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Review Article

The Farm Commune and Athens, Ohio Food Cooperative as Bioscience Expressions of Food, Land and Faith Principles

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Abstract

This report presents a teaching case study that emphasizes The Farm commune and the Athens, Ohio Food Cooperative as bioscience illustrations for how ideals pertaining to food, land and faith principles can be lived in varied contexts. This begins with observations of The Farm and moves into observations from living in Athens, Ohio and participating with the Athens Food Cooperative (Co-op). Such development serves to exemplify how ideas associated with food, land and faith can exist via unique contexts within the American social order.

Introduction

I am using The Farm commune and Athens, Ohio Food Cooperative as bioscience illustrations for how ideals pertaining to food, land and faith principles can be lived in varied contexts. I will start with observations from my time residing at The Farm. From there I will enter into observations from my time living in Athens, Ohio and participating with the Athens Food Cooperative (Co-op). Such development serves to exemplify how ideas associated with food, land and faith can exist via unique contexts within the American social order. In developing my teaching materials, I have found it especially beneficial to draw from domains that I have had first-hand experience with. I begin this illustration with how I came to know about The Farm. In the winter, 1978 I was driving from San Angelo, Texas to Columbus, Ohio. I had spent a night in Dallas and after I left Dallas noticed a hitchhiker on the freeway carrying a sign that said "Cleveland, Ohio." He caught my attention for two reasons: 1) he looked very cold (was wearing only a light jacket in about 20-degree weather) and 2) the road he was hitchhiking on was not a road that would take him to Cleveland, Ohio. I decided to turn around and pick him up. His name was Charlie and he was 19. His luggage was limited to a cloth Navy bag. We picked up some beer and began a long and interesting conversation. I should note this was during a time when a driver in Texas could legally drink and drive. That is, you could drive with an open container of beer in your hand. I mentioned to him that he was lucky to find a ride all the way to Columbus because I was doubtful, he would find a ride to Ohio (let alone Cleveland) from Dallas. He told me he was not really going to Cleveland. He was AWOL (absent without leave) from the Navy and was trying to make his way to The Farm-a hippie commune located about 70 miles south of Nashville, Tennessee-where he was hoping to seek asylum.

I laughed so abruptly that my beer shot back up and out my nose. I informed him that The Farm, being located in the state of Tennessee, was in fact under federal jurisdiction and that I could not see how he could claim asylum there. He then explained he intended to hide there. I was vaguely aware of The Farm. I had seen one of their signs in a coffee house that conveyed they would gladly receive and raise any unwanted child anybody wanted to drop off to them. They said if you were planning to abort your child you could deliver it to their clinic and leave it with them. No questions. That they might hide fugitives on the run kind of fit the profile. I decided to take him to The Farm so I might have a look around. It was not easy to find The Farm. There were no signs. Charlie knew it was near Summertown, Tennessee and that it was

located off of Drakes Lane. Sure enough, I saw a hand painted sign that said Drakes Lane and we proceeded a mile or so off the main two-lane road we came into town on. The Farm was a commune of about 1500 people living on 1700 rolling acres of woods and fields. The gate house was located at the front gate. There the "gate man" met all who entered and, if you were not a resident, decided if you could enter. I later learned he did this by focusing on your "vibes." Charlie told his story to the gate man and he nodded knowingly. He had a quiet demeanor but piercing soft eyes. He later told me "The eyes are the window to the soul." He thought a long time after Charlie spoke. He then softly said it would be better if Charlie left the commune after he had a meal at the gate house. Charlie continued to plead his case, but the decision had been rendered. I told Charlie we should chow down on the offer of a meal, it looked like good health food, and then I could give him a ride to Columbus and he could hitch a ride the rest of the way to Cleveland-where his family lived. We ate, I took a bath, took a nap and went for a walk as Charlie continued to seek permission to stay but to no avail. As we left, the gate man pulled me aside while Charlie was loading his stuff into the car and told me I was welcome to come back. Two years later, in the summer of 1980, I did.

Report of Data

I was a graduate student at Ohio University at the time and decided to visit The Farm. It intrigued me personally and sociologically. I was intrigued with how they managed to live their ideals pertaining to food, land and faith principles in such a way that struck me as being sustainable. My 1980 visit provided me with a foundation for how I could reside at The Farm. I returned in 1981 and resided at The Farm over multiple periods. I was impressed with their sense of purpose. This was clearly a group that had defined their own unique vision for how life should be lived and they practiced what they believed. Part of their vision was that they should share their perspective with outsiders as time and resources permitted. Here is what I learned. The Farm was started in 1971 by 250 longhairs and their spiritual leader, Stephen Gaskin. It evolved from a weekly meeting called Monday Night Class that Gaskin conducted in San Francisco during the late 1960's. From this beginning, the class supported Stephen on a speaking tour across the country. Upon returning to San Francisco after being together on the road for four months they felt they had become a community. Within a week they were on the road again in search of a place to base their community. They paid $70 acre for 1700 acres of land in Lewis County, Tennessee. The commune grew to over 1500 people and they created smaller satellite affiliate communities in the U.S. and other countries.

They described themselves as "long hair pacifist, non-violent types, living together to create an alternative lifestyle that is comfortable and graceful, but financially within the reach of nearly everyone." When they first settled near Summertown the locals used fewer words to describe them. They called them "hippies." There were some rough edges at first, but The Farm was able to gain acceptance in southern Tennessee. All my interactions with the locals who lived near The Farm were friendly when they learned I was associated with the commune. The Farm was known as a good neighbor. People lived in a variety of shelters that initially included many of the buses they arrived in and then larger communal shelters were built. When they departed California, they were traveling in old school buses. When they arrived in rural Tennessee and found their way to the land, they had purchased they initially augmented their buses with tent shelters for places to live. Many of those old buses were still being lived in over ten years later and could be seen across the communal property serving varied functions from living quarters to library, to storage facility to kids playhouse. If a person had an interest in becoming a resident of The Farm, she/he would typically first spend time there as a visitor.

This could then lead to an invitation to return to The Farm as a "soaker." As a soaker, you got to know more about the community and they got to know more about you. If all went well membership was the final stage. It did not cost anything to join The Farm and your personal belongings remained your own. But things like money, cars and real estate became community property. One of their goals at the commune was complete self-sufficiency. They grew most of their own food. The Farm was strictly vegetarian based primarily on soybean and soybean products such as soymilk, tofu and tempeh. Relationships with the land was primary for inhabitants of The Farm. They very much saw themselves as stewards of the land rather than owners of the land. This blends well with Scott Chaskey's Soil and Spirit: Cultivation and Kinship in the Web of Life. Chaskey stresses that "for indigenous people, land is the foundation of all things, not as property, but as the source of all things" (implying food, water, medicine etc.) [1]. This ethos was readily apparent at the commune. Tending to the needs of the land was a common topic of conversation and care was extended to ensure effective stewardship of the land. The Farm had Amish neighbors who were known to be helpful with advice for perpetuating rich soil.

Relations with the local population were mildly contentious at first but acceptance was soon realized when communal residents reached out to the surrounding community for advice on how to plant, grow and harvest crops. Many of The Farm members had attended college but not typically in subjects that prepared them for farm life. They were quick to admit they did not know what they were doing and that many mistakes were made. Each year added to their knowledge base though and by the time I arrived, about ten years after they had been farming, they had a fairly efficient farming operation underway. The membership had a variety of labor skills. Such skills included carpentry & the building trades, farming & food processing, automotive technology, alternative energy, book publishing & printing, primary health care and midwifery. All of these skills were taught through the apprentice system on the commune. The Farm also ran a state-approved school with over 250 kids in grades 1-12. Regardless of occupation they shared equally in food, shelter, clothing and medical care. Work was the visible expression of love. They were able to provide for themselves and for others. PLENTY, The Farm's international relief and development organization, reached out to people in a variety of locations. Projects included on-location participation with Greenpeace initiatives; reforestation in Lesotho; supplying water, soy dairy, agriculture and construction in Guatemala; free ambulance service in South

Bronx (New York); agriculture in Haiti; a clinic and orphanage in Bangladesh; the Shutdown Project (against nuclear power), and spiritual midwifery in the United States.

The Farm maintained an independent comprehensive health system and the midwives delivered well over 1500 babies by natural childbirth. Many expectant mothers came to The Farm specifically for this method of delivery. In a unique social statement, the midwives publicly advertised "If you or anyone you know is thinking about getting an abortion, here is an alternative. We will deliver your baby by natural childbirth, for free. We will raise your child as our own and if you ever want the child back, you can retrieve it, with no hassle." Since The Farm did not receive government benefits, they viewed their children as their "social security" for the future. It was evident to me that the kids were their most precious resource. Over half of the commune population was under the age of 15 during my time there. I observed that the children were not viewed as burdens or irrational entities. They were fully accepted as part of The Farm mosaic. I was continually impressed with the children. I am accustomed to American children seeking attention and often "acting out" in relation to their emotional outbursts. This is normal to me in my observation. The Farm children rarely behaved in such a manner. They struck as little adults and lived rational lives. Not overly expressive or demanding. They would freely engage in conversation with any adult and seem to be able to hold their own in such interactions.

Discussion

Life on The Farm had a spiritual aspect to it that typically stressed meditation. Once a week we would meet on a hillside and engage in meditation for about 30 minutes. This would serve as foundation for a community meeting that was typically led by Stephen Gaskin-their spiritual teacher. A variety of topics would be discussed ranging from problems with the communal water pressure to how a purer consciousness could be sought. I found the communal mindset to be in a continual meditative state. I am accustomed to most Americans engaging in informal dialog about the weather and irrelevant topics. I can appreciate how such "small talk" can help to provide context for building relationships. I never had such dialog at The Farm. It seemed to be assumed that the foundation for relationship had already been achieved.

The Farm lasted about 12 years but could not continue beyond the economic recession of the early 1980's. They could no longer support themselves and the commune was dissolved. The only people who could stay were those who could support themselves in the local economy. The Farm went from being a commune to a small intentional community. When I visited the community in 1985 and later in 1991, there was little to indicate that this small community had been a much larger commune. In 1991 roughly 200 people still lived privately on the property that had once prospered with over 1500 people. The vision seemed to live on but not in the form of a communal settlement.

"And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need." Acts 2:44-45, The Common English Bible

Comparative Analysis

Less removed from the larger society, I offer the Athens, Ohio Food Co-op as another illustration for how progressive ideals pertaining to food, land and faith principles can be lived in a context more closely associated with the dominant culture. My involvement with the food Co-op opened my eyes to how such an organization can be much more than just a food store. It can reflect a way of life and a way of centering oneself. As such, I was intrigued with the food Co-op with regard to how they offered healthy food to their membership and a means for the membership to advance the kind of social order they wanted to live in. I am focusing on the Athens Food Co-op in this report as being a representative organization within the counterculture. Utopian ideals were consistently stressed within the counterculture via a variety of organizations such as the food Co-op. Thus, the food Co-op was more than a food store. It symbolically represented a different way of life for many of the members. It expressed their utopian vision of how life should be and could be led. Understanding this vision requires the reader to grasp the notion of the prevailing counterculture at the time. From the mid-1960's until the early 1970's a youth culture evolved which, among other things, tended to reject primary norms and values of the larger culture in favor of a more liberal lifestyle. This subculture subsequently became known as the counterculture. Since that time counterculture has taken on a number of meanings and is represented in various organizational structures.

These meanings and representations flow from fundamental countercultural themes. Two primary explanations of counterculture are provided by Theodore Roszak, in The Making of a Counterculture, and Charles Reich, in The Greening of America. Roszak discusses counterculture as arising from a youthful revulsion at technocracy. It represents a refusal to surrender spontaneity to artificiality. The counterculture serves to reassert life and joy in the face of impersonal organization [2]. Reich defines counterculture as arising from a perception by the young of contradiction between the stated ideals of the parental generation and their actual lifestyles. He designates six crises within this contradiction: disorder and corruption, decline of democracy, absence of community, poverty (in contrast with affluence), exploitation of technical resources (instead of expanding human resources), and a sense of loss of self [3]. Contrasting subculture, contra culture, and counterculture will further clarify the countercultural perspective. Cohen defines a subculture as "the existence, in effective interaction with one another, of a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment [4]." Within this situation new group standards are formed among the actors. In "Contra culture and Subculture," Yinger clarifies that subculture can be recognized without intensive analysis of interaction with the larger culture [5]. Yinger views contra culture as a subculture that stands in opposition to important aspects of the dominant culture. He suggests the term contra culture:

wherever the normative system of a group contains, as a primary element, a theme of conflict with the values of the total

society, where personality variables are directly involved in the development and maintenance of the group's values, and wherever its norms can be understood only by reference to the relationships of the group to a surrounding dominant culture [6].

Counterculture is "a term used since the mid-1960's to describe a specific form of youth culture whose members reject key norms and values of the prevailing culture [7]." Counterculture is more readily recognizable, in contrast with subculture and contra culture, through its attempts to modify, change, and alter the dominant culture. Athens is a small city located in the southeastern part of Ohio. Aside from being the county seat of Athens County, Athens is primarily known as the home of Ohio University. With 19,000 residents living in Athens and a student population of 14,000, the atmosphere is considerably tolerant of countercultural ideals in contrast with other cities and townships in that part of the state. A number of countercultural organizations evolved within the tolerant atmosphere of Athens. One such organization was the Athens Food Cooperative (Co-op). The Co-op initially started as a buying club which allowed members to order food in bulk once a month. As the buying club became established the transition from a buying club to a Co-op by renting space above a local restaurant for deliveries and purchases. After experiencing an increased cash flow, the buying club obtained a storefront and was recognized as a Co-op within the Federation of Ohio River Co-ops (FORC). Aside from the Co-op there were other indicators of the countercultural tolerance in Athens during my time there. These indicators ranged from a variety of alternative organizations such as S.A.F.E. (Safe Alternative Forms of Energy), People for Peace, Students for Peace, Athens Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the Gay Rights Coalition to the prevalent growth of high-quality marijuana in the surrounding area. The Athens Food Co-op was reflective of the alternative community that existed in Athens. The alternative atmosphere was periodically acknowledged in the Athens newspapers. The following is a quote from a local newspaper article about unique aspects of the community.

Athens occupies a special place in our hearts because it is a good place to cool out. Here one can live cheaply, ponder life's eternal mysteries and find plenty of people who won't question you about what you intend to do with your life. It's a good place to hide out. Outside of moving to Bhutan or Tasmania, there's no place one can become invisible faster than here. It's a good place to weird out. Short of conducting human sacrifices or advocating armed revolution, one will find a high degree of tolerance here.... Athens is one of the last places where the pleasant, relaxed ethos of the late 1960's still exists.

The Athens Food Co-op described itself as a "not-for- profit, good food, member owned and democratically controlled business... membership is voluntary and open to all." A person could join the Co-op by paying a refundable $20 buying deposit. Members were owners and were encouraged to share in all aspects of the Co-op's operation. General business meetings were held the second Monday of each month. The Co-op was managed through a committee system. The committees were Cashiers, Communications, Finance, Maintenance, Ordering, Orientation, and Receiving. Extended membership status was earned by individuals who were active with the Athens Birth Center, Athens World Hunger Coalition, People for Peace, and The Women's Collective. Shopping at the Co-op was less formal than shopping at grocery stores. Members brought their own bags and containers for items packed in bulk, such as peanut butter, dried fruits, whole wheat pastas, beans, cooking oils, and liquid soaps. The underlying philosophy of the Co-op was that cooperation was a social, economic, and political idea about how people can work together to meet human needs. The introductory "Welcome" newsletter emphasized:

Being a member means taking responsibility for yourself, and also for the building of a just, peaceful community and world. By operating the Co-op and buying from it, we seek to: 1) become part of an alternative, cooperative, not-for-profit economic system which practices consumer and producer ownership and control, 2) foster an ecologically sound food/production/distribution system, 3) educate consumers about food issues and 4) encourage local self-reliance.

In an Athens newspaper article entitled "Food store 'seed' of new society," Paul Tescher (cashier) related "It's an opportunity to not just be a food store, but to be part of an ideal to be the seed of a different society."

What Tescher conveys is commensurate with what Jennifer Ayers presents in Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology. "Food is an avenue for strengthening affective and familial bonds. . . and building community [8]." It is within this notion of building community that the reader can recognize how we live can be tied to what we believe and what we want to put forward as our vision for the present and the future. The prominence of food in our lives provides an avenue for living what we believe in meaningful ways. This resonates well with the book title from Ayers that asserts focus on food is a grounded practical theology This perspective is further highlighted via Leah Penniman's view that we need to "dismantle the oppressive structures that misguide our food system" [9] as featured in Voices from the Soil. She stresses the view that social change is tied to larger structures aside from merely emphasizing an ideal. Rather, meaningful social change can best be realized when it is tethered to fundamental functions within the social order. Food production, food distribution and food consumption are representative of such fundamental functions.

The Co-op had roughly 200 active members during the period I spent with them. Active members were those who had paid their $10 buying deposit. Approximately 40 of these 200 active members were consistently involved with the decision-making process within the Co-op. Such consistent involvement was generally exercised through employment as a cashier, committee work, or regular attendance at general membership meetings. The store was operated through consensus whereby all members (present at monthly membership meetings) had to agree with new policies and amendments to the operating rules. The Co-op described itself as an egalitarian organization whereby all members had equal power. The consensus process was the decision-making and conflict resolution method used by the Co-op at monthly membership

meetings. The primary appeal of the consensus process was that it promoted cooperation instead of competition. It is a 16-step process that emphasizes discussion and compromise. The FORC organization also operated with consensus decision- making. It was not-for-profit and democratically controlled. FORC, comprised of one representative per Co-op, meets one weekend every two months. Any Co-op member was welcome to attend.

Within its "Bylaws, Structure, and Philosophy" FORC clarified its purpose and intent: FORC views itself as a part of a larger social and political movement directed towards creating a society which holds as its first principle the welfare of all human beings. We are a revolutionary organization and, as such, feel solidarity with other people and groups equally committed to providing people with the knowledge and resources necessary to control their own lives.

The Federation of Ohio River Co-ops (FORC) promoted regional solidarity for the countercultural co-ops that existed in the Ohio River region. This enhanced the buying power of the co-ops in the region and provided them with a stronger collective position than would be the case if they had no affiliation. One can recognize parallels with Monica White's description of The Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement. She explains how cooperatives found their birth out of necessity and created sustainable agricultural programs to build, support and protect economically self-determined communities [10]. My interest with the Co-op allowed me to observe how they functioned and how this functioning reflected their values. Observing their approaches with decision making and conflict resolution allowed me opportunity to see how their philosophical orientations were manifested in their organizational processes. That is, I could observe how their behaviors reflected their stated positions. Put more simply-I could see if they "walked their talk" via their daily routines. Such findings allowed for means to judge how well their ideals associated with food, land and faith were evidenced in their organizational practices. I found that the Co-op usually used a form of voting within the consensus process framework instead of using the actual process. That is, if no member opposed a proposal strong enough to major object, then the proposal passed. A major objection is an irreconcilable objection to a proposal. It stops current action on the proposal and the major objector accepts responsibility for meeting with the proposer to rewrite the proposal. Power was generally based on who had information and position. If a proposal was objected against at a monthly membership meeting, the major objector and the proposer were supposed to work out an agreement on the objected proposal so it could be put on the agenda of the next monthly membership meeting.

I found that the egalitarian ideals advocated by the Co-op were only superficially evident. Egalitarian ideals were evident on the organizational behavior level but not on the core philosophy level. Egalitarian ideals were evident within Co-op rituals, procedures, clothing styles, jargon, and norms, but the egalitarian ideals were not recognized as genuine on the core philosophy level. The Co-op presented itself as egalitarian, but my analysis found consistent behavior contradictory to egalitarian ideals. Member participation was correlated to power within the Co-op. A basic progression was that participation within the organization led to knowledge of the organization which, in turn, led to referent power within the organization. A typical example of this progression was evidenced in the cashier's position at the Co-op. As cashiers, they participated considerably in the operation of the Co-op. This participation enhanced their knowledge about the functioning of the organization. As knowledgeable members, they were frequently referred to for advice or direction regarding the needs of the Co-op. Such consistent reference, by the general membership, established the cashiers in positions of power because they, more than most members, knew what was going on. The degree to which a member could be identified by other members was correlated with that member's position within the Co-op hierarchy. That is, if Co-op members did not identify with an individual member this negatively affected that member's position of power and influence.

Burnout generally occurred when members became over involved with the Co-op and felt a need to withdrawal from such involvement. Burnout did not represent disagreement or disenchantment with the Co-op; rather, it represented an interest to apply one's time and energy in another area. It was not uncommon for an individual to withdraw from the Co-op and then re-initiate involvement at a later date. Burnout affected the Co-op on three levels: temporary burnout at meetings, burnout experienced by an individual member, and burnout experienced by the entire organization. Temporary burnout generally occurred near the end of monthly membership meetings. That is, members were tired of sitting and discussing and were anxious to leave. Earl Sebastian described how Rolf Haenisch, the former coordinator of the Co-op, used temporary burnout to his advantage. "He'd wait until the end of meetings when everybody was burned out and then propose stuff and give substantiation for the ideas and folks generally went along with what he did." The coordinator was a temporary position which had been held only by Rolf. The Co-op did not have an official constitution and bylaws and subsequently experienced difficulty with recurring problems. A review of meeting minutes and newsletters from the Co-op evidenced problems that were dealt with, but which also managed to reoccur as problems. The Co-op appeared to "go in circles" with some problems.

I found that the Co-op conflict resolution communication attempts exemplified dominant culture attempts on the core philosophy level. The Co-op used voting within a consensus process framework in formal settings and a hierarchy was evident in informal settings. The Co-op conflict resolution communication attempts exemplified counterculture attempts on the organizational behavior level. Organizational behaviors included rituals, procedures, clothing styles, jargon, and norms. The Co-op presented itself through organizational behaviors as using the consensus process in formal settings, but analysis found it did not use the consensus process. The entire process was never used during my involvement with the Co-op. The Co-op presented itself through organizational behaviors as an egalitarian organization in informal settings, but analysis found it did not practice egalitarian ideals. These findings carry implications with the Dramaturgical

School of symbolic interactionism. That is, social interaction is based on the management of impressions we receive from each other. Erving Goffman develops this notion in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.

I have said that when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they have come to have. When an individual appears before others, he will have many motives for trying to control the impressions they receive of the situation [11].

In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of the situation and thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect [12].

The importance of the conflict resolution communication attempts is that the attempts constructed a presentation made by the organization members. The Co-op presented itself as using the consensus process, which exemplifies counterculture ideals, but analysis found it did not use the consensus process. The Co-op presented itself as egalitarian, which exemplifies counterculture ideals, but analysis found it did not practice egalitarian approaches. Thus, the Co-op presented itself as countercultural through its conflict resolution communication attempts, and such attempts were often perceived as countercultural, but my analysis found the presentation of countercultural conflict resolution communication attempts to be superficial. That is, the counter-cultural ideals were only superficially evident through organizational behaviors. The Co-op usually used voting within a consensus process framework in formal settings. The informal hierarchy was based on power via identification and participation. Participation within the organization led to knowledge about the functioning of the organization which in turn led to referent power within the organization. There was a considerable ideological distance between countercultural organizations and dominant culture organizations in the United States during the late 1960's and early 1970's. The past 50 years have seen this distance become smaller with the formation of a common ground between countercultural organizations and dominant culture organizations. An example of this common ground was recognized during my involvement with the Co-op when FORC adopted a Board of Directors and large supermarket chains gave increased emphasis to the marketing of health foods. That is, a Board of Directors approach was previously considered to be unacceptable in the counterculture and the health food market was not previously emphasized by the large dominant culture supermarket chains.

Conclusion

This report has focused on such organizational behaviors occurring within a countercultural organization that professed a utopian vision. This vision offered a unique foundation for the organization and thus the unique vision set it apart from surrounding (non-countercultural) organizations. I offer a word of caution that study of organizations with less unique foundations or visions would be more challenging in that the organizational behaviors would be correspondingly less unique to observe and analyze. Taken together, this report has conveyed an illustration as a teaching event. It exemplifies aspects of what I have learned in the PT 600 Food, Land, and Faith course. What is presented has been influenced by the course readings, in-class writing exercises, on-line student tasks and the variety of sources we have accessed in this course and beyond. In this process I have used The Farm commune and Athens, Ohio Food Cooperative as illustrations for how ideals pertaining to food, land and faith principles can be lived in varied contexts. I started with observations from my time residing at The Farm and then built into a fuller clarification of The Farm via sociological framing associated with relevant utopian perspectives. From there I entered into observations from my time living in Athens, Ohio and participating with the Athens Food Cooperative. In developing varied teaching materials, I have found it especially beneficial to draw from domains that I have had first-hand experience with. The illustration I have presented exemplifies how ideas associated with food, land and faith can exist via unique contexts within the American social order.

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