there is the kind of food and drink consumed: not daily provisions, but a meal out, a bit of an indulgence, not quite expensive but definitely not cheap either, and alcohol, which, unlike even the most unnutritious food, has no productive qualities whatsoever, and is condemned and enjoyed precisely for its dissipatory effects. Typical of Quimby's craft-beer culture, the pub's beer menu is extensive and rewards the connoisseur, making the alcohol itself of a special kind – thereby representing utter consumption all the more, I would argue, as it makes it more of an epicurean pleasure. Mintz's observation, that 'the desire to consume, powerful as it is, does not rest easy on the American psyche', with 'the feeling that one must pay for one's excesses [being] at least as American as the consumption itself' (1992: 269), prompts the thought that the indulgence of this consumption does not go unnoticed by the customers, whose consciences are alert to their own (what may nevertheless be quite habitual) indulgence. All this, then, is consumption that stands for consumption itself; thereby helping to intensify the sense of marvellous transformation when it is ritually rendered into self-giving through the unique mediating offices of the pub.

Joseph Gusfield (1987) argues that 'alcohol is a point of tension, ambivalence … in American life unlike its status in most industrial societies' (1987: 83), and I would add that it is often especially so for those with ties to evangelical subcultures. Many of my informants, almost all of whom drank socially, now took wine as part of communion, and were often craft-beer enthusiasts and

sometimes homebrewers. They would recount stories of childhoods with no alcohol ever in the home, and grape juice only in church; an abstemiousness they now rejected. Most, it seemed, still approached alcohol with a rather deliberate demeanour, in which their positive engagement with it was, like other choices they had made about their ethical and aesthetic orientations in the world, a fairly serious matter. Making beer the wholesome centrepiece of the action – a move which is by no means unique to the CFH in this subculture – is thus in part a serious ethical decision, a way of signalling release from a sequestered kind of church life, and a deliberate choice to not dismiss alcohol consumption as sinful.

Gusfield (1987) writes about alcohol in American society as a 'mood-setting' (1987: 79) signal of the shift from 'work' to 'leisure', pointing to 'the uses of alcohol in establishing time frames of play' (1987: 80) and to the 'festive character of alcohol use' (1987: 79). He notes that alcohol marks release from work, the beginning of 'free' time, and time away from domestic, as well as work, duties. Certainly, the pub like any other pub was conceived as a space of relaxation and conviviality – recognising that, as per Mary Douglas, 'drinking is essentially a social act' (Douglas 1987: 4), and 'the meaning of drink as solidifying personal relationships' (Gusfield 1987: 81), non-hierarchical relationships in particular. But in the new-evangelical doctrine, borrowed from US urban sociology, of the importance of 'third places' (Oldenburg 1999), that is, gathering places that are neither work nor home, to the formation of 'community', we see a more ambitious, and encompassing, hope for the site of drinking, as also being somewhere where attainments may reach *beyond* the separate spheres of 'work', 'home', and 'leisure'. While drink might work symbolically as a figure of total consumption; as an active social ingredient in the world, it was imagined as a component in a configuration that was neither work nor play but something more diffuse and holistic (as elsewhere in Quimby, I noticed that the pub was the site of a fair amount of work meetings and deal-making chatter).

This is not, then, alcohol as a release into mere leisure – the philosophy of the pub joins in the general new-evangelical hope of integrating set-apart spheres, in its case such that hedonic consumption and both the practice and the teaching of virtue are mixed in together. Alcohol did not in this subculture play the role of marking out time away from moral industry, necessarily. Indeed, in the ritual encounters set up by the pub, I would argue that drink, while retaining symbolic connotations of carefree dissipation, took on a somewhat sacramental role, echoing the incorporation of wine by many new-evangelical congregations, following the practice of the liturgical churches, into frequent communion-taking as part of worship. As part of their counterevangelical critical turn, new-evangelical groups often made much of communion; celebrating its bringing together of persons through the body and sensory experience, rather

than words. Some congregations even made a convivial toasting ceremony out of communion, bringing forth the feasting connotations of the sacrament. I would argue that the drinking that took place in the CFH should be seen with such religious shifts in its background. In both new-evangelical communion-taking and the pub's particular frame for alcohol use, alcohol is imagined as a core instrument in a condensed act of spiritual and moral participation.

But as a 'secular' space, as Keegan put it, the pub did not explicitly truck in such connotations. And indeed, although customers (the majority of whom were not connected with the church) seemed enthused about the pub's model, it was unclear to me that the experience of being in the pub in itself necessarily had the desired effect of raising people's enthusiasm for voluntary work or contributing to charity. The slight disappointment I'd heard about the lack of 'world-changing conversations' may have been a reaction to the fact that – as was in many ways intended – the feel of the pub, at least in the early days when I visited, was very much that of an ordinary, hip-elegant, American commercial eating and drinking space. Generally, people came and left with friends, and talked amongst themselves, and, social intoxicant alcohol notwithstanding, they did not perform 'community' in the way that they might have done if, say, they had been a work party helping to build the place or, for that matter, a congregation engaged in worship or structured discussion time. Like other new-evangelical engagements that posited potential 'Kingdom' transformations in the social world, this one trod a line which ran a risk of making it only dimly discernible as a moral and spiritual intervention.

Sacrifice

In his 1998 study of North London shopping habits, Daniel Miller argues that shopping may be understood as a kind of sacrifice, where the process begins with the 'premiss for the act of shopping', which is 'a vision of pure excess' (1998: 95), in which shopping is imagined as utter 'destructive consumption', the profligate expenditure of carefully gathered resources (1998: 95-6). This 'vision of excess' then undergoes a 'negation' (1998: 100) in the second stage in the shopping process, in which the shopper makes an offering to the equivalent of 'the divine recipient of sacrifice', which in the case of shopping, he says, is the idea of 'thrift' (1998: 101); that is, they offer up expenditure to a transcendent notion of thrift, as an agent of protection and care for the household of loved ones for whom the shopping is primarily undertaken, and which, in the third stage, is reconstituted after the transcendent interlude of the second stage, as the goods are distributed among the 'subjects of devotion' (1998: 114). Miller observes that 'sacrifice is always an act of consumption, a form of expenditure through which something or someone is consumed' (1998: 82). He notes that a typical sacrificial format will involve the

sacrificed entity being portioned out for consumption between the transcendent recipient, and the earthly contingent who carried out the sacrifice or had it done on their behalf (1998: 83). Importantly, the initiator of the sacrificial process sacrifices in order to establish connection with the transcendent, a connection which is thought to bring benefit to themselves, or to something that matters to them (e.g., a field of crops). Thus we have a rite of consumption that enfolds in its structure an offering to something beyond the mundane world, which Miller characterises as most centrally a contact or a communication with a transcendent entity. The process also helps to constitute the transcendent entity with which communication is established (1998: 75).

The CFH's transactive model, in combining an idea of the pure gift and a performance of pure consumption, in the form of luxuriant eating and drinking, is intended to be counterintuitive to the American consumer, who sees these things as properly quite distinct. But as a self-sufficient rite (as opposed to a stage in a long economic sequence of reciprocal transactions, which the broken links of the CFH model, which are what make it so compelling, disable), consuming-as-giving-to-the-transcendent coheres, and may be understood as effective action. In the pub's model, the lack of intrinsic relation between the producers of the commodities sold and the main recipients of the profits from the commodities' sale, the charities and their clients, is the reason why there is no true gift element in this transaction (although there was of course plenty of gifting involved in the creation of the project itself). The connection between the production and consumption of the food and drink, and the charities' receipt of money, is contingent on the mediating action of the Cascade Free House – without it, the two exchanges would be quite unrelated. Thus, what the customer-donor does at the pub is not gifting, it is something more ceremonial; an act that depends for its effectiveness on certain conditions being in place (the right place, the right set of actions clustered together in ordained ways by people functioning in particular defined roles). Following the rubric of sacrifice offered by Miller, I suggest it is a sacrificial offering, rather than a gift.

This is why I think it could be fruitful to regard the CFH as something like a church, in the sense of a site of sacred ritual action. Drawing on Hubert and Mauss's (1964) distinction between 'sacrifier' (person/s or thing/s for whom the sacrifice is performed) and 'sacrificer' (the agent performing the rite for them), and noting the emphasis put on the physical place of the pub itself as the site of community interaction and gifting activity, I suggest that the staff of the pub, in engaging customers in these split-level transactions, are playing a priest-like role, in which they accept the offerings of the customers, who are sacrifiers, and they send a portion of the offering up to the transcendent, which is the specified charity, which stands for generalised good. Then a

portion of the offering goes toward the costs of preparing and serving the feast that follows this contact with the transcendent. Referring to Hubert and Mauss's stadial conception of sacrifice, which he retains, Miller writes that 'sacrifice is held to transform what might otherwise have been merely acts of expenditure or consumption, and turn them into a primary means by which the transcendent is affirmed'. It does so, he says, by turning 'expenditure into a devotional ritual that constantly reaffirms some transcendent force' (Miller 1998: 78). Again drawing on Hubert and Mauss, he tells us that the sacrifier is transformed by undergoing the stages of sacrifice (1998: 76).

Hubert and Mauss state that 'sacrifice is a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it' (1964: 13). In this case, the thing consecrated, that is, sent into a transcendent realm, is money. Miller states: 'it is not the whole person which is identified with the victim, but only one aspect' (1998: 34) – thus, that part of the person which possesses wealth is ceremonially given up to a transcendental principle, before rejoining the profane in consumption. The money, sacralised by the transaction that sends it into the transcendent realm of 'charity', has the effect of rendering the food and drink bought with it also somewhat sacred – a sleight achieved by the business model's apparent contraction of donation and consumption into a single transaction. One makes contact with the transcendent by offering it money through the mediating offices of the CFH iPad till, and then that sacrificed object comes back to one, refreshed with transcendence, in the post-sacrificial feast that is apparently produced from the gifting process. To the customer/donor, the whole sequence has a pleasingly magical feel, which is played with in the tone of much of the publicity, including the teasing, non-serious-serious invitation to 'Have a drink, change the world'.

Transactional orders

Bloch and Parry (1989) have challenged the contrast, sometimes drawn by anthropologists in response to Marcel Mauss's essay on the gift (2002), between non-Western societies, in which exchange is embedded in all other kinds of social transaction; and Western societies, which have a distinct sphere of transaction called 'economics', separated out conceptually from other kinds of social transaction, and which is accompanied by a strong ideological division in which self-interested commodity exchange is seen as quite different from gifting. Referencing ethnography from diverse parts of the world, they contend that it is rather the case that all societies, Western included, have 'two related but separate transactional orders: on the one hand transactions concerned with the reproduction of the long-term social or cosmic order; on the other, a

"sphere" of short-term transactions concerned with the arena of individual competition.' (Bloch & Parry 1989: 24)

> What we consistently find…is a series of procedures by which goods which derive from the short-term cycle are converted into the long-term transactional order …And of course it is no accident that such transformations should so often be expressed in an alimentary idiom, for everywhere this is one of the most powerful of all possible metaphors for transformation (1989: 25).

I would like to suggest that the CFH's sacrificial rites do the work of transferring resources from the short-term cycle to the long-term transactional order, as for example when Indian merchants gift a proportion of their wealth to Brahmans 'as part of the long-term cycle of cosmic purification' (1989: 25). One could object that the CFH's charities are not socially reproductive institutions aimed at maintaining an ongoing social order: however, the rationalised, life-course oriented projects toward which CFH monies tend to be directed, in which gifts from the individual are conceived as making possible plans for long-term flourishing of individuals and communities (as opposed to, say, gifts that ease suffering in the moment), do appear to represent ideal cycles of long-term social reproduction. These are typically conceived along neoliberal economic and social lines, as in the pub's charities' microcredit schemes and the plethora of mentoring schemes aimed at poor young people, in which 'friendonomics'-style processes of bringing people up in the moral disciplines of neoliberal selfhood represent long-term social reproduction imagined as inaugurated in moral transformations of persons. Thus the latter half of 'have a drink, change the world'; in which 'changing' the world means intervening such that certain kinds of social reproduction might take place in it.

Bloch and Parry continue:

> While the long-term cycle is always positively associated with the central precepts of morality, the short-term order tends to be morally undetermined since it concerns individual purposes which are largely irrelevant to the long-term order. If, however, that which is obtained in the short-term individualistic cycle is converted to serve the reproduction of the long-term cycle, then it becomes morally positive – like the cash 'drunk' in Fiji or the wealth given as *dana* in Hindu India (1989: 26).

This convertive process connects 'the individual human life' with 'a symbolically constructed image of the enduring social and cosmic order within which that life is lived' (1989: 27).

A win-win sacrifice?

The hopeful faith that market economics has the potential to be self-redeeming is strong in this West-Coast US milieu. So much of the CFH model's charisma lies in the sense it projects of being *both* a glorious impossibility, and a sure destiny of market economics redeemed through utopian enterprise. The massed will and virtue of morally sovereign individuals are set a challenge in this apparent paradox, and appear to meet it. The entrepreneurial spirit seeks provocation, and it finds it in the peculiarity of this model, which invites people as volunteer/producer-donors and as customer-donors to join in to make the impossible work. Economically, the model is a bundle of broken links, but ritually and religiously, it has a fluid logic of transformative performance.

Of course, 'sacrifice' is a central theme of Christianity, in Jesus's work on the cross, and the urging to Christians to live sacrificially in turn. But the sequence of sacrifice that I suggest we see here is not the Christian one, rather it is, as per Miller's formulation, that of 'rituals…designed to ensure that goods are first used for reaffirming transcendent goals' (1998: 73), before becoming simple consumption. This is a ritual work upon 'consumerism', the bogey of this still-somewhat-ascetic subculture, to redeem it by connecting it to something conceived as its opposite.

With 'sacrifice' usually, and especially in a salvation-religion context such as Christianity, associated with someone's suffering and loss (see Mayblin 2014 for a Christian context where this sense is pervasive), what happens in the pub is notable for its claim of *no* 'sacrifice' in this sense, of wins all round. I would argue that the improbability of this win-win-win (customer-charities-enterprise) is what customers are being reminded of, precisely as it is advertised as such. Thus the branding message is intended to offer a subtle sense that this win-win-win, this absence of self-giving sacrifice, is not quite right – to give punters a sense of something being a bit off, that is, off in the world of the consumer lifestyle, a reminder of the something-missing feeling there is in the consumer formula that frames everything as gain and never as sacrifice. Such a sense may then prompt – perhaps through a 'world-changing conversation' in the pub – a drive in a person to offer a more salvation-religion-like sacrifice than the curious rite they undertake in the pub, perhaps in the form of deciding to volunteer, or 'start their own charity one day'. This, I would argue, is part of the pub business model's oblique (and implicitly self-contradicting) moral pedagogy.

Producing 'community'

In a speech celebrating the collective achievement represented by the pub, Keegan spoke of 'community formed around this basic idea that we could have a pint and change the world'. 'Community', and 'the community', are key terms here, as they are throughout these subcultures. Miller writes that 'the act of sacrifice…takes the moment at which production is transmuted into consumption and appropriates it for the purpose of sanctification and receiving the powers of transcendent objects of devotion on behalf of individuals and society' (1998: 83). In the CFH model, the moment when food and drink prepared is eaten and drunk is the moment when donation to a charity comes due and, payment made, the charity organisation as transcendent object is reached by the customer by way of the giving of money and the taking of food and drink, as brokered by the pub.

To return to Hubert and Mauss, the sacrifier here is the individual customer, who makes his offering to the particular charity of his choice, in so doing establishing the connection between his individual self and the transcendent realm, into which it is absorbed and rendered numerically, as accounted evidence of the gift economy at work. The transcendent party to this sequence, to whom the sacrifices are offered, might be said to be 'the community' – the entity which, Keegan says, the CFH exists to serve, and the only one it is answerable to (no shareholders). Miller emphasises the idea that the transcendent entity is in part *created* through sacrifice's institution of communication with it (1998: 75). This is a part of the analysis that the CFH's creators would, I think, readily recognise: their project is explicitly one of community-building, and the volunteerism and financial donations that helped to launch the project were intrinsic to its vision. Hubert and Mauss conclude their essay by observing that sacrifice 'is a social function because [it] is concerned with social matters' (1964: 102), and reflecting in a Durkheimian vein on the formation of a society's 'character' that is achieved through collective rites of various kinds. They note that the 'personal renunciation of their property by individuals or groups' in sacrifice 'nourishes social forces', in part by reminding individuals of the 'presence of collective forces', which in turn 'sustains [those forces'] ideal existence' (1964: 102).

Understanding the process as a rite of sacralisation, in Hubert and Mauss's (1964: 52) terms, it is possible to view the entire CFH sequence as a reflexive act, in which local people seek to engage with the transcendent, by way of giving to charities, which stand for 'community' – supportive, ameliorating social worlds – so as to both fortify and sacralise themselves, that is, come closer to embodying 'community'. Keegan put it thus: 'believing in some sort of greater good'.

But what of the CFH's 'missional' Christian associations? Keegan did after all describe himself to me as a 'missionary' to the Claremont neighbourhood. It might be surmised that Keegan and others hope that the thriving and multistranded community centre that their little group created in a matter of no more than three or four years in these handsome old shopfronts might lay the groundwork for the neighbourhood to build trust in their congregation sufficient to really 'tear down the walls' between church and non-church, and win new people to the faith community. But, as we have seen, the missional tendency in contemporary American evangelicalism appears happy to bide its time on the matter of making new disciples, in many cases apparently indefinitely.

Keegan was clear: in this model, unlike in the evangelistic one, there was not just one 'endgame', as he put it; this was a 'three-point endgame'. The primary endgame was to care for people, to do good. We want, he said, a world where there is 'no-one in need', we 'believe in the idea of community, [of] having a community space', of 'giving something back'. As for the Great Commission, well, he was firmly of the belief that Jesus would want love and care to be sown in the first place. And, a secondary endgame was for church people to do things, to engage with the community *for the right reasons*, he emphasised, to grow in our faith. And, yes, (in third place) to 'bear compelling witness'.

I have argued that the pub's transactions operate as sacralising rites that effect transformation in their participants, and further that the physical space of the pub is intended also as a pedagogical space, where customer-donors can be taught facts about the charities they support and, ideally, inspired to lend themselves to their operations as volunteers (conceived as a more direct engagement than through the prosthetics of financial donation). Materially, the whole place is sacralised by the display of products of gifted labour, and the images of the 'transformations' the charities achieve in their clients. What we see in a production such as the Cascade Free House might be understood as a tacit consecration of space, and a shift in this very Protestant strain of faith toward material and ritual instantiations of the sacred, as 'place', 'community', and locality are increasingly invoked as resolutions of the tensions that the new-evangelical movement confronts between its evangelistic and civil spirits, and between its market-economic proclivities and its aspiration for a socially embedded economy.

Keegan spoke to me of his aspiration to 'infiltrate the world with the Kingdom of God', the language of infiltration[14] pointing to the desire to overcome boundaries by permeative means. In the context of the 'Kingdom now, not yet' theology (Bielo 2011a), in which prefigurative moments of kingdom-ness are understood to be realised in the here and now, in part through redemptive social action, 'place', material things, and tacitly ritual action such as the pub transactions are potentially in play as Kingdom elements. The 'endgames' of new-evangelical projects of social engagement such as this one are thus complex. The concern for 'world-changing conversations', rather like the 'learning conversations' of the ABCD community development of the previous chapter, reflects enduring Protestant convictions about the importance of sincere verbal encounters (Keane 1997; Seligman *et al* 2008) to spiritual and social transformations. The sacramental tendency in new evangelicalism remains largely implicit (and some of the missional movement's keywords, notably the ubiquitous 'relationship', are capacious enough to enfold both discursive and sacramental understandings of grace), but of course it is this very implicitness that makes it potentially encompassing of the social world beyond the 'walls' of the church.

Matthew Engelke's (2012) concept of 'ambient faith', which he applies to the work of English evangelicals who try to generate 'publicity' for the Bible in the British public square, is suggestive of the kind of semiotic and material diffusion that may be at work in these Kingdom-infiltration projects. Diffusion of what? Engelke deploys 'ambient' as a kind of override of the public/private binary as it applies to 'religion': 'the production of ambient faith in a Lyfe [Bible discussion] group depends on at least two refusals: the refusal to accept the distinction between public and private when applied to religion and the refusal to be satisfied with the very idea of "religion" itself' (2012: 165). These refusals would likely be shared by my American consultants, whose brand of faith has many features and influences in common with that of Engelke's English Christians. 'Religion', 'public' and 'private' are aspects of the fragmented, dis-integrated social world the Kingdom must seed within and transform. Observing his informants' attempts to draw attention to the Christian story by, among other things, putting up hanging figurines of angels in a Swindon shopping street (the angels 'were perhaps too underdetermined as signs' (2012: 163)), Engelke offers ambient faith as a kind of sensorily diffuse putting-it-out-there, for people to notice or not as they see fit. He draws a parallel with 'ambient' music: 'what it "does" to or for the listener is supposed to be up to the listener' (2012: 166).

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[14] One example I noticed of the oblique angle they often took on their own ambitions, which often looked like irony (Bielo 2011a), was the way that new evangelicals playfully used slightly sinister language about their own projects; words like 'conspiracy', 'scheming', 'infection', 'infiltration', in combination with – usually not overtly religious – words that denoted unquestionably good and happy things, e.g., joy.

The iconography and aesthetics of the Cascade Free House – the charity photographs, the #believe chalkboard encouragements, the monogrammed founders' pint glasses, the 'volunteer' aprons, the ubiquitous wood, replete with natural features and yet all surfaces impossibly smooth – might be thought of as signs of ambient faith, intimations of transcendence that people might or might not explicitly engage (through, say, a 'world-changing conversation' that prompts in a person a decision for volunteering). But, like the boss of a member of the Word of Life congregation studied by Simon Coleman (2004: 431-2), who gave the congregant a company car some time after that congregant had, as per the church's health-and-wealth gospel convictions, spoken in faith his wish for one, the people who interact in these spaces, participating in the working, gifting and consuming practices that happen there, are enfolded into the spiritual story in a way that Engelke's Swindon shoppers are not.

Writing of the housebuilding work of Habitat for Humanity, in which the Christian organisation engages people of all faiths and none in the good work of building houses, Jerome Baggett (2001) notes how the 'rationalisation' imposed by modern society means that the 'secular' activity of housebuilding becomes – ironically perhaps – a 'locus of the sacred' (2001: 200), as goods that everyone can agree on, that are not overtly 'religious', can become suffused with spiritual meaning by virtue of that generally agreed goodness. He goes on to say, though, that 'there is a very fine line…between sacralising the secular and secularising the sacred' (2001: 200). This lesson, that the enfolding of persons, through material practices, into what some people understand as the sacred – signs of the Kingdom, in this local idiom – is not something that everyone will interpret the same way, was well taken in advance by Keegan, who, it will be recalled, called his pub a 'secular space'. 'Community', of course, is needed to provide an interpretive context for the ritual practices that are concentrated in the pub space, and 'community' is what the people running the pub and the surrounding gathering spaces of the dance hall and the children's play place are industriously nurturing.

Engelke observes how much work in commercial spaces is required of those who, like his English evangelicals, seek to exit the private sphere for some communicative purpose (2012: 165). In Keegan and his associates' entrepreneurial foray, we see an attempt at tacit ritual which takes commercial form – an interesting twist away from the evangelistic stereotype of attracting people with free food and drink, and into a situation in which one must become a customer in order to engage with a transcendent purpose. I had the sense that the payment element was part of what made the project credible in the public sphere – what kind of agenda must a group have, after all, that appears to give something for nothing? By making people into customer-donors, the CFH in a sense made a confident normative claim, set out a stall on the corner, and

witnessed authoritatively to the public about what was right, what they should do. As Keegan observed to me once, everyone speaks the language of non-profits.

The one note of eccentricity in the stylish, smoothly rustic and very woody barroom of the CFH is a whimsical mural on the back wall of St Nicholas, painted in Orthodox icon style, with one finger raised and head enhaloed. He faces the door – if it wasn't busy (which it usually was), he would see you as soon as you walked in. The saint is shown with antlers on his head, and a backdrop of Pacific Northwest pines. A typewritten caption in loosely poetic style lists the very diverse categories of people he is patron saint of:

> Patron of shoeshiners/paupers/and pawnbrokers/of judges/prisoners and penitents/murderers/of sailors/and scholars/pilgrims/and perfumers/patron of barrel makers/and patron of brewers/the patron of maidens/brides and spinsters/saint Nicholas/was a hipster

Or, in briefer words: All are welcome.

Chapter five

'The right relationship of resources to people'[15]: Social enterprise and localising economy

'Values-based enterprise is a radical assumption that in a world of abundance there exists all the necessary resources for the world to flourish' – Greg

'So... are you a non-profit or a business? The answer to this is simply YES...' – Cycle of Life fundraising literature

About six months before the Cascade Free House opened, a small meeting was held in the pub's unfinished bar area. The Quimby chapter of the Neighborhood Circle, the Christian localist networking organisation mentioned in earlier chapters, had come to visit the pub and its Claremont neighbourhood and, in the words of the social media invitation sent out by Helen, the rep, to hear Keegan 'share some stories about his particular place'. Although Keegan knew Helen's fiancé through the Foursquare denomination that he belonged to and Helen's fiancé used to belong to, and indeed the couple were to hold their wedding in the Claremont Dance Hall the following year, Keegan and his church were not closely connected in with the city's localist Christian world. The meeting was, like many such events, notionally informal (it was social, people drank, and enthused about, beers), yet it followed a fairly programmatic format of elicitation, in which people asked questions of Keegan intended, I felt, to hold the project to account somewhat, as well as to engender a diffuse and subtle sense of revivalist hope through the 'sharing' of neighbourhood 'stories'.

One of the things the group wanted to know about was the pub and church community's life in the commercial ecology of the neighbourhood. It was important that a church community 'put resources in' to a neighbourhood, Helen said. She noted with approval that here, the children's swap 'n' play and the regular kids' concerts in the dance hall brought footfall to the coffee house a few doors down. She asked Keegan to talk the group through how he interacted with the other businesses in the immediate area – for instance, what were their plans for large events? What kind of kitchen did the pub have, did they have an approved list of caterers for large events, or would they do their own catering? Keegan assured them that they only catered themselves up to fifty persons; after that, they'd make it a 'rule' to 'push it out' to other local businesses. He

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[15] Gandhi, quoted by Greg to describe what an economy should look like.

mentioned a pizza place across the road, saying that they encourage people to go there for food – 'partly because their stuff there is really good'. Someone asked about the relationship the pub had with the brewpub a few doors down – Keegan reassured, oh, yes, that relationship is fine, the owner was initially a bit wary to have a rival pop up so close by, but now the relationship is good. After a while in which the conversation continued in this gently inquisitorial vein, he reassured the group: 'we really do try to be neighbourly', to do 'Kingdom things here', and emphasised the humble size of the pub's kitchen and, I felt, the project as a whole.

At the end, Nate remarked to me that what was under discussion tonight was the 'politics of abundance'. 'Abundance' is a biblically derived term, familiar in evangelical circles in part from the verse in the Gospel of John where Jesus says 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly' (John 10: 10, NASV). Embedded in the word 'abundance' as it is used here is both the idea of material (and other kinds of) plenty, and its fair distribution among people.

One of the more persistent questioners that night was Greg, a large and striking man with flourishing mutton chops, who dressed distinctively in a 'utilikilt' (a kilt with pockets to store tools in – a Pacific Northwestern startup invention) and a range of felt green waistcoats. He projected exuberant confidence, sometimes edged with challenge. Greg was in his early forties, a successful social entrepreneur who ran a café, a couple of food carts, and a vocational training non-profit in the East Quimby neighbourhood, a mile or so down the road from Claremont, which he had called home since moving to the centre city from a fairly affluent suburb in 2009. Greg – whose vocabulary reflected his enthusiasm for the community-development philosophies to which he was an eager convert – liked to talk about working 'from an abundance model', meaning, he said, recognising that everyone in a community had something to offer. He would frame 'abundance' in egalitarian terms: 'you can't have abundance with somebody having more abundance [than others]'.

When Keegan remarked that all the businesses in the immediate area had benefited from increased economic activity there, brought by the pub, Greg remarked, somewhat bullishly, that he and his wife had gone for a pizza at the restaurant opposite – which Keegan had mentioned as one of the places he recommends to people – and had gone 'straight back out again', because the prices were too high. His implication was clear: the rising tide that was lifting commercial boats in Claremont did not, Greg reckoned, favour everyone.

Greg's thing was, primarily, 'capacity building'. What he advocated for, he said, was both 'transferring capacity' to local communities, and making use of the 'capacity' that already exists

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in those communities, for their overall 'flourishing'. Thus, in his businesses, he focused on vocational training and hiring locally.

Moralising enterprise: holism and governmentality in the exemplary small business

Leaving the Cascade Free House, and its particular performative and devotional work of community-building through ritual and moral pedagogy, in which the consumer economy is both imbricated and thought to be redeemed, this chapter turns to another facet of the local new-evangelical moral enterprise culture: the merchant end of the process, and the claims made by moral entrepreneurs for the possibilities of radical social and moral reform through small-scale, local enterprise. As with other dimensions of this movement's philosophies, new-evangelical entrepreneurialism operates on the conviction that resizing the social and economic world to a scale on which interpersonal relationships can be the primary binding agent is the great moral necessity of the age.

As we saw in the conversations above, localist entrepreneurs in this movement promote a vision of commercial enterprise enfolded within a kind of civic oversight, employed by businesses themselves. What the 'politics of abundance' looks like here is businesses bringing in-house a civic, and indeed somewhat governmental, imagination, as part of the broader localist project of social reconstitution from a ground of ethics.

The chapter will focus on a small constellation of socially-conscious enterprise projects undertaken by Greg and by Nate, both present at the meeting that night: a café, a vocational-training scheme, and a grocery-delivery business. It will draw on anthropological literatures on corporate social responsibility (CSR), development, ethical trade, some US social history, and some recent discussions of intersections of religion and economy, to argue that what we see in these American Christian localists' microenterprises is a petit bourgeois moral economy (Johnston 2003) in a long American tradition, which, indigenously capitalist, draws on a heritage of anti-trust Populism and Progressivism (Hofstadter 1962; Johnston 2003) and welfare capitalism (Lambert 2009) to propose small-scale socioeconomic arrangements in defiance of the scalar stretch of a global industrial and post-industrial economy.

I will argue that the language of 'neoliberalism', so regnant in the scholarship on corporate development initiatives in the Global South, is only partially applicable in this Western US context, where the petit bourgeois moral economy imagined by these entrepreneurs, although it has obvious kin ties and formal similarities to 'neoliberal' capitalist thought, has spent its at least century-long life in very different (and resolutely domestic) real-world

contexts, such that it appears – including, crucially, to its propagators described here – as quite different from, indeed morally opposed to, the power-ridden world of World Bank 'empowerment' interventions and the rest. Nevertheless, as with capitalist logics, with their troubling temporal implications, being enfolded into temporally utopian projects of community-building described in Chapter three, the high ethical ambitions of enterprise localists make them magpies in the traditions they ambivalently inhabit, or are related to. Thus, we see in enterprise localism a bringing together of some of the governmental instruments of CSR, in service of a small-town pastoral vision that imagines something like a socially embedded gift economy arising from the operations of freely undertaken small-scale market enterprise.

A conversion to socially responsible enterprise

When I met him in 2012, Greg's conversion to social enterprise was quite recent – until 2009 he had been a successful realtor, making deals and taking home, he said, half a million dollars annually throughout the mid 2000s, just as the US housing market began to bubble and boil over. He had come to his current passions of environmentalism, localism, and leftish politics over the course of the past decade; part of a wholesale shift in his orientation to life, which included the move into town and away from the suburbs. Previously, his worldview had, he said, been dominated by materialism, a lust for the sale, and a jingoistic political outlook (he liked to tell people how he had 'let off fireworks' when George W. Bush was re-elected).

Now, he was a firm localist, committed to 'integrating' the corners of his life in the one geographical area; attending a church less than a mile from his house, he and his wife cohousing in a much smaller home than the large one they had sold in the suburbs, and his businesses inflected with community-development ideas of local social uplift and moral pedagogy. Greg's wholesale life change was very much in the vein of the 'deconversion' narratives that Bielo has noted told by people in this reformist turn, as part of their posture of 'cultural critique' of the American evangelical mainstream (Bielo 2011a; 2009).

What Greg stood for now, and what he was eager to proselytise about, was what he called 'values-based enterprise'; enterprise in which, he would say, profitability is merely 'the fuel' for making sure a business is 'sustainable', and achieves its goal of 'transferring capacity' to the individuals or communities for whose benefit it exists. When I asked him once whether what he was doing was social enterprise, he quickly corrected me – no, social enterprise is too capitalistic. Social enterprises, he said, have a 'triple bottom line': profit, sustainability and the

achievement of some kind of social good. But their aim, he said, was to make a profit. Whereas with his own vocational-training enterprise, for instance, the 'end goal' is not profitability, but 'capacity transfer'.

In his study of the relationship between spirituality and business in the United States, Lake Lambert (2009) defines social entrepreneurs as those 'who seek to harness the power of capitalism and profit making for solving social and environmental problems' (2009: 164-5). He notes the conversion-narrative quality of much of the social-responsibility-in-business discourse: 'the biographical and autobiographical books on environmental and social responsibility are nothing less than conversion narratives or testimonies that explain how the business leader came to see the light…and like all other testimonies… their purpose is to edify and call others to repentance and conversion. The kingdom, they believe, is coming, but it is a new way of doing business that will save the world' (2009: 167).

As befits the movement's doctrine of the small scale and the humble, Greg and others like him in the Quimby localist socially-responsible enterprise world tended to avoid speaking in terms of 'world' salvation; nevertheless, Greg's ambitions, for a social world of common 'flourishing' and 'abundance' enabled by increased 'capacity', of local persons and places, were implicitly redemptive. As seen in his comment about the pizza restaurant, Greg had an ideal vision of the local business ecology as one of rough equality of condition, in which wealth gaps were small, and consumer and producer alike benefited from business models that were both economically energetic and self-limiting; that kept before them a vision of common good that both drove and set limits on their productive ambitions. In the 'values-based'-enterprise imagination, there is no luxury-goods segment.

Greg's preoccupation was with holism of business purpose and organisation, and so one of the reservations he had about the Cascade Free House's business model was the fact that it billed itself so prominently as a non-profit. We bumped into each other a few months after the meeting in the pub, at a racial-awareness and reconciliation event one evening (Greg had met the organiser, an African American former teacher, when she'd become a regular at his coffee shop). Greg and I talked a little about the pub meeting, and the pub's non-profit model. While acknowledging the success of the pub, and its good intentions, Greg's view was that for-profit businesses that 'transferred capacity' into a local community, through training local young people, for instance, paying local people a living wage, or hosting and supporting community events, had an empowering effect that, he implied, offered perhaps a greater gain to a local community than funnelling money to charitable organisations, as the pub did.

His argument was that business and doing good ought to be integrated; that the situation where some organisations made money, but did human and environmental damage as they did so, while other organisations picked up the pieces through charitable work, made no sense. He gave the example of a non-profit doing poverty relief in West Papua, while its employees have retirement-fund investments in extractive-industry corporations, which are wreaking environmental havoc in West Papua. What was needed was a view of the 'greater ecosystem of what is taking place', and to bring things back together by, in his words, 'using non-exploitative market systems to bring about capacity transfer'.

'Values-based' enterprise: the Fir Creek Coffee House and urban farm

Greg's own businesses reflected his integrative ethos that ordained that business should enfold both profit-seeking and seeking the good (with the latter taking precedence), and that it should do it on a small scale. When he and his wife moved from the suburbs to the neighbourhood of Fir Creek, Greg had gone about realigning his working life in accordance with his new principles. He bought a retail space on a well-placed corner near the busy intersection of two artery roads, an entrance to the freeway, and the light-rail stop that leads into the centre of town. The neighbourhood was situated in the middle of the inner East Quimby area that had a recent past of being low-income, but was gaining in property value. He opened a coffee shop in the space, which he named the Fir Creek Coffee House, partly, he told me, as a way of helping to shape the small neighbourhood's sense of its own identity.

The coffee shop, which is run, for profit, by paid staff, is described on its website as a 'mission-based coffee and community space'. The shop's website expands on the idea of 'mission' thus: 'As a mission-based business, profitability and social responsibility are weighed out in every decision'. Greg estimates that through community events, sponsorships, etc., it gives 'a little over a thousand a month' into the local community. It bills itself as a neighbourhood space, emphasising that it is a place that people can walk or bike, as opposed to drive, to reach (though as observed above, it is on the intersection of major roads, and close to the freeway). The shop frames itself as meeting a social need – in the words of the website, the 'neighbourhood is under-resourced with walkable spaces to gather'. Greg also credits the shop with helping other businesses to open in the area, clustering on the corner with it where, he said, 'we positioned ourselves very intentionally'. As evidenced in the meeting at the pub, part of the localist ethos is to nurture an area's business ecology.

The shop hosts a variety of local events, from craft fairs to board-game nights, offering a lower rate for locals. On Thanksgiving, Greg and his wife host a neighbourhood potluck for anyone who wants to come. Greg very much sees the coffee shop as an entity that does social good in all its aspects. He told me that the business has a flat pay scale: 'because I live off less money, my employees can make a little more, they can do things like go get additional education, that we pay for, and I can put…additional money back into community events'. At the time of my fieldwork, Greg also owned a pizza cart downtown and a kiosk selling crepes and smoothies on the other side of the street from the café. In the months that I knew him, Greg was also getting into the community-supported agriculture (CSA) game too, by developing an empty lot around the corner from the coffee shop into an 'urban farm' (more like a large allotment) where organic vegetables would be grown and sold. The idea was that customers would pay a subscription and come and collect their produce share regularly, with the face-to-face contact of collecting the share an intrinsic part of the project.

Form:ation: vocational training

One of the functions of the 'farm' was to, along with the two food carts, be an 'enterprise training lab' for the 'interns' of the other arm of Greg's cluster of businesses, a non-profit called 'Form:ation'. That Form:ation was a non-profit seemingly went against Greg's own repeated point that he was 'not a fan' of segregating the making of money away from doing good in the world, however, he indicated that the distinction was a legal necessity, because the state's employment law would not allow long-term unpaid labour in a for-profit organisation.

Form:ation offers vocational training in business to young people from disadvantaged, predominantly non-white, backgrounds – 'barriered communities', in the organisation's language – in the local area. Form:ation's interns, who are referred to the organisation by nonprofits and social-service agencies, work in the food carts and on the farm to learn the skills of working in and operating such businesses ('service', 'leadership', and 'management', according to the organisation's literature). The training is outlined in language drawn from the asset-based-community-development lexicon, notably that of 'head, hand and heart'; signalling the whole-person aims of the training model. As Greg explained it to me, Form:ation offers a curriculum of vocational study aimed at 'building' the 'capacity' of its interns, much of which is conceived in psychological terms. It includes a 'survey' which interns take to, in the words of its author, 'figure out where they're at vocationally'. Interns undergo 'vocational discernment', in which they reflect on their lives with a mentor provided by the programme, discuss and set personal

goals, as well as meeting and interviewing people working in the fields they think they might be interested in entering.

Greg explained to me plans he had for Form:ation to create reproducible business plans for interns who had graduated through all the stages of the curriculum to use to set up in their own small businesses, with support and loans from the organisation. He envisaged a person identifying a 'support group' of around five people in the local neighbourhood who would advise them through the preliminary stages of business creation. Here, and indeed throughout the Form:ation concept, ideas of personal vocation, a morally supportive and quasi-therapeutic community context, and the economic needs of a tightly geographically defined local area, are deliberately mingled – in Greg's words: 'It's community-based exploration of enterprise and opportunities that are specific to the geographical area'.

As a new startup and the product of a fertile entrepreneurial mind, Form:ation has gone through various iterations in its time, from this experiment in microcredit to business consultancy. At one point, there was a new-monastic-like element in the programme, in which interns could explore the idea of developing an 'integrated life', in which 'life', 'work', and 'values' were undertaken together in tandem with others, in a programme aimed at 'developing leadership within a geographical context'. From supporting people to set up as independent drain-cleaning contractors (the example Greg gave me), to training people to form new-monastic communities, to having young people learn horticulture, customer service and stocktaking, while going through personality-test techniques to determine their 'vocation', Form:ation took a scopic view of what it was to be a 'values-based' enterprise, with moral pedagogy and the formation of the neoliberal self at the forefront of its capitalistic and communitarian vision.

'Ending food deserts, one bike ride at a time': Cycle of Life

Back in South Otago, LW, who were friends with Greg and his wife – at the tail end of his realtor days, Greg had in fact found the group their first two houses in the neighbourhood – had been hoping for some years to set up some kind of small-scale local grocery outlet. Ecologically and social-justice-minded, people spoke the public-policy language of 'food deserts' in relation to their neighbourhood: although there were several supermarkets within a five-minute drive of where LW members lived, and buses plied the main road toward them in both directions, South Otago did, technically, qualify as a food desert, as the term is generally taken to denote, in the urban context, a low-income residential area where there is no supermarket or large grocery store within a mile (see also Markowitz 2008). The lack of a grocery store close by was framed as an issue of 'equity'

and social justice, as, as was often pointed out to me, low-income neighbours without cars would have quite a time travelling to and from the store. Over the years, LW members in collaboration with likeminded neighbours had tried to acquire a small plot of land locally to vend or barter local produce from, but nothing had ever quite worked out.

It was in this context that Nate's Cycle of Life produce-delivery service came into being in the spring of 2014. He promoted the business through word-of-mouth and messages to neighbours through Al's email list, writing: 'I'm not asking for your donations here. *I am asking for your business.*' The idea was that Nate would bike around Otago with a trailerful of fresh organic fruit and vegetables to deliver to neighbours each week, promising to match or undercut the prices of the nearest major grocery outlet – a weekly subscription to the service is $20. Explaining the concept to neighbours, Nate emphasised that the neighbourhood was a food desert, and as such it needed a source of 'real food'. Referring to the corner stores that did exist in the neighbourhood, he quipped 'one cannot live on Corn Nuts and Pepsi alone'. Launching his appeal in terms of affordability, necessity (the produce he would be selling consisted of kitchen 'staples'), and an invitation to share in the lively excitement of business risk – for initial viability, he needed twenty-five households to sign up for six months, or, as he put it, to take a 'neighbourly dare' to do so – Nate also implied social and environmental amelioration, by pitching the business as a social enterprise, and compressing the themes of responsible travel and food justice in the playful-utopian tagline 'ending the Otago food desert, one bike ride at a time'.

A couple of months before Cycle of Life launched, I'd been talking with Nate about jobs. Although cohousing in Otago in the early 2010s still represented a thrifty way to live, Nate, whose wife earned a modest living as a social worker, was in need of paid work. He had applied for two jobs recently, one an administrative role in a missions organisation, and one in the kitchens at Fresh n Local, a local-food-specialising grocery chain, well-beloved of locavores such as himself. Nate was scholarly – he had a doctorate in ministry, which he had written on the damaging effects of 'automobility' on the moral life of the American church, and the hope for it that resided in the prospect of peak oil – as well as being techy and artistic, but he was chronically underemployed from a financial point of view.

A board member of Neighborhood Circle, he wrote and occasionally spoke on localist and communitarian themes for progressive Christian outlets and organisations, designed websites for friends and associates, did mapping and project managing for local projects such as the neighbourhood project discussed in Chapter three, and did administrative and liturgical-planning work for LW – he was one of the community's most enthusiastic innovators of liturgies, and he

was also its main keeper of its cloud-based trove of documents, from a shared calendar to accounts and membership records. Among Nate's skills were those of marketing and administration – however, like others in this subculture, he applied professional-life skills and habits of mind to entities and projects that were not paid jobs.

This was partly intentional. In response to my inquiries about whether he would want to, say, try to pursue an academic teaching career following his doctorate, he would demur, saying that his 'dream' was to 'work with food part-time in the neighbourhood, to pay the bills, and participate in the neighbourhood', and write the rest of the time. Nate was one of the LW members for whom the localisation of life, work included, was an absolutely paramount value. On one occasion, I had witnessed some disagreement between Nate and other LW members, in a gathered-worship discussion of 'vocation', in which he had urged the importance of trying if at all possible to have one's work life centre on the neighbourhood. Some other members had pushed back a little, arguing that strict localism risked failing to recognise the value of work done outside the local – for example working in a community college on the other side of town, as one person did (most LW members did not work locally). But for everyone in the church, I think, 'vocation' – the subject under discussion in the gathered-worship session – meant something broader than paid work alone.

Greg, ever-fizzing with business ideas, had been the original driving force behind Cycle of Life – for years, he and Nate had been talking about the possibility for a grocery stand or something similar in Otago, and Greg had contacts in grocery distribution through his own recent urban-farm venture. One of the things he had wanted to do was to pilot bike-'powered' distribution, as a way of getting community-supported agriculture products out on the market, in a way that was non-polluting, and might potentially itself offer a vocational-training opportunity to local people. In late 2013, he had approached the underemployed Nate with an idea for a small business selling vegetables door-to-door to his neighbours by bike. Nate was enthusiastic:

> Every time I see him, he pitches an idea…he's constantly churning out ideas for neighbourhood businesses that actively participate in a healthful web of life for the neighbourhood – you know, his whole thing.

I did. Nate relayed Greg's pitch to me in enthusiastic tones, mentioning the figures Greg had suggested he could make, on only two days' work a week. Soon after we spoke, Cycle of Life started to become a reality, initially with Nate as the only 'veggie pedaller' (as the whimsical branding had it), but with a plan that enfolded a vocational element partly overseen by Form:ation, of which more below.

Cycle of Life is a for-profit business, but one that sees social enterprise as core to its identity. In its marketing materials, it is billed as a win-win-win project as regards value, health and convenience for the customer; just remuneration for the 'pedallers'; environmental responsibility (the produce is organic, bike transportation is lower-carbon than customers driving to the store); and support to the local community, through buying food grown in 'Cascadia'[16] and keeping the money spent in the local community. The affordability to the consumer was made possible by the large size of the farming cooperative that was the main supplier, which meant their wholesale price was lower than a small-scale producer's would be.

'Ending food deserts one bicycle ride at a time' is the consumer end of the business's social-justice mission. As with other social enterprises I came across, Cycle of Life's marketing language addressed the consumer in terms that framed social ameliorations, such as benefits to the environment and to disadvantaged people, in terms as if these were a consumer boon, equivalent to affordability or quality of product. On affordability, Cycle of Life addressed prospective customers simultaneously as consumers seeking 'value' for themselves, and as consumers seeking to buy into a product that represented 'justice' in the form of prices low-income people could afford. A year or so after opening, the project applied to start accepting food stamps, which they hoped would make up thirty per cent of their customers, and initiated plans to deliver free food to low-income customers through the state food bank.

At the producer end, the idea is that the business will eventually franchise out across other low-income neighbourhoods in the city, as a vocational opportunity for people from 'barriered backgrounds'. The Cycle of Life website invites people to 'license a route'; with the words 'express your vocation in your neighbourhood'. These franchised routes are conceived as a kind of enterprise apprenticeship for local people. Among the social goods the business could do, Nate argued, was to create living-wage jobs for people who have not traditionally had access to the resources needed to start a business; in the words of the promotional materials, 'eventually providing the dignity of business ownership to neighbours'. Cycle of Life's 'veggie pedallers', it says, will receive an 'honourable income'. Thus the project is conceived as one that offers opportunities to low-income people at both the producer and consumer ends of its process.

A year into its life, Cycle of Life did a crowdfunding drive to enable a 'hub' to be set up for the business to replicate as a vocational-training social enterprise in other parts of the city. The online fundraising page listed the positive impacts of setting up a 'hub' for a franchised Cycle of Life – on the environment (fewer trips to the grocery store for customers); on community

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[16] A name given to the Pacific Northwestern region, normally including Washington and Oregon states in the US, and British Columbia in Canada.

health, as, one of its fundraising campaigns claimed, it 'significantly increases the likelihood of the community eating more fresh produce resulting in better health outcomes' (one blogger credited Nate with 'changing eating and snacking habits' in the neighbourhood, 'one by one'); and on society; as the work pays significantly above the minimum wage, and an 'equity mandate' means that three out of five new routes would be manned by people of colour. 'Economic impact' was also listed, with the argument that more than half of the business's revenue would go back into the served communities (this is echoed in the business's own website, which argues that Nate's own personal expenditures would benefit the local community, by keeping money local). Exhibiting the full-spectrum localism of this movement, the website also mentioned as a 'bonus' that the business keeps its founder pedaller, Nate, in the neighbourhood, 'where I've been since 2008'.

The fundraising page asked itself the question 'So…are you a non-profit or a business?' and answered it thus: 'The answer to this is simply YES... We are a non-profit that recognizes that oftentimes market systems are where change needs to happen. Form:ation, the parent organisation, is devoted to using market systems to give opportunity to communities otherwise excluded.' In the business's promotional materials, the ideas of neighbourhood and vocation are mingled together, with Nate, promoting the idea of franchised new routes, painting a picture of vocational self-realisation coming through 'becoming more connected in your neighbourhood – becoming a known character in civics, festivities, and other expressions of local life'. 'Your income becomes a byproduct of your place in a local fabric of care.'

An enthusiastic blogger posted the following about the business, citing Nate's words:

> The market, [Nate] says, serves humanity, and not the other way around. Nate is developing a business that works for everyone – business owner, employee, customer, and community. The simple act of delivering produce by bike is a market of shared abundance in action. He is providing value to his community, but also receiving value of community and connectedness in return. He is making friends with his customers, and their lives are more integrated.

While Nate gains 'connection' from the work, his customers gain 'integrat[ion]'. This is a matter of relationships, exchange and resources; of a moral economy imagined in resistance to an industrial economy that divides 'economy' out from other kinds of transaction, and to an accompanying division of labour that renders consumers far from the origins of the goods consumed.

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Shortly before Cycle of Life got up and running in 2014, I asked Nate whether he saw the service in 'missional' terms. I scarequoted the word, as I knew that, as an example of Christianese (albeit new-generation Christianese), he would cringe at it, which he did, vocally, before saying 'yeah'. I asked him if he would be doing something like Cycle of Life if he wasn't a person of faith. He said it wasn't possible to extract faith, a permeative thing, out of everything else like that. He reflected on the question:

> Yeah…I can sort of sanitise it with secularism, and just say, 'Oh, well, for a variety of reasons, whatever your bigger narrative and ethical framework is, most ethical traditions believe that a chief goal of humanity is human flourishing', and I suppose if I weren't doing the Jesus thing I would still be – I *hope* I would be – whatever ethical framework would be moving me in those directions....

Softly he added, with humour in his voice: 'I'd probably be trying to figure out how to make more money if I weren't doing the Jesus thing.'

As with the other social enterprises mentioned in this chapter, nothing in the Cycle of Life communications is explicitly Christian. There was a whisper of Jesus talk, though, in an interview Nate did with a bicycling website, where he was quoted as saying of the project: 'It's reconnecting people to the land in some small way...The whole vision of the good life according to Jesus is that it's shared. … St Ignatius said the glory of humanity is to be fully alive, and I really like that. Enabling others to be fully alive is part of that.'

Creating social totalities through food

For many people in Quimby, being 'fully alive' did importantly involve having some kind of affective and epistemological connection with the source of one's food. Fresh, local food was an enormously resonant symbol in much of Quimby's culture, connoting both healthy and virtuous living. There was an influential subculture of food localism that celebrated the taste and health qualities of locally, and non-commercially, grown food, and urged it morally, as a route to community connection. Trying as far as possible to have a human connection to the people who produced one's food was, in line with the drive toward 'integration' and 'relationship', a moral hope of many in this subculture, and was even the subject of supermarket branding/hectoring, as in the banners along the walls of a popular local grocery chain, which read 'Know your farmer!'

This is, of course, not a trend unique to Quimby: Lisa Markowitz (2008) outlines the emergence, 'over the past three decades', of a constellation of initiatives such as food coops and CSAs, to offer an alternative to food produced by large-scale commercial agriculture, with an increasing focus on local food production over that time (2008: 196). She describes an emergent idea of local food as 'a kind of vehicle through which community connections may be built and bolstered, and social relations which transcend the marketplace may be created and recovered' (2008: 197).

Observing 'farm to fork' and local-food movements in the Piedmont area of North Carolina, Brad Weiss (2012) has noted a drive within local food movements to 'reconfigure a dynamic totality' that is 'at once cultural and natural, social and zoological' with an emphasis on the 'dense and multiple connections' connecting both parts of animals (which are usually set apart in industrial food processes), and parts of the local food economy (2012: 623). Weiss notes the strong appeal of the idea of 'totalities' that these ideas draw on, in which food comes to stand for 'unification and integration in and across a range of different domains: spatial, social, ecological, and culinary' (2012: 614). Local food movement, he notes, tend to 'embrac[e] integration as an esteemed dimension of sociality and action', putting a strong discursive emphasis on 'connections' among the actors and elements that went into production. He sees this in the wider context of the 'privileging of linkage and interconnection' that he says 'is vital to contemporary ethics' (2012: 615).

Locavores, he says, 'aspire to assemble' certain kinds of 'complex wholes', but these are not the wholes of, say, international industrial agriculture protocols. This is a particular kind of directed 'holism', that certifies as 'authentic' – a key validating term – only some kinds of 'connection' among people, agricultural products and resources, for example those that involve face-to-face encounters between customers and farmers (2012: 615). I would add that, in this, we may glimpse localism's ambitions for social formation; tracing through food the outlines of the social map they seek to create. As Weiss notes, food works well as a semiotic condenser of such hoped-for and actual relationships: he remarks how, in local food movements, 'the authenticity of' 'the socioeconomic relationships formed between farmers and customers' 'is authenticated by the qualities of [the food product]' itself (2012: 617).

Greg framed his 'urban farm' project with keen awareness of the semiotic resonances of fresh vegetables in this subculture. When he and I discussed the farm when it was still just a plot of unsown black soil, Greg quoted Marshall McLuhan (1994 [1964]) at me: do you know the 'marketing statement', he asked, 'the medium is the message'? Well, we're using that space, the farm, as both medium and message, as our 'billboard'. It's a 'high-visibility spot', he remarked, whose resonances we can 'catalyse' to bring in 'revenue streams and opportunities'. Some of

the CSA produce would be grown there, but because of the plot's small size, most would come from elsewhere, in a close regional radius. But the 'medium' of the farm itself, on whose ground Form:ation's interns would do their work experience, would communicate the project's orienting message, which, in Greg's words, was: 'localising economy, localising economy, localising economy'.

Greg articulated the aesthetic and signalling qualities of locally grown produce:

> Farming is something that's very visually beautiful; you see something go from seed to consumption, it's significant…it's a significant endeavour…that's the other reason I like farming, is because of the visual metaphor.

He noted how much people enjoyed that visual metaphor, and that, as a 'pragmatist', he wasn't above making use of that sentiment as a way of sharing his 'message' of localising the economy, and building 'capacity' in locals such as the interns. The role of the farm was communicative and pedagogical; indexing community labour for the 'common good', through the seeding and tending work parties that were to take place there, and the performance of 'abundance' and 'flourishing' by the vegetables thereby produced. Greg framed the semiotics of the farm as both canny marketing, and moral pedagogy; indeed I think he saw no real distinction between the two. This kind of seamlessness of intent is key to 'values-based enterprise'.

Conceptual influences from the world of corporate development initiatives

As noted at the outset, we can see in both Greg's and Nate's businesses' claims for wraparound goods of commercial, moral, social, and nutritive betterment the influence of discourses and practices of corporate social responsibility, and other development-commerce hybrids. Among these is what is known as 'bottom-of-the-pyramid' (BOP) (Prahalad 2006) commerce, a development-focused commercial intervention in which both corporate profits and poverty reduction are thought to be attainable through companies selling various kinds of life-and-livelihood-improving products to the poor, and using the poor themselves as the entrepreneurial units of the products' delivery into their own communities. As we saw, Cycle for Life framed itself as an 'equity' intervention at both consumer and retailer ends, with the consumer part being about supplying a source of nutrition at affordable prices to people who, in a 'food desert', might not otherwise have access to it, and the retailer end involving franchising routes to people from 'barriered' communities as a way of enabling them to construct themselves as independent businesspeople.

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Writing on the operations of Avon cosmetics that pursue this model in South Africa, Dolan and Johnstone-Louis (2011) have said that 'the poor' become 'instruments of ethical capitalism' through Avon's BOP business model, in which individuals are enfolded as entrepreneurs; their work imagined as a route to 'self-actualization and social transformation' (2011: 22). Cross and Street (2009), using the example of Lifebuoy soap in India, have looked at the product end of the BOP equation. These authors write of 'the hidden work and power relations involved in establishing an everyday commodity – like soap – as a "social good" that is capable of simultaneously combating disease, tackling poverty and realizing value for shareholders'. They note the innovation in CSR represented by Prahalad's vision that 'makes no distinction between ethical practice and the self-interested pursuit of profit' (2009: 5).

Cycle of Life's presentation of its delivery service as a solution to a social deficit, and the amelioration of both physical health and moral formation (through helping people live more 'integrated' lives) could be viewed in this light, with locally grown, organic vegetables taking the role of socially and physically redemptive products, strengthening consumers, distributors, and their shared community as they are retailed. I would add, too, that in this first-world context, the model also enfolds the commercial value of selling the idea of it as an ethical enterprise; as seen in the marketing materials that present the produce's affordability in dual terms, as good for one's own pocketbook, and as a sign of the business's equity focus, making participation in it a kind of virtuous consumption.

There are obvious and important differences. A young man's small-scale grocery delivery business in his low-to-middling-income home neighbourhood of a medium-sized United States city is importantly unlike the nationwide PR campaign of a multinational corporation trying to break a new market among the poorest communities of a vast developing-world country. This is just a guy trying to start a small business, and signing up his neighbours. But what is significant is that he does so using terms and ideas drawn from these CSR and development discourses, which, notwithstanding Nate's own avowed anti-capitalism, frame the market in potentially socially salvific terms, and market gains as potentially at least coproductive of social, nutritional and moral gains for all, regardless of social positionality, or indeed of a person's position in the transactions involved.

One important difference between micro-interventions in the American neighbourhood, such as Cycle for Life, and the developing-world BOP schemes of large businesses, is the role of the

neighbourhood business in the entrepreneur's own ethical self-formation. One of the reasons the market plays such a central role in new-evangelical social engagements, notwithstanding the subculture's sometimes vehement anti-capitalism, is the whole-life philosophy of these movements: people need to earn a living, at the same time, they seek to bring all aspects of their lives into moral alignment, and so one of the most realised forms of this integration is understood to be making the way you earn a living itself a kind of moral servicing of the social landscape around you. As evidenced in its anti-corporate stances, this movement is not unaware of the moral problems presented by large-scale markets; bringing markets and common 'flourishing' into alignment through localism thus represents a commendable – and practical, at a personal level – vocation. In another era, these Christians might have preached the gospel and done service work with the poor. They still do the latter, and sometimes the former, but the former has, as we have seen, come to be seen as socially problematic. I would argue that projects such as Cycle of Life are one element of a process of new evangelicals working out new ways of being inworldly. Development discourse, and the language of enterprise (especially as it is spoken locally, in a Western US context of – in spite of critique – faith and indeed joy in the spirit of enterprise) offers a language of salvation through practical human action which offers alternative possibilities for doing 'Kingdom work', conceived as socially useful and potentially morally transformative of all concerned.

CSR reimagined in the free-market heartland: the 'neoliberal' person as vehicle for social connection

The emergence of the benefit corporation, written into state law in 2014, is evidence of the growing influence of norms of corporate social responsibility, or CSR, on the business culture in which the entrepreneurs I knew operated. Some of the trend toward doing-good capitalism is explicitly spiritually inflected. Lambert (2009) has noted a trend toward 'a new vision of commerce grounded in compassion and enlightened self-interest', which he says is, at its heart, a 'spiritual phenomenon'. Part of this is the crossfertilisation of practices marked 'spiritual' and those marked 'commercial': 'no longer would God and Mammon be separate' (2009: 1), the new trends seem to declare. Lambert also claims to see 'a values shift whereby managers may consider that profits are not the primary focus of business but are instead a means to measure the quality of relationships built between customers, workers, communities and the environment' (2009: 39). This use of the language of measurement is interesting, implying as it does some kind of moral overseer.

Dinah Rajak (2008), who has written on the South African CSR projects of mining giant Anglo American, offers the following summary of CSR thought: 'contemporary CSR claims the confluence of economic and ethical values packaged together as a new or even "compassionate capitalism"', and that 'the apparent convergence of doing business and doing good unsettles the discursive separation of "the market" and morality', presenting instead 'a powerful paradigm of "empowerment" through enterprise, which asserts…that "the market" itself offers a panacea to poverty' (2008: 300). Katy Gardner (2012) precedes her discussion of CSR with the anthropological note that, of course, '*all* economic practices are embedded in particular moral orders', and goes on to say that what is distinctive in the current era is how 'CSR makes [morality] explicit and attempts to turn it into (economic) value' (2012: 27).

We can see this in Greg and Nate's enterprises' marketing of their goods; the café space, the vegetables, in moral terms, as the virtuous provision of social goods. At the same time, social good in these localists' discourses can run fluidly into economic good, as in Greg's usage of 'capacity' and 'sustainability' in relation to his own business, to sometimes refer to educational resources the business offers to its interns, and sometimes to refer to the business's own flourishing (as with its 'capacity interns', who do not receive training but work for the business in a support capacity). These terms' mobility signals the claim of this kind of enterprise to bring together, even to identify, social utility – understood in moral terms – and economic value to the business. 'Morality' may be reified and marketed in these discourses, but it is also imagined – as in Greg's 'values-based' epithet – as in some ways redeemed businesses' true endgame.

Gardner notes that CSR's claims for doing 'good' draw on the 'moral orders' that 'underl[ie]' current-day 'neoliberal capitalism' (2012: 28), and that 'anthropologists have argued that CSR involves the implicit transmission of neoliberal values via programmes that stress income-generation, microcredit and particular styles of work' (2012: 34). That is, the 'morals' part of CSR's dovetailing of markets and morals itself involves the inculcation of market behaviours and disciplines. This may be seen in the vocational training and microcredit aspects of Form:ation, and Cycle of Life's plans to enable others to set up in self-employment. Gardner's ethnographic subject is the CSR projects of an oil company in Bangladesh, where the rural poor live lives of fragile security, and so, Gardner argues, they seek 'connection to resources and services' (2012: 47) to render their lives a little less insecure. She claims that CSR projects, with their discourse of 'empowe[ring]' people to have 'sustainable livelihoods' (2012: 36) fail to enable people to make such connections; in fact, they implicitly advocate a kind of *dis*connection from the secure entitlements to jobs and social support that formed part of a pre-neoliberal vision of development. Her view, in which 'poverty can be viewed as

a state of disconnection', is that for people to win real security of life, development schemes that propose further 'disconnection' through "self-help" and "social capital" (2012: 55), which, she says, further informalise and make insecure the connections people rely on, ought to be rejected, in favour of ones that support 'formalised connections', that is, "rights" (2012: 56).

'Formalised connections', if that is taken to mean cords of obligation backed by political or legal guarantee, are not part of the vision of this ideologically institution-wary Quimby localist subculture. And yet, as we saw in the local-food discourses of both businesses, and of the wider local-food subculture, 'social connections' are precisely what schemes such as this are intended to forge and firm. Promoting models of independent contracting and self-starting enterprise, these projects nevertheless see these 'empowerment' practices as ingredient in the formation of *greater* community connectedness among locals, not less – an association, I will argue, that has to do with American traditions of harking back to the pre-urban small town, on which model a morally coherent social totality and the modest enterprises of self-starting individuals are seen as mutually reinforcing (Hofstadter 1962).

Recall the claims made by Cycle of Life that the experience of being either vendor or consumer would render a person more connected to their community; or Form:ation's teams of friends, family and neighbours who would gather as the vocational guidance for interns as they sought to set up in freelance business. The localist economic vision posits a mutually supportive world of freely chosen reciprocities, in conjunction with small-scale enterprise, all under a collective moral oversight made possible by locality. One of the effects of the subculture's encompassing language of 'abundance' and 'flourishing', and its use of CSR discourses, is that the formal differences between socially binding Maussian gift economies, moral sentiment-driven free-gifting, and commercial enterprise are elided together, and an ideal of local economy imagined, as a beneficent swirl of exchange that has features of all three.

When I put it to Greg that he was a capitalist, he firmly disagreed. His argument was that capitalism was a 'power structure, not an economic structure'. The flat pay scale he advocated for his own business was based on the idea that if all American households took home the sum that he intended to pay everyone in his company, from himself to the newest baristas, he said, the impact of the US consumer economy on the rest of the world would be neutral (as opposed to rapacious, as it currently was). Currently, 'our mode of consumption requires exploitation', he said. He evoked a scenario in which there was a business owner, and an employee, and the directness of that relationship prevented a lot of exploitation, whereas once you had the intercession of the shareholder, whose only interest was financial return on investment, money

that could have remained in the business to go back to the employee to pay them a good wage went off to shareholders, and wealth disparities resulted. But this needn't be so; there are other ways of doing things. For example, 'co-ops are beautiful', Greg said, because everyone involved has ownership. Greg was morally offended by pronounced economic inequality, but, committed as he was to market systems, he sited the fault for this state of affairs with social structure, not economic processes. Rather than there being an 'invisible hand' guiding the market, he told me, the market is directed by the hands of those who hold the power in society – 'white, male hands', usually.

In her ethnography of CSR in South Africa, Rajak (2011) writes that the 'triple bottom line' idea 'impl[ies] an implicit symbiosis of social goods, ethical imperatives and market rationalities' (2011: 10), and she notes 'a remoralising of the capitalist market economy' (2011: 16), 'which appeals to…ties of community, solidarity, and even affection'. She concludes that CSR discourse enfolds 'moral economies' of values such as 'generosity' and 'community' into the market economy, and thus in a way coopts these, with an upshot that 'market interests work *through* moral practice' (2011: 18). She notes the use by CSR's proponents of the vocabularies of its critics and of activists, as an example of its colonising character (2011: 59). Emphasising the centrality of CSR to much contemporary doing of business, Rajak makes the subtle argument that, rather than CSR discourses cloaking brute market calculations with an impression of gift- giving, in fact they explicitly claim that the market itself offers the route out of poverty, and that 'the interests of material accumulation can be pursued alongside those of moral wellbeing' (2011: 176-7); but, that this story told of market-driven uplift obscures the gift relationships that *are*, in fact, being forged through CSR practices, which draw people into relations of patronage with the corporation, and into the receipt of gifts that bind in unequal power relations – in her words, 'the gift masquerades as impersonal market relations' (2011: 238).

In some ways, this argument is similar to that made by Greg about the market's 'invisible hand' – that it is power relations, not some kind of fictive disembedded market behaviour, that determines how things go for the victims of structural inequality. No one likes a big extractive corporation, perhaps especially not one bearing gifts. Where they seem to be speaking a different language, however, is on the matter of markets themselves, and, implicitly, the role of the state. Remember that Greg, Nate and others lodge strong moral opposition to 'capitalism', meaning the world of the corporate juggernaut, and indeed the neoliberal state that, they would say, abets corporate designs. But where Rajak sees co-optation of development by corporate interests, whose shareholders retain their concern for the (single) bottom line (2011: 199), Greg *et al* see a system of exchange (the market) able to be redeemed by market actors willing to frame their

market action in moral terms as the generation of 'abundance' – which enfolds both wealth generation and its equitable distribution. Recall the blogger who hailed Nate's delivery business as a harbinger of a new kind of economy? Like the proponents of CSR, Greg and Nate do not see a fundamental conflict between market systems and social equity – more, they share a sense of the enterprise as rightfully having a role beyond the making of money; in social world-building.

Rajak quotes a CSR representative talking about the importance of 'providing environments for enterprise' as a way of bringing people into 'the social system', and she remarks: 'according to this equation the market comes to stand for the social system as a whole' (2011: 34), in 'a moral vision of economic empowerment' (2011: 184), in which market participation emerges as a kind of 'moral duty' (2011: 319). In the Quimby context, small-scale enterprise is imagined as ideally engendering a kind of gift economy, in something like the socially totalising sense that Mauss intended it, however without the inequity of power relations that Rajak sees inhering in CSR gifting relationships. For people like Greg and Nate, on the small-scale ground of neighbourhood, the 'dignity' of enterprise, and mutual gifting, can together constitute the great, good community, without risk of the power relations of the latter interfering with the dignity of the former.

State guarantees of rights such as Gardner cites do not much feature in this vision, which, as part of the broader ethico-political (Rose 1999) localist ethos, posits 'values', not legal instruments, as the engine of 'equity' (although it should be said that, as part of this movement's broad alignment with the progressive end of politics, there was little pronounced anti-statism in this discussion). The potential dangers of 'social capital' – what Gardner calls its 'nasty' side, in the form of 'corruption/patronage' (2012: 48) – are barely at all elaborated in this milieu, in which approving talk of social capital is very common, in a context of a national political culture in which secure connections between individuals and a social state are not a prominent ideological inheritance, nor most people's day-to-day experience, as compared to a longstanding lively culture of associationalism (including through churches), combined with a pervading, also Tocquevillian, moralist fear of the creep of complacent individual isolation.

In their analyses of the workings of CSR in the projects of large multinational corporations operating in poor countries, Gardner, Rajak and others use the term 'neoliberal' to denote the kind of free-market philosophy that they see operative in CSR's moral logics. Neoliberalism is, in David Harvey's definition, 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free

trade', and in which the state's regulatory role is firmly circumscribed, with the state often in fact encouraged to help create markets where they did not previously exist (Harvey 2005: 2). 'Deregulation, privatisation, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision' (2005: 3) are among the signs of neoliberalism at work.

On this definition, these enterprises would perhaps not easily escape the neoliberal tag (though localism, were it elaborated as a political doctrine, might have words to say about free trade). But my argument would be that whether or not one sees a particular set of market-economic practices and discourses as 'neoliberal' is largely dependent on context. In this context of a Western American town, I argue that it makes more sense to see these trends of social enterprise, and indeed the active role of local government in stimulating and supporting such enterprises (the farm received a large grant from urban-renewal funds), as a kind of romantic reappropriation of global development models – which themselves of course have roots in American free-market capitalist thought – as a discursive resource for ethical projects that, emergent from a context in which what Harvey describes is a long-established status quo, use them to articulate ambitions for the formation of moral communities that instantiate a long-lived American hope for a civic settlement in which the industry of individuals is the glue of social connection, not its undoer.

Of gifts, autonomy and embeddedness: localists' hybrid economic hopes

In *From Mandeville to Marx* (1977), Louis Dumont offers a historical account of the emergence of the contemporary idea of 'the economy' as a distinct sphere of operation, independent both of politics, and of 'the general or common run of morality' (1977: 61). Dumont picks out eighteenth-century works by Adam Smith and Bernard de Mandeville as important intellectual moments in the emergence of the idea of the economy as a special arena in which different moral precepts apply – briefly, that within the economic sphere, conditions are such that pursuit of self-interest is not construed as immoral, because the workings of 'the economy' will parlay that self-interest into public goods – Smith's 'Invisible Hand', Mandeville's 'private vices, publick benefits'.

This assumption, of the pitiless character of market economy, sits as conceptual backdrop to the idea of moralising the economy that motivates people like Greg and Nate, in combination with an almost opposite assumption, that somehow, through the good offices of individual moral discernment, the market could be rendered 'moral' – indeed, that it perhaps has the seeds of virtue already within it. The paradox of private vices and public benefits offends the individualist

sensibilities of this evangelical movement, which doubts the possibility of public benefits gained from individual selfish impulse.

Parry (1986) notes that, in the history of Western thought, we see 'the ideology of a disinterested gift emerg[ing] in parallel with an ideology of a purely interested exchange' (1986: 458). It is, historically, specific to Euroamerican thought to hold the 'theory' that the gift should be free. 'As the economy becomes progressively disembedded from society', Parry writes, 'as economic relationships become increasingly differentiated from other types of social relationship', there is increasing polarisation between the two spheres 'in terms of their symbolism and ideology'. 'Gifts are defined as what market relations are not – altruistic, moral and loaded with emotion' (1986: 466). Parry links the existence of a strong ideology of the pure gift in a society to the existence of a sharp division of labour, a 'significant commercial sector', and the influence of 'an ethicised salvation religion' (1986: 467), in which rewards for good behaviour are conceived as being beyond this world, thus seeking worldly reward is understood to be inconsistent with a path to salvation (1986: 467-8). He also notes that, unlike in the gift exchanges of societies in which exchange is not siloed off into a separate sphere of 'economy', gifts are not *needed* in a state society with a market economy (1986: 467). This lack of need for gifts is precisely the Christian localists' lament – central to the whole idea of living the 'neighbourhood' life is a move to reinstate a need of one another, in practical terms of everyday exchange.

This subculture, itself deeply convinced of the bifurcated ideology in which there is self-interest on the one hand, and love-filled giving on the other, is at the same time well aware of the place of exchange in binding people socially over time. One thing localists always tried to do, I noticed, was to ask as well as receive; to initiate exchange flows in all directions, with the time-lag necessary for an artefact exchanged to acquire the social drag of gift. They share with Mauss the thought Parry attributes to him, that 'the combination of interest and disinterest in exchange is preferable to their separation' (1986: 469). But they mount this recuperation of the gift from the ideological ground of believing in the purity of both free gifts and acquisitiveness. Their vision of a recuperated world of gift circulation looks like one of pure gifting, in which it is utter goodness that motivates the giving, as per the salvation-religion view Parry outlines. Parry says this idea of altruism lines up with asceticism, as the act focused on the world to come, not this world; but in this subculture, I would argue there is an increasing inworldliness to the salvation idea, with beyondness imagined, in the 'Kingdom' idea, as emergent in certain instances of ordinary exchange, informed by love. The localist hope is for people to both need each other, as sources of gift exchange, but for this need not to shade into the pursuit of

interest, and risk the hierarchy that might emerge from it. Pure gifting, but embedded in materiality and ordinary everyday exigency, is the localists' dream.

At the same time, the hope is for non-dependence: the kinds of gifts offered by Greg's vocational-training organisation, the 'capacity building' of training people to become independent entrepreneurs, are, as we have seen, the gifts of disembedding, of 'empowerment' and 'sustainability', in which precisely what is sought is individuals' *lack* of need for patronage, or of the ongoing oversight of the trainer – who would suspect himself of colonising if this foster of independence was not his avowed goal. As per the Western ideology, gifting can wound – that is, can create inequality of condition, rather than the fluid play of independent, roughly equal, individuals pursuing interest. *Inter*dependence is what the localists seek, *mutual* interest, if you like, but suffused on all sides with the loving sentiment of the disinterested gift.

As an idea, 'doing good' in business is a product of the ideology Parry describes, of the two incommensurable spheres. The localists' hope is that a non-hierarchical gift economy might emerge from the spread of this hybrid model of business; part-interest, part-heartfelt altruism – that is, that the counterintuitive bringing together of selfish and selfless motive might result in a system of total exchange, saturated by the spirit of the latter. It is no coincidence that the division of labour is a key part of what makes the modern world morally problematic for this subculture: they view it as both an enemy of personal moral responsibility, *and* the source of the socially fragmenting differentiation of 'economy' from social life that renders a true gift economy impossible.

Rational labour in a calling: reclaiming the Protestant work ethic

At the heart of the localists' vision of social enterprise is the idea of the social entrepreneur him- or herself as moral agent, and the place of work in a life lived locally. In his famous study of the connection between Protestant, especially Calvinist, ideas about salvation, and the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe, Max Weber (2005 [1930]) writes of the 'inner-worldly ascetic', for whom the things of this world, especially things of the flesh and enjoyable luxuries, are to be shunned in favour of a mind concentrated on the life to come, but who at the same time accepts that this world is where they must live, and do God's work within it. In the Puritan, or Calvinist, view, Weber argues, God's work in the world is a *Beruf*, a 'calling', or 'vocation', a task of life that is characterised by a 'systematic', 'methodical' (2005: 107) quality; that is, it is a consistent and rationalised kind of action in the world. In the Puritan view, 'for everyone without exception God's Providence has prepared a calling, which he should profess and in which he should

labour' (2005: 106). And: 'what God demands is not labour in itself, but rational labour in a calling' (2005: 107). It is the method and rationality bit that matters here – in these traditions, Weber says, labour that is pleasing to God is that which is 'useful' (2005: 108).

Describing the condemnation of money and wealth in Puritan thought, Weber judges that this is in response to the 'relaxation' that having wealth can instil; the temptation to rest on one's laurels – because 'only activity serves to increase the glory of God' (2005: 104), it is labour that is the 'ascetic technique' most approved in this tradition, to the point where useful work comes to itself stand as the rightful moral end of life (2005: 105). It is, therefore, not wealth as such that is a moral problem – drawing on the writings of seventeenth-century English Puritan minister Richard Baxter, Weber notes that, in cases where economic gain is an anticipated outcome of labour in a useful calling, it is 'actually enjoined' (2005: 108).

Weber sees in the emphasis on the calling the origins of a modern division of labour, which might be viewed as a historical irony given the view of today's Christian localists – inheritors if not of predestinarian theology, then of the ascetic attitudes of the post-Lutheran Protestant movements such as Puritanism – that the condition of modernity, to which the division of labour and occupational specialisation is so central, is fragmentary of individual moral selves. For Nate, biking the neighbourhood with locally sourced groceries was the right way to bring the different parts of his life together – the need to make a living, the ethical duty of performing the useful function of delivering healthy food to neighbours, the pastoral and governmental duty to form his neighbours in rational and virtuous habits of consumption, building 'relationships' as he went. This was indeed rationalised and methodical labour in a calling, and, as per Baxter, profit- seeking was part of that, although getting rich from it (unlikely) would not be approved. No localist project did not have this imprimatur of practicality; some kind of rational claim to community usefulness. I would argue that the localists' adoption of the language and practices of development and CSR can in part be ascribed to the need for a set of conceptual resources that mark out in rationalised and methodical terms the usefulness of particular kinds of labour, whose status as virtuous labour rests in large part on that validation as useful (often expressed in terms of public health and education).

It is in this free-church Protestant, Benjamin-Franklin-esque (Weber 2005: 14-16) tradition of thought about work, wealth, and idleness, that we should view today's 'values-based' entrepreneurs, whose vituperation against 'consumerism' might be seen as a mixture of this Puritan-heritage horror of wealth dissociated from labour; and a more present-day moral recoil,

against a state of affairs evocatively imagined by Weber himself, at the close of his famous essay. This imagined future is of one of collective imprisonment in an 'iron cage' of 'care for external goods' (2005: 123); a world in which the idea of work in a calling has become entirely disengaged from its religious origins, but has intensified its hold over people's imaginations, such that they feel compelled to labour in a calling, and to accumulate wealth thereby, but with an emptiness of purpose and, therefore, of condition. Today's Christian localist objects to 'meaningless' labour, as much as she does to meaningless consumption – in the many diatribes against 'consumerism' I heard, more commonly than simple attacks on the love of material goods I heard a wider critique, of the impulsion to work hard and accumulate for its own sake, and the want of ethical freedom that that cycle implies.

For these present-day ascetics, hard work and private profit both carry a moral value, as Weber shows they did for the seventeenth-century Puritans, but the mechanistic capitalism into which he believed that initial Puritan drive to know the good of work 'by its fruits' (2005: 107) had turned, is itself the new anathema. It was work, and the slavish commitment to it that the localists I knew felt was typical of American life, that stood in the way of true neighbourhood life, as people were prepared to spend hours physically and psychologically remote from 'community' as they served a work ethic that, like Weber, my informants saw as evacuated of moral meaning and merely hitched to the making of money.

Thus, part of what we see in these projects of personal self-formation through neighbourhood-based enterprise is people seeking to reclaim the Protestant work-and-profit ethic from industrial capitalism. It is also about seeking to make possible the application of individual, personal moral discernment to every matter of money-making decision. Lambert notes the prevalent language of 'values' in contemporary business talk – he writes of people wanting to 'live their values as consumers, investors, and workers' (2009: 163), and of 'values-driven business' (2009: 164). In these usages, of which of course Greg's was one, we see the focus on the individual, 'values' being proprietary possessions of the individual, aspects of the cultivated self to be protected. The language of CSR, of the virtuous marriage of the good and the profitable, offers a contemporary vocabulary of ethical action for people for whom the division of labour has offended against the good by loosing the bonds connecting an individual's moral discernment with their economic place in the world.

The occupational specialisation that, Weber argues, vocational thought helped to make possible, is problematic in relation to a localist ethic that seeks community cohesion above all. Greg's trainings are designed to help a young person imagine their core vocational identity in the

context of a neighbourhood ecology; in practice, this rules out, or at least radically underemphasises, the value of many professional kinds of work. And committed neighbourhoodism often demands the relinquishment of hopes of any career that takes a lot of a person's time.

Cycle of Life advertised its work to prospective 'pedallers' as both a practice of 'vocation', meant in the sense of self-formation as an entrepreneurial node of neighbourhood life, and as an ideal part-time job, deliberately enabling a person to pursue other activities too. I knew several people who explicitly said they'd chosen neighbourhood and community life over pursuing or getting further in a given career. Added to this was the press of necessity: most people I knew did more than one kind of work; money was too tight in most cases for one job to suffice. In some cases, the money pressure was partly chosen; an ascetic aspect of the shift to neighbourhoodism, in more, it was simply a fact of life.

Early Protestantism's connection of useful (and perhaps money-making) action in the world with spiritual grace is remade in this movement as a kind of whole-person usefulness – recall the 'assets' of ABCD development thought – that, while imagined by those involved as a challenge to power structures dominated by the occupationally differentiated version of 'vocation', also appears well adjusted to an economic situation in which secure and well-paid work is relatively scarce, and self-imagining in stable and singular career terms increasingly difficult to sustain. A flexible, portfolio, neoliberal working self might be one way of viewing the kinds of ethical self these projects of self-formation in virtuous utility are producing, as they seek to reclaim vocation for ethics, and labour in a calling for the small-scale virtuous community.

Theatres of enterprise: exemplifying a petit bourgeois moral economy

Both the entrepreneurs featured in this chapter described themselves as anti-capitalists: when Pope Francis said that the world was centred on 'the god of money', and called this state of affairs 'fundamental terrorism, against all humanity', Nate posted a link on Facebook with the word 'Preach'. In his discussion of what he calls the 'radical petit bourgeoisie' in Progressive-era Portland, Oregon, historian Robert Johnston notes that the American petit bourgeoisie has always had 'an extremely complex relationship with capitalism' (2003: 268). *Pace* Lambert, who remarks that 'commercialism has never been frowned upon in evangelical history' (2009: 52), this evangelical and bourgeois subculture draws, as others have before it, on Christian ascetic and American traditions of Puritanism and 'simplicity' (Shi 1985; Swartz 2008) to strongly condemn the love of commerce – especially, as we have seen, at the consumer end of the process, in

'consumerism'. And yet alongside this sat their sense of small-scale enterprise, with its vocationalist discourse of people having a 'passion' for brands, products and business models, as potentially redemptive of society (see the discussion of how Nate's business would effect virtuous reform among the population, through what they ate). On the one hand, consumer capitalism was seen as utter anathema to the good life; on the other, the enterprising purvey of consumer goods was natively understood by all as something of value and potential virtue.

Johnston (2003) has offered a fruitful approach to thinking about the moral politics of middle class, small-business-oriented Americans who, though no revolutionaries, display a sharply anti-authoritarian 'radicalism' that, he says, should prompt analysts to reconsider their assessment of the American bourgeoisie and its presumed politics. His study takes as its focus 'populist democracy' in Portland, Oregon, during the Progressive Era of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century; that is, political campaigns for more direct forms of democracy, as well as campaigns for taxation on land (on the principle that the only wealth legitimately gained is that won through work (2003: 165)). Johnston notes, alongside these, the general sympathy of the 'petit bourgeoisie' of that city with the working classes, in defiance of corporate 'elites'.

Johnston's thesis is that, through these various political initiatives, the small business class of Portland, in the forty or so years straddling the turn of the twentieth century, exhibited a middle-class 'radicalism', and indeed 'anticapitalism' (2003: 266), which amounted to a morally inflected critique of wealth inequality, and a vision of a 'just' society of earned reward and property ownership on the basis of work alone, in defiance of a mass economic and political system that fails to preserve a reliable link between labour and reward (2003: 267). Johnston uses the example of Portland in this era to make a punchy case for seeing petit bourgeois political consciousness as 'radical', and intent on 'economic justice' (2003: 268) – conceived on bourgeois terms – as against what he sees as a more common scholarly tendency to view America's middle classes as tending merely to reaction and anxious status aspiration. Johnston remarks that 'America's anticapitalist tradition…began with the people whom we have always seen as small- scale "capitalists"' (2003: 86).

He argues that, while small business Americans are committed to both private property and profit-seeking, in the era he studied, such people took 'a stance of (often subversive) moderation' (2003: 28) in which they tended to approve of the working classes' efforts to keep the wolf from the door, including if that meant strikes, and felt moral disapproval of great wealth. This picture resonates with my experience of the Christian localists I knew, also in a medium-sized, Western American, predominantly bourgeois city, a hundred years later.

Writing of one of the driving philosophies of Portland bourgeois radicalism, Populism, a loose movement of protest by middle-class, initially agrarian, fractions against the power of 'elites', including federal government and large corporations, Johnston proposes the existence of a 'petit bourgeois moral economy' (2003: 88); seeing 'the Populists' dedication to small-scale property and moral market relations' as 'an expression of…an unfriendly critique of "capitalism"' (2003: 88). He describes a strong, even fervent, moral discourse against extreme wealth accumulation, and a vision of capitalism as a kind of violence, insofar as it represents this extreme.

Citing among others Braudel and Marx to argue for a distinction between a regime of market exchange and 'capitalism', meaning for Marx the expropriation of labour, and for Braudel high profits, monopoly and an international reach (2003: 82-3), Johnston argues – echoing Greg and his critique of the invisible hand mythos – for the existence of an American petit bourgeois moral economy in which market activity brings modest rewards of property ownership to ordinary people, in contrast to a 'capitalism' that accumulates wealth for the monopolistic corporate few.

Richard Hofstadter's (1962 [1955]) famous study of the American political traditions of Populism and Progressivism opens by setting the scene of a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth- century America undergoing a shift from a primarily agricultural economy, to an industrialised, urbanised one (1962: 8). Hofstadter describes a strain of American thought that lamented the social changes this brought, among them a shift from an 'individualistic' form of work and economy, to something more corporately determined. He writes that 'in the Progressive Era the life of business…was beginning to pass from an individualistic form toward one demanding industrial discipline and engendering a managerial and bureaucratic outlook'. In this new scenario, Hofstadter says, people 'wanted economic success to continue to be related to personal character' (1962: 10).

Hofstadter describes how Populism and Progressivism, in their different ways, sought to retain in the American economy 'values of agrarian life', and to 'save personal entrepreneurship and individual opportunity and the character type they engendered' (1962: 11), in a vision that valued 'the primary contacts of country and village life' and 'the cherished image of the independent and self-reliant man' (1962: 12). He notes the Progressives' Protestant sense of 'personal responsibility' above all (1962: 203), as they attacked 'the powers of trusts and bosses'. He describes a Populist conviction that people of different classes – farmer, labourer, small businessman – did not have conflicting interests, but that only a tiny money elite was an enemy to common flourishing (1962: 64). This conviction of the absence of class conflict is, I believe, central to the localist social-enterprise thought I've been describing here.

Hofstadter goes on to note the Progressives' 'idea of social justice … on Protestant moral imperatives' (1962: 208) and their drive to be socially useful, citing 'useful philanthropies' (1962: 209) undertaken under a sense of the *personal* responsibility that the 'middle-class citizen' felt 'for all kinds of social ills. It was his business to do something about them' (1962: 210). The 'clotting [of] society into large aggregates' (1962: 213-4), through the growth of corporations, was experienced as a kind of moral unmanning of the civic individual, who sought in these movements to bring moral responsibility of the person, and social usefulness, together. In Hofstadter's words, 'they were trying…to retain the scheme of individualistic values' the increasing 'organisation' of society and economy into large aggregates was 'destroying' (1962: 215).

I cite Hofstadter's Populists and Progressives as an example of an important intellectual inheritance; one of the historical streams in which today's localist-enterprise movement stands. Hofstadter describes a 'tradition, rooted in the Protestant ethic', in which people 'think of the wellbeing of society…in moral terms, as a reward for the sum total of individual qualities and personal merits' (1962: 221). We see in today's entrepreneurial anti-'capitalist' localism a move to restate this moralism, to both perform and argue for a business ecology in which socioeconomic ties are threads running from moral person to moral person, on the ground of locality, and in defiance of scale and deindividualisation. In part, moral enterprise in this context thus constitutes a project of exemplarity. There is, as Greg's remarks on his 'farm' indicate, a 'message' to be conveyed here, about the links between personal virtue and productive enterprise. Greg's café has, we recall, a 'mission', both to represent the role of small business in meeting the social needs of local people, and to be a forum where 'community' can be enacted and discursed upon.

These businesses are thus, in a way, theatres of enterprise. Nate's regular bike peregrinations around the neighbourhood both do the localist work of tracing out the neighbourhood as an imaginative entity in a shared mind, and exemplify commercial action that dovetails consumer savings, ecological responsibility, and community connection among producer, distributor and consumer. The 'good' the business represents is its sales pitch, but it is also an argument, a public claim, for the capacity of market action to remake 'community' through a repeated performance of connections among neighbours.

As part of his spirited defence of the petit bourgeoisie as a moral-political agent in American society, Johnston takes on the criticism that not all of the ambitious political goals of his bourgeois Portland activists succeeded: 'the purpose of utopians is not to rule society', he points

out, but to offer ideas and passions, and 'energise their fellow citizens to work toward the world to come' (2003: 17). In speaking the language of neoliberal-era development, the localists described in this chapter bring into their projects of bourgeois 'radicalism' a slice of technocratic governance thought that, among other things, draws on capitalism of a rather different altitude to that indigenous to American towns. This is both an enactment of small-town moral economy, and a model and projection of it, taken from the annals of liberal governmentality. Development discourse, with its aims of creating 'via "the community", a local population of self-reliant entrepreneurs' (Gardner 2012: 167), through 'microfinance, village development committees, training schemes' (2012: 166) might be recognised as an emerging kind of devotional language in this subculture.

Chapter six

Christian anti-moderns: sincerity, eschatology and politics in the new-evangelical turn

The half-day conference on the future of evangelicalism took place at a seminary in the city's suburbs one spring morning during my fieldwork. It was strange to be out in the suburbs, the wide-spaced landscape dominated by parking lots and boxy campuses, a classically 'automobilic' space, in Nate's words. Most of the people I recognised at the conference, cardigan-clad and slightly hippyish, I was unused to seeing out of their adopted neighbourhoods in town, 'living local' and pottering about their neighbourhood routines.

The star of the show was speaker Rachel Held Evans, a thirtysomething blogger and writer who had won fame through her sharply humorous, first-person critiques of the state of American evangelicalism. Her first book, *Evolving in Monkey Town*[17] (2010), a memoir of growing up evangelical in the Tennessee town where the 1925 Scopes Trial had initiated fundamentalism's decades-long cultural retreat, had engagingly addressed her own religious 'evolution', from a firm creationist position, to a mode of faith more question-filled and open.

Held Evans uses satiric observation and buoyant testimony of personal change to make an argument to her own American evangelical culture – what she affectingly calls her 'religious mother tongue' – about the ways in which she feels it needs to change. Her books sit alongside myriad other works that use the core evangelical genre of first-person testimony (both memoir and fiction) as an argument about and for religious change (for example Claiborne 2006; Hogeweide 2012; Kriz 2012; Kurek 2012; McLaren 2008; Miller 2003) – all in different ways exemplifying the 'deconversion' posture Bielo has noted. Bielo (2011a) has also observed the extensive use of cultural self-mockery among reforming evangelicals. Held Evans ribbed evangelicalism's businesslike presentational styles: 'I've boiled this down to six points – you can tell I'm an evangelical!', and segued into a humorous rundown of evangelical life: 'You know you're an evangelical if….Satan or demons are blamed for technical difficulties with the church's Powerpoint…if you re-re-re-committed yourself to Christ at summer camp…if you have witnessed to an Episcopalian…if you say "Alleluia!"[18] during Lent….if your parents say Obama is the anti-Christ, and your peers say let's stop human trafficking….' People laughed, familiar

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[17] She has since changed the title to *Faith Unraveled*.
[18] In liturgical traditions, 'Alleluia!' is left out of the order of service during Lent, a time of penitence, not rejoicing. Evangelical churches have not traditionally observed the liturgical calendar.

with the world Held Evans was evoking. She told the audience how she grew up a zealot – 'I knew what abortion was before I knew where babies came from'.

Her speech tacked between humorous critique and a discourse of hope, in which her own 'evolution' and that of her generational peers pointed to moral renewal. She spoke of the younger generation's exasperation with evangelicalism's intimacy with the Republican Party and right-wing politics, of its weariness with 'the culture wars', and being known for being against things, e.g., same-sex marriage. She spoke of evangelicalism being 'held captive to white American culture', at a time when 'the future of Christianity is non-white'. She listed the things 'we' care about – *not*, she said, getting certain political parties elected, but 'creation care' (environmentalism), 'justice', poverty, immigration.

Concluding her cheery diatribe – 'ooh, I'm ranting!' – Held Evans said she was hopeful, 'optimistic', even as evangelicalism seems to be receding; becoming something that people, for all the reasons given above, feel uncomfortable identifying with. Christians *shouldn't* feel comfortable with being mixed up with power and politics, she reflected, noting the increasing interest in the Anabaptist tradition among young evangelicals – a rich tradition, she said, of Christians being '*intentionally* more marginalised' politically.

She spoke too of the draw to the liturgical traditions among younger evangelicals, and about her own wanderings to Roman Catholic, Methodist, and other kinds of churches. People becoming less obsessively focused on the Bible was another good sign, she reflected: 'I guess I don't see the Bible as the final authority, I see Jesus as the final authority'. Growing up, she had, she said, been obsessed with the literal truth of the Bible. We've got to stop seeing the Bible as an 'answerbook', or a 'science book', she said. In thinking this way she had, she realised, been 'elevating an Enlightenment theory of knowledge'. She concluded her talk with a call to ongoing reform: if we do 'my little quiz' (the 'you might be an evangelical if' refrain she opened with) again in ten years' time, we will have different questions. If we don't, we might be looking at the end of evangelicalism, she said.

Held Evans' speech offers a concise overview of some of this movement's key cultural, political and theological preoccupations. In this final thesis chapter, I will draw out some of these themes as they were engaged in the Quimby communities I knew, and in the work of influential writers whose thought reflected and fed into the worldviews I encountered there. The themes discussed in this chapter – of the new-evangelical view of history, of the movement's worship practices and their relationship to the orienting idea of 'modernity', its emerging social teaching, and its eschatology of materiality and ethical hope – enfold questions that have emerged throughout the

thesis, regarding the movement's relation to individualism, to people outside the faith, and to its own activist ambitions.

'Protestant confusion hour': planning and negotiation in the liturgical turn

LW participated in the turn toward non-evangelical worship practices, such as the speaking of form prayers in gathered worship, frequent Eucharist-taking with both elements (and using that term for it), and participation in the rites of the church calendar, for example the Palm Sunday procession, ashing on Ash Wednesday. They did a posada procession at Christmas, inspired by one member's experience living in Mexico, and held special liturgies throughout Advent. The group's four-person worship-planning team was tasked with setting out the format for worship, and there was a presumption in favour of ecumenical inclusion, and of some variety – people didn't like to get into a rut. When I was living with them, the group took up using the Anglican lectionary – a selection of Bible portions for each day of the year – to guide their weekly collective and daily personal worship.

Some church members were enthusiasts for what people tended to call, generically, 'liturgy', while others could take or leave the various small rites that came and went over the years. Advocates for 'liturgy' would point to the connection that participating in a rite gave them to the church around the world and in history. The turn to liturgy was composed of a mix of this appeal to shared tradition, and a formally contrasting appeal, toward 'creativity' in worship, and the encouragement of individuals to bring prayers and practices that meant something to them into worship. Like other aspects of the new-evangelical repertoire, these two appeals were united by their remoteness from the long-form exegetical, pastor-focused format of mainstream evangelical worship.

In the rationalised and pragmatic 'debrief' spirit of much LW meeting practice, in worship-planning meetings, people would discuss how various things were and weren't 'working' in Sunday worship – for example, for a period, there had been an attempt to bring a bit of liturgical ceremony to the arrival of the communion bread, with a sequence of 'processing the Body' at the beginning. But, someone observed in one meeting I attended, it seemed to be going a bit unnoticed – 'people think you're just walking into the room', the person said. Emily, remembering one recent stint as worship facilitator, recalled fluffing her lines because she couldn't remember which of the Sundays it was in the liturgical calendar. They all smiled at their uncertainty with these new-old traditions. Nate said something wry about gathered worship at LW being 'Protestant confusion hour'. But things always muddled through in practice, and LW

gathered worships were an eclectic mix of Scripture readings; singing; thoughtful, probing and sometimes profound Bible discussion; communion-taking with wine and fresh bread; and the group's well-loved liturgical constant, 'God sightings', when people called out encounters during the week when, in the acts of others or something in nature or just in life, they felt they had seen God at work. A different church member 'facilitated' worship each week, while another gave the short 'homily' that took the place of the long-form evangelical sermon.

Unlike traditional church liturgies, then, LW worship formats were anything but invariant. Nor was there a thoroughgoing sacramental interpretation of any particular elements. As was their wont, LW members would laugh at themselves sometimes about the amount of energy that could go into working out how to do worship, in part under pressure for variation. Although the basic pattern of worship was quite steady, in the five years since they'd started meeting in 2008, the group had tried all kinds of worship practices, from cacophonous simultaneous free-form prayer, to Eucharist as a kind of ongoing (and somewhat tipsy-making) toasting ceremony for 'God sightings', and more besides.

LW's liturgical samplings were a sign of the group's desire, typical of this movement, to make worship gatherings less verbal and propositional, and more sensory and meditative. But matters of language dominated discussions about how to do worship, as innovations undertaken in the spirit of, say, gender fairness, chafed against some members' understandings of doctrinal orthodoxy. When disagreements arose, as they did from time to time, it was a test of the group's proudly professed commitment to comity above doctrine. At such times, the worship-planning team took on a somewhat diplomatic function, tasked with careful, informal discussions with individual parties, seeking common ground. One such disagreement was about the Lord's Prayer, with which gathered worship concluded each Sunday, in a handholding circle. During one worship-planning meeting, held in one of LW's several cosy living rooms, the meeting facilitator, Jenny, brought up the issue of a couple in the church who were uncomfortable with the words 'Our Father and Mother' that the church had been using to open the prayer. The couple felt it was unbiblical. Others in the church, including some in the meeting, felt pained by the lack of female pronouns in scriptural language generally, and it was important to them to have at least some exceptions to what one person in the meeting referred to as the 'monogendering of God'. All parties agreed that God was neither female nor male; the issue for this couple was the relation of what the church said to the wording found in Scripture.

This question had come up before, and discussions had been had. The issue now was that the couple thought the church had already reached an agreement about how matters of gender

parity and Scriptural citation would be handled in liturgical practice, and they felt the group, in saying this phrase most weeks, was now diverging from that. Other people remembered the agreement differently. The team, a little wearily, discussed what to do. The main thing, as with all these kinds of issues, was to find a solution where everyone could feel comfortable.

Part of the point of the liturgical turn was its status as an alternative to the propositional emphasis of the evangelical mainstream; the constellation of verbal and written practices, from the brief 'Sinner's Prayer' some churches took as a sign of conversion and 'being saved', to street evangelism and tract-sharing, to churches posting long and detailed statements of doctrine on their websites, that these reformers disparaged as aspects of the church's capture by the spirits of modernity. LW's communitarian face was set against this tendency, through its embrace of the doctrine of 'practice' in 'community'. As part of its explicit practice-over-proposition stance, LW took a lot of pride in the diversity of beliefs within its fold. A mostly highly educated group, several of whom had gone through seminary, most people in LW knew about and cared about theology, but part of their new evangelical posture was to subordinate doctrine to fellowship, within and beyond the church. Through being a community of shared practice, included shared liturgy, people sought to rework their faith in a more communal and experiential direction.

But, as everyone was aware, doctrines still mattered – doctrines of gender parity, as much as of the meanings of Scripture – and matters of conscience could not simply be overridden. The group's perennial challenge, discussed in Chapter one, to be a corporate body but one in which no one's conscience was subordinated, made for recurrent debates on what shared practice should look like.

One member of the worship team, an English teacher who felt strongly that female as well as male language should be used for God, also felt strongly about reading the Bible 'as literature', and had once given a presentation to the community on the theme of Bible translation, in which she had discussed the idea of translators as 'positioned', not neutral vessels. Her understanding of Scripture differed from that of some others in the community, like this couple, who worried that certain gender-inclusive practices amounted to crossing a red line of 'changing Scripture'. That for all concerned, biblical language remained within the realm of sincerity-talk (Keane 2007; 2002), and was not rendered into 'liturgy' as shared practice, with lexical meaning backgrounded in favour of performative effect, was a sign that, notwithstanding the ideological turn against certain propositionality-focused cultural practices, for LW, Protestant ideas about the importance of the meanings of words, particularly Scriptural words, and their relationship with individual, speaking persons, were still of substantial ethical importance.

The group's ideal of consonance among individual consciences, public forms, *and* a broader ecclesial heritage, is difficult to attain, and extensive diplomatic work is sometimes necessitated to find forms of words and actions that can win the conscientious participation of all. Someone suggested that the 'and Mother' could be dropped from the Lord's Prayer, but that at the same time a commitment could be made to move towards greater gender parity in worship language more generally. In the end, members of the worship team were deputed to have private chats with the individuals who had expressed strong views on both sides, and a view would eventually be taken (in the end, it appeared to me that 'and Mother' appeared less frequently after this discussion).

Comparable to the drafting of public documents such as treaties or legislation, LW's formats for worship involved forms and fixes reached through the slow work of negotiation, rather than through hierarchical imposition, or – as in non-sincerity-focused semiotic systems – through the referential meaning of words spoken in ritual simply not mattering very much. LW's negotiations over worship elements was unlike the work of the great doctrinal councils of Christian history in not aiming to resolve differences into a common orthodoxy; what is sought, as in democratic legislative politics, is a form of words that everyone can live with, while cleaving to their own perhaps diverging convictions.

Some parents wanted the language used in homilies to be simpler, so that their young teen children could follow more fully, while one person mentioned feeling uncomfortable with 'cussing' in homilies. This, then, was another set of differences over language. What wasn't in debate in any comparable way were the sensory, ritual or liturgical elements of worship – it was language, not objects or sequences of acts, that was felt to have power; to exclude or to misrepresent, and which thus needed to be handled with care. Traditional Protestant recoil from Catholic 'superstition' appeared quite absent in LW, from whom classic disagreements over sacramental authority were remote.

'Passing out Jesus on the sidewalk': the possibilities of sacrament

For most people, the theology of communion, questions about 'real presence', or modes of consecration, did not detain them much. But there were people for whom the physical communion elements had a definite spiritual identity. Anne, who had taken classes in church history at her evangelical seminary, in which she had learned about different theories of the Eucharist, told me that it was in those classes that she 'realised', with some amusement, that 'I'm actually probably a transubstantiationist'; 'the opposite of what I grew up with' (she had

been brought up in a conservative Baptist tradition). If she were a Catholic, she said, it would be the priest's consecration that rendered the change, but that wasn't what she believed.

> I take from another place in Scripture, where Jesus says 'any place where two or three of you are gathered in my name, I am there in your midst'. To explain how Jesus gets into the bread and the wine…it's not like an incantation … [laughs] we aren't actually doing magic … I mean that Jesus chooses to be present in [those elements] when the church is gathered. … I would say it's sacramental when we are intentionally remembering Jesus in the bread and in the wine, and the church is gathered.

As a young adult, Anne had lived and worked for four years in a l'Arche community home. Instituted in the 1960s in France by Canadian Catholic Jean Vanier, l'Arche is now an ecumenical network, but its Catholic roots remain influential. Some of the community-living practices adopted by LW came from Anne's l'Arche experience. Living at l'Arche, she would accompany core members[19] to Mass. Anne told me the story of being inspired by the response of a core member who, leaving the church one day after Mass, spat his dry communion wafer out onto the sidewalk with the words 'oh, I got the bones!' She recalls being delighted by the man's literal interpretation of the real presence idea, and I gathered from her a sense that she would like to, and to some extent did, herself experience communion with a comparable sensory power.

Anne, as was her way, told me the story of her evolving approach to communion in a homiletic register. She explained that, believing that Jesus was really present in the bread and wine, she then faced the challenge of overcoming her anxiety that, as such, communion should be received in the right spirit, and not, as she recalls happening in a house church she had belonged to, being played with and eaten by children, who didn't know what it was and didn't treat it differently from other kinds of food. She had felt its meaning should be explained to the children, that they should be taught to respect it as special. Confiding in a friend who worked at a seminary about her discomfort about this, she recalls him challenging her about whether she would be uncomfortable having the Bible read in the presence of a neighbour who, nonbelieving, might not receive it in the right spirit. Well, surely it's the same with communion, he had argued – Jesus is making himself present, 'giving himself freely', whether or not people are prepared to experience that, doesn't take away from the reality of that gift. 'He convinced me', and she had 'a change of heart, where I do want everyone to receive Jesus [in communion]', whatever spirit they take it/him in.

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[19] The people with learning disabilities who, unlike most of the assistants, live at l'Arche long term.

For her two-year-old daughter Ida who, I had noticed, had acquired a sweet habit of running around during gathered worship with pieces of the communion loaf saying 'does anyone want some more Jesus?', Anne said she would definitely like her to know that it's not just bread. 'I want her to know that it's Jesus, and to want it because it's Jesus'. But she, Anne, was not about to prevent some other person who might happen to be present at communion from taking it, however they did or didn't appreciate the presence. If Jesus chooses to enter into a person that way, 'that might be the only way that this person experiences anything of Jesus, is tasting something that's good, that is nourishing to them, that's communal, you know' – 'far be it from me to stand in the way'. She was now at the point, she said, where 'I would like to take Jesus out on the sidewalk and, you know, pass him out freely', never mind how people chose to receive it/him. She continued: it wasn't 'my job', as a mere person, to 'police' who got to take in that presence or not, by having expectations of belief or respect, even, on the part of recipients of communion. This position, that it is not up to us to 'police' relations between other people and God, is common among new evangelicals. It is an example of the ethic of civility (Hunter 1987) as Christian humility that is so powerful in this movement.

Anne's sacramentalism has a kind of universalistic quality, rejecting both Catholic and Protestant expectations of certain states of mind, spiritual standing, and relations with the church as appropriate to the reception of God's physical presence. It tacks with the tendency I noted among the progressive liturgical-tradition churches I knew in Quimby, to offer 'open communion', that is, allow all people, whether or not baptised, to 'come to the table'. Anne's openness to sacrament is consistent with the wider new-evangelical movement's positioning, discussed above, away from a strong Protestant emphasis on declarations of faith as guarantors of inner sincere belief, and an opening out of theological understandings to enfold actions, often physical ones, that are not necessarily understood by their actors as Christian. This view, of course, has the potential to bring the uncommitted into the conceptual fold potentially more directly, without necessitating the awkward mediations of proselytic discourse, which people in this movement do not view as limpid to interior meaning or cosmic truth as the 'semiotic ideology' of some Protestantisms would have them be.

Anne's striking image of passing communion out 'on the sidewalk' recalls the figure of the street preacher in a fantasy of non-rebarbative evangelism, the Word/Jesus transmitted on the tongue, not by the tongue. In it, we see an inversion of what anthropologists have viewed as a classic Protestant anxiety about physical mediation of the word or presence of God, in which speech and language are underemphasised, in favour of potentially universal experiences of sensory engagement. Nevertheless, her hope that Ida would want the bread of communion 'because it's

Jesus', and her conviction that the collective priesthood of the church intentional is what invites the presence in to the elements, not 'magic', shows the central importance of human interior intent and right belief to the schema too. In this conviction, we see an unusually explicit and articulated form of an evangelical sincerity-formed sensibility as it undergoes an immanentising shift, tracking with intimations of inclusive polity as people in the movement espouse ideals of pietistic modes of belonging, while reaching, sometimes, toward a model of religious belonging that is, potentially at least, more wordlessly encompassing.

Sincerity, modernity, asceticism: continuities and inversions

While these groups are by no means the first Protestant Christians to embrace materiality and the body in their religious practices (see for example Klassen 2011; McDannell 1995), they do so from within a notably reflexive ideology that points up in explicit terms the importance of materiality and social embeddedness for the practice of their faith. The movement deliberately deemphasises certain language practices considered in the evangelical mainstream to be central to a Christian life; among them, evangelising, or 'witnessing to' the unconverted. The paradigmatic 'sincerity' practice of declaring one's faith in certain culturally recognised ways, such as witnessing, long recognised by anthropologists as central to Protestant practice (Harding 1987; Keane 2002; Stromberg 1993), is viewed with unease by many in this movement, as a practice that risks having little meaning if not backed up with 'relationship', and 'action' of some ethical kind; and potentially uncivil, as an offence against norms of a pluralist society. As one friend in LW put it, when I asked him why he was wary of the label 'evangelical', he said that to him, evangelical meant evangelising, and 'I am *extremely* nervous about evangelisation'.

As we have seen in their careful protocols of interpersonal negotiation, and indeed their negotiatory approach to worship practices, these American Christians retain a firm sincerity orientation (Seligman *et al* 2008); however, their performances of this orientation circle around the report of personal affect, more than they do around faith conviction, and when faith conviction is invoked, it is often done so – as we saw in the liturgy discussions above – from the pluralist vantage of conviction as an aspect of self to be respected by those from whom it differs, rather than the striving to verbally encompass an interlocutor, as for example exemplified in Harding's celebrated encounter with a strenuously witnessing Baptist pastor (Harding 1987). The latter kind of sincerity talk tended to be discussed by people I knew in terms of *in*sincerity, as well as the concern about incivility: often drawing on their own experiences as young people on missions trips, from Hong Kong to New Zealand to the next-door neighbourhood, people would recall being encouraged to have what ended up being rather contrived encounters with

strangers, which, they felt sure, had had no transformative effects on anyone. Their own experience of Jesus, they said, had little to do with the formulaic lines they delivered in these encounters; their firm sincerity orientation was offended against, not realised, in such situations.

In his historical ethnography of the early twentieth-century encounter between Dutch Calvinist missionaries and the ancestor-venerating people of the island of Sumba, Indonesia, and its aftereffects up to the present day, Webb Keane (2007) proposes the encounter as a clash of 'semiotic ideologies'; that is, sets of beliefs about signifying systems and social relationships – including, crucially, material things in their signifying capacities, as well as language (2007: 18). Keane explains that the semiotic ideology of the Protestant missionaries involved the idea that 'immaterial meaning' was of superior value and importance to 'material expression' (2007: 67); with 'belief' as the important core of 'religion', and language's proper role being to communicate individuals' internal states – such as 'belief', shown by the speaking of creeds – to others. This was in contrast to the view of the Sumbanese people they were seeking to missionise, for whom language did not hold such a special status as a revealer of hidden truths, and who related to material things in ways that seemed to the missionaries to mistakenly attribute agency to things, and not persons – for example, through venerating objects, which the missionaries disparaged as 'fetishes', that figured the ancestors to whom people paid respect.

Keane identifies 'sincerity' as a 'metadiscursive term' (2002: 74) in the Protestant semiotic ideology he is describing; one which denotes language that makes a person's 'interior state' 'transparent' (2002: 74). He links the sincerity ideal to the emergence of linguistic ideologies that 'stress the referential and predicational functions of language' over 'social pragmatics', and 'the understanding of "religion" that centres on truthful propositions rather than, for example, ritual activities or bodily disciplines' (2002: 74). Keane identifies this ideological preferment of the 'sincerity' value as characteristic of 'modernity', noting too the existence and power of 'modernity' as an idea in people's social worlds – 'whatever else one might want to claim about it, modernity exists at least as an idea and a conceptual orientation for actions' (2002: 68). He isolates the idea of 'self-transformation' as central to the 'modernity' idea as it is lived by many people in the world; conjunctive 'with a vision of the self, abstracted from material and social entanglements'. 'The normative ideal of sincerity in speech' is one part of this 'vision of the self', he says (2002: 68).

Keane thus offers a picture of a constellation of ideas and practices that link notions of individual autonomy, the potential of language as limpid mediator between interiority and the social world (as 'sincerity'), and 'modernity' as a social condition that contrasts with other,

'traditional', ways of being, which embed persons in social and material worlds where agency is more diffused among persons and things, and, from the point of view of the self-identified 'moderns', where individual freedom is thus constrained, and semiotic and moral mistakes are made. Keane ties back 'modernist views of language and things', views which seek the subject's 'abstraction' from 'its material and social entanglements', 'in the name of freedom and authenticity', to the Protestant pursuit of 'transcendence', connecting 'abstract' modern forms such as money, and sincere and referential (as opposed to performative) speech, with this desire for attainment of a beyondness from the social and material world (2007: 222). Seeking the subject's disembeddedness from worldly 'entanglements' is, Keane argues, central to Protestant sincerity practices, and related practices and forms of 'modernity', among them the expectation that interactions with material things should be 'symbolic' of inner 'intentions' only, rather than understood as having a more direct kind of agency. The emphasis on 'sincerity' that is at the heart of these ideological constellations has consequences, Keane says, for the idea of 'religion', which, he says, quoting Talal Asad (2007: 67), had by the nineteenth century become identified as "a set of propositions to which believers give assent".

Asad's phrase, 'a set of propositions', is a form of words I heard a lot in my fieldsite. People used it dismissively, to denote what they saw as an empty artefact of 'modern' culture, rather than the transformed life they saw as the sign of true discipleship. These reforming Christians made the same connection Keane does, between certain Protestant language practices, and 'modernity', closely connecting the two and noting, as Keane does, the centrality of 'abstraction', and of disembedding social and conceptual forms as diverse as money and the idea of the autonomous individual, to the 'modern' world. 'Abstraction' stood as a literal evil for people in this subculture, cited by authors influential in the movement (Berry 1991; van Steenwyk 2013) as the root of much social sin – more on this later. In these reformers' turn toward material and social embeddedness, people actively seek to comport themselves sacramentally, for example through paying attention to the materiality of the Eucharistic elements. They do so explicitly in terms of rejecting the 'modern' hope, described by Keane, of individual emancipation from social and material context. Keane writes that 'modernist rationality and proselytising religion' share a sense of 'the value of freedom and abstraction' because they seem to offer the possibility of 'transcendence' (2007: 81). My informants, who would speak often and thoughtfully about 'relationships', 'justice', and 'reconciliation', almost never invoked that paradigmatic American value, 'freedom'. The word, if it came up, would likely be invoked a little mockingly, as part of sending up the discourses of patriotism and jingoistic pride.

Freedom from context, then, was explicitly what people said they didn't want. 'Context' is a much-invoked term in people's talk about the Bible in particular, and the movement's overriding social ethic of 'neighbourhood' may be read as an assertion of the moral value of attending to a social world which is irreducibly itself, 'particular', in the (itself somewhat abstract) language favoured by the movement. Part of the point of 'neighbourhood' as it is articulated by people in this semi-missionary subculture is that the idea points deliberately away from an 'abstract', 'modern' idea of replicable models, a capitalism-derived idea of the mission as a scalable business model. And yet, in spite of all this, as we saw in the liturgy-planning discussions above, practices symbolic of inner intentions or convictions retain their value; thus emerges a posture in which social embedding ('entanglements', in Keane's terms) is explicitly strived for, but with these embedding connections ideally also validated in terms of consonance with inner states.

Elaborating his argument about sincerity practices and their relation to ideas of the autonomous individual and the transcendence of the existing social world, Keane draws on Bruno Latour to speak of 'purification' practices; attempts to separate 'humans and things, culture and nature' (2007: 23), which both authors see as characteristic of modern thought and action – and, both emphatically state, not successful ones. Much of the work of Protestant reform, Keane argues, is purification work, trying to organise people's worlds such that the things of this world, which include material things, but also ritual practices, forms of words – indeed 'forms' in general – are overcome, transcended, in favour of a 'disembodied spirit, a pure idea, or an unsullied faith' (2007: 79).

What I would argue we see among sacramentally minded new evangelicals is a distinctly 'modern' attempt at *de*purification, in service of an eminently Protestant ideal, of individual attainment of a well-discipled self. Much as Keane warns that purification work defeats itself, by generating forms that then form part of the sociomaterial furniture of the world that needs to be overcome in further purification attempts (2007: 79), it might be said that the depurification work of these contemporary reformers is continually revealing its 'modern' derivations and motives, as people seek 'authentic' (Bielo 2011a) practices and forms that precisely figure real, interior essences ('transcendence' by another, more earthy-sounding, name), and adopt practices intended to settle communities into webs of inherited tradition, as we see in LW's work to create 'liturgical' worship, only to find that questions of 'meaning' and sincerity questions, and the need for stimulating novelty, proliferate, and so work to find shared, unmodern practice actually generates large amounts of sincerity talk and negotiation work to resolve matters among individual wills.

The new evangelicals' depurification practices are also a purification process of their own in a different way; in which the contemporary American evangelical world's semiotic habits and

forms are seen, as the Dutch missioners saw the practices of Sumbanese locals, as too 'cultural', too unseemly embedded in the styles and social demands of modern America. Examples people often gave of sullying things were the American flag at the Baptist altar, and the whole look, feel, and socioeconomic context of the paradigmatic megachurch, its 'consumerist' character – telling invocations of the church's relationship to temporal powers and worldly materiality as the sources of its corruption.

The social and material embeddedness of the American evangelical church is the object of the current movement's purification practices, which in a way seek the 'transcendence' that Keane saw his missionaries pursuing, only by route of embedding in a *different* set of social and material forms; ones determined by their lack of association with the corrupted practices of the contemporary evangelical subculture. This is the pursuit of purification by way of a critique of purification.

The explicit demotion of certain classic Protestant language practices on grounds of their inauthenticity, in comparison to the living of a good life in community, moves propositional language into the category of worldly accretion to which Protestant thought, with its purifying projects, has historically more often assigned material mediations. Anthropologists have noted the various ways that Protestants have found to desocialise and dematerialise the Christian message, from classic Reformation *sola scriptura* Biblicism to moves away from even that level of mediation, for example Engelke's ethnography of the Zimbabwean Christians 'who don't read the Bible' (Engelke 2007; Keane 2007), because they denigrate the written form and see spirit at work only in the 'live and direct' voice – which, Engelke points out, is not entirely free of mediation either, being a corporeal product like everything else. In this North American context, it is practices intended to index sincerity that tend to be seen as worldly interference; with, by contrast, certain prescribed verbal formats, 'entextualised' in Keane's words (2007), that is, disembedded from immediate context for wider cultural circulation, that are celebrated as indexes of an individual's sincerity in faith *by virtue of* their entextualised character, which signals the person's sincere commitment to submitting themselves to the church and its traditions, as opposed to an 'individualistic' desire to speak their own unique word.

Thus many in this movement embrace the use of early-church creeds, with those creeds' terseness, and their aura of antiquity, indexing 'tradition', as counter to individualistic faith – as Keane notes in a discussion (1997) of entextualisation, 'to the extent that texts can move across contexts, they allow people to create the image of something durable and shared'. He goes on to remark that people can find 'authority' 'to derive…from [the entextualised forms'] global reach

and their ancient origins' (1997: 64). In this movement, opening oneself to these intimations of the wider church body are important ingredients in a person's self-formation as a disciple of a large and ancient faith. The form of such decontextualised creeds – comparatively brief, lapidary – is interpreted by new evangelicals as being rich with the contextuality of church history, much redolent of the amodern embeddedness they seek. Thus, the creed, the form of sincerity speech discussed by Keane as paradigmatic of Protestant linguistic ideology, is embraced by these Protestants as a sign of a move *away from* sincerity speech, away from a mode of faith in which an individual takes the views of a given church and scrutinises them for accordance with their own interior positions. The 'ancient' creeds in this view are thus almost de-languaged, made into actions, rather than sincere words. These creeds are words as 'ritual', imagined as such.

Which is not to say people in this movement do not worry about entextualisation, as Keane says people sometimes do – usually, he says, seeking remedy in sincerity practices of various kinds (2007: 15). But the entextualisation they worry about is the contemporary evangelical kind, that seems to them to participate in the 'abstraction' work of modernity that they try to turn against. Examples might be the decontextualising practices of picking out Bible verses to 'prooftext' a rhetorical point, or Bible-mining for aphoristic nuggets to connect to one's life dilemmas, practices mocked and avoided by many in this movement. Some of the enthusiasm for practices such as the recital of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds has to do with what people regard as their restricted character, as regards 'sets of propositions'. Although outsiders might view these creeds as rife with proposition, the people I knew tended to value them as blessedly terse signals of faith, as compared with the longer statements of faith, liberally annotated with Biblical references for each proposition, compiled by evangelical churches to signal to prospective attenders what to expect as regards doctrines on which there is much division – say, the principle of male 'headship', or the 'inerrancy' of Scripture.

Such statements, and the assent to them people are sometimes expected to indicate before joining a congregation, were under discussion among a few LW members one morning (prompted by my questioning). Sally remarked disapprovingly on the idea that you 'literally sign on' to this long statement, and then somehow you're 'saved' by 'saying the right words' – you know, she said – I believe in Scripture, sole inspiration, inerrant, infallible etc., etc. Craig recalled with distaste how he'd had to sign a doctrinal statement when he was baptised at one church he'd gone to in Quimby, and he said that here at LW, we're 'trying to do more than that'. For a group like LW, 'shared practice', not 'assenting to' propositions, was the declared cornerstone of the faithful life, thus their covenant was a list of 'values' and practices, not doctrines (although it implicitly rested on doctrine). Sally said it explicitly: faith *as practice* was the 'theological

underpinning of the covenant'. *Doing* – liturgy, and faithful work in the world – was the active site of the 'ongoing conversion' into being 'a more loving person' that a group such as LW was working to achieve, with speaking one's faith correspondingly demoted.

In the classical credal form, as described by Keane, a 'performative of assent' (2007: 70) is attached to a set of doctrinal claims, which seems to render the speaker a kind of 'subject' to the 'object' of their own 'belief', exerting agency over their own interiority thus (2007: 71). Keane notes that the form of the creed is public, as is its performance, and so the 'semiotic form facilitates a disciplinary practice that tends toward bringing inner thoughts into line with public doctrine' (2007: 71-2). With their anxiety about the particular kind of attempted social control implied by the credal form and process – their objection seeming to rest on the fact that, being an attempt at control, it fails to reliably tie up interior conviction with public statements, that this is not a reliable kind of sincerity practice – LW members shun credal practices in favour of performatives of social commitment. The community's covenant begins with 'covenant commitments', which are linked back to a list of 'values' – things like 'stability', 'simplicity', 'justice and peacemaking', 'geographic proximity'. The recurring performative at the start of each commitment is 'we commit to…'. The community's orientations, of opposing 'individualism', and of emphasising ethical 'practice' over doctrinal orthodoxy, are distilled in this usage of 'we commit', instead of 'I believe'. The intent to bring individual interiority into line with public orthodoxy (even if that is an orthodoxy of practice, not belief) remains, and indeed in the comparative specificity of the practices committed to, constrains agency further than does a statement of assent to theological propositions, which, in themselves, do not prescribe action (part, of course, of the point of the 'grace' over 'law' aspect of Christian doctrine).

In general, among many new evangelicals, earthly practice and materiality are, we might say, the new 'immateriality' (Engelke 2007) – that sought-after beyondness whose 'lure' (2007: 22) pulled the inheritors of Reformation's iconoclasm toward language and away from things, and toward language removed from obvious material mediation. Describing his Zimbabwean anti-biblicists, Engelke notes that the theme of suspicion of the text has a tradition within Christianity, citing among others St Francis criticising "spiritually empty book-learning" (2006: 66), and noting how this admonition has been picked up by some 'prophet' traditions, including the one he studied.

One of the commonest phrases I heard in the field was the quote attributed to St Francis: 'Preach the gospel. If necessary, use words.' Engagements in the material world; above all, the 'building' of 'relationships' through shared practices of work and reciprocity, but also the materiality-focused 'liturgy' practices mentioned above, are seen as infinitely preferable to

preaching at people, with the material forms engaged to these relational ends – gifts of food, artworks collectively produced – reverberating with the aura of their production in and of 'relationship'.

But, much as forms of Christianity might, as Cannell argues, operate as the 'repressed' of secular anthropology (2005: 341), modern habits, such as understanding objects as referential Peircean 'symbols', and valuing interior intention above all, utterly inhabit this subculture which seeks strenuously to repent from the 'modern'. While they avoid 'using words' to preach the gospel to the unconverted, these new evangelicals, as we have seen, 'use words' extensively in their religious work, which is, as they would tell you, primarily the work of 'relationship'. Painstakingly negotiated and reviewed 'relationship', the cultivation of intimacy, understood above all as reflective interaction among individuals (for which projects of material work, and gift exchange, offer a pretext), are ethical practices built in very large part out of words – indeed 'sincere' words, because relationship intrinsically involves honest mutual self-report.

Keane's abstraction/purification, Engelke's 'immateriality', and what numerous commentators (among them Cannell 2005; Parry 1986; Weber 1968) have designated 'asceticism', are different ways in which Christians, and especially Protestant Christians, have pointed themselves toward the aspect of their religion that takes them beyond this world. Parry (1986) has associated practices of 'renunciation', such as the 'free gift', with 'ethical salvation religions', in which a world free from suffering is posited, and ethically striven towards, engendering a kind of '*contemptus mundi*', in which 'the notion of salvation itself devalues this profane world of suffering' (1986: 468). Troeltsch concurs, defining asceticism as 'denial of the world' (1931: 474).

In an article that uses ethnographic data from American Mormonism to argue that not all forms of Christianity are 'ascetic', and that anthropologists appear to imagine them so, for reasons to do with secular anthropology's own incorporation of 'ascetic' modes of thought from certain Christian traditions, Cannell (2005) describes asceticism as the idea of 'the inferiority and sinfulness of the body compared to the soul' (2005: 341). Here, the anthropologist's revision tracks with the reflexive philosophies of the new evangelicalism itself, emergent from a Christian academia that, as Hunter (1987) observed nearly thirty years ago, has incorporated much from the secular academy's intellectual and accreditation practices. 'Asceticism', in Weber's usage in *Economy and society* (1978), is an 'attitude towards salvation, which is characterised by a methodical procedure for achieving [it]' (1978: 541). 'Methodical' (2005: 107; 1978: 541), 'active ethical behaviour' (1978: 541) in some kind of relation to 'salvation', is central to Weber's idea of asceticism, whether it is the anxious striving of the Calvinist who, feeling

himself alone and unsure of his fate in relation to salvation, works hard in a rationalised calling, or the ethical travails of someone more confident of what she has to do to gain salvation.

This kind of asceticism was very much embraced by the people I knew; however, they self-consciously rejected the 'dualism' of religious modes that insisted on the utter separation of soul and body, earth and heaven, text and context (Keane 2007), the 'asceticism' described by Cannell. My informants' much-articulated commitment to 'holism' displays a commitment to Weber's asceticism, in the sense that no arena of life was exempt from self-controlled and 'methodical' ethical oversight and direction; but at the same time it shows a commitment to a vision of salvation that does not, as Mormon theology does not, 'insis[t] on an opposition between this world and the next world' (2005: 338), and it behaves in relation to material things – or tries to so behave – in ways that reflect this openness to immanence.

Weber defines 'world' as it is used 'in the religious sense' as 'the domain of social relationships' (1978: 542), experienced by those of ascetic bent as a place of potential distraction and temptation, but for the 'inner-worldly asceti[c]' (1978: 542) also potentially the place on whose ground salvation-focused strivings are enacted, perhaps with a view to the world's transformation. Innerworldly asceticism involves action 'within the institutions of the world but in opposition to them' (1978: 542). In the new evangelicals' case, the organic world, of persons and of things that are the product of growth or cultivation, is where potentially salvific behaviour is transacted, while it is the manufactured and organised world – the 'institutions', as Weber says – that are the site of problematic 'world'; in this context of anti-modernity, understood as instances of 'abstraction', as opposed to (potentially salvific) embodiment. As adherents of a salvation religion, people did very much imagine two incommensurable worlds. But where some other Protestant imaginations take an ascetic stance against the material and bodily world, here, the ethical discourse turns on the importance of embracing the material and the particular, in the reverberant Christian trope of 'incarnation', a term which people used frequently to point to their imagination of corporeal presence in 'the neighbourhood'. Part of the vision of modernity, Keane says, is 'the work of purification that aims to abstract the self from material and social entanglements' (2007: 201). Incarnation, by contrast, is about reembedding the self in such entanglements, and forming the self ethically by way of that reinsertion.

There is thus in this movement a classically Christian anti-worldly cast of mind, in which 'the world of man and of social institutions' is demoted in relation to what Dumont calls the 'individual-in-relation-to-God' (Dumont 1985: 98), with the implied insistent tug away from 'world' and toward transcendence, but in conjunction with an explicitly elaborated anti-

asceticism; a much-articulated determination to embrace the thingness of things, to, in the words of Neighborhood Circle's cofounder, 'plunge our hands into the dirt', to neither flee the world in sectish isolation, nor make like those conservative evangelicals who reject ecological concerns because the earth will burn up in the 'end times' anyway (Merritt 2010). There is of course something of the Puritan settlers in this earth-focused vision, with its affiliation of land and its cultivation with the hope for a new, redeemed community that reflects God's city (Lane 2002).

Cannell's argument, and its reflexive, self-critiquing tone and intent, is uncannily parallel to the arguments of the new evangelicals themselves, as regards the non-ascetic potentials of Christianity. There is a sense in which their position on such matters is an ethical call to do concepts differently; to make 'otherworldliness' (2005: 338) – the transcendent – something that has intrinsically, indeed *materially*, to do with this world. Cannell writes of Mormonism that it 'does not view the world as the inverse of the life to come' (2005: 351). New evangelicals do, I think, see the life to come as something quite distinct from this world, but the difference lies not in a material/immaterial distinction, but in the extent of mutual ethical oversight and relations of reciprocity.

The denigration of 'world' that Parry claims is necessitated by the positing of salvation here takes as its object the things of this world that are 'abstract', that is, that participate in modernity's vain attempts at transcendence. Thus in this view, materiality, and the next world – the redeemed world – are brought alongside one another against the common contrastive term of modernity, in a religious vision of people who, in their reflexive, psychologically inflected, technique-focused self-governing work towards deconverting from the modern, repeatedly display their own modernity.

The postmodernity story

New evangelicals' preoccupation with modernity underpins their liturgical practices, their ecclesiology (wariness of large churches), their approaches to scripture, politics and what evangelicals sometimes call 'the culture'. A particular story is told in this subculture about there taking place, in the recent past and continuing into the present, a historical shift from a modern era into a postmodern one; entraining striking, if complex, opportunities for church renewal. This claim of an epoch shift is iterated by countless new-evangelical (and, indeed, non-evangelical) scholars and popular writers (for example, Butler Bass 2012; Frost & Hirsch 2003;

Gibbs & Bolger 2005; Grenz & Franke 2001; Halter & Smay 2008; Harding 2009; Jones 2008; Kimball 2003; Leo 2013; McLaren 2008; Sine 2008; Tickle 2008).

The postmodernity idea as it pertains to Western missionary Christianity emerged from the 1980s onwards in the context of the missiological challenge of a Western world no longer under a Christian 'sacred canopy' (Berger 1990). As Bielo has noted, American evangelical theologian Robert Webber was an important early proponent of the liturgical turn, especially drawing on the Anglican tradition. In his influential book *Ancient-future faith* (1999), Webber makes a case for churches adopting liturgical worship as a way of creating 'community' in a 'postmodern' world. Webber was one of the first in this subculture to adumbrate the claim that modernity is 'dying' (1999: 7), and is being replaced by the condition of postmodernity. Webber sets his book's task as being to discern the affinities between what he calls 'classical Christianity' and postmodern thought (1999: 7), mapping the history of the Western church in a historical sequence from 'ancient', through 'medieval', 'Reformation', and 'modern', to a 'postmodern' 'paradigm' (1999: 34). In the 'modern' era, he argues, 'individualism', 'rationalism', and 'factualism' dominated thought. 'Building Christianity around reason became the crucial task of Enlightenment Christians' (1999: 18). Now, under postmodern conditions, there is a 'shift into mystery, holism' (1999: 22).

Webber's explicit message to 'we evangelicals' (1999: 22) is that modernity and its apparent certainties must not be clung on to, but that 'postmodernity', with its emphasis on 'mystery, community, and symbol' (1999: 34) actually affords great possibility for a return to 'classical Christianity', which also exhibits those features, in a striking parallelism between the earliest and latest stages of history. This is a claim that conditions of institutional fluidity and value pluralism ('postmodernity') can offer fertile soil for a return to shared meanings, through enacted rite and a common mystical relationship to 'symbol'. In the words of a popular new-evangelical prayerbook, 'liturgy is not about getting indoctrinated. Doctrines are hard things to love' (Claiborne *et al.* 2010: 11).

The concept of modernity/Enlightenment thinking functions here as a conceptual holder for two models of culture that the movement wishes to reject: a disenchanted world that is also 'secular' by virtue of functional differentiation (Casanova 1994); and a model of Christian culturedominated by an ascetic, language-centred Protestantism, of the kind that, anthropologists have observed (Cannell 2006; Harding 1991), has stood for 'religion' in much Western imagination in the decades since the setpiece performative routing of religious 'fundamentalism' in the 1925 Scopes Trial. (Fundamentalists, in this view, are inheritors of

Enlightenment thinking, through their desire to render religious truths into empirical, concrete facts and data.)

The genres of missiology, sociology, marketing, and something like prophecy merge in such writings as Webber's. In its normativity, the church-growth end of this genre has cousinship with the more prophetic style of theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas (1981) and Walter Brueggemann (2001), and together these kinds of work form a backdrop for religious action that people understand in these epochal terms. In *Resident Aliens*, Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon (1989) write of the demise of 'Christendom', the era when, in the West, Christianity was just part of the cultural air people breathed (1989: 16). The authors set rough dates for the life of what they more specifically refer to as 'Constantinianism' (1989: 17) – from the third-century Roman Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan, when Christianity became the accepted religion of the empire, to 1963, when a movie theatre opened on a Sunday in Greenville, South Carolina. With this concept of Constantinianism, a term in common currency among my informants, the authors frame the waning of Christian cultural dominance in Western society (the book is about America, really) as a chance for the church to emerge from the corruption that such dominance entails – 'we American Christians are at last free to be faithful in a way that makes being a Christian today an exciting adventure' (1989: 18).

In positing 'postmodernity', and the demise of Constantinianism, people in this heterogeneous movement seek, I argue, to manage the doubled sense of mission they inhabit, in which there is a drive to uphold a spirit of 'civility' in the context of a plural religious and social world (Hunter 1987), alongside one to promote a kind of public religion (Casanova 1994) that seeks to have transformative effects in the social and material world. The postmodernity proposition states both a dissolution of the old orders of institutional affiliation and belief, and by implication a softening of the exclusivity in the Christian claim, while at the same time claiming the possibility of a renewed common orthodoxy on the ground of shared experience and ethical behaviour – in the words of LW's Al, a hoped-for sequence of 'behaving-belonging-believing'.

Christians and the idea of modernity: anthropological viewpoints

Drawing on the work of Susan Harding (1987; 2000) on US Christian 'fundamentalist' movements, such as that of the Reverend Jerry Falwell, Cannell (2006) argues that thesemovements emerged in a context in which, 'for better or for worse' (2006: 44), most people believed that American society was becoming both more modern and, concomitantly, less religious. She writes that 'all those concerned are acting as though some…version of Weber's

theory of secularisation were an absolute truth' (2006: 32). Thus, according to Cannell, fundamentalists and secularists alike were, in this famous 'culture-wars' scenario – whose legacy dominates the imaginations of many of the Christians I knew, informing their eagerness to seek release from 'politics' imagined in these terms (Putnam & Campbell 2010) – 'enacting one particular myth about modernity'; that it is in 'essential opposition' to Christianity (2006: 32). Harding's work (1991) on the famous 1925 Scopes Trial (in Rachel Held Evans's hometown) tells the story of the trial as a 'representational event', which produced the 'discursive effect' (1991: 380) of the 'encapsulation' of what thereby came to be called 'fundamentalist' viewpoints by, within, the 'modernist story' (1991: 390), such that all concerned came to imagine this thing called Christian 'fundamentalism' within the terms of a story of modernity, as a kind of perennial defeated Other to it, a process that hid the fact that 'fundamentalism' was a 'modern discursive production' (1991: 392).

In the new evangelical movement's commitment to the idea of the death of modernity, and its replacement by postmodernity – an era filled with potentially dizzying indeterminacy, and yet vastly fertile possibility because of that – I would argue that we see a newer elaboration of the tale of the incommensurability of modernity and Christianity, in which the aims of the Protestant individual – to renew their own lives and the lives of others through discipleship in Christ – are thought to be very difficult to attain under 'modern' conditions of life. Cannell's argument that the idea of 'modernity' haunts American understandings of 'religion' on all sides, is pertinent to this movement, whose disparate practices and preoccupations, from the embrace of 'liturgy', to localism, to earnest discussions of the moral problems of 'dualism' and 'abstraction', to theological elaborations of the materiality of heaven, takes as a starting point the idea that 'modernity' has been an enveloping process that has made a true Christian life almost impossible, by virtue of its disembedding of individuals from the condition of networked reciprocity in webs of social obligation that they – and, I imagine, most anthropologists – associate with non-modern forms of social life.

Bielo's observation, that the disparate liturgical, theological, and missiological postures of the diverse 'emerging church' cohere under the sign of 'cultural critique' (2009) is part of this point. For himself, Bielo tags his informants as both 'modern' and 'late modern' (2011a: 19) subjects, identifying as 'modern' new-evangelical church planters' use of 'discourses of measurement' to plan their urban interventions, and as 'late modern' their entrepreneurial practices and habits of mind (2011a: 160-7). Elsewhere (2011b), he notes the 'irony' that 'Emerging evangelicals rely on a distinctly modern script to enact their critique of modern, suburban evangelicalism' (2011b: 279).

In a 2008 survey of anthropological treatments of Christianity worldwide, Bialecki, Haynes and Robbins, having rehearsed the familiar Weberian historico-intellectual links between Protestantism and the emergence of the value of 'individualism' (2008: 1147), remark on Christianity's 'deep heterogeneity', in relation to its capacity to 'be read as' both 'championing' and 'challenging' modernity. In contexts where modernity and, in particular, ideas of the paramountcy of the individual-in-relation-to-God are less embedded in the society in the first place, they observe Christianity's 'individuating' capacities tend to come to the fore; in societies where Christianity has been present for longer, the faith is 'more likely to be invoked to oppose the social forces that are collectively read as "modernity"', with ethnographers working in Euroamerica tending to frame Christianity as a 'self-consciously anti-modern project of subject formation'. The authors point out that some of this is a question of the lens of context; with projects that appear 'anti-modern' in the West likely appearing the opposite elsewhere (2008: 1151).

They argue that Christianity affords validity to both points of view; with the 'counter-modern' Christianity that is found in societies, such as the US, where Christianity and modernity have both been long embedded, tending to highlight the 'dependent and contingent' nature of the individual person in relation to God (2008: 1152). The observations of these authors reinforce the point that 'modernity' and Christianity are severally imagined, by Christians and non-Christian observers alike, and that seeing the two as immiscible or opposing states, as Cannell and Harding judge they have been by diverse constituencies in the US, is a culturally contingent act. I would add to this that the 'counter-modern' Christianity under study here showed its pull against modernity less through an emphasis on the person in subordinate hierarchical relation to God (though people would, of course, accept that as a given), than through a fervently ethical discourse of 'community' and 'relationship', in which 'individualism', intended in a narrower sense than the Dumontian ontological one intended by these authors, stood as the key sin emergent from modernity's conditions.

'A new heavens and a new earth'

Embedding in the organic world, and trying to live from the ground of reciprocal community, is the prophetic task of the church in this age, according to this view. New evangelicals embrace an eschatology that neither claims inevitable worldly demise before the return of Christ, as in premillennial (usually fundamentalist) theologies (Harding 2000; McDannell & Lang 1988), nor a progressive movement towards the 'Christian transfiguration of the social order', as in the

'postmillennial' eschatology associated with some early twentieth-century Social Gospel thinkers (e.g., Walter Rauschenbusch, quoted in Wacker 1983: 320; see also McDannell & Lang 1988: 333, Cannell psnl comm.). The prefigurative, temporally condensed eschatology of 'Kingdom now, not yet', briefly alluded to across this thesis, is dominant in this subculture, reflecting a positionality that embraces activism in the world, but recognises limits, and does not envisage incremental progress as likely to culminate in the good, as some of the Social Gospel reformers, with their legislative campaigns on working conditions and the like, did (Wacker 1983: 319; also Curtis 1991). As in the movement's opposition to 'Christendom', this is a somewhat anti-political vision of the good.

In his ethnography (2011a) of new evangelicals in the Midwest, Bielo explains the centrality of 'Kingdom' theology to this movement. The majority of his informants, Bielo reports, shared the view, also held, as Bialecki (2009) has noted, by members of the charismatic Vineyard movement – which has many similarities to the new evangelical outlook, including a posture of theological nonchalance and interest in 'social justice' – of God's Kingdom as being in evidence both 'now', and 'not yet'. This view, Bielo tells us, was first promulgated in something like its current form in the 1950s by Fuller Seminary theologian George Eldon Ladd (2011a: 140; 2009: 116; see also Grenz 1994; Willard 1998). In it, God's Kingdom is not utterly separate from this world, but is rather potentially emergent in moments here on earth, although it will not be fully realised before Christ's return.

Hardly anyone I knew had much time for premillennialism, which was this eschatology's primary foil. As one person put it, if church was supposed to be, in a phrase oft-repeated in this subculture, 'sign and foretaste of the Kingdom', we're not leaving much sign and foretaste if it's all just gonna be whipped away. But the 'now, not yet' position is not a wholly progressive view, either. There are certainly affinities between the 'Kingdom now, not yet' view and the Social Gospel emphasis on the Kingdom being realised here on earth: today's new evangelicals make frequent reference to the need to concentrate on life here on earth, and the language of 'Kingdom' intentionally connotes both physical place and social dispensation, as opposed to any individual person's situation. But the view is more fragmented, and not progressive over time. People spoke about 'Kingdom moments' (rather like LW's 'God sightings'), and saw the 'practices' they committed to as part of the work of, in the words of the LW covenant, 'being God's new creation', as God has 'invited humanity into' his 'dream…to dwell in creation'.

The cover of the LW community's songbook shows an image of a wooden sign tacked to the big, winding trunk of a tree, that in half-coloured-in writing reads 'God – and kids! – at work', and another sign is stuck in the ground next to the tree: 'Help Wanted'. The pursuit of 'God's

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dream', which is something that people do together, is an activity propelled by individual 'intentionality' (virtuous self-discipline), and this intention to act, the action's actually being undertaken, both at the level of the individual and at that of the group, and the action's presumed positive effects, are almost run together, conceptually, in the 'Kingdom' idea. This is quite a contrast with the absolute separation of persons from the heavenly good, bridgeable only through Christ, that one sees in a more traditional evangelical view, such as that summarised by the idea of a person 'asking Jesus into [their] heart' (another sincerity-speak formula that people expressed their dislike of). But this flowing-together of intention, action and effect also precludes progressivism of the kind described for the Social Gospellers. The language of Kingdom 'moments', 'foretastes' and 'inbreakings' is telling: this is not a path toward something, but a collective discipline to try to instantiate in the here and now realised fragments of the eschatological future. Prominent new-evangelical figure Rob Bell has put it thus: 'the merging of heaven and earth, future and present, *here* and *now*' (2012: 59).

With all the focus on the Kingdom, a place and a state imagined as both earthly and sacred, there was little talk among the people I knew of 'heaven'. In line with the rejection of 'conservative' eschatology, a proximately traditional idea of heaven as a perfect, ethereal place one goes after death as a kind of reward for good behaviour was an object of some of this subculture's critique. Communitarian neo-Mennonite and anarchist pastor and writer Mark van Steenwyk, who was a friend of several of my informants, dismissively refers to this idea of heaven as 'some magical sky-kingdom' (2013: 93). Again in line with Cannell's reminder of the earthliness of much Christian practice and thought, the Christians I knew espoused the traditional, but, as Cannell notes, generally 'backgrounded' doctrine of the 'bodily resurrection of all believers at the end of time' (2005: 341), which, she says, 'has lost ground in the popular imagination to the present-day stereotype' of heaven, as a place of "anti-embodiment" (2005: 342). This was in line with their incarnational focus, and their determination to avoid the horror of the physical and material found in the purification philosophies.

In *Surprised by Hope* (2008), British Anglican theologian N.T. Wright, popular in this subculture, argues for the view of bodily resurrection of the dead at Jesus's return, and for the idea that 'it is not we who go to heaven, it is heaven that comes to earth' (2008: 104). He argues that the Bible talks about the Kingdom of God coming to Earth, and that 'the orthodox picture is of a vibrant and active human life, reflecting God's image in the new heavens and new earth' (2008: 20). This 'will be an active place, as people, bodily resurrected' (2008: 159), bustle about, doing God's loving work (2008: 105-6). 'There will be plenty to be done, entire new projects to undertake', Wright remarks (2008: 161), echoing the methodical language of 'projects' I heard often in the

Quimby subculture. Wright implies a causative connection between action in the world now and the 'gloriously embodied reality' of 'life after life after death' (2008: 197) that he posits, saying that people's 'stewardship' of creation helps to bring it back into good order (2008: 200).

'Salvation', Wright says, is not "going to heaven", but "being raised to life in God's new heaven and new earth"' (2008: 198). In LW, members sometimes rewrote hymns and spirituals for use in gathered worship. Nate rewrote the famous hymn 'I'll Fly Away', whose lyrics sing of escape from this life, which is prison-like and wearying, into 'a land where joys will never end'. He renamed the song 'Rise to Life', and changed the refrain from joy at escape from this life to joy at a kind of resurrection within this world – the land where joys will never end becomes *this* world, not the next, as 'he' and then 'we' 'rise to life' (rather than 'fly away'), with death defeated (rather than welcomed).

But what of the people who don't end up participating in the life to come? Most people I knew were unwilling to argue in favour of Hell. This was on the basis that God was a God of love above all, and was not thought likely to want to consign people to eternal suffering. In *Love Wins*, Rob Bell (2012: 47) makes an ethically impassioned case for universalism, impugning the idea that saying the Sinner's Prayer could have a once-and-for-all salvific effect, while other people were left unsaved.

Bell's argument might be understood as a theological adumbration of what Hunter (1987) describes as 'an ethic of toleration and civility' (1987: 35), occasioned by 'intensive cultural pluralism, one of the hallmarks of the modern world order' (1987: 34-5). Interviewing American evangelical college students and seminarians in the 1980s, at the height of the prominence of the Moral Majority, Hunter found that a 'moral code of civility' (1987: 153), which expects political and religious convictions to be expressed with discretion, tact and moderation, and mostly in private, was embraced by his evangelical student informants, who were some of them embarrassed by the pugnacious sermonising of the newly prominent Religious Right (1987: 152-3). Surveying students on matters of theology, social and sexual ethics, and politics, Hunter links shifts in beliefs and attitudes, including on soteriology, to this 'ethic of civility'. Thus, 'with regard to the problem of salvation', he sees 'a certain affinity between a normative ethic of civility, tolerance, and tolerability and the theological doctrine of universalism' (1987: 47).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to make claims about historical shifts, or indeed about any causal relation between cultural politics and soteriologies, but Hunter's note of an 'affinity' between a civility ethic and universalist doctrine is worth noting. Various doctrines – exclusive salvation, penal substitutionary atonement, and predestination – were rejected, sometimes vehemently, by the people I knew on the grounds of ethics; the idea that exclusion and

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damnation were not the conceivable actions of a good God. Hunter refers to the 'social pressure' exerted on evangelicals by the 'code of civility' (1987: 184), and the sense that wider society disapproves of what is seen as the moral absolutism of evangelical positions on, say, divine judgement, or Hell (1987: 183). I would argue that for most of the evangelicals I knew, the ethic of civility was experienced as more morally compelling, and more *Christian* (understood in terms of 'love'), than any doctrines that were firm about damnation or exclusion.

But sincere individual choosing of faith matters still too. As in the area of sacrament and sincere report of faith, and what kind of 'passing out Jesus on the sidewalk' people feel it is right and efficacious to do, on the matter of salvation, new evangelicals can feel somewhat pulled between piety and universalism, and between sect and church. Emily:

> So I was always very dismissive of [the] idea of…baptising infants, and state church, and … [the] cultural Christianity kind of thing. But then, the cultural Christianity idea sort of fits better with universalism in a lot of ways. Even though – not like Catholics are universalists or anything – but…just that whole idea that…everyone is taken up in this thing, that's sort of what universalism is, you know. But then that doesn't necessarily make a lot of sense [with] the idea of free will, and choosing, and not choosing, you know.

Eschatology, ethics and politics: imagining the incommensurable

A new creation that will be earthly and in some way coexistent with our work in the world now, and an eschatology of exemplary action, raise questions about the kind of activism this Christianity might represent. The Christians I knew, anti-political in a way – in that they rejected all forms of power – were nevertheless seized with the urgency of political affairs, and most people took a broadly left-radical perspective, with anti-statism and anti-corporatism aligning in a posture that was not quite revolutionary, but was certainly no friend of a liberal democratic settlement. Particular concerns were the treatment of racial minorities, including immigrants, in the US, and the complicity of American middle-class consumer life in economic exploitation, war (Iraq had formed the backdrop to a lot of people's 'deconversions' away from the evangelical mainstream), and structures of racism. Many people spoke the language, briefly mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, of 'Empire', and of Constantinism. In their politics, modernity, 'abstraction', and the idea of power stood arrayed as the gospel's obverse, imposing an

expectation on Christians to exemplify in their actions in this world something else; a 'new creation'.

Mark van Steenwyk, whose website Jesus Radicals was popular among some people I knew, published a book while I was in the field, and visited Quimby for an evening of discussion in my friend Caleb's living room to promote it. Mark had cofounded a neo-Mennonite intentional community in Minnesota. His book, which was called *The Unkingdom of God* (2013), exemplifies much of this movement's outlook on politics. In it, he argues that the Kingdom of God 'isn't apolitical', it's just political in a 'radically different way' (2013: 94); subversive of empire and power in general, in positing 'mercy not vengeance', 'peacemaking instead of warmongering' (2013: 95). The book seeks to remind readers of Christianity's own imbrication with colonialism and conquest ('Christianity is conquest' (2013: 26), he says); and Steenwyk uses the term 'empire' in much the way that it is used by leftist scholars Hardt and Negri, who he cites (2013: 27), before tying the concept back to the biblical context and the idea of God's Kingdom, in a classically new-evangelical merger of biblical and academic postcolonial discourses.

This idea, of Christianity as profoundly political, but not on the world's terms, is conveyed by Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder, whose 1972 book *The politics of Jesus* is an important background influence on current Christian writers in this genre. Yoder argues that Jesus's message was a political one, but he defines 'political' to mean something like brotherly-love (Weber 1974) ethics on a geopolitical scale. Key to this vision of a kind of Jesus-focused politics-against-politics is the biblical concept of the 'powers and principalities'.

The 'powers and principalities' appear in a passage in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6: 12), in which the apostle urges Christians to arm themselves spiritually, 'not against flesh and blood', but against the 'dark forces' of the world, through which the devil works. The concept is used by people in this movement to mean instantiations of evil, of the demonic, in the world's systems and structures. It is a notably capacious term, which van Steenwyk, for instance, defines as 'social structures…that "manage" humanity' (2013: 44); 'structures and ideas and systems' (2013: 46) that keep persons at one remove from each other, such that they keep people from acting out of love. The movement's philosophic and semiotic anti-modernism, discussed above, comes in here: 'The powers' (as people would often shorthand them) are, van Steenwyk writes, dependent on 'abstraction' to survive (2013: 45), abstraction being 'the process by which ideas are distanced from objects' (2013: 44). This distancing helps to keeps people from encountering other people and their suffering directly, and thus 'abstraction begets evil' (2013: 45).

Objections to rites and symbols associated with the 'powers' were common. LW members sometimes did an alternative Fourth of July celebration; an event which was part send-up of the

real thing (Nate dressed as a comic Uncle Sam, reading a 'State of the Kingdom of God' speech, Emily as a carnivalesque Statue of Liberty) and partly a rite to, in Sally's words, 'celebrate the humble Lamb of God, not the powerful nation…kind of up and against the Fourth of July national hoo-hah, to say we belong to a different nation, and it's a crucified lamb, not a warrior'.

Caleb, a social worker who had once been a right-wing conservative Baptist eager to get to Iraq to fight America's enemies, was by the time I knew him a pacifist and a Christian anarchist, vehemently opposed to America's wars. He was to go on to pastor a church for homeless people that did advocacy work, as well as offering support to 'our friends who live outside', in the respectful language of the movement. His words in an interview with me offer an evocation of this movement's stance on theology in its relation to politics.

> A question that for me at one point was central, is less and less central for me. That's the question of does God exist, like, is all of this true?...I'm less and less interested in asking those kinds of questions, and I'm more and more interested in asking, is consumer capitalism true?....is the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Roman imperial story, is that true?...I can…look at the Bible [and] say, well, no, here is a narrative which is at least attempting to cut those stories off at the knees.

He argued for the validity of what Christians often call 'mustard-seed' acts, tiny, local acts of kindness and community cooperation, as against the money-saturated world of national politics, which he reviled.

Caleb was far from being the only person I knew in this movement who spent a large part of his life advocating for vulnerable people and acting consciously in ways that related to the structures of power around him. The idea was to be, more than to build, an alternative. In an article on the temporal and political orientations of members of a Southern Californian congregation in the charismatic Vineyard church-planting movement, Bialecki describes a church which communicates the message that 'politics and religion' are 'indissociable' (2009: 112); with a pastor who calls for aid to the poor from public and private sources and an end to killings in Iraq, and prays for the tearing down of the US's border fence with Mexico (2009: 112, 115). Bialecki notes that this church's outlook is nested within a wider scene of American evangelicals turning to attend to political issues, including slavery and environmental protection (2009: 113). He draws out a disparity, as he sees it, between the ethical-political aspirations expressed in this church, and what church leaders seem prepared to do to help achieve the political changes they pray and preach about. The pastor and his congregants do not join a march in support of immigrants' rights, Bialecki notes, in spite of the call to 'tear down' the border wall (2009: 116); he gives other examples. 'Specific calls for justice are not associated with any programmatic

course of action' (2009: 115), a condition which Bialecki calls a 'disconnect', and which he links to the eschatological outlook that Vineyarders share with the new-evangelical Christians of my own study – the view that the Kingdom of God will only come in full when Jesus returns to Earth, but that it can be 'model[led]' (Bielo 2011a: 144) in the here and now. Bialecki sees this doctrine as offering a temporal picture that makes planning and a practical forward orientation difficult, as 'what believers call for is always a "radical" justice that must mark its alterity, its link to the divine, by rejecting quotidian forms of practice that could be given a space in existing social arrangements' (2009: 116).

Bielo has challenged Bialecki's claim about the stilling effect on believers of 'now, not yet' eschatology, offering an example of a pastor and a congregation in an economically depressed Ohio town, whose 'now, not yet' eschatology he sees at work in their decision to merge their majority-white church with a black church in the poor part of town in which they had chosen to settle. Bielo says that the leadership of this church was convinced that racial 'problems' in the town were likely to continue, but that nevertheless it was possible to 'model' the Kingdom with action, such as the bringing together of these two churches, and that this modelling could, further, have a 'compel[ling]' effect on others in the town (2011a: 148). For these Christians, 'now, not yet' offered a foundation for practice and directed hope, not inaction. Elisha (2011b) has noted that 'the Kingdom of God functions in the religious lives of evangelicals as a motivational paradigm for various forms of evangelistic and humanitarian action', 'predicated' as it is, he says, on the idea that the 'Kingdom is fundamentally immanent, even tangible, in the here and now' (2011b: 244).

The Christians I knew in Quimby did not seem to me to be kept from public action by their sense that the Kingdom was 'incommensurable' (Bialecki 2009: 116) with the temporality of this world, although it is true that their general disparagement of electoral politics meant they were not much politically engaged in that sense. Instantiating the good, and bearing witness against the bad – as when Anne went to witness and comfort when a local homeless encampment was evicted – were the tasks of the church. Performative political protest, in the vein of the Catholic Berrigan brothers' anti-war protests, and the anti-nuclear Plowshares movement, was favoured and admired, as 'prophetic critique'.

This 'prophetic' work did not participate in a model of political action as a 'programmatic course of action' (2009: 116) of a kind that Bialecki seems to endorse; but that does not mean that it was not political in the sense of publicly directed, and intended to have effects. The temporality here is not linear, but nor are futures foreclosed – people took action that had proximate, practical goals in mind. But in their generalised stance against power, and against the 'evil' of abstraction,

that is, of systems unfolding beyond the remit of the interpersonal, there did appear to be a sense that certain things were not possible in this world as it was.

Chatting with Emily about politics and change over preparations for Thanksgiving dinner, I made a pitch to her for the virtues of representative social democracy as a salve for some social ills. She looked a bit unimpressed, saying it was hard to get enthused about such a pallid vision, and as for revolution, well, that just changes the personnel in power. It's still power, she said. In the end, really, it's the hope for the Kingdom of God, she reflected in her usual quiet, thoughtful tone.

In a discussion about the ethic of 'brotherliness' one finds, he says, in salvation religions, Weber remarks this ethic's immiscibility with politics, given that brotherly love and the legitimate violence of the state do not mix (1974: 333-5). The partially immanentised vision of the new creation, in which action in this world in some sense flows into action in the next, and action now prefigures the millennium, proposes that the ethic of brotherliness will one day eclipse the world of politics, which is underpinned with violence. In this view, the ethical will one day come to engulf the political, as per the Kingdom action that Christians such as LW are trying to prefigure now, in their rescaling of civic life onto very small patches of ground, such that social and economic structures might be assimilable to the scale of inter-individual encounter. Rather than claiming, as Bialecki does, that 'Kingdom now, not yet' theology cuts off near-term planning and political action among left-leaning 'progressive' Christians, I suggest that, in regard to the new evangelical Christians I knew in Quimby, one way of parsing 'Kingdom' talk is to say that people are seeking, or imagining, a thorough ethicisation of the public, seemingly incorrigibly political, world.

Keane has remarked of 'modernity' that 'as an *idea*, it has a pervasive and powerful role in the popular imagination' (2007: 48). The bundled sign of 'modernity', and its ethical challengers, particularity and narrative, enable this movement's thinkers to work out a biblical and missionary way of being in the world that comports with the ethic of civility *in its very grain*. Hence the very popular tropes of 'tribe' and 'story', which resonate through congregational and individual language and Christian academic writing, as signals of both modest identity and an acknowledgement of identity as relative, *and* something romantically compelling as a source of moral coherence. The idea of modernity allows people to pursue with equal fervour an open and inclusive vision of God and the redemptive possibilities of all people's work in the world; and the hope of a deprivatised, even desecularised social world (eventually), in which all of life knits together in a moral coherence of which 'community', soldered through ethics, is the sign.

Conclusion

Sometimes, living in the bosom of the LW community, witnessing the warmth of connection among individuals and families; the evident joy people often took in one another's company, in a conversation, a job or a meal well shared, I did nevertheless from time to time wonder about, I suppose, the contrivance of it all.

I was part of a LW texting thread on my phone, rather like the social media app Whatsapp, and so I received lots of messages every day as part of the group. These often concerned practicalities, sometimes it was people sharing news, or asking for favours or prayers, or just sending round a joke. One longish thread one evening concerned Nate needing an onion for the dinner he was cooking. He texted to see if anyone had one, and various replies came – Barb had an onion! – and so there ensued a back-and-forth about which of Barb's kids would come round with the onion, when they would come, etc. Eventually the news reached us all that Barb's daughter Lisa was on her way, onion in hand. I remember thinking as I received all the messages: it might have been quicker for Nate to just ask a housemate to pop in the car to the store five minutes away and pick up a bag of onions. I mentioned this, jokingly, to Emily when we were talking one evening about community. I suggested that sometimes people in LW contrived relational situations out of the tiniest matters, and did they really need to be so thorough in this formative work? She demurred thoughtfully, as was her way:

> I don't know. I think maybe in some ways the whole independence thing is this giant façade; that we've this sort of illusion that we're having a society, like, that we're pretending we don't need each other, and all the while desperately needing each other, but mostly creating these crazy chains where the need is met very indirectly. But then there's some other ways in which we just go without, if we don't have, I don't know what it is, connectedness with other people, like, interdependence – it does seem somehow very fundamentally human to need other people.

The contrivance, then, was not contriving to involve relationship-building in the tiniest matters of everyday life – what I took to be one of LW's core disciplines – but the elaborate modern fantasy purveyed by capitalist marketers; that we, as humans, don't need each other utterly, that we can get all we need from stores and consumer goods and the things of the service economy.

This thesis has in part been about a struggle to be a particular kind of ethical person in the modern world, under conditions where the differentiation of spheres of economy and state stretch and split into parts the stuff of the moral individual across the vast canvas of 'a

society', making ethical coherence as an individual-in-relation-to-God-and-others difficult for persons to sustain. The ideological commitment to locality of groups such as LW is one strategy employed to right this situation by people convinced of the paramount value of the individual-in-relation- to-God-and-others.

In his 1994 discussion of an apparent return of 'public religion' across diverse societies in the modern world, where various theoretical assumptions about the continuing march of 'secularisation' had once presumed that religion's public face would diminish over time under the combined pressures of functional differentiation, declining observance, and privatisation of religion, Jose Casanova argues that no assumptions should be made about inevitable decline on all these fronts. His analysis partitions 'secularisation', which he says ought not to be theoretically dismissed in toto, into these three distinct processes – differentiation, decline of religion, and privatisation of religion – and makes a case for differentiation as a going concern, while the other two do not necessarily follow from it (1994: 7). As religions in different ways reassert their authority to engage publicly in various ways, we see, he argues, a 'deprivatisation' (1994: 6) of religion that takes place alongside, and is not intrinsically incompatible with, the 'functional differentiation' of the spheres of economy, state and science in which, he says, the core of secularisation consists (1994: 19).

Neither 'public' nor 'private' were terms much favoured among the communitarian Christians I knew in Quimby. The term that people favoured was 'common' – the common good, common ground, the 'commons'. Within the LW community, we have seen how domestic spaces, such as the Barn household that the Hass family shared with me and with the collective functions of the church, are filled with the artefacts of collective life – a document of belonging in the covenantal 'quilt', the tithing box, the whiteboard and projector for the meetings and the various plans for action. What does the 'common' denote in this communitarian world? In part, it denotes – as per Emily's point about people's affective and practical needs for each other – an ethicised alternative to the 'public'; a way of being together as individuals, knit together through bonds of affect and care that enfold together practical life provisions and mutual ethical oversight, ideally in the stead of the bonds of what Durkheim called the 'organic solidarity' (1984 [1893]) of a society organised through a division of labour.

But, as we have seen throughout the thesis, the people attempting this rewiring of connections are themselves products of the differentiated and rationalised world of modernity, and characteristic components of its different spheres may be discerned in the acts and artefacts they gather together to formulate the 'common' in defiance of it. We have discussed the signs of the

contemporary white-collar workplace in the techniques, administrative and interpersonal, that LW uses to form itself as a collective, but I would suggest that the main template for the 'common' is a different sphere of differentiated modern society; the domestic. The flipcharts and marker pens and scheduled 'chats' reside inside domestic spaces; the domestic spaces encompass them. Recall that LW seek to be the 'family' of God, and the sociality of the American bourgeois family, dominated by the values of unconditional love and interpersonal negotiation, is the template this group draws most heavily on as it works to construct the 'common' from the materials furnished by the separate spheres of modern life function.

Beyond the church community's bounds, I would argue that it is the hope of the localist project more broadly to build the 'common', a space and a condition to, ultimately, supplant the realm of the public, and that this 'common' stylistically and affectively resembles the domestic sphere. Thus do projects of street art and festivity, and everyday habits of exchange, lay the ground for and furnish neighbourhood living rooms, spaces beyond the household's perimeter that are intended to feel like 'home' for everyone. In a breakfast meeting about the South Otago Project, speaking of the small clutch of blocks in which LW members resided, I heard Nate lament, as I had before, that 'ninety per cent of our neighbourhood is functionally private' – that is, not shared, not a home space for all, together. When these localists speak of 'the common', what is being envisaged is not so much a public square, with its competing desires and neutral spaces, but something more intimate and mingled. This, of course, is one of the reasons that size matters – for all the movement's styles of bureaucracy and planning, the goal of this genre of neighbourhood improvement is not the provision of amenities to a plural public, but the creation of the conditions of life for a cohesive moral community that looks and functions like what Jared in the 'family of God' meeting referred to as a 'healthy family'.

To return to Casanova, then: these 'countercultural' Christians, as we have seen, say that they are not distressed by religious decline, nor does its privatisation seem to animate them much – indeed the repugnance at 'Constantinism', and the Anabaptist insistence on church independence of state, show the desire for religion to be independent from power politics. But Casanova's other secularity element, differentiation, is felt as offence in these people's collective marrow. Economy, governance, knowledge – these ought, by rights, to imbricate one another, with the lives of individuals and the systems for life-provisioning and comity and thriving being identified together, under a canopy of collective moral oversight. Remembering to need each other, in our whole personhoods, even when the provisioning behemoth of 'economy' tries to plug us into its systems of indirection (see Emily's remarks above, about needs being met 'indirectly'), is the daily discipline that points toward the creation of this 'common'.

I have said that, notwithstanding the ideology of anti-individualism, localist communitarianism has centrally to do with ethically honing, perfecting, and rescuing from organic solidarity the moral individual. Durkheim's summary of the irony of organic solidarity is as follows: 'On the one hand, each one of us depends more intimately upon society the more labour is divided up, and on the other, the activity of each one of us is correspondingly more specialised, the more personal it is' (1984: 85). Thus the kind of 'individualism' that is reviled by the communitarians is emergent from the conditions of substantial human interdependence.

This is an aspect of the condition of what have sometimes been called 'complex societies'. 'Simplicity', a term condensing values of thrift, asceticism, aesthetic beauty, and connoting practices of life-provisioning that involve a commitment to gift exchange, was a much-invoked term of approval among the localists I knew. People sought simplicity in their food, clothes, worship, daily routines, choice of wall coverings. It seemed, in a way, a curious kind of virtue, composed of many different species of the good, and the not-necessarily-good – aesthetic, ethical, organisational. And in a world in which so many people were deliberately engaging, with moral seriousness, with the demands of complexity in matters of religious understanding, ethical decision-making, intellectual endeavour, it was striking that 'simple' was, it seemed, one of the best things you could try to be.

But the preoccupation with simplicity is best understand in relation to the moral problems occasioned by structural complexity; by the fragmenting and knotting and sometimes person-engulfing puzzles posed by a functionally differentiated and technologically advanced society. 'Complexity', in that context, was a grand-scale moral evasion, a siloing of actions such that coherent moral agency is rendered almost impossible. As a practical matter, what localists called 'simplicity' was often complicated – as people laughingly observed when trying to coordinate three people's days' errands used one household vehicle (having one car between three was part of being 'simple', i.e., reducing pollution). But one car between three people was comparatively 'simple' because it was a reduced degree of capitulation to the grand scale of 'complexity', in which one buys vehicles, built under bad working conditions from degraded natural materials in a faraway country, with a resultant increase in atmospheric pollution that warms the Arctic, to cause floods in Bangladesh and get you, the purchaser, stuck in traffic, away from the ground of 'relationship'. Being imbricated in this complexity – unutterably complex as it is – is a moral temptation to stand apart from.

The authors of *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah *et al* 1985), themselves communitarians, observe a tendency in American civic thinking to feel defeated by sociological scale; they attribute this to

large-scale political imagination being stymied in America by the prevailing ideal of small-town civic engagement as the model for public life. They write, too, of 'invisible complexity' (1985: 207), in which individualist American thought tends not to admit of the structural conditions that make Americans' preferred imagined socioeconomic scenario, of market exchanges undertaken on a ground of rough social equality among individuals, not a thorough reckoning of how things actually work. In the case of the localists I knew, I would say this complexity was not invisible, so much as a moral trouble to them. Sharing in much of the American civic ideal that Bellah *et al* describe, they seek to reorganise their own social arrangements so as to extricate themselves from some of this complexity, rather than imagine it away in fantasies of 'leadership' and technical fixes, as Bellah *et al* remark is often the American tendency (1985: 208).

Where does 'religion' fit in to all this? This thesis began with the story of activist, yet disavowing missionaries; people seeking to be civil in the face of plurality, to repent from both the Christian imperialism of certain kinds of evangelism, and from the isolationism of the 'Christian bubble'. Writing on socially engaged evangelicals in suburban Tennessee, Elisha identifies four 'key themes of evangelical urbanism': 'diversity, proximity, civic pride and Christianisation' (2011b: 245). He concludes that urbanist Christians, active in socially ameliorative projects in the city and collaborating with public bodies for the common good, are, notwithstanding their general rejection of proselytising, nevertheless engaged in 'practices oriented toward systemic cultural Christianisation' (Elisha 2011a: 211). Their 'moral ambition' involves hopes to seed Christian assumptions in the public space, to have Christians become the 'chief arbiters of public morality and civic life' (2011b: 238, see also 2011a); a hope of pervasion that Elisha says is seen in their wish to 'essentially ushe[r] the Kingdom into the world' (2011b: 245).

I suspect such ideas would slightly appal the localist communitarians I knew, with 'Christianisation' sounding rather imperialist and domineering, not to say crafty. My informants' posture of disavowal in relation to seeking transformations around them was much more pronounced than it seems to have been in Elisha's informants' cases, and their turn against the evangelical mainstream was not shared in his context. But turning the ground on which sociality happens from public into common is, I believe, a live hope of these localists. A common space, as opposed to a public one, in which life functions are reoriented onto the ground of place and whole persons, is, in principle, a site of mutual moral oversight, of people acting within a shared frame. This is, I would argue, some kind of deprivatisation project; a seeking to enfold within a shared tradition, a hoped-for sequence of 'behaving-belonging-believing', in which that final term goes in and out of focus as an ambition, as individuals involved in this movement constantly query and reflect on what their faith and its sharing demands. The somewhat immanentised eschatology

we saw described in Chapter six, and the various material and ritual practices, of placemaking in Chapter two and rites of charity in Chapter four, point to an imagination of transformation and renewal as something other than the verbalised parts of familiar American sincerity-gospel iterations of 'religion'; something more diffuse and encompassing, in which salvation is not so clearly marked off from the ordinary run of things as it is in other parts of the evangelical tradition.

As we saw in chapters three and five, there are characteristics that Christian localist groups share with NGOs, in their projects of ethical governmentality, and the combination of rationalised technique and sentimental appeal. Appeals to human sympathy, and stories of 'love in action', are recurrent rhetorical moments in this subculture, in social media performances, homilies, and everyday conversation. These share airtime, as it were, with a discourse of technical fixes and programmatic action. One way of conceptualising the world of Christian localist community engagement is as a kind of subtly expansionist third sector in which, as in much of the third sector more generally, the soul of society is the primary object of engagement. Organisationally, Christian localism can look NGO-like, and it shares with NGOs its principled sense of transcending politics in favour of ethics and technical solutions.

But just as localism, in its NGO-like dimensions, in principle seeks to remake the social in terms of the interpersonal-ethical, at the same time, individuals' ethical lives – that is, the sum of the ways in which they hold themselves and undertake their material and relational activities – take up their place in a landscape viewed with a sociological and somewhat governmental, even biopolitical (Foucault 1997) eye, as localists seek to organise themselves and others to self-govern locally in ways that promote health and flourishing (to use the popular local terms). At the level of day-to-day life, then, people view themselves and others somewhat governmentally, while they hold high hopes for the social to resolve, one day, back down into the ethical – as the Kingdom of God.

Weber observed that 'the religion of brotherliness has always clashed with the orders and values of this world' (1974: 330), also noting 'the mutual strangeness of religion and politics, when they are both completely rationalised' (1974: 335). The 'basic demand for brotherliness' found in 'redemption religions' causes these to come into 'tensions' with 'the political order' (1974: 333). Taking the bird's eye view of governmentality on self and other, today's NGO-ish localists, very much adherents of the religion of 'brotherliness', can seek to be a not-politics machine, to further the remit of the ethical; and they do a little, in their plans and projects.

But above all, as Sally indicated when she said the aim of LW, for her, was to learn to become 'a more loving person', these communitarian experiments are focused on the personal piety of their

members, and the ambitious hope of creating a modest amount of goodness on a modest scale, among people they know. Organised projects of furthering the ethical slightly risk worldliness and 'abstraction', as compared with trying one's best to be and do good from the ground of belonging and ordinary life. The movement's taboos on geographical and institutional growth are the best way people in this religious reform movement have found to stabilise the commitments of their movement, which rejects the differentiating, future-oriented temporal thrust of a modern economy, while also maintaining an ethical commitment to rationalised and industrious action. A core hope, short of the Kingdom come in full, seems to be to attain a social dispensation that will enable people to more thoroughly cultivate the thoroughgoing ethical personhood for which modern societies offer the imaginative, but seldom the structural, conditions.

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