Living Grace-Fully

A Reflection on Spirit-led Community as Practiced at Pendle Hill

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are by nature social creatures. We cannot survive physically or spiritually unless in community with others. The truly solitary individual is inconceivable. The "self-made man" *(sic)* is a deceptive myth. Not only the meeting of our essential needs for food, water, clothing, and shelter, but also the formation of our spirits and personalities, depend upon complex webs of inter-relationship within human society, and upon appropriate interactions between the human estate and the rest of the natural world. Healthy communities enable people to fulfill numerous practical and spiritual responsibilities to each other in accordance with principles of justice and truth, and in a spirit of joy. It is in addressing the shared task of upbuilding authentic expressions of community that the human race experiences its noblest accomplishments and suffers its most crushing defeats.

All religious movements seeking to uplift human life have recognized that community formation is an essential aspect of our growth, both as individuals and as a people gathered to enact a spiritual vision. But religion is concerned not only with small communities like Pendle Hill. The great communities of faith are very large. One of the main functions of religion is to preserve, to teach, and to insure the continued availability of the gathered wisdom of an entire culture, and to inspire love and enthusiasm for this wisdom. With their various scriptures and traditions, the great communities of faith hold up for us a vision of human life expressing our best possibilities, showing us their nobility and attractiveness, drawing us to them. The vision of human life which a religion upholds incorporates a complex fabric of attitudes, habits, and practices which form a whole in a way which excites spiritual enthusiasm. Often succeeding as they do in orienting and defining entire civilizations, such religious visions enable populations of countless millions of people to relate to each other so that life flows along in predictable and natural-seeming patterns which almost everyone can regard as appropriate and good. In order to understand fully the functioning of community at Pendle Hill, it is necessary to recognize that there is a legitimate *conservative* dimension to Spirit-led, or religious, community formation. A religious community exists, at least in part, to preserve, to teach, and to insure the continuation of a spiritual vision.

At the same time, there is also a *revolutionary* dimension to Spirit-led community formation. This revolutionary function is most conspicuous in times of transition, when the old order is disintegrating and being replaced by something new. We ourselves live in an age when a new civilization is seeking to be born. Evidences of this abound everywhere and they need not be enumerated here. In ages of transition significant religious teachers have started communities of believers intended to be the beginning of a new culture: Jesus, Mohammed, the Buddha, LaoTsu, Confucius, George Fox, Francis of Assisi. Such sages are revolutionary in the sense that they project a revised vision or faith, and seek to nurture a new kind of human being through a revised pattern of community, hoping to inspire a new way of living and a new society, a better society than any thus far seen on earth. The use of the term "revised" is important, for rarely do great spiritual teachers propose something entirely new. They are always syncretic, always ready to acknowledge the usefulness of what has sustained others. The Christ and the Buddha, to cite two conspicuous examples, built upon the religious inheritance they found, rather than rejecting it *in toto*.

The radical dimension of the religious and community-building task, while most obvious in ages of transition, must also be kept in view in quieter times. Conditions slowly but inexorably change, new information and insight is gained, and the inevitable lapses and shortcomings of governmental, social, and religious institutions come into view. The religious sensibility must somehow stand outside of cultural and social arrangements, even while upholding them, proposing constantly an enlargement of the sustaining vision and a greater perfection in the expression it is given in institutions and practices.

It is useful to have all this in view before considering Pendle Hill in detail. It is important to understand that Pendle Hill participates in both the conservative and the revolutionary tasks of religion and of the community-building enterprise. Allowing these two aspects of the religious task -- the conservative and the revolutionary -- to interpenetrate each other, rather than dichotomizing them and then opting wholly for one pole or the other, requires wisdom and spiritual maturity. It is a theme to which this reflection on community building at Pendle Hill will return in the material below.

Arnold Toynbee, the great historian who saw humankind's spiritual quest as the driving force behind the march of civilizations and eras, observed that at the root of all faith-based efforts in community building is a belief that there exists at the foundation of reality a mysterious Presence, Supreme Being, Creative Agency, Deity, or Principle of Lawfulness which, although beyond our human capacity fully to understand or grasp, is nevertheless close enough to express a Truth of which we can become aware and to embody a Goodness for which we thirst and to which we can resonate in our way of living. He went on to observe that religious movements have in common the understanding that to achieve knowledge of God and to perceive accurately how to live in a way consistent with the Creator's goodness requires that we rid ourselves of self-centeredness. According to Toynbee, the curse of self-centeredness takes many forms, as do the strategies of various religions for struggling against it. The idea of gaining our life by losing it, the metaphor of the crucifixion, various Eastern religious disciplines for practicing emptiness or mindfulness, the use of mantras or the Jesus prayer, the Quaker practice of inner silence, the tonsure, uniform garb, the abandonment of personal given names associated with the ego structure for religious names associated with desired spiritual virtues,

and the discipline of living in community are among the insights and practices through which religious traditions seek to overcome what Thomas Merton describes as the "rigidity and harshness and coarseness of our ingrained egoism," an egoism which he further describes as "the one insuperable obstacle to the infused light and action of the Spirit of God."[1]

FOUR POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS OF SPIRIT-LED COMMUNITIES

Communities formed out of a Spirit-led or religious motive, then, tend to have four different functions or purposes. Although these four functions interrelate in sometimes complex ways, they can be thought of in pairs: two functions are directed at serving and transforming society as a whole; and two functions are focused on serving and transforming individuals.

1. Modeling a New Society.

Spirit-led communities are often established in order to enact, to demonstrate, to experience, and to experiment with a vision of human life and of human society believed to be a more perfect realization of the Creator's Truth, Goodness, and Intention than that which prevails in the world at large. Such communities are intended to be models which eventually will be applied universally. Various utopian communities, the Amish subculture, the Bruderhof, and different sorts of kibbutzim are examples of this sort of enterprise.

It is important to recognize that neither Benedictine monasteries nor Pendle Hill fit into this category, in the sense of representing in microcosm a future hoped-for universal community. Even at the height of the monastic movement few would have supposed that the celibacy and the highly regimented and cloistered life of the monks could be generalized to humanity as a whole with happy results. Rather, it was seen as fitting and good as a specialization within the community of faith for those with a particular vocation for it. Similarly, no one could imagine that an enterprise like Pendle Hill, which produces so little of the physical needs of its residents, which depends upon huge infusions of donated resources from outside itself, which contains so large a proportion of people who are on sabbatical, and where study and contemplation occupy so large an amount of many members' time, could ever be a model for an entire society, any more than a university could be a model for a total society.[2]

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[1] See *New Seeds of Contemplation* by Thomas Merton (New York: New Directions Books, 1962). Page 191.

[2] In arguing against the appropriateness of visualizing Pendle Hill as a miniature version of a future hoped-for ideal society, the writer, in the interest of simplicity and brevity, has focused only on the conspicuous characteristics of Pendle Hill which render analogizing it to society as a whole very misleading. A fuller treatment would cover several other implications of the mistaken "ideal society in miniature" approach, however. These would include, but would not be limited to, the following sorts of considerations: a) the irreconcilable diversity which is apt to manifest among different person's concepts of what an ideal society would be like, in contrast to the need of any association such as Pendle Hill to gather people to it in terms of animating values around which all can unite; b) the spiritual and practical disorders which result from trying to enact a "peculiar" way of life geared to the future when the society outside of Pendle Hill is unready to support it in the present; c) the contradiction between the Quaker spirituality of "present-

Pendle Hill, like a Benedictine monastery or a religiously affiliated school or university, represents a specialization within a broader vision of the total community of faith. Confusion can occur at Pendle Hill as a result of attempts to analogize it to a worker owned cooperative or a kibbutz, or even to a Friends meeting, all of which are at least economically self-sustaining. But even though Pendle Hill or a Benedictine monastery cannot be regarded as models in microcosm of a future society, they can still be places where practices deemed to be prefigurements of a future social order are made visible. This imaging function, this experiential and experimental dimension, are described in the next two sections.

2. Offering a Specialized Service Within a Larger Community of Faith.

A religious vision of a comprehensive society often provides for spiritual communities with specialized functions nested within it. Although Benedictine monasteries could never be visualized as models for an entire society, their life of prayer and contemplation was seen as an expression of holiness which elevated the Christian spirit of lay citizens' day-to-day interactions. They served as centers for the advancement and preservation of specialized learning which ultimately benefitted the society as a whole. This learning was concerned not only with religion, but also involved matters we would now regard as secular, although the monks themselves probably did not see it this way. But the great monasteries both reformed agriculture and advanced the study and preservation of scripture. They served to support pilgrimages and traveling ministries through their hospitality for wayfarers. Through their cultivation of a spirit of holiness, an atmosphere of contemplation, and a devotion to spiritual learning, the monasteries served as centers for the spiritual renewal of people from other walks of life who sojourned at them.

Although the analogy is not entirely exact, obviously, Pendle Hill in its essential nature resembles a Benedictine monastery more that it does a kibbutz, an intentional utopian community, or a worker owned cooperative. It is much less economically self-sufficient than many Benedictine monasteries were. But like a Benedictine monastery, Pendle Hill is not a model for an entire culture, but it performs a specialized service for the wider community of faith in which it is nested. Pendle Hill seeks to serve as a spiritual, intellectual, and practical resource for individuals, for the Religious Society of Friends, and for the broader community of faith. Members of the community operate and participate in teaching and learning opportunities; they disseminate broadly and promote understanding of the testimonies, values and insights of Friends; and they support Friends and others in seeking divine guidance as they address the challenges of contemporary society. Pendle Hill operates courses, conferences, lectures, and retreats, it publishes books and pamphlets, and it runs

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centeredness," which seeks always to understand what God would have us unfailingly do given the circumstances we are actually in, and an effort to imagine or visualize a future social order and to gear our practices to it, as if life were an exercise in science fiction, and d) the distraction from the task of serving constituencies beyond the Wallingford campus entailed by efforts to structure a Utopia within the Wallingford campus. These considerations, and others, would require development beyond the scope of the present effort to be fully understood, but would be necessary to get a complete understanding of the dysfunction involved in conceiving of Pendle Hill as a model in miniature of some future perfected society.

a bookstore attracting a nationwide group of users. The main point of Pendle Hill can never be circumscribed to the very small group of people who happen to be in residence at the Wallingford campus at any given moment.

Due to its particular Quaker nature, which seeks always to ensure that hireling religious professionals serve rather than dominate the laity, Pendle Hill staff accept readily and with enthusiasm the oversight of the Board and of lay committees. The Board, and its committees seek to exercise stewardship for the enterprise on behalf of those who support it financially and whom it is meant to serve. In effect, the Board and its committees vouchsafe to the wider community of faith that the work Pendle Hill carries out is as we described it in the process of cultivating their support, that it is brought to fruition efficiently and competently rather than wastefully or ineptly, and that it is authentically an expression of the faith, the values, and the experience of the Religious Society of Friends.

3. Offering Support for the Practice of Special Virtues.

A Spirit-based community serves as a place where persons are nurtured in their individual spiritual development through the provision of an environment which facilitates special practice.

For example, if one's understanding of the will of God is that children should be raised without war toys, it is easier to do this in a community of other people striving for the same goal than it is to carry it out in a context where all the other children on the block have toy machine guns. If one wishes to uphold the institution of marriage, it is easier to do so in a context where everyone honors the disciplines which are required than in a cultural environment where separation and divorce are accepted as a matter of course, and where seduction is regarded as a natural recreation, resistance to which is a symptom of neurosis. Whether the community is of the sort which is intended as a self-contained model for a future society, or is seen as a place of specialization nested within a larger whole, it can serve this function of providing an environment for the spiritual growth of individuals through facilitated special practice. Both sorts of communities can do this whether the special practices themselves are considered generalizable to the population as a whole (e.g., simplicity) or are seen to be the vocation of special and relatively limited groups (e.g., celibacy).

In Pendle Hill's case we seek to enact a way of life rooted in simplicity; where daily worship is central; where spiritual issues can be discussed candidly in a spirit of trust, tolerance, and inquiry; where there is deep respect for clarity of thought and for the conscientious study of spiritual traditions, history, and experience; where overall thoughtfulness is valued; where the disciplines for non-violent conflict resolution are maintained; where inner silence, present-centeredness, and an awareness of the presence of God is upheld throughout daily life; where gossip, back-biting, and conspiracy are avoided; where the undertaking of simple manual tasks to maintain the community is valued as an expression of love and as an opportunity for enlarged spiritual insight; where respect for the principle of accountability to lay governing bodies by paid staff is practiced; and where Quaker testimonies in general are made visible through daily living.

Thus, although Pendle Hill cannot be regarded as a self-sufficient microcosmic version of a future

society, it can in its daily life enact principles and virtues which are characteristic of the world to which members of the Religious Society of Friends, in general, aspire.

4. Providing a Laboratory for the Transcendence of Egoism.

If self-centeredness is the key obstacle to spiritual growth, community is the key instrument for burnishing it away.[3] Community practiced from a spiritual motivation is often defined as being synonymous with selflessness. There is no such thing as a community of egoists.

"In community we work out our connectedness to God, to one another, and to ourselves. It is in community that we find out who we really are. It is life with another that shows my impatience and life with another that demonstrates my possessiveness and life with another that gives notice to my nagging devotion to the self. Life with someone else, in other words, doesn't show me nearly as much about his or her shortcomings as it does about my own. In human relationships I learn how to soften my hard spots and how to reconcile and how to care for someone else besides myself."[4]

Community involves facing finitude together. Finitude arises sometimes from human foibles and selfishness. Sometimes it simply represents the natural limitations of time, space, money, and energy. In the face of finitude choices are necessary. Conflicting values and claims, each of which might be reasonably defended, cannot always be brought into harmony. Pain and loss are involved in every complex choice a community faces. Some properly valued ends cannot be achieved because others must be deemed to be of greater merit. This shared encounter with reality and finitude by members of a community is what elicits the patience, love, and endurance which are the marks of selflessness.

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In recent times some have argued that a focus on the problem of self-centeredness in Western and Eastern religious traditions reflects an undo preoccupation in those traditions with the spiritual issues faced by men rather than women, that self-centeredness is a particularly male failing, and that women suffer from an opposite affliction induced by patriarchal social forms. The present writer does not wish to minimize the unfortunate reality that religious life has reflected the same biases against women that have characterized social structures generally, and that this has been extremely harmful to all, most especially to women. Nor would the writer wish to affirm that women and men are alike in all internal psychological and spiritual dimensions, and only differ in physical externals, another argument also advanced in modern times. However, it is the writer's view that simple observation does not support the idea that self-centeredness is a key problem in the spiritual life of only one gender. The patterns through which egoism manifests in women can be different from those characteristic of men, but they are very real, nevertheless. It is also true that certain individuals, both women and men, sometimes exhibit self-effacing behaviors in personal and institutional relationships which are disabling, but this is not exclusive to one gender or the other. Whether such problematic behavior can be equated with the selflessness which spiritual sages identify as a goal is a large question which is too complex to enter into within the scope of the present consideration. Appendix A includes some paragraphs by Joan Chittister, O.S.B., a modern Benedictine, whose experience in communities of women would seem to support the observations of Toynbee, Merton and other traditionalists about this particular matter.

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See Joan Chittister's *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily.* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990). Pages 48-49.

Faithfully living in community nourishes the spiritual growth of individuals who do it; it provides an opportunity for them to practice the willing subordination of personal interests and desires for the sake of others and for the whole.

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It needs to be observed that these four aspects of community, in order to be carried out authentically, require a serious level of spiritual discipline on the part of participants. Tolerance for stress and much fortitude are required of all involved. Any idea that an Eden-like existence can be facilely achieved by people casually interested in the idea of community must be regarded as naive. It is a naivete which is all too common and which can be quite disabling of any group's attempt to achieve genuine community. The false expectations quickly lead to disillusionment and anger, which obviously burdens the community-building task. Appendix A contains a few quotations by people experienced in the building of community inspired by spiritual goals. They illustrate some of the difficulties involved. The quotations represent a very small sample of the materials available.

THE CONSERVATIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY TASKS OF PENDLE HILL

With these four goals of Spirit-led community in view, it is useful to return to the concepts of the conservative and revolutionary tasks of religion and of the community-building enterprise. How does Pendle Hill serve the Religious Society of Friends and the broader community of faith in each of these aspects of the religious task?

Clearly, it is a major responsibility of Pendle Hill to model and to teach time-tested Quaker practices and testimonies which we seek to preserve. Classes in Quakerism and the Bible are inspired by the understandings which prevail among the unprogrammed Friends who are our core supporters. We do not, in our Quakerism classes, for example, teach an idiosyncratic theory of Quakerism which a few staff members might regard as the Quakerism of the future, but rather we root the work in solid scholarship regarding the Quaker faith as it has actually been experienced, practiced, and understood by Friends, as it is explicated by recognized Quaker scholars in our own day, and as it is practiced by contemporary elders and spokespersons appointed by Quaker bodies. While students are invited, in pondering this material, to come to their own conclusions about its relevance to their own faith journey, consonant with the classic Quaker admonition "what cans't *thou* say?", staff members do not promote novel inventions of their own as authentic Quakerism.

Similarly, when teaching Scripture, we adhere to classic Quaker approaches to the texts, avoiding legalism, fundamentalism, and dogmatism in interpretation, and avoiding also a dismissive skepticism, all of which would contradict the experience and practice of unprogrammed Friends. While students, once again, are invited to reach their own conclusions, we are careful not to use Pendle Hill as a kind of pulpit from which to promote approaches to Scripture which stray far from the perspectives characteristic of unprogrammed Quakerism.

When it was proposed that in our daily worship at Pendle Hill we place a table with a Bible and flowers on it in the center of the room, unease with the suggestion was expressed in terms of our responsibility to set an example in our worship of the symbol-free simplicity and silence of worship as it is practiced by Friends in the unprogrammed tradition here in the United States, and not to experiment with novelty in this aspect of Pendle Hill life so central to its animating idea. Similar reservations have been expressed with respect to the introduction into our daily worship of candles or of various sorts of totem objects. It is not that anyone has ever objected to other forms of worship taking place here at Pendle Hill -- Taize singing, Buddhist meditation, the celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass, Seder meals, or Native American sweat lodges -- but a responsibility has been felt not to confuse these with the characteristic identifying form of worship which it is Pendle Hill's responsibility to practice and pass on. This approach has been seen as consistent with the universalist sentiments of Quakers, from George Fox, through John Woolman, to Howard Brinton, and to others in our own time, and with their practice of worship.

When we operate clerking workshops, run programs for Quaker educators, or conduct youth programs which merge community service with religious education we are seeking to carry out our responsibility to preserve, to teach, and to insure the continuation of a spiritual vision.

Where the Society of Friends as a whole is not in unity, or is still seeking the way forward, it is important for Pendle Hill to avoid "picking sides" until substantial unity is reached. For example, Friends are not in unity about the use of alcoholic beverages. Many believe it is permissible to use alcohol in moderation; others believe the use of alcohol is never justified. In acknowledgment of this state of affairs, very few Friends meetings would serve alcohol at an official meeting function, although they would not reprimand members for the inconspicuous use of alcohol in their own homes. This is not hypocrisy, but a sensitive and honest acknowledgment of the present achievement of Light on the matter among Friends. It would be wrong for Pendle Hill either to serve alcohol at officially sponsored events or to rail against its use by people in private, placing itself in some position different from that of the generality of meetings we are charged with serving. To do so would be to assume that paid religious professionals have the right to use the influence of office to advance their own views among the laity, which is to turn Quakerism on its head.

Attitudes about non-marital sex and about homosexuality are under review in the unprogrammed branch of the Religious Society of Friends. There are deep and often painful divisions among the people it is our task to serve. In establishing policies about conjugal living at Pendle Hill we have sought to be sensitive to the present state of Light on the matter in the constituency to which we are responsible. Almost universally Friends meetings are prepared to respect gay and lesbian people and to welcome them into membership and into the meeting's life. But not all meetings are willing to celebrate as marriages the relationships of gay and lesbian couples, nor are meetings in general willing to endorse or officially to recognize cohabitation by heterosexual couples who are not married (although a few meetings do). As is the case with alcohol, Pendle Hill has established policies which are responsive to the present condition of the Society of Friends and has avoided presuming to be an authority which dictates to Friends what the true path to the future is.

No concept of community at Pendle Hill can be valid if it assumes that whatever small group of thirty Resident Program participants who are enrolled at the moment, or whatever group of staff happen to be employed, can take Pendle Hill practice or teaching to some place about which they may be personally enthusiastic but which is at odds with the present state of Light among unprogrammed Friends in the United States. To do so would be spiritually perverse, for it would be using resources gathered from Friends to teach and practice an unauthentic Quakerism; it would be practically useless, for it would simply reduce the base of donors and fee-paying participants available to support the programs we are trying to run. The financial calamity which would ensue would be well-deserved.

But this cannot be the end of the story, for Pendle Hill plays a role in the revolutionary task of religion as well. Religious traditions all tend towards stagnation and decay. Traditions cling to objects which time destroys without mercy. Quakerism, like all wise religious perspectives, realizes that the whole truth about itself or about Christianity has yet to be revealed; it has not yet been fully understood and lived. We see our faith as more akin to a pilgrimage or journey than to the clinging to a shrine. We believe in continuing revelation; we believe that the Holy Spirit still speaks to us. Sometimes this continuing revelation illuminates traditional faith ideas so as to enlarge our grasp of them and vitalize their place in our being and acting. Sometimes this continuing revelation shows us new principles which had been dormant in the religious understanding of our community in the past. Moreover, it is also obvious that the social and political structures around us demand fresh thinking and concerted action in the interests of pursuing justice and peace. Pendle Hill has always found a vital role to play in this revolutionary side of the religious task.

The way Pendle Hill seeks to participate in the revolutionary task of religion is by serving as a place where thoughtful and prayerful dialogue can take place as Friends seek a way forward with respect to contemporary concerns. It is a place where Friends of all points of view can be gathered, assured of a prayerful, seeking atmosphere, assured of creative listening, assured of intellectual integrity and a careful regard for facts, and assured that the best exemplars of various points of view will be assembled, so that the speaking and listening will benefit from the clearest that can be brought forth from each perspective. Through retreats, seminars, gatherings, and publications, all imbued with a spirit of seeking Divine Guidance rather than prevailing in humanly contrived debate, Pendle Hill can make a vital contribution to the forward motion of the Religious Society of Friends as a whole. In the recent phase of its history, the Issues Program has been Pendle Hill's vehicle for performing this function, but other mechanisms could easily be devised. When "realignment" was in the air, a Monday evening lecture series performed this function, and the publication which grew out of the lectures was an admirable effort in promoting meaningful Quaker dialogue about difficult matters.

Whether Pendle Hill's participation in the revolutionary task of religion is carried out by the Issues Program or through some other mechanism, the Resident Program should be illumined by the effort. Students ought to be able to participate in the dialogues. Their experience here should be informed by the serious efforts we make to support the Religious Society of Friends' processes of discernment. The Resident Program can also uphold Pendle Hill's ability to function as this cross-roads for creative listening, dialogue, and seeking by fostering an atmosphere which respects people of all points of

view. This happened admirably in the 1995-96 program year when Resident Program participants responded with a generous spirit of hospitality, and practiced thoughtful dialogue and listening, when an Evangelical Friend came to share perspectives on issues of Christology and sexuality. The Resident Program can also uphold Pendle Hill's role in the revolutionary task of religion by avoiding the practice of *outre* life styles on campus, which tends to undermine our credibility as a place of fair-minded dialogue, and by avoiding advocacy of *avant-garde* policies in a way which would give Pendle Hill the appearance of partisanship with respect to matters about which unprogrammed Friends are still seeking Light.

Thus, it is important to understand that when considering Pendle Hill as a community, we cannot think about it as an isolated entity. It is nested within the broader community of faith, and exists to serve that broader community, that is, the Religious Society of Friends, as the Society addresses both the *conservative* and the *revolutionary* aspects of the religious task. This obviously requires care and balance on the part of Pendle Hill or any other Quaker enterprise. In Quaker faith and practice it has been found that the maintenance of a vital Board and committee structure is the key to success in doing this with authenticity. If Pendle Hill is truly to be a help to the Society of Friends, if it is to be an exemplar of Quaker practice, it must take care to promote within itself a concept of community life which takes account of the key role in it of the Board and committee structure.

Governance is an important aspect of any community and is a matter not addressed here. Material in Appendix C seeks to outline a perspective on governance at Pendle Hill which takes account of its nature as a spiritual community expressing Quaker values.

THE TERM "COMMUNITY" IN EVERYDAY SPEECH AND IN ACADEME

The word *community* is an extraordinarily capacious one. Like the word *love,* which can be understood to mean anything from *eros* to *agape*, community can refer to a wide range of experiences and qualities which, although they may have something in common with each other, are also often quite disparate. The effort thus far has been to explore the meaning and implications of the concept of community as conventionally employed when discussing Spirit-led or religiously inspired uses of the term. But there are other uses, and these other uses have legitimacy and dignity, although dysfunction arises when different usages of the term community are confused with each other. So it is helpful to consider how the word community is used in common parlance, and to flag the difficulties which can arise when there is a failure to be clear about distinctions among the different meanings the word can hold.

Howard Brinton points out that "A community may be created by kinship as in the family, by geographical propinquity as in a village, by contract as in a business organization, or by sharing an

idea."[5] A dictionary points out that in addition to these meanings the term can apply to a group or class having common interests, to a group of people under the same government, to society as a whole, and to the public.[6]

Thus, a business, such as the ABC Company, will sometimes refer to the collectivity of its employees, management, stockholders, and customers as the ABC community. People will talk about the Latin American community even though two or more nations within the group are at war with each other, or about the United Nations community even though literally hundreds of armed conflicts may be occurring among member states. One hears of the African-American community or the gay/lesbian/bi-sexual/transsexual community even though members of the group described may bear relatively little resemblance to each other socially, politically, economically, culturally, religiously, or philosophically. One even hears the phrase "the human community." All these uses are not necessarily illegitimate. The human race is indeed a community, or it ought to be, even if many people cannot recognize this fact. But the examples serve to alert us to the extraordinary flexibility of the term *community* in everyday speech.

A commercial transaction is a perfectly legitimate expression of community. The numerous ethical ideas, trust relationships, legal arrangements, and currency maintenance which make possible the buying and selling of goods are all manifestations of community. Indeed, Quakers have made significant contributions to the development of commercial culture. Allowing for a just and fair profit in return for able dealing is a reasonable goal of community.

Community in some sense abounds everywhere. The members of the typing pool at an insurance company will give each other wedding and baby showers and birthday parties and will go to the theater together after work. Those with long tenures may even develop family-like feelings for each other, sharing grief at times of loss and joining in celebration on happy occasions. They may genuinely be pained when circumstances part them, as when one must move to another city for family- or work-related reasons. But, although they form a community in some genuine sense, the sort of relationships which develop in the typing pool do not fulfill the goals of a religious or Spirit-led community, as a rule, in that they do not seek to advance a way of life different from that in the world around them, nor do they seek to nourish among themselves a special discipline supporting the spiritual transformation of individuals.

There are also things about the typing pool which bear some further scrutiny, for they are not unrelated to life at Pendle Hill. If a member has a birthday and in order to celebrate it office colleagues take her/him out to dinner and the theater after work, giving up an evening to do so, and paying personally for the dinner and the tickets, the comradeship and feeling of fellowship are

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See Howard Brinton's *The Pendle Hill Idea: A Quaker Experiment in Work, Worship, Study.* (Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill Pamphlet #55, 1950). Page 28.

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See *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981).

genuinely a gift to the celebrant from the co-workers. However, if the celebration is at lunchtime, and if the group, in order to celebrate, gives itself permission, perhaps with management's acquiescence, to extend the lunch break by an hour, the gift then becomes, at least in part, not one from colleagues to one of their own, but a gift to the work group from unseen people not present. The owners of the business may be accepting a reduced margin of profit to make the practice possible, or the customers may be paying higher prices. This does not necessarily mean something bad is going on, particularly if the owners or the customers consciously approve of the practice. But it does mean that the birthday celebration is an expression of a larger community than the visible work group, and that all involved, whether they be immediate to the situation or remote from it, believe that the comradeship and sense of community nourished in the work group by the practice of long lunch hours on birthdays is a goal worthy of some investment. This issue of the use of corporate resources garnered from contributors and fee-payers for activities designed to foster feelings of community among constituent groups in a place like Pendle Hill will be discussed in more detail in material below.

People on a holiday cruise, vacation tour, or at a resort may develop a sense of community. They may help each other out in small but kindly ways. They may develop a sense of comradeship based on shared adventures. They may form affinity groups based upon personal chemistry, social background, mutual professional or recreational interests, or general outlook on life. The final banquet may be a genuinely sentimental event. Some people may stay in contact after the tour or cruise is over and even become lifelong friends. Some subset of the group may hold reunions. All this can be genuine, healthy, and quite good. But it, too, does not involve enacting a special way of life nor cultivating the transformation of individuals. Nor does it involve any shared confrontation with finitude. In fact, a feeling of finitude is usually avoided, with lavish food and recreation, and specially designed, Paradise-like settings. If a member of the group has a heart attack, sympathy may be quite genuine, but usually will be momentary only, as the person is shipped off to needed medical care and the group gets back to restoring an upbeat recreational atmosphere. It would be a rather unusual vacationing group that would seriously interrupt its recreational agenda to respond to the special needs or the misfortune of a member of the group. This, too, is not necessarily evil; it is part of the mutual expectations with which each member joined the group and made the investment to cover the vacation's cost. It was never conceived of as a group marriage in which the members would stand by each other in sickness and in health. A vacation resort or a cruise is a limited kind of community, but a community nevertheless.

People tend to be conflicted about how much community they want, particularly in modern times. Most people feel that if the social fabric of which they are a part is limited to the sort of community represented by a vacation resort something would be seriously wanting. Indeed, the innate dependence of human beings on each other for their physical survival and spiritual development cited at the very beginning of this essay has resulted, over the course of time, in the evolution of a type of human being who hungers for a spirit of community, comradeship, and kinship of a deep rather than a superficial kind. While people vary considerably in their hunger for community, such a need exists to some degree in almost everyone.

Traditionally, extended kinship networks, clans, and villages provided deep and lasting communal bonds and supports. Generation after generation of interlinked families and clans would make up an enduring village whose members would rally in times of crisis and join together in celebrating the march and rhythms of life. Admittedly, the traditional village structure was sometimes riven with feuds and rivalries. But there was also usually enough consonance so that everyone had a community and was part of a community, and it was only a few eccentric people who were completely isolated, often by their own preference. It is obviously easy to over-idealize the quality of community life which prevailed in small towns in previous eras. But where small town culture still survives it does provide for the communal dimension of human need.

But there is no such thing as a community of an enduring sort without some discipline, without shared values and habits. Sameness is a kind of glue which holds traditional communities together. These qualities of discipline and sameness characteristic of village culture, or the culture of extended families, is often found to be stifling by modern individualists. The flight to urban settings where one can be anonymous in the midst of diversity, and where one can fluidly participate in a series of limited communities whose sum total somehow is congruent with the predilections of one's own particular nature, continues apace. A few find this exhilarating. Most, after a while, find it wanting and are overcome by a kind of existential loneliness or ennui.

The conflict between human need for community of an enduring sort, as compared with the vacation resort type of "community-as-long-as-convenience-lasts," and the fragmenting dynamics of urban life, industrialism, and individualism, have fueled an intentional community movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century and throughout most of the twentieth century. This intentional community movement has admittedly had a few enduring successes, but they are very, very few indeed when considered in the light of the amount of idealism and energy that has been poured into the matter. The problem seems to be an endless search for the holy grail of the warm, embracing, reliable community which still allows all within it to be totally autonomous individuals, which still allows all within it to write their own individual contract, so to speak, not only upon entering, but from minute to minute as well. It is supposed that it is possible, with sufficient intentionality, so to organize communities that they achieve the advantages of an extended family and the traditional village without any of the corresponding disadvantages or limitations. Somehow it is expected that a network of love and of mutual support can be made ready and available for instances of crisis, while at the same time this network of support can be a continually fluid, evolving, and developing concept which grows and changes in accordance with the transient desires of those within it.

One key point to understand about all this is that the four general goals of the religious or Spirit-based community are related to members' commitment to obeying a divine will outside of themselves in developing their community, understanding full well that building this communal "city of God" will involve a strenuous discipline of selflessness. The modern, secular community movement, being a creature of our own culture of individualism, tends, in contrast, to grow out of the participants' conception of their own needs; thus it is rooted in self-seeking rather than self-giving. Secular community activists often seek a sort of mercantile transaction in which the benefits always clearly outweigh the costs to the participants.

A contractual relationship freely entered into so that members can help meet each others' needs works fairly well when the objectives are clearly defined and limited. Producer and consumer cooperatives are such contractual expressions of limited community. The system goes awry and disillusionment sets in when people enter such limited contractual arrangements expecting some sort of totally sustaining, family-like community. But this does not mean that in the process of running a consumer cooperative a more wide-reaching and sustained spirit of community might be generated among some, or many, participants. A village-like community can develop out of a sustained effort at carrying out a limited contractual community, just as it can among a group of people thrown together by geographical proximity. But such an outcome cannot be expected as a matter of natural right.

In some broad sense every culture ought to foster an instinctive kind of community, even among strangers. New York City, where the writer once lived, is a busy place where most people live fast-paced, high pressured lives in crowded conditions. People share limited public spaces in ways so as deliberately to avoid interacting with each other. This can strike an outsider as a kind of coldness and unfriendliness. Actually, it is merely mutual self-protection under circumstances where modes of interaction characteristic of a small village would be debilitating. New Yorkers are frequently quite ready to come to each other's aid in a crisis. For example, there was an occasion when the boiler in the apartment house where a friend of the writer's lived blew up in the small hours of the morning. People who ordinarily did not look at each other directly in the elevator delayed their exit from the building to be certain that their neighbors were awake and aware of the danger. People in nearby buildings offered items of clothing to people they did not know who had to flee in nightclothes. Others gave keys to their own apartments to strangers before departing for work so that those who could not reenter their own homes in the unsafe building would have shelter for the day. On another occasion, many years ago, when the first electrical grid failure caused a blackout throughout the City, people came to each other's aid with utmost generosity and great community spirit was manifest. In more recent times, with the progressive breakdown of community, power failures have become occasions of looting and vandalism and are something to be feared.

The diversity in the everyday usages of the word community is also reflected in academic discourse. Philosophers talk about linguistic communities, moral communities, political communities, ethnic communities, and cultural communities. The field of anthropology started with the study of small-scaled communities, but expanded its horizon to embrace not only cities and nations, but entire cultures and racial groups. Similarly, polities, families, tribes, and nations are spoken of as communities by political scientists. A school of philosophers who have criticized the liberal[7] philosophy which has prevailed in America are known as communitarians. Karl Marx, whose thought launched one of the most ambitious attempts ever known to improve human life, reflected extensively on the idea of community and on its opposite, which he called alienation.

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Again, care must be used about terms. Liberalism as used by academic political scientists is different than liberalism as used in the daily newspaper or in casual conversation.

In some ways the confusions which surround the word community in the academic world are remarkably parallel to those of everyday life. Scholars argue vigorously about what counts as community. Some maintain that only face-to-face relationships count as community, while others allow that people who do not know each other can be united by a spirit of community. Some maintain that members of a community must inhabit the same locale, while others allow that they may be dispersed geographically. Some argue that communities must involve relationships of a certain moral quality, while others observe that a sense of community may prevail in circumstances where exploitation or other moral failures may be part of the relationships involved. Karl Marx expected that the feelings of community among the exploited working classes with each other would unite them against the elites of their respective nations. The First World War proved him wrong, as the working classes permitted themselves to be conscripted into slaughtering each other while leaving exploitative social structures in place quite undisturbed. Even in the single place where revolution occurred, in Russia, where there still existed a kind of feudal order which was outmoded by several centuries, the revolution was ultimately carried out by a very small circle of people who subsequently sustained it by dictatorial means.

These concerns are not carrying us away from things that matter to Pendle Hill. The expectation that there will be a moral quality to our community relationships, and the question of whether our community does or does not include people who cannot meet face to face, are very real for us. But the main point to be made immediately is that just as is the case in ordinary life, academic conversations about community employ the term in a wide variety of ways.

Both in ordinary life and in the academic world there is a dimension to the discussion which is a matter of semantics. No one doubts that there can be feelings of solidarity among people who do not meet each other face to face. The question is whether the word community can be applied to such feelings of solidarity, or whether terms like *religious sectarianism* or *patriotism* ought to be used instead. How are we meant to use the word community? How can we talk to each other meaningfully if a word has too many disparate definitions? The sheer variety of ordinary and theoretical usages, and the disputes that occur about them, have given rise to the thought among some scholars that the word community has no descriptive meaning at all and is used simply to designate whatever social arrangements a particular speaker deems desirable. There are no common properties to those things labeled communities, except perhaps the property of being regarded positively by whoever is using the term at a given moment. Community is thus simply a very vague term of approval.

Another direction which academic discussions of community take, if they do not despair totally of rescuing the word from the web of ambiguities into which it has fallen, is to designate it as a member of a class of "essentially contested concepts," that is, a class of concepts whose very nature it is to be open to endless dispute. This idea has been developed with some care and is of considerable interest. Going into details about it here is beyond the scope of the present effort. But a feeling about the idea of the "essentially contested concept" can be gained simply by considering other examples in the category besides community. What is a work of art? What is social justice? What is a Christian life? What is democracy? We will probably have to wait a very long time before the

entire human community falls into a united and settled conviction about any of these concepts, even though all of them designate objects which are considered to be of high value.

There are two purposes to this review of the diverse usages to which the word community is put in common conversation and in academic discussion. The first purpose is to get clearly into focus the difficulty any voluntary association of people faces if an idea central to its life is vulnerable to contradictory interpretations by well-meaning and sincere people. People in a community like Pendle Hill can come to feel betrayed and angry if an expectation regarding common life has a clear meaning for them which is being ignored by substantial numbers of other people in the fellowship. Yet these "non-cooperating" people may be operating quite sincerely on a different understanding, to which yet other people are acting in contradiction.

There is absolutely no need to despair about this. The confusion and diversity of usages surrounding the word, and the potential it holds for endless dispute, need not undermine our capacity to develop an understanding of the concept of community which is meaningful and uplifting for Pendle Hill. We need to work hard on clarifying what Spirit-led community means for Pendle Hill, and be certain that all seeking to become involved in Pendle Hill life have an opportunity to understand the meaning which the term holds for us. Our concept need not be static and unchanging. Everyone can make a contribution to its refinement over time. But changes have to be undertaken carefully, and in a way that all involved can keep pace. We must understand that keeping the concept of community clearly defined in Pendle Hill's own usage will require constant effort in the context of the long-standing and inevitable confusions of everyday and academic usage. Above all, we must understand that naive simplifications, ambiguity, intellectual sloppiness, and spiritual sloth regarding the idea of community are inevitably very self-defeating for us.

The second reason for undertaking this somewhat too brief survey of the diversity of meanings the word community can hold in everyday and academic talk is to lay the groundwork for a consideration of one of the most difficult and subtle aspects of community life undertaken out of religious motivation. It is to explore the relationship between a Spirit-led community carrying out the conservative and revolutionary tasks of religion by means of some or all of the four functions described at the beginning of the this essay, on the one hand, and what I will describe for want of any other adequate standard vocabulary, as *the normal human need for natural affection and friendship,* on the other.

SPIRIT-LED COMMUNITY AND NATURAL AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP

There is a normal and natural human need for, and experience of, the affection of family, friends, neighbors, and pets which becomes involved in the formation of any community. These factors have to be given special consideration when we address the task of building up a community formed out of religious motivation. The need for and experience of natural affections ought to be part of Spirit-led community life; yet this is an area where careful balances need to be maintained and where excesses can lead to unTruthful living and to the actual erosion of community.

There is a warm comfortableness, a satisfaction in being together, which can take in all sorts of objects. It can ignore barriers of age, sex, race, class, and education. It can even ignore the barriers between species. It can esteem the unattractive and turn a blind eye to faults, can revive easily after quarrels, and can be kind and forgiving. Our capacity for natural affection can broaden us. We are thrown together with the people in our college, in our neighborhood or village, on a ship, or in a religious community or retreat center. Except for spouses, who in our culture choose each other, we are thrown together with the people in our family, whom we did not choose. Being able to develop natural affection, being able to find something to appreciate, in the cross section of humanity one meets every day is clearly an expression of largeness of spirit, and evidence of this capacity ought to be sought among any group claiming to be religious. As spiritual and contemplative people we should be able first to notice, then to endure, then to smile at, then to enjoy, and finally truly to esteem the qualities and personalities of the people who happen to be around us on a regular basis.

Friendship is in a somewhat unique category. Just as I cannot claim to be widely read simply because I like all the books on my own bookshelves, by having a great many friends I do not necessarily prove I have a wide appreciation for human excellence. This is because we choose our friends according to our own standards and biases. At the same time, in traditional philosophy, friendship has been celebrated as the happiest and most fully developed of human loves. Affection for spouses, lovers, and children enmeshes our egos and becomes a kind of contractual exchange of goods and services, a series of responses rooted in mutual needs. Friendship, on the other hand, is the least biological, least instinctive, and least necessary of affections. In classical thought friendship exists in a luminous, tranquil, jealousy-free sphere of freely chosen relationship.

An outlook which values the collective above the individual often disparages friendship because it withdraws people in twos and threes from the collective togetherness. Thus some forms of democratic sentiment see it as selective, an affair of the few. To claim that some people are your friends implies that there are other people who are not. Authority figures, too, can look askance at friendship. Headmasters and headmistresses, workcamp leaders, the heads of religious communities, military officers, and ships' captains can all feel uneasy when strong and close friendships arise among little knots of their subjects or constituents. Totalitarian political regimes are notorious for the lengths to which they will go to make ordinary friendship impossible.

Spiritual groups have traditionally been wary of communal aspirations based on personal needs for friendship and affection. It was not unusual prior to the post-modern era for religious communities to use various strategies to prevent a chatter-based chumminess among their members, and to seek to discourage the development of "particular friendships." At the Pendle Hill staff retreat of December 20, 1993 some staff members spoke of experiences they have had in these more spiritualized settings -- settings usually based upon silence. People in such silent communities can become very close as a group of the whole, even though the individuals in them have only the sketchiest notion of each others' lives and interests; in other words, an atmosphere of intense community can develop even in the absence of any of the data upon which feelings of community at Pendle Hill are ordinarily thought to depend. In the history of Christian tradition, religious communities have discouraged the development of what I have called natural affections by insisting

upon celibacy, by discouraging any special friendships within their ranks, and by separating novices at a young age from their natural families, allowing visits only occasionally and often only through a screen or barrier. Most religious fellowships which have discouraged friendship and affection among members have done so because of their understanding about the contradiction between a need-based or self-seeking desire for community, on the one hand, and self-giving or Spirit-based community, on the other. It was not because they thought friendship and affection to be evil in ordinary walks of life. It should be added that in modern times a reassessment has occurred regarding this matter of conviviality within religious communities, and friendships within them are for the most part no longer discouraged.

At Pendle Hill it is common understanding that an ability of members of the resident community to develop a broadly conceived natural affection for the plurality of people which can be found here is a measure of their spiritual development. Nor do we discourage particular friendships from forming. An exactingly even-handed degree of friendship with each of the ninety or so persons (including families) who are part of the resident community, to say nothing of Board and committee members, would be artificial and highly unnatural.

At the same time, sensitivity is required. In conducting one's friendships one does have to keep in mind the dynamics of the community as a whole. Six people in a Resident Program class of thirty who act as if they are an elect of some sort because they share an interest in evangelism or lesbianism can indeed make everyone else feel marginalized and excluded. Staff members who allow personal friendships to become an improper center from which the community's common life is manipulated can undermine and betray solidarity. As social change activists discovered in the 1930s, a small group of people acting in a planned and coordinated way unknown to everyone else and in a context where it is assumed that all are participating as individuals can have an unfair and disproportionate affect on all outcomes. In such situations, community becomes inauthentic and is seriously undermined.

Nevertheless, in spite of skepticism on the part of some authority figures in the past, many organizations recognize the value of natural affection and of friendship as elements which ease common life and thus help advance essential goals. Many are willing to invest resources in order to cultivate feelings of natural affection. Allowing members of the typing pool extra long lunch hours on birthdays was mentioned earlier. Most businesses treat their staff to a Christmas party or "holiday" party. They also provide club memberships to executives so they can form out-of-the-office friendship bonds which are presumed to ease teamwork on the job, and so that informal communication about company concerns can take place in a relaxed setting. Such club memberships, and additional entertainment budgets or "expense accounts," are also provided to enable company representatives to cultivate communal bonds with chief customers and establish loyalties with them. Management training seminars and the annual meetings of professional associations held in posh and exotic settings are another example of the genre of community building efforts made with reference to cultivating friendship and natural affection, as well as professional competence.

Although the famous three-martini-lunch has tended to go out of style, there are clearly many too-lavish practices intended to foster natural affection and friendship as an aid to business and politics

which are still commonplace. Many of these practices, started as a natural attempt to cultivate human communal feelings, have deteriorated into forms of thinly disguised corruption and bribery. Not-for-profit organizations are not immune to this, as recent disclosures about the United Way and the NAACP have made clear.

I know of no Spirit-led or religious community which proclaims as its aim the cultivation of feelings of natural affection among its members. Religious community is always about something other than communal feelings. Financial resources are gathered and volunteers and staff assembled in order to accomplish some mission or task. Community is presumed to be a natural by-product when spiritually sensitive people are drawn into association around a set of goals having religious significance. In Pendle Hill's case, the goal of establishing a spiritual and intellectual resource for Friends and the broader community of faith is the mission which animates the community. People who simply want community only are unlikely to find it. The very condition of having community is to want something else besides community. If people in an organization were asked: "Do you all see the same truth," and the answer was "We do not see anything and we do not care about truth, we only want community," no community could arise. Community must be about something; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow travelers.

Consequently, Friends organizations are usually reluctant to spend money on activities solely devoted to internal community building for its own sake. At the American Friends Service Committee's New York Office, for example, we did have a staff Christmas party, but it was self-catered and held after business hours. Nor was there anything that could be called an entertainment budget. We let people pick up the tab for us if a conversation over lunch seemed necessary. If a conference was called for, the agenda was very full with business and the retreat center selected was of the budget variety, and not in remote or exotic settings. Committee members and staff of an AFSC office usually gathered for an annual retreat once a year. The working agenda was fairly heavy at these affairs, although breaks were allowed so that there would be enough free time to allow informal community-building on hiking trails or in canoes. The heavy agenda arose from a desire not to utilize inappropriately contributed resources on anything that too closely resembled entertainment, and also out of the realization that the sort of community we sought grew out of our work and was not some sort of community for community's sake. An AFSC office, not being a residential affair, and usually involving activities in several states, was often comprised of people who literally did not see each other from year to year. In the face of this geographic dispersion, an annual retreat focused on programmatic goals, with community-building seen as a by-product, did not seem extravagant or wasteful.

Pendle Hill, in contrast, is comprised of program participants and staff who see each other every day and who, in addition to working together, have opportunities for daily corporate worship, for participation together at Monday night lectures, and for table fellowship at meals. The staff as a whole meet twice a month for business and threshing meetings. Still it has been traditional at Pendle Hill for the staff to be given a retreat at Cape May once each year as a community building undertaking. There are some differences of opinion in the community about the reasonableness of this expenditure, and about the nature of the retreat. Some people are quite comfortable for this to

be a loosely programmed time for relaxation and for the cultivation of friendly feelings among staff. Others believe that the agenda should be both substantial and fairly sharply focused on material and skills which will improve staff members' capacity better to advance Pendle Hill's mission. Happily, with careful preparation, the staff has enjoyed retreat experiences which build fellowship, which deepen individual and corporate spirituality and general competence, and which, therefore, have left every participant feeling that the experience was an excellent use of time and financial resources.

The tradition of Wednesday work mornings at Pendle Hill is another practice which deserves thought. There are clear advantages to the practice. Work contributed by students reduces costs, and therefore fees. Simple manual tasks offer contemplative opportunities; if done with prayerful attention they can provide an essential counterpoint to the intellectual activity which spiritual learning also involves. While painting a window frame moments of profound illumination can occur which might not might not be experienced in a classroom or an office. There is no doubt that all of us – staff members and students alike – are better off if time is spent each week engaged in contemplative manual tasks which are also needed to strengthen Pendle Hill's practical health and well-being.

The problem occurs when essential work which is understaffed due to budget constraints and which therefore may be behind schedule anyway is put further on hold so that the only person available to do it properly can be diverted to raking leaves or cleaning windows instead. This financially costly practice is justified as necessary for "community building," by which is usually meant the cultivation of fellow feeling based on familiarity and shared experience between staff and Resident Program students. Work morning then becomes artificial. Rather than a contribution to Pendle Hill's advancement by reducing costs and fees, it becomes instead an expensive gesture intended to foster good feelings. Wednesday work mornings are clearly a valuable, even a necessary, part of Pendle Hill's spiritual and practical life. But when the attempt is made relentlessly to homogenize participation regardless of cost or practicality, and to justify this in terms of an investment in the cultivation of fellow feeling, spiritual disorder results. It is definitely in Pendle Hill's best interest for some people to continue to work at their conventional work stations on Wednesday work mornings. The good fellow-feeling and natural affection which ought to spring up naturally as a by-product of our working together, no matter what each person's particular contribution is, should not be replaced by a false theory that only certain kinds of work are eligible to produce a communal result. To do so is to displace Pendle Hill's true mission as an object of attention, diverting precious resources away from the purposes to which they should be dedicated and into a false program of investment in fellow-feeling.

The Pendle Hill community, and indeed any community, is comprised of people who play a diversity of roles and perform a wide range of functions. Different people make different contributions to the overall goal, according to their situations or their natural talents. Resident students conscientiously undertake a program of spiritual growth and religious education seeking to prepare themselves for a future of service to others. At the same time they also support other aspects of Pendle Hill's work in various ways. The study and preparation, and the program assistance, is their contribution to Pendle Hill's mission. Staff members prepare meals, keep auditable books, raise funds, teach, maintain buildings and grounds, edit publications, provide hospitality, and do many other things which

are vital to the community which is Pendle Hill. Diversity and complementarity, not homogeneity, are signs of a healthy community. It should not be assumed that community feelings are possible only insofar as all distinctions among people are erased. It may be true that some individuals cannot feel "communal" except in the midst of homogeneity, but this is a fault, not a virtue. Nor should it be assumed that communal feelings ought to depend on a requisite amount of social interaction. We do not seek a world in which feelings of unity and compassion involve only those people we socialize with directly. The Samaritan in Jesus' story recognized his connection with and responsibility to someone quite unlike himself with whom he had no social exchange before or after his acts of service.

Staff members should not be put in the position of having to earn credibility as members of the Pendle Hill community by making themselves as indistinguishable as possible from resident students who are on sabbatical, while at the same time being expected to fulfill full-time jobs in functions which are, as often as not, understaffed.

It is important to be clear about the differing experiences of community that staff and students inevitably must have at Pendle Hill. Students are on sabbatical, while staff are hard at work. Students are deliberately provided with holy leisure.[8] Staff, working as they do for a not-for-profit organization where budgeting is inevitably tight, are under stress. Both staff and students can have authentic experiences of Spirit-led community here, but they are different experiences. Confusion can arise if staff members expect to emerge from a week of work at Pendle Hill in the same state that a student is in after a week of study and contemplation, or if students believe it is reasonable for very many staff to be omnipresent at their various activities as an expression of commitment to community. Spiritual maturity on students' part would allow them to realize that a staff member working in a vital back office assignment is as much a part of the community as a staff member who is more visible and with whom they can socialize with greater frequency. To take a staff member away from receipting contributions when there is a backlog of this work to be done so that he or she can rake leaves with students in order to enable the students to feel more amicable or intimate with the staff member is not necessarily to display spiritual or communal maturity.

It seems to be in the nature of the situation that staff will be exercised more thoroughly in the ego-burnishing practices alluded to as the fourth goal of Spirit-led community than will students. Students can conceivably skate through Pendle Hill in more of a collegiate or resort-like mode than can staff, who daily have to face interacting with others under straitened circumstances with fewer opportunities to practice selectivity so as to avoid what is unpleasant. Students do have some opportunities for spiritual growth through coping with finitude, however. If Chace plumbing is noisy, they have to develop patterns of showering which respect each other's need for sleep or quiet. If one student comes with a small infant the group may have to cope with a certain degree of inconvenience

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How much leisure is productive in a program for spiritual development depends upon individuals and upon circumstances. While most religious disciplines caution against superactivity and "workaholism," few programs of intentional spiritual practice intended to foster growth encourage a lot of idleness or unstructured use of time. This is a large topic not addressed here. See the writer's essay "Finding Our Sacred Ground: A Reflection on the Practice of Contemplative Living at Pendle Hill."

and crying. If the people in rooms opposite the dormitory kitchenette dislike noise, people can carry their cups of coffee a short distance to the student lounge for conversation. But it is interesting to observe that our natural tendency is to improve the things that require coping with on the part of program participants so as to reduce the degree of coping required. It is also interesting to reflect that some of the most enthusiastic recollections of alumni involve meeting difficulties, such as sleeping in the breezeway for a month.

Staff members will differ in the degree to which they will find spiritual refreshment and leisure in the same physical environment and among the same people with whom and for whom they do arduous work all week. Some will rather easily switch hats and enjoy Pendle Hill as a place of recreation and fellowship. Others will find it better to withdraw to their private space and to follow pursuits off campus. To some extent this may be as much a function of the community's willingness to switch perspective, respecting a particular staff member's right not to be a Resident Life Coordinator or a Dean during his or her off hours, as it is a matter of personal predilection. It is a responsibility of the community to ensure that all the staff members do have Sabbath time each week. There is no respectable school of religious thought which advocates relentless work and superactivity as a path to deeper spiritual awareness. The material in Appendix B seeks to define reasonable expectations regarding staff members' responsibility for upholding the practice of community at Pendle Hill in terms of workload issues.

Some staff at Pendle Hill have clearly indicated that they have little enthusiasm for discussing community. It has even been suggested that the word be dropped from our vocabulary! There are probably as many reasons for this disinclination to talk about community as there are people, but certainly one hypothesis is that some of these people, at least, have become drained by discussions of community which have a whining tone, and which are fueled mainly by the complaints of some that the rest are not providing the complainants with *enough* community, discussions based on naive self-seeking rather than on divinely inspired goals of service to others.

The need to feel a spirit of natural affection among one's family, friends, and neighbors is normal and deeply ingrained in the human psyche. As has been mentioned, many traditional religious communities, seeing this as a need rooted in the ego, and contrasting it with the selflessness which ought to characterize people dedicating their lives to Truth alone, or to God alone, have sought to blot this need out from the lives of their members. While this is still practiced in some communal religious settings in both the east and the west, many groups now conclude that the person from whom these natural desires are obliterated is not necessarily a whole and well-developed individual, and they now make place for, and even celebrate, these natural aspects of human social life. But most also recognize that the incorporation of these natural instincts into Spirit-led community life is not entirely a simple matter. It requires carefully developed and nuanced practice, and sensitivity on the part of all involved. The practice of seeking to erase the experience of natural affection and fellow-feeling from Spirit-led community life can be replaced by an equally distorted opposite. The hunger for, and assuaging of, the desire for natural affection can be fancied as the primary purpose of community building, instead of being accepted as a by-product. It can falsely replace the true *raison d'etre* of Spirit-led community. It can induce a focus on neediness rather than on selflessness and

self-giving, undermining the health of community relationships.

It is especially important to recognize that all human needs and cravings can easily become excessive, and even demonic. This is as true of our need for the natural affection of family, friends, and neighbors as it is of our other needs. King Lear, full of ravenous desire for the filial affection of his daughters, never asks himself if he deserves their love. Many unlovable people are full of an insatiable need for love. Similarly, it is possible for self-absorbed and socially dysfunctional people to be full of hunger for community. We might be justified in entertaining a reasonable expectation of being affectionately regarded by our circle of companions if we, and they, are more or less ordinary people. But we may not be ordinary. We may be insufferable. Nor is a "reasonable expectation" the same as a natural right. The situation can become quite perverse if natural affection and fellow feeling are transformed from something one exudes to others out of a natural generosity of spirit into something one demands as an entitlement. "This is a Quaker community, and I have every right to be loved and respected regardless of what I say or do."

People can differ widely in the way they express natural affection and fellow feeling. They also differ in the amount of it they want and can accept with grace. Even someone who is not grossly dysfunctional socially, and who might be quite likable in ordinary circumstances, can become a trial if his or her need for expressions of fellow-feeling and natural affection exceeds what it is comfortable for others to give. This is an area where almost any degree of demand is self-defeating. Making manifest a sense of injury, and engaging in reproaches, whether loudly proclaimed or merely implied by subtle gestures of resentful self-pity, tend to dry up the very well from which one hopes to drink. One can produce a feeling of guilt in others, and an impulse for avoidance, but not the desired outpouring of "community."

A spiritual community has to recognize that, although the craving for natural affection and fellow feeling may be normal and ought not to be abolished as a part of group life, it is also an arena in which greed, egoism, self-deception, and self-pity, ever-present characteristics of our earthly existence, can flourish, often wearing the guise of piety. Health and happiness in this area require balance, reasonableness, common sense, and give and take. They require goodness in a broad sense: that is, self-denial, patience, and humility. Above all, they require a commitment to a higher form of love than natural affection and fellow feeling can ever be -- that is, the love of God. If we try to live by natural affection alone, it will always turn sour on us.[9]

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Some ideas in this section have been freely adapted from C. S. Lewis' essay "The Four Loves." See *The Inspirational Writings of C. S. Lewis,* published by Inspirational Press. However, the application to Pendle Hill required much adjustment, and the result should not be attributed to anyone but the writer.

Thus, experience shows that a Spirit-led community, such as Pendle Hill strives to be, faces two common pitfalls.

The first is that people will be drawn to it out of a false expectation that it represents in self-contained form a miniature version of a future hoped-for perfected society. This is a legitimate, albeit a very difficult, mission for a religious community to undertake, but it is not our mission. Often people approaching us from this perspective will, upon examination, be shown not really to wish to engage in the very arduous spiritual, intellectual, and physical effort which would be involved in developing such a miniature self-contained society of ideal characteristics. Rather, they are only assuming that by joining such a supposedly ideal community they can easily realize a Heavenly existence without the awkward necessity of dying. This is a kind of self-delusion which Pendle Hillers should always address with clear-mindedness if we are to remain healthy.

The second common pitfall is that people will approach us assuming that by community we mean the affectionate fellow-feeling people experience among their family, friends, and neighbors in a small town. When people approach us with a starry-eyed enthusiasm for community, they are rarely thinking of the arduous spiritual discipline of facing finitude together by willingly subordinating their personal interests to the good of the whole. Rather, an existential loneliness bred out of the conditions of modern life causes them to seek warm and affectionate communal feelings as an end in themselves, and to ignore, or at least excessively to subordinate, the true purposes for which a Spirit-led community like Pendle Hill exists. This unbalanced sort of motivation can cause burdensome disorders for community life, and it, too, must be addressed with clear-mindedness.

Pendle Hill is admittedly a unique hybrid incorporating many, but certainly not all, of the above-mentioned characteristics of community. This is legitimate and good, but it is important to be clear how these various types of community interrelate, and it is also important not to project expectations suitable to one type of community manifest at Pendle Hill onto another type also manifest at Pendle Hill. Pendle Hill is a religious, Spirit-based community seeking the second, third and fourth of the goals of such communities as described above. It is a mistake to try to act as if it were pursuing the first goal--being a model, self-sufficient unto itself, of how a future society might be organized.

Pendle Hill also, in some respects, pursues community on the model of a vacation resort--temporary, conviviality-based community with minimum strain based on clearly defined expectations about costs, benefits, and behaviors. This is not illegitimate, but great confusion is caused when it is assumed that the three goals of Spirit-based community we do seek can be achieved by employing only such dynamics and disciplines as are suitable at a vacation resort. There can be no expectation that a Spirit-based community is such that one will always feel good, that it is a place where there will be no sadness or budget crunches, or that it is a place where everyone will always get his or her own way. Nor would it be particularly conducive to the spiritual growth of program participants if staff were to be run ragged trying to provide as much service as one might get at a Club Med or at a continuing care retirement community at one fifth of the cost. Nor is it clear that it is wise or useful for Pendle Hill to pay thirty staff members to be available on a stand-by basis for instant demands by

resident students, whether such demands be of a practical nature ("I need scotch tape") or of a psychological or spiritual nature ("I had another draining conversation with my mother, father, or spouse this morning"), even if such stand-by staffing is viewed by some as a way of building community. While in an authentic community everyone should be willing to lay aside daily routine to help with the extraordinary event experienced by a member -- the birth of a child, or sudden catastrophic illness, or news of bereavement -- care must be taken not to overextend this principle in a way which encourages program participants in habits of self-indulgence. Pendle Hill should not, in the name of community, seek to treat program participants as if they are extraordinarily needy. This tends to contradict, rather than support, the goals for which authentic spiritual community is established.[10]

Given the current climate of American life, where family and village life have broken down and many people are experiencing an existential loneliness and a hunger for community while also remaining individualists, it is very risky for Pendle Hill, when recruiting staff or program participants, to advertise "community" as something people will "get" by coming here. This starts everything off on the wrong foot by pandering to self-interest. We can be tempted to practice a kind of pious fraud, suggesting that community is something we can deliver to people painlessly. Then people, understandably enough, can become angry and disillusioned when we cannot do this. So, while community is an absolutely essential ingredient of the Pendle Hill experience, its usefulness as a "come hither" selling point is strictly limited. It is better for us to emphasize the opportunities for excellent study courses, manual work, daily worship, and conviviality with fellow students when reaching out to Resident Program applicants, rather than talking about community in any grand, vague, or mystical sense. With respect to prospective staff members we should emphasize the possibility of useful work directed at meaningful ends, rather than talking about community as a kind of fringe benefit.

At Pendle Hill, teachers and administrators should frequently remind the group of the three relevant purposes of our spiritual community: to serve the wider community of faith outside of ourselves through our programs; to be an arena of special practice for Quaker testimonies; and to challenge staff and program participants toward the expansion of spirit which the conscientious practice of self-giving in community allows. Expectations that warm and fuzzy feelings alleviating existential loneliness will automatically be gained should be muted. When in reality these feelings do occur they should be regarded as a grace rather than an entitlement, and they should be celebrated with gratitude.

> In truth community eludes us if we aim directly at it. Instead, community comes as a by-product of commitment and struggle. It comes when we step forward to right some wrong, heal some hurt . . . Then we discover ourselves as allies in resisting the

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In my time at Pendle Hill I have not directly observed students or program participants making unreasonable demands; most students, to the admittedly limited extent that I have gotten to know them, have been quite mature and self-sufficient. I have in the past been uneasy about the degree of dependency the students have manifested as this has been interpreted to me by staff colleagues. I have been glad to learn that in recent times the pattern of dependency on the part of students and program participants as experienced by staff has been much diminished.

diminishments of life . . . We cannot have it [community] just because we want it -- precisely because the foundation of community itself goes beyond selfishness into life for others. Only as our beliefs and acts link us to the invisible community of human kind will the forms of visible community grow up around us.[11]

The experience of genuine community comes unbidden, a cool soft wind on a hot night, a visitation from on high.[12]

I am not sure my elephant [community] is intentional. That sounds too serious for me. I think that community happens all the time, whether we "intend" it or not. Think of the times that you felt truly a part of a community of folks. (Third grade comes to mind). What was intended was not necessarily a community, but the commonality was there. When we share a vision, a purpose or a shared work, community is the result.[13]

SUMMARY

1. Of the four possible purposes for which a Spirit-led community might be organized, Pendle Hill gives expression to three:

    A. It serves the broader community of faith in which it is nested by providing needed services in the fields of education, spiritual nurture and development, discernment, and publications.

    B. For those who spend a longer or shorter period of time in residence, Pendle Hill offers an environment which facilitates the practice of a way of life rooted in Quaker worship, experience, values, and testimonies.

    C. It offers an opportunity for program participants and staff to practice selflessness, facing finitude together while willingly subordinating personal desires and preferences for the good of others and of the whole.

3. Pendle Hill participates in both the conservative and revolutionary aspects of religious life and of the community-building task. Doing this successfully requires a carefully balanced

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[11] Parker Palmer, *A Place Called Community.* Pages 18 and 19.

[12] John Youngblut, *Union Differentiates.* Unpublished address to Friends General Conference, June 30, 1985.

[13] Bobbi Kelly, *Notes on Community.* Unpublished memo (October 15, 1996) to the Pendle Hill staff consultative group working on community in the Fall of 1996. The entire memo is included in Appendix D.

understanding of how each of Pendle Hill's activities relates appropriately to each aspect of the paradox involved.

4. Community is always "about" something, never an end in itself. In Pendle Hill's case, community is about serving the Religious Society of Friends and the broader community of faith as a spiritual and intellectual resource. It does this through the series of programs and activities outlined in paragraphs 1A, B, and C above.

5. In the face of manifest confusion about the concept of community in the culture at large, it is the serious responsibility of everyone at Pendle Hill, and most especially its Board and staff leadership, to keep our operating definition clearly in view, and to undertake changes in our vision of community in a careful and balanced way so that everyone can keep pace.

6. Natural affection and fellow-feeling are significant aspects of group life, but they are by-products which are given freely and accepted with grace. They are not the main point, nor are they a natural right. This is a wish-prone area of community life where excesses can often masquerade as piety. While some investment of scarce budgetary resources might be dedicated to providing opportunities for the cultivation of natural affection and fellow-feeling, care must be taken that this is kept at a level of modesty suitable for a Quaker enterprise and appropriate to our understanding of the proper place of this aspect of communal living in the overall goals of Pendle Hill.

7. Pendle Hill faces the recurring problem that seekers will be drawn to it out of the false expectation that the most visible part of the community -- that is, the staff and the long-term resident students -- is intended to comprise a self-contained miniature version of a hoped-for ideal society of the future, rather than seeing Pendle Hill as an enterprise nested within a larger spiritual community which supports it and to which it offers services. This, too, is an area where Board and staff leadership must be exercised to keep the community properly focused. The Board of Directors plays a key role in mediating the complex responsibilities Pendle Hill has assumed in cultivating support for its programs from among the large and far-flung constituencies we have promised we will serve.

CONCLUSION

As stewards of Pendle Hill we are custodians of something infinitely precious. A work like Pendle Hill is both a gift and a task. It provides joy and fulfillment, but requires effort. God both enables us and requires things of us. One of the most significant things which God requires of us is coming to terms with finitudes of all sorts: the limits of bodies that waste away and die; the limits of a planet the resources of which are exhaustible; our boundedness as a species which has appeared only lately in the unfolding drama of the Creation and which will eventually suffer extinction.

All who are associated with Pendle Hill -- Board members, committee members, students, conferees, sojourners and staff -- seek in their common endeavors to participate in the creative, sustaining, and ordering work of God. As members of the Pendle Hill family we are members of an organic whole. We are interdependent, and our interdependence is an image or sign of the mutuality inherent in the Creation itself. We come, through this interdependence in the face of finitude, to our enactment of many spiritual virtues -- gratitude, mutual respect, a sense of obligation, repentance, readiness to forgive, patience, tolerance, trust, trustworthiness, love, and the willing restriction of our individual interests and desires for the sake of others and of the whole. Pendle Hill's essential strength is formed of the love and endurance of those who comprise it, and their willingness to enter deeply into the eternal mystery of brokenness and resurrection. It springs from our awareness of our ultimate dependence upon a power we cannot control and a source of goodness we did not and cannot create. Such an awareness is the solid grounding for our discernment of what God is requiring of us in community; it is the authentic basis for our understanding of what God is enabling us to be and to do as we carry out our future ministry among Friends and in the wider community of faith.

Daniel A. Seeger
November 12, 1996
(Revised December 18, 1996)
(Revised August 3, 1998)
(Revised November 30, 1998)

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APPENDICES:

(Appendices not attached can be obtained from the Pendle Hill office of Administration)

Appendix A	Quotations from People Experienced in Building Communities Inspired by Spiritual Goals.
Appendix B	*Expectations for Work and for Community Involvement by Staff.*
Appendix C	*Growing Together: A Reflection on the Governance of Quaker Enterprises,* by Daniel A. Seeger (July 27, 1993).
Appendix D	*Notes on Community* by Bobbi Kelly (October 15, 1996)
Appendix E	Ideas About Community (a collection of ideas about community which have been collected from business meetings and from informal conversations at Pendle Hill – assembled by Dan Seeger).
Appendix F	Proposed Operating Definition of Community at Pendle Hill.
Appendix G	Queries About Community as Practiced at Pendle Hill.

APPENDIX A
"Living Grace -Fully"

Quotations from People Experienced In Building Communities Inspired by Spiritual Goals.

Community wounds even as it blesses. John Berchmans, a sixteenth century Jesuit saint who died at the age of twenty-one, is reported to have said, "My greatest mortification is the common life." The Savior of the world was crucified by his own community -- ultimately by all of us. The paradigm is enduring. If our expectation of community should not be cynical, neither should it be naive. Leave optimism -- which is not the same as hope -- aside, all ye who enter community. . . .Each of us is both a wound and a blessing to our beloved community, and the community to each of us. Recognizing this is a first step towards realizing in our life together an *agape* that will always bear the marks of the Crucified One, who is nevertheless, beyond every human expectation, also the Risen One.

Thomas E. Clarke, S.J.

As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones. . . .If you want to know what is meant by "God's will" in human life, this is one way to get a good idea of it. "God's will" is certainly found in anything that is required of us in order that we may be united with one another in love.

Thomas Merton

God's will is not a solitary call. Rather, it is a call to solidarity with the one or the many who can daily lead us into generosity of heart. Their requests for love require our response and gradually deepen our sense of union with them and with God. We begin to think in unison with God, who offers us through these repeated surprises the opportunity for connectedness. God's will unites us.

Nicki Verploegen Vandergrift

Over these ten years I have learned a great deal about community life, both through mistakes I have made in l'Arche and through the evolution of our communities. Some of these have gone through an immense amount of pain and have nearly collapsed; two had to be closed for various reasons . . . . All our communities have lived times of crisis and growth. We have seen some assistants put down roots, flower and give life; others have left, some angry, some with hearts transformed in love and taking elsewhere the gifts and the vision they had received.

Jean Vanier

Work in the monastic tradition is not something to be avoided. Work is not a punishment or a penance. Work is a privilege. . . . There are two poles pulling at the modern concept of work. One pole is workaholism; the other pole is pseudocontemplation. The workaholic does not work to live. The workaholic lives to work. The motives are often confusing and sometimes even misleading. . .

Work is a shield that protects them from having to make conversation or spend time at home or broaden their social skills. Sometimes, ironically enough, work becomes the shield that enables people to get out of other work. . . . Pseudocontemplatives, on the other hand, see work as an obstacle to human development. They want to spend their hours lounging or drifting or gazing or "processing." . . . Pseudocontemplatives say they are seeking God in mystery, but as a matter of fact they are actually missing the presence of God in the things that give meaning to life.

Joan Chittister, OSB

In community we work out our connectedness to God, to one another, and to ourselves. It is community where we find out who we really are. It is life with another that shows my impatience and life with another that demonstrates my possessiveness and life with another that gives notice to my nagging devotion to the self. Life with someone else, in other words, doesn't show me nearly as much about his or her shortcomings as it does about my own. In human relationships I learn how to soften my hard spots and how to reconcile and how to care for someone else besides myself. In human relationships I learn that theory is no substitute for love. It is easy to talk about the love of God; it is another thing to practice it.

Joan Chittister, OSB

The fact is that simply living with people does not by itself create community. . . We have to share a common vision. We have to want good for one another. . . .Even liking one another is not enough. The truth about Christian community is that we have to be committed to the same eternal things together. What we want to live for and how we intend to live out those values are the central questions of community.

Joan Chittister, OSB

Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and safeguard love. . . .In teaching, the abbot should always observe the Apostle's recommendation, in which he says: "Use argument, appeal, reproof (2 Timothy 4:2). This means that (s)he must vary with circumstances, threatening and coaxing by turns, stern as a taskmaster, devoted and tender as only a parent can be.

Saint Benedict, The Rule.

Solomon was busy judging others,
when it was his personal thoughts
that were disrupting the community.

His crown slid crooked on his head.
He put it straight, but the crown went
awry again. Eight times this happened.

Finally, he began to talk to his headpiece.
"Why do you keep tilting over my eyes?"

"I have to. When your power loses compassion,
I have to show what such a condition looks like."

Immediately Solomon recognized the truth.
He knelt and asked forgiveness.
The crown centered itself on his crown.

When something goes wrong, accuse yourself first.
Even the wisdom of Plato or Solomon
can wobble and go blind.

Listen when your crown reminds you
of what makes you cold towards others,
as you pamper the greedy energy inside.

Jelaluddin Rumi

Very few people are sanctified in isolation. Very few become perfect in absolute solitude. Living with other people and learning to lose ourselves in the understanding of their weakness and deficiencies can help us to become true contemplatives. For there is no better means of getting rid of the rigidity and harshness and coarseness of our ingrained egoism, which is the one insuperable obstacle to the infused light and action of the Spirit of God. Even the courageous acceptance of interior trials in utter solitude cannot altogether compensate for the work of purification accomplished in us by patience and humility in loving other people and sympathizing with their most unreasonable needs and demands. There is always danger than hermits will only dry up and solidify in their own eccentricity. Living out of touch with other people, they tend to lose that deep sense of spiritual realities which only pure love of others can give. Do you think the way to sanctity is to lock yourself up with your prayers and your books and the meditations that please and interest your mind, to protect yourself with many walls against the people you consider stupid? Do you think the way to contemplation is found in the refusal of activities and works which are necessary for the good of others but which happen to bore and distract you? Do you imagine you will discover God by winding yourself up in a cocoon of spiritual and aesthetic pleasures, instead of renouncing all your tastes and desires and ambitions and satisfactions for the love of Christ, Who will not even live within you if you cannot find Him in other people?

Thomas Merton
(modified slightly in favor of inclusive language)

Some people have perhaps become hermits with the thought that sanctity could only be attained by escape from other people. . . . If you go into the desert merely to get away from people you dislike, you will find neither peace nor solitude; you will only isolate yourself with a tribe of devils. . . Solitude is not and never can be a narcissistic dialogue of the ego with itself.

Thomas Merton
(modified slightly in favor of inclusive language)

It often happens that an old brother who has spent his life making cheese or baking bread or repairing shoes or driving a team of mules is a greater contemplative and more of a saint than a priest who has absorbed all Scripture and Theology and knows the writings of great saints and mystics and has had more time for meditation and contemplation and prayer.

Thomas Merton

To "be perfect" (Matthew 5:48) as God is perfect means to possess an integrity as comprehensive as God's – to be able not only to discern truth and to judge without error, but also to forgive and to love without condition. Such wholeness may be beyond our achieving, but not beyond our aspiring. Salvation, then, is not a matter of correct theology or superior argument. Salvation is a matter of community, of love between people of differing opinions and respect between people who are as varied as snowflakes. Such love is hard work, fraught with fear and trembling.

Sam Portaro

APPENDIX B, Part 1
"Living Grace-Fully"

Expectations for Work and for Community Involvement by Staff

There are some things which all communities have in common. There are other things which are legitimately unique to any particular community. Such uniqueness grows out of the spiritual vision a group espouses. Uniqueness may also grow out of the cultural context in which a community exists, and whether it seeks to be expressive of community values or whether it seeks to offer a contrast to the prevailing values around it. Various practical matters, such as the material conditions under which it operates, will shape a community, as will the work or mission which the community has been formed to undertake. Benedictine, Franciscan, Gandhian, Amish, and various Kibbutz and Quaker communities will all share some things in common, yet all will also be unique in many ways.

Pendle Hill, too, is a community which, while sharing things in common with other Spirit-led communities, also incorporates many dimensions which are utterly special to itself. It is not the purpose of the present reflection to survey these common elements or special characteristics, or to explore the underlying spiritual principles which give form and character to the Pendle Hill experiment. While such an effort is needed and overdue, the present consideration is confined simply to the practical matter of defining what work and what community-focused activities are expected of those people in that subset of the larger Pendle Hill community which is comprised of salaried employees.

Pendle Hill exists to be a center for study and contemplation which 1) nourishes the spiritual life as the basis for doing work which is an authentic service to others, and 2) which supports the Society of Friends and other people of faith in their discerning of God's will for a faithful witness to the Truth in contemporary history and affairs. Pendle Hill does this through its Resident Program, Extension Program, Publications Program and Issues Program.

The animating value which draws staff members together into community is the shared desire to apply their working energies to the accomplishment of this mission. Staff care for the maintenance of buildings and grounds, prepare and serve meals, keep auditable books, raise funds and undertake other forms of outreach, extend hospitality, design and operate program, recruit program participants, and provide supervision, leadership and general support for the enterprise.

The satisfaction staff members seek and receive is the satisfaction of being part of a community in which each person makes a vital contribution of labor to the accomplishment of this shared, purposeful undertaking.

Therefore, the first and most important contribution which each staff member makes to the spirit of community at Pendle Hill is the conscientious and creative carrying out of the tasks in her or his job description. For in an enterprise in which lavish spending is impossible, and where every dollar must be counted, there is no possibility of overstaffing or of padding with unnecessary functions. Therefore, each task that a staff member is asked to do is necessary and vital to Pendle Hill's well-being. The community would be seriously drained by mediocre work or inefficient habits on the part of anyone. In the case of some jobs, a failure to work wisely, creatively, productively and efficiently could compromise the very survivability of Pendle Hill itself. It is the confidence which each staff member has that her/his assigned tasks are a meaningful contribution to an overall goal expressing Quaker values which provides spiritual nourishment. It is the confidence that each has that the others are similarly engaged in a Pendle Hill-sustaining commitment of vital energy which is the source of the truest joys of community life among Pendle Hill staff members.

Many of the functions which need to be performed require some special learning and expertise -- either expertise gained from experience in the job itself or from education gained elsewhere. This specialization of function among staff members enhances the meaningfulness of community, since it offers a figuration of mutual dependence and of complimentarity which is the essence of the community spirit. It is the way human communities partake in the mystery and wonder of the Creation itself, where all the classes of beings exist in systematic inter-relatedness to each other involving mutual dependence, and where they are upheld in an atmosphere of active sympathy by the self-same love on the part of the Creator which was moved to raise all things up from the formless dust.

Staff meetings (including threshing sessions and business meetings) are scheduled twice a month, as a rule, although they might occur more or less often depending upon the amount of business to be discussed. A three-day staff retreat is scheduled each September, and a one-day retreat takes place in the mid-winter. Faithful attendance at staff meetings and retreats, when they are scheduled, is essential, since it is in such meetings that the unity and complimentarity-in-diversity comes to be realized as discussion and information-sharing helps to blend and optimize our work. Staff business meetings are not an end in themselves, however, but a means for achieving unity through shared work toward a common spiritual goal. Such meetings should be held no more often than necessary to accomplish this resilient collaboration. While it is everyone's responsibility to be present when such staff meetings take place, to the extent that community spirit is strong, trust is high, and work modes of complimentary functioning have been worked out satisfactorily and need not be rediscussed, the ability of the staff to work productively with fewer business meetings can be a measure of the growing health of the Pendle Hill enterprise and of its community spirit. While a falsely motivated reduction in the number of staff meetings can sometimes occur out of disinterest, disengagement, evasion or alienation, a true reduction can reflect a desire for a right-ordered use of the time being paid for by contributors and fee-payers, and can be expressive of the successful accomplishment of useful modes of collaboration. Community spirit is not enhanced by inflexibly convening meetings of busy and hard-working people even if the needed coordination has already been realized. At the same time, care should be taken that staff gatherings do not become so rare that affirmation of the animating values supporting Pendle Hill's life, and eliciting the creative contribution of everyone in

the task of realizing their application in evolving circumstances, is neglected.

While much of the work of Pendle Hill requires specialized knowledge and some experience to perform efficiently and well, some other work can be done by almost anyone who is concerned to see it accomplished. Because of the nature of Pendle Hill life, most of these simpler jobs occur around mealtimes, when for a short period of time the labor of many people is needed if things are to be accomplished in good order. So, in addition to doing their specialized jobs, Pendle Hill staff members work to ensure the community's viability by sharing the responsibility to do this simpler work which must be done on a daily basis. This work enhances the spirit and satisfactions of community in a way complimentary to that of the specialized jobs--through the joyous gathering for daily teamwork focussed on the provision of the bodily nourishment needed to sustain life in the community's members.

The conscientious carrying out of daily jobs and of the tasks described in each person's job description, and the mutual respect, rapport, and gratitude all feel for each others' help in advancing Pendle Hill's spiritual mission through this meaningful work is the basis of the essential satisfactions of community life at Pendle Hill.

There are other activities which can be undertaken which enhance the life of the community as a whole and which provide satisfaction for the people participating. These include worship, work mornings, community dining, Monday night lectures, ad hoc celebrations (showers, birthdays, strawberry festivals, and so forth), prayer meetings, healing meetings, Resident Program Community Meetings, and caring acts for other members of the community at inspired moments.

It is understood that staff members make a valuable contribution to the realization of Pendle Hill's mission and to its enactment of a Spirit-led community by participating as much as is feasible in these activities. But, in general, participation in these events is seen as a matter which can be approached flexibly, in the faith that generous participation will be forthcoming without laying a burden on anyone. Only four of these activities require special mention: worship, work mornings, common meals, and individual caring acts.

Staff provide vital assistance in building community with each other and with students, sojourners and guests by participating in the common meals. Breaking bread together is an ages-old and very powerful community-building ritual. There can be some flexibility in the number of meals any staff member takes in the dining room. Staff are asked to be sensitive to the value of participating in common meals and avoiding an overly reclusive use of the "carry away" possibilities which Pendle Hill provides with respect to food service. Yet all can also realize that, depending upon personal temperament, one's family responsibilities, and the nature of one's work, quiet meals alone, or family centered meals, may offer a healthy respite. No one wishes to keep score regarding the numbers of meals eaten in the common dining room and elsewhere by different members of the community.

Participation in work morning is also a valuable community building exercise. Again, discretion is advised. There is no doubt that the more staff who participate in work mornings the more

successful they are both in the accomplishment of the practical tasks the community needs to have done in order to survive, but also in building community among fellow staff members, students and sojourners. But this must be balanced against Pendle Hill's need to have staff members successfully accomplish the tasks outlined in their job descriptions. Continued application of one's energies to job description functions during work morning may be the most apt contribution some staff can make to community and to the overall physical and spiritual health of Pendle Hill. When in doubt about what is best for Pendle Hill as far as the application of energies on work morning, staff members should consult their supervisors.

Quaker worship cannot be made mandatory in an adult community. Yet worship is central to the Pendle Hill idea, for it is only by joining together in worship, by being open to the Divine Presence among us, that we can see our way forward clearly in fulfilling our true calling as individuals, as a community, and as a body organized to serve others. In seeking to help people find a spiritual basis for authentic service to others, and in seeking to support a faithful search for the guidance of the Holy Spirit with respect to contemporary issues and life, we counsel rootedness in the life of worship. It is hardly likely that we can teach this principle successfully if we fail to practice it. Therefore, in selecting individuals for the Pendle Hill staff, the Executive Board seeks persons for whom a way of life centered on daily worship elicits enthusiasm and commitment.

Any community, if it is to be real, will be nourished by personal caring acts extended by the members, each to the other, either spontaneously and without reason, or at times of recognized special need. While this aspect of community living is fundamental, it is one which cannot be defined or prescribed, but only recognized as partaking of that tenderness and truth which all Spirit-led communities exist to uphold. It is this dimension of community which most makes it resemble an extended family. Individual staff members must be on guard not to expect such caring acts as an entitlement; it is, rather, a responsibility each seeks to carry out from a place of spontaneous, natural giving which is the essence of goodness within ourselves. Pendle Hill cannot officially ask or expect that this take place. Pendle Hill can, and should, be certain that the official demands of work

and community are not so excessive that the sabbath principle is violated or that the capacity of members spontaneously to give of themselves in such caring acts is undermined.

It is the combination of meaningful work done in a measured and balanced way and which expresses the mutual dedication to the spirit of Truth, the space for worship, solitude and silence, and the unmeasured and unmeasurable extension of spontaneous loving support for each other that enables a place like Pendle Hill, in spite of its unique aspects, to prefigure the balance, order, harmony and peace which is the natural destiny of the Creation as a whole.

Daniel A. Seeger
May, 1995

APPENDIX B, Part 2
"Living Grace-Fully"

ABSTRACT:

Expectations for Work and for Community Involvement by Staff

Essential:

Tasks in Job Description
Daily Jobs
Staff Meetings and Threshing Sessions

Special Category:

Daily Meeting for Worship
Individual Caring Acts

Important, But Flexible:

Work Morning
Monday Night Lectures
Ad Hoc Celebrations
Resident Program Community Meetings
Meetings for Healing
Prayer Meeting
Epilogue

APPENDIX D
"Living Grace-Fully"

MEMO

TO: Bobbi, Charlotte, Dan, Elisabeth, Jane, Janeal, Margaret, Martha, Sally, Tom, Chris

FROM: Bobbi October 15, 1996

Another addition to our homework for Monday

Notes on Community:

I have long felt that, when Pendle Hill talks about community, we experience something analogous to the story of the blind men and the elephant. If you remember it, each man tried to describe the same elephant, but one felt the tail, another the leg, a third the side and so on. Each experienced the elephant so differently that a picture of the whole creature was hard to arrive at.

Well, I've been hearing conversations about community for quite a few years now and we all have very definite ideas about our elephant.
This is not a bad thing, to my mind; we don't all have to, each of us, acknowledge that the other's elephant is just as true as our own.

My elephant is a practical creature. It appreciates the day to day camaraderie of living with other folks. When times are good, there are plenty of laughs; when there is trouble folk usually come through, with prayer, sympathy and practical support - as well as a few more laughs. Of course there are conflicts: I have come to the conclusion that everyone I know is very difficult to deal with. But even the person with whom I get along with least has her moments when we touch, and I find that I can manage to hang in there even with that person. The ability to hang in there is a prime lesson in community.

Community is a process, and it is a daily discipline. Community happens as a result of a continuing commitment to living together: and I don't think I am begging the question here. In the every day business of life, if we are conscientious and persistent, we build a sense of community, a bonding with others that outlasts the arguments. We put up with one another in several senses of the phrase, another characteristic of my elephant. We learn to recognize the beauty in others, to know that it is there.

I am not sure that my elephant is intentional. That sounds too serious to me. I think that community happens all the time, whether we "intend" it or not. Think of the times that you felt truly a part of a community of folks. (Third grade comes to my mind.) What was intended was not necessarily a community, but the commonality was there. When we share a vision, a purpose of a shared work,

community is a result.

I think that we have this community here at Pendle Hill. It does not always function smoothly, but elephants are ungainly creatures. We, as an institution and as this group of people, have weathered some difficult times. And, I think, the community held. Perhaps not for everyone, but for the whole. We worked at it, we tried hard to keep the bonds of friendship and civility strong and we were forgiving of one another's incivilities.

Could we do more? Of course, no elephant is perfect. I would make several suggestions:

There should be more times during the year when staff, in particular, and perhaps the Board as well, specifically come together to maintain the communal bonds we have. The subject matter of our discussions is not as important as our coming together.

The ministry and counsel committee should be enlarged and charged with oversight of the state of the community, rather as a committee operates in a local meeting. I know myself well enough that I am not advocating eldering here (!) but the use of oversight and ministry committees works fairly well in meetings and might give folks some non-institutional ways to solve problems and endure difficult times.

As individuals, I think that we should examine our commitment to the elephant and then be up front about it. Not everyone has the same amount of energy to give to Pendle Hill and we certainly don't all come from the same circumstances. So our contributions are very different and THIS IS OK. I think we sometimes, both individually and collectively, feel unnecessary guilt about "Whether we are a ["real"] community." Remember the elephant.

Maybe we need a way to celebrate our communal acts. Notice that we are "doing it." Gold stars? Secret messages? I'm being a little silly here, but I think that it is important to recognize that we do, in fact, daily build community.

To go back to our elephant. None of us know quite what this elephant is like, and my elephant sure isn't your elephant. But it's a lively beast and seems to get along well. It's been going for quite a few years and I think will continue to do so.

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I wrote this a year of so ago when we had another discussion on community and I rather hesitate to present this as a topic of discussion. It was written in a rather light-hearted mood on a hot August afternoon. However, on reading it over, I think that there is much here that would be useful in the present discussion.

Community results from individual's actions, rather than from corporate design. If we who live and work at Pendle Hill desire community, we can build one. No institution can stop us. If we

don't, there is nothing Pendle Hill as an institution can do that will result in community.

It is how we treat one another that will make the difference.

I'll nail those two to the door.

Appendix E
"Living Grace-Fully"

IDEAS ABOUT COMMUNITY:

(The following are ideas about community which have been articulated at one time or another by someone at Pendle Hill. It is obvious that some of these ideas contradict others, and that even those ideas which do not contradict others vary in their degree of soundness. The point of this admittedly incomplete compendium is not to "take sides" with respect to the issues, but only to suggest that the development of a healthy and vital community at Pendle Hill might be served by more work in clarifying the nature of our particular kind of community, so that all can know what our expectations are and so that unnecessary disappointment and consequent alienation can be avoided).

Some ideas about community at Pendle Hill:

1. Community is a benefit Pendle Hill provides to staff in compensation for poor salaries.

2. The concepts of "community" and "institution" are in an irreconcilable tension. Community is what we aspire to be; institutionalism grows out of a corrupt need on the part of some people for power and dominance. We hope to be liberated from institutionalism as soon as possible.

3. "Community" and "institution" are closely allied concepts. There is no such thing as a community which is not supported by an enabling institutional framework. There is no institution of any kind which can function effectively if those involved are not embraced by some communal feelings. Moreover, the virtues and disciplines necessary to support communities, on the one hand, and institutions, on the other, are quite similar, rather than antithetical. It is important to distinguish among, and not casually to equate, the institutional frameworks of a Friends meeting, Pendle Hill, of General Motors, of the Vatican, of the Kremlin, and of the United States Congress.

4. The Pendle Hill community is comprised of the people one sees at any given moment on the Wallingford campus. These people need feel accountability only to each other, not to stakeholders and contributors who are not present. They govern Pendle Hill as a collective via "Community Meetings." All hierarchy is wrong.

5. The people gathered in Wallingford are part of an extended network of supporters and stakeholders which supports them and which they are charged with serving. The Board of Directors plays a crucial role in the authentic practice of accountability within this larger framework. Although susceptible to abuse, hierarchy in general is both good and necessary in human life, and in fact is absolutely essential to enable community if more than a dozen or fifteen people are involved.

6. It is one of Pendle Hill's main goals to provide a utopian experience to its staff as a model for the future.

7. Community is an end in itself, and not a byproduct of the human collaborative spirit as people seek to work together to advance shared goals.

8. There is no such thing as community for its own sake. A community is only possible in terms of larger goals outside itself which draws the people dedicated to these goals into community with each other.

9. Community is "selflessness." One of its primary purposes is to help its members learn to overcome the constant demands of their own egos.

10. In community everyone somehow gets her/his own way. community is certainly not a place where one ever restrains an impulse to speak about anything to anyone or in any meeting at any time.

11. A true community welcomes everyone.

12. If a community is to survive those entering must be very carefully screened.

13. Quaker process can forge a community out of any disparate collection of people.

14. Community as practiced at Pendle Hill can provide the security and sense of belonging characteristic of village life or of extended families without any of the characteristic constraints of village or family life.

15. Living in community can substitute for needs ordinarily met by family and friends and intimate relationships.

16. All spiritual sages have launched communities as patterns of a new culture they sought to bring into birth. It is impossible to have a spiritual movement which does not have a communal dimension.

17. The practice of community is peripheral to the main purpose of Pendle Hill.

18. Defining grievance procedures and keeping auditable books is bureaucratic, institutional and anti-communal.

19. Because Pendle Hill is a community, staff are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Anything less would betray our community spirit.

20. Because we are a loving community we must grant any request that a student or sojourner might make.

APPENDIX F
"Living Grace-Fully"

THE PENDLE HILL COMMUNITY

All associated with Pendle Hill form a community which participates in the creative, sustaining, and ordering work of God by serving as a spiritual and intellectual resource for the Religious Society of Friends and the broader community of faith. The Pendle Hill Mission Statement provides the animating vision for the Pendle Hill community. Those who participate are drawn together by a shared commitment to do God's work in the following ways:

1. Board members, committee members, volunteers, program participants, fund donors, and staff work together to bring into being programs and services in the fields of religious education, spiritual nurture and development, corporate discernment on spiritual and social issues, and publications on spiritual and social themes, seeking to make these as excellent in quality, as broadly accessible, and as cost effective as possible.

2. Those who are able to spend a longer or shorter period of time in residence make of Pendle Hill a place which carries out this work while upholding the practice by individuals, and by the community as a whole, of a way of life rooted in Quaker worship, experience, values, and testimonies.

3. Like all Spirit-led communities, Pendle Hill offers an opportunity for those participating to practice selflessness, facing finitude together while willingly subordinating personal desires and preferences for the good of others and of the whole.

The various people who form the Pendle Hill community play many different roles, but they are interdependent and complimentary roles. They see this combination of differentiation and interdependence as an image or sign of the mutuality inherent in the Creation itself. Through the recognition of their interdependence in the face of finitude members of the Pendle Hill community find the opportunity to enact many spiritual virtues – gratitude, mutual respect, a sense of obligation, repentance, readiness to forgive, patience, tolerance, trust, trustworthiness, and love. In all things members of the Pendle Hill community seek to discern what God is leading them to do and to be as they carry out their ministry to the Religious Society of Friends and the broader community of faith.

APPENDIX G
"Living Grace-Fully"

Queries About Community as Practiced at Pendle Hill

1. Do we accept the practice of community as essential to the Pendle Hill idea?

2. Do we recognize that carrying out the practice of Spirit-led community authentically involves a strenuous spiritual and intellectual discipline, and that it cannot be sustained by overly-simple slogans and glittering generalities? The word "community" is used in a diversity of ways both in ordinary speech and in academic and religious discourse. Are we alert to the problems which can arise when a voluntary association draws people to itself in terms of an animating concept which is ambiguous? Are we willing to do the hard work of defining what community means for Pendle Hill specifically?

3. Do we see that Spirit-led communities have both a conservative and a revolutionary dimension, and that to enact this paradox requires care and mature insight? How does Pendle Hill uphold the revolutionary task of religion? How does it uphold the conservative task of religion?

4. Do we see that Spirit-led community is more about practicing selflessness than about searching for fellowship and camaraderie? What are the risks of an over-emphasis on natural affection and camaraderie as perquisites of community participation?

5. Do we avoid the mistake of associating homogeneousness with genuine community? Do we recognize that students, staff members, committee members, and Board members have distinct roles, and that appreciating these distinct roles, rather than seeking to erase them, reveals a genuine spirit of community?

6. Do we acknowledge that an authentic community is always about something, is always focused on something other than a longing for community for its own sake? The animating ideas which give vitality to our community are contained in the Pendle Hill mission statement. Each person involved with Pendle Hill – student, sojourner, Board member, staff member, retreatant, conferee, committee member – has a vital role to play in the realization of this mission. Do we see that if this role is not inspiring or meaningful to them, nothing else will prevent any desire for community which they might harbor from being frustrated?

7. What are the pitfalls of trying to define the community and its practices according to some hoped-for future ideal society, as opposed to living authentically in the present? How do we enact our hopes for the future in the present moment?