

Halsted Street, Chicago / Mott Street, New York / Jefferson Street, Memphis:
A Study in Contrast of Intentional Community in the Late 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries

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At 1268 Jefferson Street in Memphis, Tennessee stands a house opened in the last four years that welcomes close to a hundred visitors every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Underneath the chipping paint on backyard picnic tables and behind the stacks of t-shirts in the clothing room, there's a legacy that stretches far back in time, to a settlement house in the Near West Side of Chicago and a house of hospitality on Mott Street in New York City.

Founded by Kathleen Kruzcek and Peter Gathje, Manna House is a hospitality house steeped in the Madison Heights neighborhood and the Catholic Worker culture. Reflective of Dorothy Day's dream of hospitality and owing its lineage to hands-on social gospelers, like Jane Addams, Manna House is distinctly its own entity, a hospitality house unique in its imagination of intentional community. The Manna House community displays the clear birthmarks of an institution influenced by the work of Hull-House and the New York house of hospitality, which add to the complex definition of intentional community for Manna House.

Jane Addams founded the first settlement house in Chicago in 1889, alongside Ellen Gates Starr, with the aspiration of developing an establishment that aided immigrants in preserving "whatever of value their past life contained," and introducing them to "a better type of Americans" and a wide array of opportunities for "immigrant[s]

yearning for knowledge and beauty.”¹ In the context of the late nineteenth century, Hull-House and Jane Addams’ work became associated with other social advocacy work at the time—later labeled the social gospel movement. Consistently, a majority of the initiators of the social gospel movement “expected and labored toward the dawning of the Kingdom of God on earth,” through their work which sought “to build a just society in the face of horrific urban, industrial, and labor conditions,” by implementing “active programs of education and reform designed to promote these principles and accomplish these goals.”² Harsh labor conditions and prejudices towards immigrants plagued American cities, like Chicago and New York, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and served as a catalysts for reform movements such as the social gospel movement.

In the early twentieth century, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the cofounders of the Catholic Worker movement, introduced Catholic theology to the laborers and urban poor—instigating Catholic presence in the social gospel movement. Maurin’s poem entitled “What the Catholic Worker Believes,” expresses not only the principles that the movement adhered to, but also the accomplishments and ventures that Day and Maurin engaged in:

The Catholic Worker believes
in the gentle Personalism
of traditional Catholicism.
The Catholic Worker believes
in the personal obligation

¹ Elshtain, Jean Bethke. Jane Addams and the dream of American democracy a life. New York: Basic Books, 2002: 99.

² Deichmann Edwards, Wendy J., and Carolyn De Swarte Gifford. "Introduction: Restoring Women and Reclaiming Gender in Social Gospel Studies." *Gender and the Social Gospel*. New York: University of Illinois, 2003: 4.

of looking after
the needs of our brother.
The Catholic Worker believes
in the daily practice
of the Works of Mercy.
The Catholic Worker believes
in Houses of Hospitality
for the immediate relief
of those who are in need.
The Catholic Worker believes
in the establishment
of Farming Communes
where each one works
according to his ability
and gets
according to his need.
The Catholic Worker believes
in creating a new society
within the shell of the old
with the philosophy of the new,
which is not a new philosophy
but a very old philosophy
a philosophy so old
that it looks like new.³

The Settlement house that Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr created in Chicago, the house of hospitality that Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin initiated in New York City, and the work that unites the volunteers at Manna House in Memphis all share an emphasis on intentional community. For Addams and Starr, Day and Maurin, Kruzcek and Gathje, community is informed by their respective theologies, influenced by specific ideologies and works that have shaped their particular organizations, and involved with their relevant action for social justice.

³ Reprinted in Peter Maurin, "What the Catholic Worker Believes," *The Green Revolution* (Fresno, Calif. Academy Guild Press, 1949), pp. 76-77.

Differences in Community

Crucial to Hull-House, the Catholic Worker house of hospitality and Manna House is the concept of intentional community, defined as “a community designed and planned around a social ideal or collective values and interests, often involving shared resources and responsibilities.”⁴ While each House has a different understanding of how the idea of intentional community should be performed, it is clear that community was a central focus for each of the founders. When discussing her motivation for initiating a project like Hull-House, Addams explains, “Hull-House was soberly opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal; and that as the social relation is essentially a reciprocal relation, it gives a form of expression that has peculiar value.”⁵ Day also recognized a reciprocity that occurred between people in the community that she developed in New York City. Considering the “down-and-out” as “members of the family,”⁶ she acknowledged at the end of her autobiography that the only way to truly experience life and to quell the loneliness that all experience is to “know each other...We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the

⁴ "Intentional Community." Def. 1. *Dictionary.com*. Random House Dictionary, 2009. 29 July 2009. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intentional%20community>>.

⁵ Addams, Jane. Twenty Years at Hull-House, With Autobiographical Notes. New York: Macmillan, 1910: 91.

⁶ Forest, James H. Love is the measure a biography of Dorothy Day. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1994: 67.

only solution is love and that love comes with community.”⁷ For Day, the “peculiar value” of community that Addams recognized was most certainly an opportunity to experience Christ in the poor whom she lived alongside, “the least of these.”⁸ Similarly, Christ is recognized as being present in the homeless who visit Manna House, but the organization is distinct in its inclusion of a variety of people from various backgrounds in the understanding of intentional community.

Inspiration for Hull-House

Young and idealistically falling prey to what Tolstoy labels as “the snare of preparation” in which the individual understands “certain digressions from the demands of conscience be necessary for that perfecting which will prepare [him or her] for future useful activity,”⁹ Addams visited Europe with Ellen Gates Starr. While in London, the women visited Toynbee Hall, a male settlement house that “provided mutual engagement across class lines and a broad education for working men and women.” According to Knight, “The Barnettts (the founders of Toynbee Hall) also introduced her to issues such as urban political citizenship, material reforms, and trade unions, regarding which she would need years to sort out her views.”¹⁰ Toynbee, unlike traditional social services for the poor, focused on providing the poor with classes on a multitude of subjects, exposure to the arts and culture, and “a well-stocked library.”¹¹ Prevalent at Toynbee Hall and

⁷ Day, Dorothy. Long loneliness the autobiography of Dorothy Day. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981: 286.

⁸ Matthew 25:40. Revised Standard Version. Often quoted in the Catholic Worker understanding of Christ’s presence with the poor.

⁹ Tolstoy, Leo. The Christian Teaching. New York: The Knickerbocker P, 1898: 75. Referenced by Addams in Twenty Years at Hull House, p. 79.

¹⁰ Knight, Louise W. Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy. The University of Chicago Press, 2005: 175.

¹¹ Elshain 74.

inspiring for Addams and Starr, was an insistence upon not “claiming the moral high ground” when providing services to the poor; “the men at Toynbee Hall dismissed the idea that they were being noble or making any sacrifice.”¹² In December of 1890, Addams delivered a speech entitled “Outgrowths of Toynbee Hall,” in which “her subtle reoccurring theme was the need for women to be good citizens in new ways.”¹³ Clearly, Addams recognized Hull-House—the first settlement house in the United States—as a predominantly female outgrowth of Toynbee Hall.

In 1896, Addams again traveled to London and met with another great inspiration, Leo Tolstoy. Addams “came to Tolstoy as a disciple and with great longing to lay the burdens that most troubled her at his feet”¹⁴ and to seek his advice in the matters of urban poverty. Tolstoy had inspired Addams’ passionate belief in nonresistance, up until their meeting when she questioned whether she misunderstood his writings on the subject; “someone asked the famous novelist and Christian apologist why he was so combative in public debate. Was he not violating his principle of nonresistance in arguing his viewpoint so aggressively? Tolstoy denied it,” on the grounds that there existed a distinction between moral force and physical force.¹⁵ Addams explained in *Twenty Years* her “disappoint[ment] in Tolstoy’s position,” and considered both forms of force (that is moral and physical) to be wrong, and she had previously understood Tolstoy to feel likewise.¹⁶ Although her meeting with Tolstoy upset Addams, it prompted definitive action for Addams because she did not reject her beliefs despite their contradiction to

¹² Knight 181.

¹³ Knight 220.

¹⁴ Ibid. 372.

¹⁵ Ibid. 373

¹⁶ Quotation for *Twenty Years* referenced in Knight 373.

“the ideas of the great Tolstoy.”¹⁷ Addams was inspired by both visits to London. Seeing Toynbee Hall provided a concrete model for Addams and Starr in their hopes for a settlement house in the United States, and visiting Tolstoy inspired a life-long characteristic of resiliency in standing by her convictions.

Beauty in the slums

Comprised of mostly women, the residents at Hull-House devoted themselves to extending community to the neighborhood, training responsible citizens, and acting as a unit to combat injustice. Addams, although ridiculed by her critics as a communist, did not support the systems of shared purse or voluntary poverty that would become definitive of the Catholic Worker communities in New York. Instead, Hull-House was elaborately decorated and “visitors to Hull-House commented on its warm atmosphere and beguiling appearance” which was “the best...[in] culture as well as decor and furnishings.”¹⁸ When Addams met Leo Tolstoy he suggested her dress as indicated that she did not practice voluntary poverty, looking at the “enormous puffy silk upper sleeves of [her] fashionable travel dress,” he wondered “if she did not find wearing such a fashionable outfit a ‘barrier to people’.”¹⁹

Addams’ purpose for the ornate decoration of Hull-House, and the lavish dress of the residents suggest a vision of community that extends middle-class values to the impoverished. Unlike Day and Maurin’s attempts to relate to the poverty of their neighbors, Addams and other community members utilized Hull-House as a place where people from varying classes could learn from each other—the middle-class and educated

¹⁷ Knight 374.

¹⁸ Elshstain 91.

¹⁹ Knight 372.

could listen and hope to understand the plight of their poor neighbors, who equally could share in the education and resources of the middle-class residents. For Addams, Hull-House existed so that educated residents could find inspiration in the stories of the troubled poor—establishing relationships as neighbors and friends—and work to enact change on their behalf.

In the late nineteenth century, middle-class women, like Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, were being educated on social issues but lacked the forum to use their education. Hull-House developed as a means of bridging that gap, serving people who could benefit from the education of the women, and also grounding educated women in “simple human foundations,” giving them opportunity to partake in the “humblest services.”²⁰ Elshtain explains that “[i]f you were a resident, it would not be at all unusual in the course of a day to move from reading George Eliot to debating Karl Marx, to washing newborns, to readying the dead for burial, to nursing the sick, to minding the children.”²¹ In her own words, Addams described the initiatives that prompted her to start Hull-House,

I gradually became convinced that it would be a good thing to rent a house in a part of the city where many primitive and actual needs are found, in which young women who had been given over too exclusively to study, might restore a balance of activity along traditional lines and learn of life from life itself; where they might try out some of the things they had been taught and put truth to “the ultimate test of the conduct it dictates or inspires.”²²

The practices of the community at Hull-House were rather countercultural, in that they challenged the established gender roles, which held that socially concerned women in

²⁰ Elshtain 92.

²¹ Elshtain 92.

²² Addams. Twenty Years at Hull House: 83.

society were to “become missionaries.”²³ The women of Hull-House rejected the three “vocations” that were open to their gender—those of “marriage, mission work, and that vague but overpowering thing called society”—and faced ridicule for forging their own path.²⁴ In this way, the intentional community established at Hull-House primarily focused on deviating from societal standards for women, and offering a place for individuals who had immediate interest in facilitating a place that brought culture, education, and beauty to the slums.

Influences and Inspiration for the Catholic Worker Movement

Peter Maurin, a French peasant who had been active in the “new Catholic activism of *Sillon*” and later rejected the movement for its short-sidedness²⁵, introduced Dorothy Day to the thinkers and ideologies that would shape their movement. Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950) was a French personalist who reintroduced the church to the ideas of communitarian Personalism, which “were much older in the church than the twentieth century.”²⁶ As Day explains, “[Peter] loved St. Benedict because he said that what the workers needed most was a philosophy of work. He loved St. Francis because he said St. Francis, through his voluntary poverty, was free as a bird. St. Francis was the personalist, St. Benedict the communitarian.”²⁷ Personalism centers on love as the *cogito, ergo sum*; “Personalism does not attempt to be entirely objective. It cannot be understood or

²³ Elshtain 77.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ellis, Marc H. *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century*. Washington, D.C.: Rose Hill Books: 27. This is an excellent source for further reading and consultation on the life and influence of Peter Maurin on the Catholic Worker Movement, as well as St. Joseph’s Catholic Worker publications of Maurin’s selected writings.

²⁶ Zwick, Mark, and Louise Zwick. *The Catholic Worker Movement Intellectual and Spiritual Origins*. New York: Paulist, 2005: 98.

²⁷ Day, Dorothy. *Catholic Worker*. 1955.

appropriated through cogitation alone. The first requisite of Personalism is commitment...commitment that thought terminates. Hence, the starting point of Personalism is, ‘I love, therefore being is.’²⁸ The influence of Mounier was seen at the most practical level in the Catholic Worker, where personal responsibility was maintained, for example, in the absence of “janitors in Catholic Worker houses.”²⁹ The Catholic Worker, also, bore resemblance to monasticism in some of the practices followed by the community, such as common meals, shared responsibility, common purse, and prayer. Monasticism heavily influenced the Catholic Worker movement, specifically the Irish monks and the desert fathers. Maurin explained, “someone said that *The Catholic Worker* is taking monasticism out of the monasteries,” and he responded that “the Counsels of the Gospel are for everybody not only for monks.”³⁰ The Catholic Worker community even attempted farming and agriculture practice in replication of the Irish monks, combining “(a) cult—that is to say, Liturgy (b) culture—that is to say Literature (c) with cultivation—that is to say Agriculture.”³¹ The influence of monasticism served to unite the intentional community that shared life together and lived with each other.

We is a community, while they is a crowd.
- Peter Maurin

²⁸ Cantin, Ellen. *Catholic Worker*. September 1974.

²⁹ Zwick 113. For more information on the works of Mounier and its influence on the Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day remembers in the April 1950 *Catholic Worker* that “Peter Maurin used to say wherever he went, ‘There is a man in France called Emmanuel Mounier. He wrote a book called *The Personalist Manifesto*, You should read that book.’”

³⁰ Quoted in Zwick: 43, from Maurin. *Easy Essays*.

³¹ Quoted in Zwick, *Catholic Worker Movement*. 43.

Pivotal to the community of the Catholic Worker in New York was an emphasis on the corporal works of mercy—“to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor that harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.”³² The works of mercy bound together the community of the Catholic Worker under a common purpose. Members of the Open Door community³³ explained that Peter Maurin implemented a weekly Clarification of Thought meeting, in which all members of the community come together for a study of an ideology, book, individual or Bible reference that is related to the work done in the community. Clarification of Thought meetings were intended to help community members understand the foundations of the Catholic Worker movement, and also served as a time of convening for the community.

The idea of intentional community for Day and Maurin juxtaposed a life of solidarity among classes alongside the American consumerist society. The Catholic Worker movement sought a communitarian society that did not rob any members of their individual identity, but fraught with a clear discontentment with strict individualism, fought to expose the harsh consequences of capitalism. According to Roberts, “Catholic Workers translate ‘love into action’ into personalism, and into a communitarian Christianity,” criticizing “Marxism, nationalism, and capitalism as dehumanizing collective systems, which rob the individual of dignity...Workers advocate distribution to achieve a decentralized, simpler society based on cooperative, personalist sharing, in accordance with Christian principles.” The Workers recognized solidarity among human

³² Quoted in Zwick 30.

³³ ³³ Further information can be obtained through the website (<http://opendoorcommunity.org>) or through Peter Gathje’s book *Sharing the Bread of Life: Hospitality and Resistance at the Open Door Community*.

beings, with an understanding of the “Mystical Body of Christ,” that is strained by “injustice, prejudice, class war, selfishness, greed, nationalism, and war.”³⁴ The New York Catholic Worker sought to establish itself as a “city built on a hill,”³⁵ providing an example of community that stood in contrast to the individualism of American society.

The Catholic Worker movement, also, focused on the ideas of voluntary poverty and nonviolence as a means of radical dissent with societal standards. Trawick argues that Day and Maurin’s introduction of St. Francis of Assisi’s concept of voluntary poverty into American society was an introduction of “elements that did not have” a previously substantiated “lineage in the United States.”³⁶ For Day, Christ was present “with us in our kitchens, at our tables, on our breadlines, with our visitors, on our farms,”³⁷ and voluntary poverty provided further means for achieving solidarity with Christ in the poor.

While Addams held firm to an ideology of nonresistance, the Catholic Worker movement proposed a Franciscan vision of nonviolence and an anarchist view that recognized the leadership of the movement, and all other leadership, as belonging to God—“our concept of anarchism is a religious one and it stems from the life of Jesus on earth who came to serve rather than to be served and who never coerced. There was no question of force.”³⁸ Day believed that “in the face of materialism and corruption the

³⁴ Roberts, Nancy L. *Dorothy Day and the Catholic worker*. Albany: State University of New York, 1984: 9.

³⁵ Matthew 5:14. Revised Standard Version.

³⁶ Trawick, Robert. "Dorothy Day and the Socialgospel Movement: Different Theologies, Common Concerns." *Gender and the Socialgospel*. New York: University of Illinois P, 2003: 147.

³⁷ *Catholic Worker*. February 1940.

³⁸ Day quoted in Miller, William D. *Dorothy Day: A Biography*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982: 382.

witness of love in voluntary poverty could change people's hearts,"³⁹ and the refusal to carry weapons or respond violently to antagonism "undercut the whole basis of the feudal system, a pyramid of mutual obligations."⁴⁰ However, the concept of intentional community left little room for those outside of the house of hospitality—individuals seeking after the American Dream or not entirely committed to nonviolence. The community at Manna House also recognizes a commitment to nonviolence in the exercise of boundaries⁴¹ and in the advocacy of the community members.

Inspiration and Influence for Manna House

On Ponce De Leon Avenue in North East Atlanta, Georgia, there is a Catholic Worker community—the Open Door—that has been the subject of multiple books by Peter Gathje. In 2003, three couples met at the Open Door Community in Atlanta and began to imagine the idea of a Catholic Worker community in Memphis. The Emmanuel House community, which consisted of Peter Gathje and his wife Jenny Case, and Bob and Sharon Gazaway⁴², began in 2004 and recognized a need for a place of hospitality in Memphis. According to Gathje, Emmanuel House saw itself "as a mini version of the Open Door and [they] did anti-death penalty work and work with folks on the streets."⁴³

³⁹ Zwick 123.

⁴⁰ Egan, Eileen. Peace Be with You: Justified Warfare or the Way of Nonviolence. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999: 77.

⁴¹ Boundaries: Manna House acknowledges boundaries instead of rules, because rules have the connotation of being rigid, while boundaries can be flexible if it is in the best interests of the organization. Often Kruzcek explains that if at times it seems that it is in the best interests of the community that a guest receive or not receive a certain item, then the boundary can be altered accordingly. Furthermore in the case of violence, boundaries hold that all guests are asked to leave and Manna House is closed down, so as to promote the communities insistence on nonviolence and to protect the guests, shutting down rarely occurs.

⁴² The third couple decided to not participate in the community.

⁴³ Gathje, Peter. Personal Interview. July 7, 2009.

Gathje attended Sacred Heart parish in Memphis, as did Kathleen Kruzcek, who had also felt impressed to instigate a place of hospitality in the neighborhood surrounding the parish. From these roots, Manna House began providing refuge Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for people on the streets of Memphis.

In practice, the work done at Manna House resembles a small-scale version of the work done in Atlanta and draws on many of the practices of the Open Door as examples of how to practice hospitality to the poor. In much the same way that Addams modeled Hull-House after Toynbee Hall, Gathje and Kruzcek use the Open Door community as a “a really good pool of wisdom that we (Manna House) can draw on for the work in Memphis.” Gathje explained that “anything that we’ve experienced, they’ve experienced probably five or six hundred times or more.”⁴⁴ The Open Door is also home to the “single largest donor” to Manna House, a man by the name of Ralph Dukes who Gathje became acquainted with through his stay with the community in Atlanta.

I met Ralph back in 1987, I started helping at the Open Door, he’d been on the streets for about fifteen or twenty years... I used to cook grits for breakfast at the Open Door, and so I’d get there about 4:30 in the morning and Ralph would be the only other person up, because he was making coffee. And we just really struck it off. Talking about baseball and the blues, those were our two big topics. Anyway, Ralph got to the age where he could get a Social Security Check and they asked him where does he want his check to go, because since he’s a member of the community it can’t go into the community... so he said Manna House. So we get his Social Security Check [every month].⁴⁵

Inspired by the Open Door and the Catholic Worker movement, the community at Manna House aspires to keep in the tradition of “start small and stay small.”⁴⁶ One of the guests at Manna House, Anthony Harris, explains that “it’s not a big organization, but it’s the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

only organization that's giving back to the community."⁴⁷ In addition to financial and inspirational support, the community members at the Open Door recognized the similarity in the work practiced at Manna House and provide a spiritual connection by remembering Manna House in the group reflection and in prayer.

Personalism is also practiced at Manna House, as well as deep-rooted understanding of the value of relationship between volunteers and guests. Every guest who enters Manna House is greeted by name, volunteers wear name tags, and the lists of guests for showers and hygiene items are always called out by name and never by number, these acts are clear examples of the impact of Personalism on the community, an emphasis on "treating each person like a person."⁴⁸ Furthermore, Craig Renneboam's book *Souls in the Hands of a Tender God* offers insight on building healthy relationships with people who are on the streets, particularly the mentally ill and those suffering from addictions. Christine Pohl's book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* examines several communities in their practice of hospitality as well as the history of the Christian principle, and has been an inspirational work for the community at Manna House. Kruzcek explained that prior to Manna House, she was practicing unhealthy relationships with people on the streets, explaining that if she wanted to have coffee with a friend from the streets, Kruzcek had to take all of the initiatives—pick up, pay and drop off. One of the guests who influenced Kruzcek and Gathje's decision to include coffee, explained to Kruzcek that her hope was that they could "ha[ve] a little house in the hood where [they] could meet for coffee a couple days a week."⁴⁹ Tyler

⁴⁷ Anthony Harris. Personal Interview. July 7, 2009.

⁴⁸ Gathje. Personal interview.

⁴⁹ Kruzcek, Kathleen quoting the guest in a Personal Interview. July 7, 2009.

Reed also influenced the community at Manna House; Gathje remembers that the ideas for the community “changed significantly after we met with Tyler Reed,” who introduced Kruzcek and Gathje around the Madison Height neighborhood. Reed was a homeless man who attended Sacred Heart, and devised “the whole thing about showers and a kind of a place to just come and be together.”⁵⁰ Building on the ideas that Addams and Day incorporated from their influences and also giving equal weight to the ideas of Tyler Reed and other homeless people in Memphis, Manna House developed a place of hospitality in which the guests take pride, and to which they feel connected.

*Socks, hygiene, hospitality
and the unconventional community at Manna House*

A shaded backyard or a cozy living room provide the backdrop, showers, socks and hygiene items draw the visitors, but the community that exists at Manna House establishes a refuge from the hostility that abounds outside and substantiates boundaries that defuse hostility from developing inside. Distinct from the residential community of Jane Addams’ Hull-House and Day’s Catholic Worker house of hospitality, Manna House exists as a place of rest and rejuvenation, where people from all backgrounds can experience their pain being “transformed into light, death into life.”⁵¹ Because volunteers do not live together or experience the restrictions of a commitment to voluntary poverty or shared purse, Manna House is open to “people coming from all walks of life.”⁵² Volunteers are free to live lives separate from their volunteer work, but still remain fully engaged in the Manna House community. Manna House hospitably welcomes a wide

⁵⁰ Gathje. Personal Interview.

⁵¹ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

⁵² Gathje. Personal Interview.

array of guests and volunteers who represent a variety of religious backgrounds, political philosophies, socio-economic statuses, ethnic identities and social ideologies.

In an interview, Kathleen Kruzcek explained that the commitment to a residential community is more taxing than the volunteers at Manna House are willing to attempt at this point. She noted that they were trying to build a model based on

[T]he pooling of the resources but continuing to work [outside of the community]. And to try to have a whole way of life that is community and simplicity... but also be full-time a part of the secular world, it was two fulltime lives, that everybody there was trying to live...and for myself as well, I couldn't have a traditional family life...at the same time I did fulltime community life and full-blown Catholic Worker lifestyle and so it's offered us a compromise, really for now. I think it's a compromise that neither one of us are 100% satisfied with, but we're doing a little by little thing... in terms of trying to gather the community as a community more often, especially of the volunteers. Rely on each other more spiritually, but physically as well...I'd say that we'd [Gathje and Kruzcek] like to move a little more towards traditional Catholic Worker, but even though we are influenced by it—our ministry is close, but our way of life isn't.⁵³

Community exists in various layers at Manna House. Using a metaphor of concentric circles, Gathje described the community of Manna House; explaining that the innermost circle is comprised of he and Kruzcek, out from there is the circle of consistent volunteers (people who have consistently volunteered at Manna House for an extended time), next are the regular volunteers (volunteering at least once a week), and finally the guests, especially the most regular guests. The various layers of community at Manna House enact numerous practices that foster community, aside from the shared work that is practiced during the open hours. Gathje and Kruzcek have a commitment to prayer for the Madison Heights neighborhood as well as the Manna House community, and meet regularly to pray and reflect together. In addition, the consistent volunteers comprise the mission group, which prays together, “does Bible study together and reflects together on

⁵³ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

the work of the place.”⁵⁴ The regular volunteers share community together in the reflection that is practiced at the end of each day that Manna House is open, and in the prayer at the beginning of the day. Finally, the guests share community together and with the volunteers in prayer, and in the mutual concern for one another. Often times the reflection period at the end of a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday is used to discuss the health, struggles, and general well being of particular guests.

Mutual concern has been instrumental in the understanding of intentional community at Manna House. For the founders and volunteers, the work is done out of concern for the needs of their friends, the guests. In the winter of 2006 on a snowy night in Memphis, Manna House opened up to lodge guests for the night and offered showers, soup and a warm place to sleep.⁵⁵ A similar display of community came in the summer of 2009; Manna House experienced two deaths in the community—Mr. Tyler Reed, a man instrumental to the founding of the organization, and an unborn daughter of one of the guests. The Manna House community remembered Reed in the morning prayer and during reflection with Psalm readings, as well as by attending his funeral at Sacred Heart. Furthermore, following a car accident one of the guests at Manna House lost their unborn child. None of the local churches in the neighborhood offered to perform a service so Manna House took on the responsibility and opened on a Wednesday to memorialize the death. Aside from the open hours, volunteers at Manna House regularly visit imprisoned guests, fellowship with guests who have become friends, and pray for members of the community.

⁵⁴ Gathje. Personal Interview.

⁵⁵ Gathje, Peter R. “A Snowy Night at Manna House.” *The Cross-Examiner*. March 2006.

Comprised of a variety of persons, the Manna House community focuses on assisting the development of relationships between volunteers and guests. Unlike Addams' Hull-House, which had engaged a mutual understanding of the community as facilitating the reciprocal education of residents and neighbors, and Day's house of hospitality, which came to reflect a desire for inhabitants to engage in like-minded Christian community together, Manna House began as a place of relationship. Since its foundation, it has been dedicated to encouraging connections between all members of the community, and it has been distinguished by its radical inclusion of people from all walks of life.

Theology

With the understanding that an intentional community is “designed and planned around a social ideal or collective values and interests,”⁵⁶ the communities of Hull-House, the New York house of hospitality, and Manna House incorporated aspects of theological understanding into the foundation of their respective organizations. While Jane Addams held to a theology that required little “assent to dogma or miracle,”⁵⁷ her work, like Day's and the work done at Manna House, was often compared with that done by Jesus of Nazareth and was undeniably inspired by the principles of the social gospel movement. Consistent among the theology of Day, the practice of Addams, and the belief of the founders of Manna House is the enactment of Christian principles as a means of social activism. Day regarded living among and working with the poor as being a replication of the lifestyle that Jesus practiced. Similarly, a desire to follow Jesus Christ

⁵⁶ "Intentional Community."

⁵⁷ Addams. Twenty Years. 78.

in their actions influenced Kathleen Kruzcek and Peter Gathje to develop Manna House as a place of refuge for homeless folks in Memphis. While Addams did not emphasize the religious aspects of her work, the widespread acceptance of Addams as a limb of the Social gospel movement, and the co-founding of Hull-House alongside Ellen Gates Starr—who was considered to be “fanatical”⁵⁸ in her faith—are indicative of an underlying religious influence.

Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, like other social gospellers of their time, recognized that “Christianity implicated believers in a new vocabulary of basic notions bearing requirements for action in the world, in the name of brotherhood and stewardship.”⁵⁹ In a similar fashion, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day believed that faith should be accompanied by action, “the works of love and mercy were for everyone and should be regarded as the ordinary Christian way of life.”⁶⁰ The founders of Manna House are also convinced that imitating Jesus Christ means “living in a way that [welcomes] the outcast, the poor, the sick and the stranger.”⁶¹

Furthermore, the founders of all three organizations did not work with the ambition of converting people to Christianity, and instead desired to create environments that welcomed the stranger. Addams did not subscribe to the idea of proselytizing her faith or religious conviction; Elshtain explains that “[a] Christianity stripped of mystery had helped Addams find her way; unsurprisingly, she urged it on others,” but not forcefully so as to win converts, “[r]ather, she tried to live out her creed and model a

⁵⁸ Stebner, Eleanor J. The Women of Hull House: A Study in Spirituality, Vocation, and Friendship. Albany: New York State UP, 1997: 92.

⁵⁹ Elshtain: 73.

⁶⁰ Forest: 65.

⁶¹ Gathje, Peter R. "Free At Last." The Cross-Examiner [Memphis] Sept. 2005, 1st Issue: 6-7.

creative solution to the problems faced by educated young women.”⁶² Rooted in an understanding of a “pointedly communal vision of salvation,”⁶³ Day adhered to a theology in which tied salvation to the practices of a community and in that way did not focus on forcing individuals to convert. Kathleen Kruzcek and Peter Gathje echoed the insistence that they are “not doing this work in order to convert people;”⁶⁴ Kathleen explained, “we aren’t really evangelists.”⁶⁵ Christian theology played an intricate role in the foundation all three organizations, but each founder interpreted Christianity differently for their respective movements.

More social than gospel

Born in 1860 to Quaker parents, Addams deviated from her family’s religion and was baptized in the Presbyterian Church in 1885. She founded Hull House on September 18, 1889 with Ellen Gates Starr. At the turn of the century in Chicago, labor strikes exposed the “bitterness and division along class lines” that existed in the city, while Hull-House attempted to uphold “avenues of intercourse with both sides.”⁶⁶ The women of Hull-House took many initiatives to lobby legislation on behalf of child labor, and despite Addams’ lack of focus on theology, Ellen Gates Starr, was heavily religious and “blatantly communicated the connectedness of her religious and political convictions.”⁶⁷

Starr’s understanding of religion influenced her decision to instigate a settlement house. Growing up, “religion had played only a minor role in the mildly Unitarian Starr

⁶² Elshtain 76.

⁶³ McKanan, Dan. Catholic worker after Dorothy practicing the works of mercy in a new generation. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical, 2008: 7.

⁶⁴ Gathje., Personal Interview. .

⁶⁵ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

⁶⁶ Addams. Twenty Years: 214.

⁶⁷ Stebner: 92.

household,” but Ellen Gates Starr sought out religion in her personal life.⁶⁸ Faith for Starr, after her studies at Rockford Seminary with Addams, became “closely linked with a passionate interest in art and its fate in modern industrial society.”⁶⁹ In the neighborhood surrounding Hull-House, Starr recognized as distressing lack of “treasures of classical art and literature,” and wanted to “bring meaning into the lives of the slum dwellers by establishing reading clubs devoted to Dante, Shakespeare, and Browning, and by decorating the walls of Hull-House and nearby schools with reproductions of great art.”⁷⁰ Later, however, she would come to understand a lack of practicality in teaching the people of the neighborhood to produce art, explaining that they were constructing books that only the rich could afford. Starr expressed a religious understanding that fused her social undertakings, her opposition to child labor and poverty, to her religious principles—considering her self to be “Christian socialist.” Assessing Starr to be closed-minded towards others who did not share her “radical militancy,” Addams found Starr’s presence at Hull-House to be disrupting of the tranquil environment of tolerance that Addams sought to create.⁷¹ The intentional community at Hull-House did not force any specific religious convictions and did not promote Christianity overtly, but instead practiced work informed by Addams’ understanding of Jesus of Nazareth.

Addams recognized a faith that was rooted in action. According to Elshtain, Addams “downgrad[ed] theology in favor of social action...Perceiving Jesus of Nazareth

⁶⁸ "Starr, Ellen Gates (Mar. 19, 1859-Feb. 10, 1940)." Notable American Women: 1607-1950. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971. Credo Reference. 06 August 2009 <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/hupnawi/starr_ellen_gates_mar_19_1859_feb_10_1940>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid. Starr later converted to Roman Catholicism, and in 1930 joined a convent—Holy Child in Suffern, N.Y.

as a forerunner of the Founding Fathers, she recast him as a proto-democrat bearing a saving message with egalitarianism at his heart.”⁷² Robert Trawick, in his assessment of the differences between the Catholic Worker and the social gospel movements, compares Addams’ work to Day’s and regards their work to be more successful in “creating solidarity” with the poor than other social gospel counterparts.⁷³ The lack of any explicitly religious programs at Hull-House points to Addams’ emphasis on social change, rather than doctrine. Elshtain explains Addams’ religious convictions:

The Hull-House gospel isn’t philanthropy or benevolence but a “thing fuller and wider than either of these.” It is nothing less than a Christian impulse to “share in the lives of the poor” in the way the Good Shepherd would have us do, in a manner both “blithe and gay... the hart [*sic*] no longer pants, but rushes to the water brooks. Addams’ Jesus is one who calls us to action, for it is only in putting ideas into action that we can truly receive truth.”⁷⁴

In this way, the work done at Hull-House to educate members of the neighborhood, to expose the unexposed to culture and art, to liberate workers from unfair labor laws, and to spark hope in the lives of the surrounding immigrants was all religious work to Addams.

Theologically, Addams’ baptism into the Presbyterian Church did not persuade her belief, which lacked interest in the mystical and mysterious facets of the Christian faith. Edwards explains Addams’ understanding of her faith to be “the reduction of Christianity to a therapeutic faith in human potential,”⁷⁵ thereby faith added substantial

⁷² Elshtain 72.

⁷³ Trawick 139-49.

⁷⁴ Elshtain 96.

⁷⁵ Edwards, R.A.R. "Jane Addams, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Dorothy Day: A Comparative Study of Settlement Theology." Gender and the Socialgospel. New York: University of Illinois P, 2003.

support for community life together at Hull-House. Elshtain echoes this understanding with her explanation that,

There was religion at Hull-House, she would later tell critics, but it was of the sort that *should* be offered to the poor—a story of their triumph through the *kerygma*, the good news of the Gospel. This was a radically transformed message. The good news of the Incarnation and Resurrection had been siphoned off, and Addams had refilled the wineskin with a social message, an account of Christianity’s origins that offered the poor what she thought they needed: a serviceable story that promised comfort for the time being, strength for the journey, and hope of social transformation in the here-and-now.⁷⁶

Addams’ relative distance from the institutional Protestant Church—as she was not a member of the clergy like so many of her male social gospel counterparts—allowed her an easier time of identifying with, and establishing solidarity with, the poor in the Hull-House neighborhood.⁷⁷ Stebner recognizes in Addams a rejection of a code of belief with the goal of “loving one’s neighbor and learning to live together in recognition of the humanity of all.”⁷⁸

However, Addams’ lack of faith may have also constrained her ability to identify with her neighbors in their religious practice. According to Elshtain,

Here we bump against a rare breakdown in Addams’ commitment to sympathetic understanding. Her bare-bones ethical system in which Jesus joins company with other moral teachers and all else is let go leaves little space for sacred liturgy, saints, incense, the mystery of the mass—and these predominated among her Catholic Italian neighbors in the 19th ward.⁷⁹

Similarly, Trawick explains that “[t]he great bulk of the white urban poor, of the American working class during the social gospel era, were Catholic, and the connections between Catholics and Protestants in the early twentieth century were tenuous and often

⁷⁶ Elshtain 76.

⁷⁷ Trawick.

⁷⁸ Stebner 82.

⁷⁹ Elshtain 76.

fraught with controversy and even danger.”⁸⁰ Addams sought politics as a means of struggling alongside her neighbors and understanding their suffering, attempting to construct a community with shared goals. Elshtain examines the way the question of “who is my neighbor?” became a political question at Hull-House and aimed at aiding “the neighbor, capaciously defined” through “well-organized, patient, and determined” action that forced public officials to be “held accountable by the voters.”⁸¹ However, a majority of the injustices were labor related, and a majority of her neighbors were immigrants and did not have the vote. Possibly Addams’ intentional community did not include her neighborhood as much as the individuals living at Hull-House who shared “a social ideal or collective values and interests,”⁸² while the neighborhood recognized a different religious practice.

Witnessing Christ in the bread lines at the Catholic Worker

Pairing conservative theology with a utopian vision of the body of Christ, Dorothy Day practiced a Catholicism that was dedicated in its fundamental adherence to the words of Jesus in the gospels—both in ceremonial practice and through reformative action. Similar to Addams’ social gospel theology, Day recognizes the necessity of applying theological principles to social issues, but identified a spiritual aspect in the reciprocal work done with the poor. Different from Addams, Day saw the practice of her theology—rather than political avenues—as a means of bringing about justice; “[w]e have tried to imitate Saint Francis in his holy poverty. Our aim has been to combat the atheism of the day by our devotion to the liturgical movement; to combat the bourgeois

⁸⁰ Trawick 143.

⁸¹ Elshtain 184.

⁸² "Intentional Community." *Dictionary.com*.

spirit by the Franciscan spirit; to oppose to class-war technique the performance of works of mercy.”⁸³ Day, thereby, created a community dependent upon a socially conscious religion with all of its mysterious and dogmatic elements.

Day rejuvenated the settlement movement, which was losing steam by the 1930’s, with an idea for communal life that stressed voluntary poverty and a radical understanding of a Catholicism not utterly opposed to socialism. While Addams had sought to bring culture and arts to the poor by establishing a beautiful home that served as “a center for higher civic and social life,”⁸⁴ Day and Maurin disregarded the power of social institutions and particularly the necessity for elaborate possessions. For Maurin, the creed for the Catholic Worker centered on “a communitarian Christianity, which stresses the necessity to live in community as Jesus did and the importance of individual action (Personalism) to achieve social justice; pacifism and nonviolence; and voluntary poverty, which stems from a de-emphasis on material possessions.”⁸⁵ All of the members of the Catholic Worker community dedicated themselves to voluntary poverty, and opposed the accumulation of wealth, in an effort to identify with the poor and with Christ.

Printing and passing out an overtly Catholic newspaper alongside *The Call*, a socialist paper, to communists and laborers on the streets of New York City, the *Catholic Worker* separated itself from the Catholics who held to an “otherworldly spirituality that

⁸³ Day, Dorothy. Selected Writings: By Little and By Little, ed. Reboert Ellberg. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992: 71.

⁸⁴ Addams. Twenty Years at Hull-House: 112.

⁸⁵ Roberts 7.

thwarted the development of a social conscience” and would condemn “the evils of Communism and Socialism from the pulpit”⁸⁶ with an open note to the readers:

To Our Readers

For those who are sitting on park benches in the warm spring sunlight.

For those who are huddling in shelters trying to escape the rain.

For those who are walking the streets in the all but futile search for work.

For those who think that there is no hope for the future, no recognition of their plight—this little paper is addressed.

It is printed to call their attention to the fact that the Catholic Church has a social program—to let them know that there are men of God who are working not only for their spiritual, but for their material welfare.⁸⁷

Day and Maurin, recognized a consistency in their personal beliefs and those of the proletariat, and sought to reconcile the religious views of the church with the social initiatives of the people.

Furthermore, pivotal to the theology of the Catholic Worker was the philosophy of personalism and the understanding Mounier presented as a balance between the individual, who was considered to be Christ disguised, and the communal.

We are working for the Communitarian revolution to oppose both the rugged individualism of the capitalist era, and the collectivism of the Communist revolution. We are working for the Personalist revolution because we believe in the dignity of man, the temple of the Holy Ghost, so beloved by God that He sent His son to take upon Himself our sins and die an ignominious and disgraceful death for us. We are Personalists because we believe that man, a person, a creature of body and soul is greater than the State, of which as an individual he is a part. We are Personalists because we oppose the vesting of all authority in the hands of the state instead of in the hands of Christ the King. We are Personalists because we believe in free will, and not in the economic determinism of the Communist philosophy.⁸⁸

Maurin and Day’s writing opposes bourgeois individualism, and like Mounier, they did not “accept the ethos of seeking security and comfort strictly for oneself and one’s own

⁸⁶ Ibid. 3.

⁸⁷ “To Our Readers,” *Catholic Worker*, May 1933: 4.

⁸⁸ *Catholic Worker*. September 1936.

family in the midst of the worldwide depression.”⁸⁹ Thus, the value of voluntary poverty as a means to create solidarity with the poor came, also, from a personalist understanding of individual’s responsibly to humanity.

Maurin introduced Day to the philosophies and interpretations of theology that shaped the Catholic Worker movement. Maurin’s understanding of Personalism came from the French Personalist movement of the 1930s.⁹⁰ Day described Maurin’s Personalism:

His whole message was that everything began with oneself. He termed his message a personalist one, and was much averse to the word socialist, since it had always been associated with the idea of political action, the action of the city or the state. He wanted us all to be what we wanted the other fellow to be. If ever man became poor there would not be any destitute, he said. If everyone became better, everyone would be better off. He wanted us all “to quit passing the buck.”⁹¹

Both Day and Maurin recognized a utopian vision of a world, “a society in which it is easier for people to be good.”⁹² Addams also acknowledged a utopian vision that believed radical change would occur through the “regular channels of established government,”⁹³ which was a far cry from the ideal Catholic Worker society’s rejection of government. The Catholic Worker’s focus on community, then, served as a means to combat the State without political action, to showcase as an alternative way of living.

Mystical transformation

Community for both Addams and Day was residential, however; Addams developed a residential community in which she lived alongside educated women in a

⁸⁹ Zwick 105.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 102.

⁹¹ Day, Dorothy. *Catholic Worker*. May 1955.

⁹² The preamble to the I.W.W. constitution, applied to the Catholic Worker in Day, Dorothy. Long Loneliness: 170.

⁹³ Elshstain 199.

neighborhood stunted by poverty, while Day accepted the practice of voluntary poverty and shared her home with the penniless and the destitute. Strikingly, Manna House is built out of the tradition of the Catholic Worker Movement but does not have a residential community. In spite of this, the community that exists at Manna House is the backbone of the organization. Guests (or members of the community who regularly find refuge from the streets at Manna House), hosts (or volunteers who routinely break from the hustle of everyday life), and others experience a unity in the work done at Manna House and a community that is enhanced by the mutual concern that all people involved with Manna House share.

Intentional community at Manna House centers on theological premises that associate people in poverty with Jesus Christ. Manna House began as a place of hospitality funded through the Emmanuel House community, a Catholic Worker community that existed in Memphis until 2007. Kathleen Kruzcek explained the beginnings of Manna House in an interview,

Pete and I were both on very God-driven paths for a long time leading up to our meeting and the actual Manna House starting time... I was kind of a “fence sitter” my whole life, kind of a liberal conservative or conservative liberal or whatever and I heard Pete preach on the death penalty one time and I really got off the fence. And I understood that part of what was happening for me in the gospel was that I needed more definitive action in the direction of what I believed God wanted for the world and establishing God’s kingdom here... So through the death penalty work we started having conversations about scripture and life... and I shared with him some of what was going on with my relationships with the poor and what I would really love to do, but what I felt like I couldn’t do because by myself I was really floundering and incapable of sustaining even healthy relationships—I was sustaining codependent relationships with people on the streets, but I was not sustaining healthy relationships with boundaries, and mutual concern and all of that...Pete was taking definitive steps to start an intentional community and they wanted to do some outreach... they had a big plan for lots of other justice work and so we decided that I could kind of hold onto [the] coattails of the community and start a place that did outreach—that did hospitality, [which] was the ministry, really, that we were both feeling called to and that Emmanuel

House was feeling called to...Pete and I started looking around at property with a realtor, and it probably took us 8 months of that...[before] we found Manna House—we found that building.⁹⁴

Unlike the Catholic Worker house of hospitality and Hull-House, Manna House came out of a residential community and developed into a unique intentional community—focused on the theological roots and the relationships that are developed between volunteers and guests three times a week.

Several Biblical scriptures are considered by Kruzcek and Gathje to be foundational to the theology of the community. Kruzcek explained that “[b]ig decisions have come from little scriptures in the morning prayer;” a time that Kruzcek and Gathje have committed as prayer for the community of Manna House. The name, Manna House, comes from the story in Exodus where God provides manna for the Israelites after their release from slavery in Egypt. An article written on the website for the community explains that,

It is not St. Peter’s in Rome...that is the center of religious activity. Instead, if we are disciples of Jesus then the center of religious activity is Manna House and the intersection of Jefferson and Claybrook; the center of religious activity is not the Vatican or Jerusalem, but wherever people are being marginalized, oppressed, exploited, pushed aside, kept down, and we as disciples of Jesus are responding with hospitality and resistance, compassion and struggle for justice.⁹⁵

Gathje’s consideration of Manna House as “the center of religious activity”⁹⁶ exposes his belief that religious practice is tied to community. At Manna House, the areas where the oppressed and the disciples meet are truly the places where ceremony is meaningful.

⁹⁴ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

⁹⁵ Manna House News and Views. [Reflections on Hebrews 13:12-16.](http://mannahousenewsandviews.blogspot.com/2009/04/reflection-on-hebrews-1312-16.html)
< <http://mannahousenewsandviews.blogspot.com/2009/04/reflection-on-hebrews-1312-16.html>>

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Furthermore, Manna House provides a sacred space where transformation occurs for broken individuals. Kruzcek describes the presence of “volunteer after volunteer, especially the ones that come and stay and keep coming back after a few months” at Manna House who have experienced hurt in their lives and come “seeking grace and healing and to let [their] pain be transformed into light, [their] death into life.” She remembers the transformation that occurred for her, “I could feel my brokenness being transformed...but it was also in my brokenness that I felt okay stopping and sitting on the steps with Tyler...a homeless black man with aids and crack addiction. I didn’t feel really too far from that spot that he must have felt in.”⁹⁷ Kruzcek experienced cohesion with the poor through a recognition of common humanity—solidarity in shared suffering. By providing a space that facilitates the development of relationships, Manna House has many similar stories of transformation, as well as people who acknowledge the “serenity” found in such a “beautiful place that allows for people to have a conversation.”⁹⁸

Advocacy

While Addams recognized the work done at Hull-House, the menial tasks and the efforts for education, to be a form of activism, and Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin understood the establishment of the Catholic Worker movement to be a protest against the bourgeois American way of life, Manna House does not explicitly recognize its service as advocacy. Nevertheless, members of the community have rallied together on occasion to combat injustice through public protest and demonstration. Kathleen Kruzcek

⁹⁷ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

⁹⁸ Anthony Harris. Personal Interview. July 7 2009.

explains the frustration that occurs in fighting the same battle over and over for the guests at Manna House. She has come to the realization that she and Gathje would “like to offer hospitality on a individual basis, and we’d like to look at fighting some of those” systems on a bigger scale.⁹⁹ Similarly, Addams and Day strove to establish places where the poor and underprivileged could come and receive aid on an individual basis; however, they also looked towards activism as a means of radical transformation of a system. Addams participated in activism on behalf of the underprivileged by “supporting the labor movement, [facilitating] ongoing social clubs for immigrant groups, offering English courses, sponsoring widespread health and well being studies, offering kindergarten, advocating for public parks, and ensuring city services did not neglect the poor in the neighborhood.”¹⁰⁰ Addams, like Day, strove to raise awareness for issues that she perceived to be important for the neighborhood and the country, even at the cost of her own reputation.

The activism common among all three communities is that of protesting war and promoting pacifism. Dorothy Day coined the terminology “Catholic Pacifism” and legitimized conscious objection for Catholics,¹⁰¹ as well as being passionately pacifistic throughout her life. Addams saw peace as politically necessary for American society to advance, expressing that “[w]e shall not have made any genuine advance until we have grown impatient of a patriotism founded upon military prowess and defence, because this

⁹⁹ Kruzcek, Kathleen. Personal interview of Kathleen Kruzcek and Peter Gathje. 7 July 2009.

¹⁰⁰ Hamington, Maurice. "Two Leaders, Two Utopias: Jane Addams and Dorothy Day." *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 19.2 (2007): 159-86. Project Muse. Rhodes College. 20 July 2009

¹⁰¹ Zwick, Mark and Louise. “Dorothy Day Prophet of Pacifism for the Catholic Church.” *Houston Catholic Worker*, Vol. XVII, No. 5, September-October 1997.

really gets in the way and prevents the growth of that beneficent and progressive patriotism which we need for the understanding and healing of our current national difficulties.”¹⁰² While Manna House is new in its movement toward activism, Kathleen Kruzcek remembers that, “[w]e’ve met at Manna House to drive somewhere for a protest in the war.”¹⁰³ Peter Gathje and members of the Manna House community engaged in weekly protests of the war in Iraq.

Both Day and Addams supported the Women’s Suffrage movement. Early in her life, Day was involved protesting for women’s rights, and was even jailed with Alice Paul and other members of the Congressional Union for Women’s Suffrage. Despite her early involvement, Day, an anarchist, later refused to vote in elections so as not to support the government. Elshtain exposes Addams’ involvement with the issue, quoting her argument to extend suffrage to women in the United States:

Because all these things have traditionally been in the hands of women, if they take no part in it now they are not only missing the education which the natural participation in civic life would bring to them, but they are losing what they have always had. From the beginning of tribal life they have been held responsible for the health of the community, a function which is now represented by the health department; from the days of the cave dwellers so far as the home was clean and wholesome it was due to the efforts, which are now represented by the bureau of tenement house inspection; from the period of the primitive village the only public sweeping which was performed was what they undertook in their divers dooryards, that which is now represented by the bureau of street cleaning.¹⁰⁴

Although the twenty-first century leaves little room for activism on the part of women’s suffrage in the United States, members of the community at Manna House engage regularly in demonstrations for the abolition of capital punishment. Similar to Addams’ activism to raise awareness for women’s suffrage, Peter Gathje utilized the

¹⁰² Addams, Jane. Newer Ideals of Peace. New York: Macmillan. 1907: 217-8.

¹⁰³ Kruzcek. Personal Interview.

¹⁰⁴ Elshtain 165.

Emmanuel House publication, *The Cross-Examiner*, as a forum to write about his opposition to state execution. In stark contrast to the hunger strike that Day engaged in, but in the same spirit of resistance, the volunteers of Manna House served pizzas to homeless guests after the execution of Philip Workman on May 9, 2007. Workman “refused to request a final meal and asked instead that a large vegetarian pizza be delivered to any homeless person near Riverbend Maximum Security Institution,” a request that the state refused but one that Manna House and others around the country utilized as an opportunity to express their opposition to capital punishment.¹⁰⁵ Activism has played a major role in the understanding of community for Addams, Day and the founders of Manna House.

Conclusion

Shared by Addams, Day, Maurin, Kruzcek and Gathje is the understanding that the individual is realized through community. In *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Addams tells a parable that illustrates the ideal of community for these activists:

When she was a little girl playing in her mother’s garden, she one day discovered a small toad who seemed to her very forlorn and lonely, although she did not in the least know how to comfort him, she reluctantly left him to his fate; later in the day, quite at the other end of the garden, she found a large toad, also apparently without family and friends. With heart full of tender sympathy, she took a stick and by exercising infinite patience and some skill, she finally pushed the little toad through the entire length of the garden into the company of the big toad, when, to her surprise, the toad opened his mouth and swallowed the little one. The moral of the tale was clearly applied to people who lived “where they did not naturally belong,” although I protested that was exactly what we wanted—to be swallowed and digested, to disappear into the bulk of the people.

¹⁰⁵ Gathje, Peter R. "Pizza Resistance at Manna House." *The Cross-Examiner* [Memphis] Summer 2007, 8th Issue: 1.

Twenty years later I am willing to testify that something of that sort does take place after years of identification with an industrial community.¹⁰⁶

Elshtain includes Leibowitz understanding of this parable as “a cautionary lesson about the foolish innocence of do-gooders...turn[ed] into a hymn to caring for those in need,” also including his argument that the tale deviates from simply expressing the strength of the oppressor to involve an assessment of communal sharing that occurs for both toads in the story.

Identification, as with the early Christians, does not erase identity. The disappearing self is compensated for by the enhanced sense of community and a ‘constant revelation.’ The glib commonplace of Social Darwinism is upended: The strong, in a form of communion, feed the weak.¹⁰⁷

Intentional community for Addams developed out of her application of Christian principles to social issues, and Hull-House became an opportunity for educated, middle-class individuals to digest and understand the suffering of their neighbors and work, with their influence, for change. Day and Maurin expanded Addams’ idea of community to include definitively religious aspects that reflected the influence of monasticism on the Catholic Worker movement, and sought to disengage from a system that necessitated that some be wealthy and strong while others are weak.

Strikingly different, yet drawing from it’s counterparts, intentional community at Manna House allows for people seeking a decidedly religious experience to find it in an ever-extending ripple of community that provides differing levels of commitment to the work. Accepting that some volunteers come with youth groups and spend a week serving at Manna House, some are members of a local parish or synagogue and come once a

¹⁰⁶ Addams 308-9.

¹⁰⁷ Elshtain quoting Leibowitz 154.

week, some have recently lost their homes, some just found temporary housing, some live in cat-holes or illegally occupy an abandoned building, some live in Germantown or East Memphis, some are college students interested in learning, some are homeless poets interested in sharing, some are drug addicts, some feel uncomfortable, but a common spirit exists in the community, all who come and stay have come intentionally and leave with a concern for people in Memphis they would not have otherwise experienced.