

THE BRETHERN OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY:
A STUDY OF A WORLD-REJECTING SECT.

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features of a world-rejecting sect, with an
analysis of its emergence and maintainance of
a distinctive 'contraculture'.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE ULTRARELIGIOUS SECT: A GENERAL DISCUSSION

A rather imposing arsenal of theoretical equipment has been developed in the field of sociology of religion to deal specifically with the question of 'sectarianism'. I would at this point like to present the theoretical perspective within which this present essay is couched and at the same time posit certain theoretical questions which this study will attempt to tackle.

A brief review of the sociological literature on sectarianism would reveal that researchers in the field have addressed themselves primarily to three separate questions. Firstly, what are sects? How are they organized? What are their structural and normative features? Secondly, how are sects related to the ongoing society? From what groups within society do sects enjoy the greatest appeal? Thirdly, what are the functions and dysfunctions of sects? For whom do the main functions of sects accrue? For what specific 'problem areas' are sects brought into being as 'problem solving mechanisms'?

At this juncture, I will attempt to summarize some of the more fertile theories that have dealt with these problems in order to make the conceptual framework within which I conceived this study explicit and to provide a point of departure from which I propose to deal with certain as yet unanswered questions.

Sectarianism as an area of study for sociologists, has suffered from the lack of an adequate definition of its subject matter, - a sect. The problem seems to revolve around the difficulty of conceptually differentiating a sect from other religious bodies (in effect a church, a denomination, or a cult). Some of the better attempts have been in the form of ideal-types,¹ often resembling check-lists of supposed structural and attitudinal ingredients of a sect. E.T. Clark, after attempting his own definition, put the problem this way,

"A definition (of a sect) is accordingly difficult or impossible to formulate in terms that include all the elements of the sect and exclude all those of the church; it is plain that there is no clear-cut line between the two."²

Without getting involved in the structural details of a sect, suffice it to say that a sect is

"a voluntary association of persons committed to an ethico-religious ideal, which its members attempt to manifest in their own behavior."³

This first approximation is far from adequate for it fails to specify the more salient aspects of the sect; that is the ethico-religious value system supports a rejection of the world (dominant society) and a withdrawal from any meaningful involvement in it.⁴ Sects are conceived of as value creation societies which are organized around a stance of opposition to the norms and institutions of the dominant society. They construct alternative value systems which are in direct contrast to those values operating in the dominant society; this antithetic value system

could be labelled a 'contraculture'. This first approximation is extremely loose for although in some measure it points out the essential difference between sects and other religious bodies, the definition may well include political protest movements, delinquent gangs, and nativistic movements.⁵ But I will forego precision for the moment in order to clarify the general pattern.

It has almost become a byword in the sociology of religion that sects are a lower class phenonema while churches are to a large extent upper and middle class. It has long been held that sects have had their greatest attraction among the lower classes.⁶ An analysis of religious ideologies might lend a possible explanation for this. Emile Durkheim in 'The Elementary Forms of Religious Life'⁷ claimed that religious doctrines supported the basic values of a society and could be looked on as an attempt to put the stamp of legitamacy on its adherents secular activities. But religion has been looked on in another light; S. Freud in 'Civilization and Its Discontents'⁸ thought that religion was an illusion which distracted its adherents from the 'real' situations of the world. He conceived of it as a social crutch for the misbegotten elements of society. N. J. Demerath made several steps in the direction of refining these primitive insights.⁹ He claimed that far from merely serving one function in society, religiosity was multidimensional. It contains elements which cater to the firmly integrated members of society, reinforcing and supporting their secular values. But, it can also serve as a mechanism for altering the position of those with an inferior social status. These people are attracted to religion because it seems to offer an escape from secular values in which

they rank poorly. According to Demerath,

"religion is only one alternative (for the low ranking) but it has the advantages of institutional stability and a distinctively different system of rewards."¹⁰

The high ranking, in terms of income, occupation, and education typically participate in parish activities such as church finances and philanthropic functions. Among the low ranking individuals, religiosity is characterized by ideological knowledge and commitment to Biblical doctrine, endowment of secular activities with religious significance, and a large degree of prayer and Biblical reading. According to Demerath these two functions of religion can co-exist in the same institution; he is able to show that this relationship does in fact exist using data collected in a sample sponsored by the Lutheran church. Although 'sect-like' behavior may flourish in certain congregations of a particular denomination, while 'church-like' involvement prospers in others, It is more likely that the more extreme sectarianism will thrive in a separate institution where they are better able to substitute religious status for social status, without the troublesome contradictions to their ethos that middle class contact might provide. The sect, then, denies the validity of the values of 'this-world' which would accord its members a low rank; it sets up an alternative system (e.g. Kingdom of God) where because of their special 'endowments' they become the elite.

It is fundamental to this view of sectarianism that sects are perceived as operating as 'escape' mechanisms from certain problem situations. Sects are thought of as providing collective solutions to certain collective problems. We might, however, at this point ask what constitutes a 'problem situation'.

Sociologists have often noticed that sects appear among people caught in conditions of severe disprivilege. They are usually people divested of societal rewards because of some type of social change. These groups, whether ethnic, racial, occupational or whatever have been placed in a state of relative deprivation because of some sort of transformation of the existing society whether it be technological changes, migrations, conquest, etc.¹¹

Ample literature in this field have testified to the fact that sects, cults and protest movements often act as buffers for the recent immigrant; often softening the blow of 'cultural shock' accompanying life in a new land.¹² Similarly technological and social innovations have on occasion been cited as the causal factor making entire groups of people occupationally irrelevant and thus, prone to join a cult or sect of the disaffected.¹³ Conquest of a weaker society by a stronger one is another frequently cited determinant of sect formation, - indeed nativistic movements and cults among conquered peoples is perhaps the most numerous of the sects.¹⁴

An overview of the situations of deprivation prior to sect formation seems to reveal certain structural similarities. One tentative hypothesis could be that religious sects serve as problem solving mechanisms to alter situations of rank imbalance for its members. Ranks are defined as positively evaluated ordering characteristics of a social system.¹⁵ Examples of ranks are: ethnicity, education, prestige, skill, etc. Some ranks are characteristics which are instrumental to certain

goals, such as: skill and education; while others are rewards for achieving certain goals, such as: prestige and income.

A person's ranks will be considered out of line or imbalanced if he occupies a high position in some ranks but low in others. It is assumed that such situations are unstable states, creating tension within the individual, such that there will be tendency to change in any direction which establishes rank balance. It should be noted that this type of equilibrium theory is indeterminant in that it is not able to predict from a knowledge of the rank imbalance situation which one of the multiple methods of establishing rank balance will become manifest; we can only hypothesize that one will be. For example, one could endeavor to raise a low rank so that it is in line with the rest, or attempt to precipitate a social revolution, and thereby change the bases of rank evaluation. Or more appropriate for this discussion, create a sect or cult within which the criteria of rank evaluation and rank assignment is redefined, and the offending values of the dominant society rejected.

According to the above theory, absolute deprivation in a stable society is not likely to be a fertile field for this type of 'world-rejecting sect', for this would be a case of rank balance. As Eric Hoffer put it,

"Misery does not automatically generate discontent, nor is the intensity of discontent directly proportionate to the degree of misery.....It is not actual suffering but the taste of better things which excites people to revolt."¹⁶

However, a set of ranks may, seemingly, be in balance at a given time, but still be a tension producing situation. For example, this might occur if the people involved undergo downward social mobility in all

ranks because the criteria by which ranks are assigned differential weights is altered in such a way as to allocate to them an inferior position than they previously occupied. The rank balance theory discussed above assumes that the cultural orientation of the actors is a constant throughout the process. However, a much different process is involved during immigration, conquest or some other change in cultural orientations whereby people are exposed to a new cultural setting where they receive a lower rank evaluation from others than they were accustomed to in the past because the very 'calculus' of evaluation has been altered. This situation is especially aggravated when one's previous societal loyalties has a 'halo effect' upon one's standing in other ranks.¹⁷ It has been frequently shown that ethnicity has a generalizing effect upon other characteristics; in that, all ranks appear to converge to the position set by this one master trait.¹⁸ For example, 'Indianness' frequently receives a low rank in ethnicity from North American whites, but it also has the effect of pulling down all other ranks to that level. Consequently, one would expect recent immigrants to undergo this process whereby their previously high ranking ethnicity 'score' would suddenly be perceived, not as a praiseworthy characteristic by others, but as a detrimental and indelible trait. Given differential value orientations, a conflict will often ensue between the immigrants and host society on 'how traits ought to be ranked'. This conflict on what is to be considered preferable behavior strikes at the core of one's definition of good and bad actions and what rewards to assign to meritorious activities. This tension will presumably be greater for the more elderly immigrant

because they have often made a public commitment to their old value system and hence have a greater personal investment in maintaining it. Again this type of situation is assumed to be tension producing and involving a tendency to change in a direction alleviating the source of strain.

One solution, as already mentioned is to withdraw from active participation in the host society into a world-denying sect from where one can reject the validity of the host society's values and within this mutually supportive framework redefine the basis of rank evaluation in a more self-commending manner.

However, there are certainly a number of other possible responses to this problem, for example, personal withdrawal, open aggression against the threatening culture, political activism directed towards a policy of altering the host society or conformity and ultimately assimilation into the dominant society. Simply from an analysis of the tension producing situation one could not predict which of the several possible solutions might be taken. However, to some extent, in Chapter 2 I will attempt to delimit the choice of possible alternatives to the religious solution. I will at that time focus on the question of what cultural and structural prerequisites must be in operation in order for the sectarian solution to be chosen.

Many social observers have noticed that sects are typically impermanent structures, exceedingly susceptible to various types of organizational transformations. For example, S. D. Clark states that,

"the sect form of religious organization has proved unstable. The pure sect, the religious group organized exclusively in terms of the other-worldly or spiritual interests of its members, has never been more than an idealistic conception of religious organization finding expression in movements of religious reform at various times. The necessity of existing in a worldly society has led religious sects from the very beginning to accept some form of worldly outlook. Where they have not succeeded in developing into churches, or at any rate into types of religious organization accommodated to the secular community, they have perished. Almost from the moment of their inception they have been forced to make such a choice between social accommodation or extinction."¹⁹

Short of instances where sects fail to come to grips with 'worldly' exigencies and thus sink into oblivion, sect-like structures as a rule evolve into churches. They evolve from a stance of rejecting the world to one of compromise and accommodation to it; indeed often to a position of supporting and justifying secular activities. One of the mechanisms accounting for this transition from sect to church has been labelled Wesley's Law.²⁰ In brief, the argument runs as follows: The sectarian belief system is to some extent a reflection of it's members economic position (lower and working class). As E. T. Clark put it,

"They (the sects) elevate the necessities of their class, - frugality, humility, and industry - into moral virtues and regard as sins the practices they are debarred from embracing."²¹

These ascetic attitudes often lead to hard work, self-discipline, reliability, etc., which in turn leads to increasing prosperity. This prosperity has the effect of raising the individual and/or the group above their former class position. Financial success and social respectability often negates the reasons behind the original sectarian revolt and makes continual adherence to the original sectarian spirit seem at best hypocritical. Thus, as the members seek more and

more to embrace the norms and institutions of the dominant society, the once radical sect itself begins to evolve into a more conservative organization, - the church.

This transition from organized rejection of the dominant society's values to active acceptance has been interpreted by some sociologists to mean that sects have a 'bridging function' for its members rather than a purely 'escape function'. In his discussion of this bridging function, Yinger claims that,

"many individual adherents are helped by the self-discipline that the sects encourage, to improve their own status."²²

Likewise, Benton Johnson observed that many sects act as socializing agents; inspiring the type of behavior that elevates the individual to a middle class position. He concludes from an analysis of Holiness sects that they,

"are not interested in 'social action' or in an attempt to reform society broadly so as to make it more 'Christian' in any structural sense. They are not interested in forming themselves into segregated, tightly knit, self-sufficient communities."²³

Rather, by rigidly regulating the gratification needs of its members, it promotes worldly wealth and hence respect and prestige within the secular community.

However, there appears to be some sects which are remarkably resistant to the forces which operate to transform them into churches. The 'established sects',²⁴ such as the Hutterites, the Shakers, and the Amana more than any other seem to defy assimilation into the surround-

ing society. They represent another pattern which diverges markedly from the type of organizational change posited by Wesley's Law. As Benton Johnston points out,

"The radical 'anti-worldly' groups, which Troeltsch would unhesitatingly call 'sects', cannot be understood so clearly in terms of the Sect-to-Church hypothesis. The major historical trend of the Amish, the Shakers, or to a lesser extent the Quakers can scarcely be understood as a simple process of accommodation to the values of the outer society."²⁵

As a rule it appears to be isolated, communalistic sects, which have withdrawn from active participation with the dominant society and have institutionalized a fervent opposition to it, that are the most successful in warding off secularization.

The Brethern of Early Christianity represents one of the 'established sects' discussed above. The author, in studying the Brethern community did so with the following theoretical question in mind: what are the structural and organizational features which prevents this sect from developing into a church and what are the factors created to impede this evolution. The author will also investigate some of the ideological factors which help them maintain an ethic at odds with the outside society: first, in demonstrating how the religious ideology is produced from the social structure and second how the resultant belief system feeds back into the social system from where it originated in a supportive role.²⁶

After an historical description of the emergence of the sect, I will endeavor to provide an ethnographic description of the community in question. The main body of the paper will follow where I will address myself to the structural make-up of the sect and how it remains resis -

tent to assimilation. My basic procedure was a one man field research program. The main period of participant observation of the Community Farm of the Brethern was from June 1, 1966 to August 20, 1966, plus several extensive visits before and after this period. The main body of data was gathered by means of direct observation, unstructured interviews and documentary analysis. Because of the nature of the subject matter, I was forced to use the same technique as Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter²⁷ in their study of a religious cult, - disguised participation. My ploy was to take on the role of a sincere potential convert; a person who in their terms was a 'spiritual infant', who had come to learn of the 'true faith'. As a student in sociology, I would not have been able to gain an entrée into the sect, because I would have been accused of being a member of a misguided faith. Consequently, in order to gain access to the sect, I suggested to them that my interest in them was not purely academic, but was more in the nature of a religious quest for 'the truth'. I took on a stance of being disenchanted with the 'world', emphasizing its impersonality and ruthlessness.* Throughout the study, I tried to remain a passive, accommodating participant. However, in order to remain in good standing within the community, I was expected to show evidence of spiritual development. Consequently, on several occasions I was called upon to say spontaneous prayers and actively participate in their religious life. Although I feel

* Fortunately, a president had been made by a sociology student, Tarrell Miller, who investigated another communitarian sect, Forest River Community. He remained and became one of their most fervent members; the Brethern hoped that I might follow suite.

that this method was the only way in which this sect could be examined in any detail, it has several weaknesses: (a) it was impossible to measure how much my own actions influenced my subject matter. I attempted to be a nondirective, sympathetic, and passive participant, but I often found this impossible. (b) It is methodologically weak in that the very nature of the subject matter limits the opportunity for others to assess the validity of the study. The very secrecy of the sect restricts the possibility that the study will ever be duplicated by others.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. See Bryan R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development", American Sociological Review, 24 (1959), pp. 3-15.
2. Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949, p. 21.
3. Benton Johnson, "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology", American Sociological Review, 22 (1957), p. 88.
4. See, for example, Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. II, New York: Macmillan, 1931, esp. pp. 993-1000.
5. See, Hadley Cantril, The Politics of Despair, New York: Collier Books, 1962; Albert K. Cohen, Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang, Chicago: The Free Press of Glencoe, Ill., 1955; Ralph Linton, "Nativistic Movements", American Anthropologist, 45 (1943), pp. 230-240.
6. For example, Liston Pope, "Religion and the Class Structure", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 256 (1948), pp. 84-91.
7. Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, New York: Collier Books, 1961, esp. pp. 235-245.

8. Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, London: Hogarth Press, Ltd., 1930.
9. N. J. Demerath III, Social Class in American Protestantism, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965.
10. Ibid., p. 85.
11. See, especially, J. Milton Yinger, Sociology Looks at Religion, New York: Macmillan, 1966, Chp. 2.
12. See, for example, John B. Holt, "Holiness Religion: Cultural Shock and Social Reorganization", American Sociological Review, 5 (1940), pp. 740-47.
13. See, for example, H. G. Barnett, Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953, esp. Chp. 14.
14. See, for example, Vittorio Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed, Toronto: Mentor, 1965.
15. M. Zelditch, Jr. and B. Anderson, "On the Balance of a Set of Ranks", unpublished paper: Stanford University, 1965.
16. Eric Hoffer, The True Believer, New York: Harper & Row, 1951, p. 33.
17. For a general discussion, see, D. Krech, R. S. Crutchfield, and E. L. Ballachey, Individual in Society, Tokyo: Kogakusha Co., Ltd., 1962, pp. 51-56.

18. Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1958, Chp. 10.
19. S. D. Clark, "The Religious Sect in Canadian Economic Development", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 12 (1946), p. 439.
20. See H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1929, p. 70.
21. Elmer T. Clark, op. cit., p. 17.
22. J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, New York: Macmillan Co., 1957, p. 173.
23. Benton Johnson, "Do Holiness Sects Socialize in Dominant Values", Social Forces, 39 (1960-1), pp. 312-13.
24. Thomas F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 69.
25. Benton Johnson, "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology", op. cit., p. 91.
26. For a discussion on this approach, see Reinhard Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1963, esp. Chp. 7.
27. See, Leon Festinger, et al., When Prophecy Fails, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956, pp. 234-249.

PART II

CHAPTER 2

BRIEF SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BRETHERN OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The history of the Brethern community can be traced back to the birth of its founder, Julius Kubassek, in 1893 near Nyiregyháza, Hungary. His father was a building contractor who appears to have used his business as a base for communist and socialist activities. He became very unpopular among his fellow contractors for harbouring wanted political criminals and using them as his main labour force. Julius's mother did not seem to share her husband's socialist sympathies, in fact, she felt they contradicted Roman Catholic doctrine of which she was a devoted follower. She was particularly intent on tailoring Julius for the Roman Catholic priesthood.

Only a few sketchy facts of Julius's early childhood could be recalled by members of the sect, mainly because Julius refused to discuss it. It appears that he was a rather visionary youth, particularly interested in the writings of Jules Verne. His relations with his parents seem to have been chiefly one of revolt and disobedience. He had an extremely poor academic record in public school because of his disinterest in school work and his frequent absenteeism. After graduating from public school, his parents insisted that he continue his education in high school; however, he refused to go and threatened to drown himself in a nearby river if his parents persisted in their demands. His father finally relented and agreed to take him into his

business as a brick layer. Although he greatly disliked the job, he retained it until he was 18. He had become involved in union activity and at the age of 18 was elected to the post of delegate of the local bricklayer's union.

It was during this period that a major rift developed between he and his parents when he suddenly renounced the Catholic faith. According to the sect's recreation of the incident, it developed in reaction to his uncle who was a priest, who had managed to beget at least 14 children. He also managed to keep four common law wives who were thinly disguised as housekeepers. The sect will frequently use this historical 'villain' to represent all that is Roman Catholic.

Immediately after renouncing Catholicism he moved to Budapest where he worked as a manual labourer. At the age of 21 and at the outbreak of the First World War, he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army. After a brief training period, he was sent to the Russian front. Julius could hardly be described as adjusting well to army life, for he soon developed a deep hatred for military personnel and warfare in general which stayed with him the rest of his life. At this time Julius is said to have spit into the face of an army chaplain who was trying to adapt Christian teachings to war. This incident is frequently cited by the sect to illustrate the 'prostitution' that the 'worldly' churches must undergo to militarism; it also underlines their founder's first denunciation of that 'fleshly union'. Later his battalion became completely surrounded by the Russian army; seeing his comrades dropping on all sides, Julius threw down his gun and fled. Julius managed to escape with his life, but

the rest of the batallion was completely wiped out. No doubt the military authorities would have considered this cowardice in the face of the enemy, but for the sect it is a source of great pride for they feel that it was a decision demanding a great deal of courage sparked by a sudden religious inspiration.

Kubassek did not escape unscathed for the ordeal left him weak, whereupon he developed pneumonia and spent the duration of the war recuperating in a hospital. After the war Julius returned to his home-town, Nyiregyháza to find that a Socialist -Communist coalition government had been established there. Somehow he became commander of the local Red guard and inspector of the branch bank. He apparently was well liked locally, but was distrusted by the leaders within the party. Kubassek says of this period,

"As I opposed their growing bureaucracy, I was finally distrusted, but so much more beloved by the working people in the village."

In 1919 a counterrevolution was sparked with the help of neighbouring Rumania. As the counterrevolutionary forces took Nyiregyháza, Kubassek hid in a woods outside the village and stole back into the village as the soldiers passed. Kubassek was forced to hide out for four months in the loft of an old shed in the back-yard of his parent's home because the counterrevolutionaries set up a headquarters in the village.

When the Béla Kun regime finally collapsed, Kubassek, wanted as a political criminal was forced to flee across the border into Czechoslovakia where he hid out in an abandoned farm house. It is during this period (according to the sect) that Kubassek was 'reborn'.

His only companion during this time was a Bible (New Testament) which he read five times. According to the mythology of the sect, Kubassek considered himself an atheist prior to reading this book, believing that

"truth and God were in opposition".

But after long study (especially of the Acts of the Apostles), he became convinced that God and truth were one, that God as represented by the 'worldly' churches was a bastardization of the concept and that only under Christ is there perfect socialism. Kubassek says of this period,

"I was deeply shocked about my former self-righteousness and found that before God I was no better than Roman Catholic priests and other sinners."

The sect considers this the beginning of his life-long search for the 'true Apostolic Christian Community'. In his journeys to find a people who lived like the early Christians he visited Baptists, Sabbatists and Nazareans and other small sects who had been persecuted for refusing to bear arms. It may be noted that prior to Kubassek's conversion to 'true Christianity' the social situation was characterized by social upheaval and unrest, a fact which the sect point out is similar to the social milieu at the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

In 1924, Kubassek visited a small Nazarean congregation which took him into its fold, after a short period of probation. No sooner had he been accepted than he pressed them to adopt the practice of community of goods in which everything was held in common. He finally persuaded them to organize a community machine shop, laundry, and sewing shop in order to make them self supporting, but this venture

barely got past the planning stage when they ran out of financial resources. Kubassek pledged that he would sacrifice himself by going to the United States in order to make enough money to support the enterprise.

In 1925, he arrived at Cleveland, Ohio where he appealed to a local Nazarean congregation for assistance. However, he found this congregation

"quite different from the poor congregations in Vienna, for most lived in great luxury; some even had factories that employed up to 2000 men".

Kubassek shocked at the disparity that existed between their lives and the teachings of their church, was treated as an outsider.

Kubassek was able to raise very little support as he wandered about visiting Nazarean congregations. He finally visited a Nazarean congregation in Bremen, Saskatchewan where he met a great deal of opposition to his views. He appears to have started a purge within the church in which several church officers were relieved of their positions. At the height of the turmoil, Kubassek eloped with the minister's 17 year old daughter, Elizabeth.

Kubassek went to Windsor, Ontario where he and his wife entered yet another Nazarean congregation and initiated a similar stir. This time he was much more successful because he managed to persuade a few sympathisers from Windsor to assist him in establishing an 'Apostolic Community' on a rented farm near Stratford, Ontario. Julius claimed that

"here and in Windsor, Ontario I constantly insisted on the principle of the apostolic community".

The Windsor congregation, however, came to the opinion that Kubassek

was all talk and little action; that in fact his community was farce. Finally with a great deal of zeal, Kubassek stood up in the congregation one Sunday morning and

"offered to serve the Lord and his people with all my life and possessions".

He then appealed to others in the church to follow. Two men, the present farm manager (Fred Kurucz) and the missionary (Alexander Bagó) stood up and expressed the same desire. According to Kubassek,

"the rest were too attached to their worldly possessions".

Both Bagó and Kurucz were Hungarian Nazareans who had undergone persecution for their resistance to war. They had not in fact surrendered a great deal for their earthly belongings included only a cow, a model T Ford and six cents in cash. Thus in May, 1931, the Brethern of Early Christianity was officially founded. However, having only five members (Bagó was single) in their minute sect, they felt rather insecure.

"We felt we were the only ones on the earth who kept all things in common,"

the farm manager later recalled. They claimed that they gained some support from the Biblical passage,

"where two or three gather in my name, I will be amongst them".¹

However, the sect quickly became financially incapacitated when the depression of the early '30's set in and as a result the sect became a mobile unit and moved west in search of more fruitful fields. They revisited the Nazarean congregation at Bremen, Saskatchewan and presented a 'manifesto'² to the church. Although the initial

reaction was highly unfavourable, the sect later attracted a number of poverty stricken farmers who were quite willing to relieve themselves of their miserable financial status.

The 'manifesto' which was designed to be a public repudiation of the Nazarean church for compromising with the world provides some informative sociological insights as to the motive behind the formation of the Brethern sect. The following are some selective excerpts:

"To the so called Nazarean believers in Christ.

To her members, leaders, elders, and to those with whom our tender faith began our least hunger and thirst for righteousness with full warmth and with sincere love we cling with confidence.. To those who we believed to be the Lord's chosen and purified people, whose elders we looked upon as ambassadors of God walking upon the earth. In which procedure we hoped to receive the crown of life and after our ten years of united pilgrimage, behold, we must speak in such a manner.

Looking on those articles from which such conditions reign in the Apostolic Christian Church (chiefly to those Nazarean believers who immigrated to North America from Europe), to which most members of the Church do not bear witness to those 'living words' which are clearly heard and understood. Even as the necessary keeping of pure and true judgement in righteousness, which is fitting for Christ's disciples, has often happened defective and even erroneous based work and even unjust excommunication. When asked for responsibility, instead of an acknowledgment and making good before the wronged member, they strive with further foundationless suspicion and judgement to further extend on the suffer's head."

This ill-worded proclamation reveals a number of things.

First, the Nazarean Church appears to have been a refuge for the disinherited elements of society as it existed in Eastern Europe.

However, in North America its function seems to have changed to one of

socializing Eastern and Central European immigrants into the dominant values of the society at large. It appears to reinforce upward status mobility of its parishioners rather than justifying a life of poverty.³

The document, in the main, is a denunciation of this process; the Brethern seem to be despairing of the fact that the Nazareans are gradually becoming integrated into society and thus receiving societal rewards for their conformity. The Brethern are repudiating the Nazarean church for accepting the 'worldly' value system and for ranking the Brethern in terms of it. The following quotations from the manifesto might clarify my contention:

The Nazarean church

"by working together with the fleshly government (whose power is based on armed violence) by which subordinate circumstances in return she is lawfully acknowledged as a 'church' (enjoying lawful power and lawful protection with man's laws and fleshly rights) and is sunk to a religious institution and political party Where we find that the Church and the government with their contradicting strength working together there we find the secret of ungodliness".⁴

I would tentatively suggest that the Brethern strongly reacted against the Nazarean's rejection of the necessity of justifying poverty. An ideology that claims that 'only the poor make good Christians' would greatly support their socioeconomic position. The following passages will illustrate this.

"Those that teach in the churches with an appearance of true humbleness, 'You should not gather treasure on the earth' but those very teachers most of the time gather treasure more than their hearers, among them there are many who gather possessions and strive for wealth more than many outside people."⁵

The Nazareans were likely people 'on their way up' economically and justified their actions with an appropriate religious ideology.

Most of the Brethern appear to have been committed to the Nazarean belief system prior to their immigration to North America. This coupled with the fact that the Brethern were a culturally alienated group who neither understood the language nor had any investment in the society which they found themselves may well have reinforced their belief in political and social non-involvement. Their criticism of the Nazarean's social involvement is relevant here.

"How many zealous poor, many times suffering heavy imprisonment and even death, because they would not 'bear arms'; that this is not just tolerated, but through various ministers is this error protected, through which many 'rich believers' (to insure the increasing of their goods and interests) give much sums in the form of Liberty Bonds, which is for the purposes of the the abominable war, with which many thousands of new swords and other weapons of murder are manufactured and with them they have made another 10,000 murderings possible."⁶

Rich believers

"will not submit their own mind to the Church but most of the time place it above, so that they are just by name 'servants' of the Church, but in truth they become lords. The account of eye-witnesses and numerous charts (base governings) reveal that the worldly law has full power over the churches to insure the cooperation of the ministers on its behalf".⁷

In all probability, the Brethern's reference group may well have been the Nazarean church in Hungary. If this is true, the Brethern may well have had a high rank in terms of their commitment to the 'old' Nazarean beliefs. Thus, they inevitably felt 'cheated' out of their high rank in religiosity when they discovered that the Nazarean church in North America evaluated others in terms of the secular values of the society (e.g. income and political power). I would suggest that the low rank in wealth, political power, and

ethnicity which was foisted on them by the Nazarean church in North America, plus their previous identification with a world rejecting sect were the dominant motivating forces for creating a value system which was the complete reversal of the secular ethic. By accepting a value system where the poor and politically non-involved will inherit the earth, they have not only elevated their own position vis-à-vis each other, but they have received an immediate sanction for doing so. It is not difficult to see why many of the poverty stricken immigrant members of the Nazarean church found the Brethern sect attractive.

With their new recruits, the mobile sect moved to British Columbia where they rented a farm in the Frazer valley near Chilliwack. In order to make the enterprise solvent the men were forced to work in the bushland cutting cordwood and making rail road ties. Several new converts joined; two because the Frazer River had flooded its banks and completely destroyed their farms.

It was in British Columbia that Kubassek heard of the Hutterian Brethern who were living a communitarian life; he immediately left for Alberta to explore the situation. He returned in a few months with a full beard and in Hutterian dress. He insisted that the sect immediately adopt the Hutterian style of dress for he was certain that he had found a people

"who had been led in every detail to the same form of Apostolic community life through the teachings of Christ".

During the following winter the entire sect migrated by means of two trucks and a trailer to West Raley Bruderhof near Cardston,

Alberta; this was a Dariusleut Hutterian colony founded in 1918.

The Brethern lived and worked with the Hutterians for 14 months trying to adopt their way of life.

The Brethern, however, felt that they did not have the necessary knowledge or experience to make good grain farmers, so they decided to resettle in Ontario, recruiting two new members from the Hutterites.

The Hutterians completely grubstaked the sect, supplying them with three railroad cars of farm implements, horses, cattle, geese and hogs. The sect had made arrangements to rent a 200 acre farm near Glen Morris, Ontario. The migration of the sect to Ontario was heavily publicized in the local newspapers and caused a good deal of excitement in the local villages. The papers, however, had erroneously announced that the Doukhobors were arriving to set up a 'Kingdom' near Glen Morris. The train from Alberta arrived in Ayr, Ontario in 1939 and was greeted by a huge throng of jeering spectators. Newsmen tried desperately to interview 'The King of the Doukhobors' but Kubassek refused to oblige thus perpetuating his image. The crowd apparently flung such epithets at them as 'Take it off, Douky' and 'Let's see your tail, Douky'. However because of the language difficulties, the sect failed to take these as insults, but felt that the crowd was recognizing them as 'dukes' and that they were surely recognizing their community as 'The Kingdom of God'. The author discovered that the idea of kingdom is still very much a part of the local resident's conception of the community. I was asked several times who had become king after Julius died.

They stayed at Glen Morris only for one year,⁸ because the persecution became too oppressive (local residents claimed that sexual aberrations were being carried out on the community) also the Brethern claim that many of their Mennonite neighbours were determined to break the community.

"Mennonites would show up on Sundays, we could see their buggies coming and we knew that we would have no meals that day. I still hate to eat with the rich because of it."

The rent was increased on their farm and they felt that their children were being persecuted in the local school, and that the children were being led into the ways of the world. The children were teased and mocked in the school for their unusual dress; the community was horrified to learn that some of the older boys picked up the little girl's dresses to see if the 'Doukies had tails'. The community instructed the children not to stand up to sing 'God Save the King' which seemed to arouse the school authorities wrath. The community was likewise horrified to learn that the school teacher marched the children in preparation for the school fair,

"just like soldiers".

The school teacher told me,

"I remember I was rehearsing the children for the Christmas pageant and I asked one of the men who picked the children up whether the children could participate. He said, 'I will ask Julius.' The next day when he brought the children to school he said, 'To this Julius says no.' Julius ruled his kingdom with an iron hand."⁹

It was a cumulation of the Mennonites, ("the Mennonites are our greatest enemies," said the farm manager), the intention of the public school authorities to integrate them into secular life, and the

7

general atmosphere of persecution that prompted them to leave on April 14, 1941.

They purchased a 375 acre farm near Bright, Ontario, which is their present site, from a veterinarian, Dr. Nurse. The sect numbered 27 people at this time, but was quickly expanding, due to the high birth rate. At the time, the Brethern were affiliated with the Hutterians, but their relationship gradually deteriorates. When a number of ex-members of the Brethern sect who had been excommunicated told the Hutterites that Kubassek was a despotic ruler who was determined to bend the community's will to his own.

"He may be a good man," said Dornvetter, a former member of Kubassek's group, 'but his is not the Hutterian way. It is Julius's way.'"¹⁰

The two churches severed relations in 1950. The sect then became completely independent, and Julius Kubassek continued his plan of 'creating a perfect people' until his death on January 27, 1961.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Matthew 18: 20.
2. Julius Kubassek, "Brethern Manifesto", Bremen, Sask., August, 1932.
3. For a brief discription of the strength and objectives of the sect, see, E. T. Clark, op. cit., p. 70.
4. Julius Kubassek, "Brethern Manifesto", op. cit.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. See Gracia D. Booth, "A Bruderhof Comes to Ontario", Saturday Night, 55 (1940), p. 28. No. 44
9. From a conversation with Mrs. Verna Woolsey, public school teacher.
10. Victor Peters, All Things Common, The Hutterian Way of Life, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1965, p. 179.

CHAPTER 3

CENTRAL BELIEFS

"Each different way of life makes its own assumptions about the ends and purposes of human existence, about ways by which knowledge may be obtained, about the organization of the pigeonholes in which sense datum is filed, about what human beings have a right to expect from each other and the gods, about what constitutes fulfillment or frustration."¹

Every society constructs its own world view or unified set of postulates which provide explanations as to the workings of the physical, social and supernatural worlds. Such belief systems define the desirable and the undesirable, limit the range of alternative behaviour patterns, and simplify the field of conceptualization to selective areas of observables which are deemed meaningful. A number of implicit and explicit assumptions and premises form the basic postulates which underly the social organization of the Brethern community.

Very little in the Brethern world view is of their own creation; it has been adopted, almost in its entirety from the doctrines and beliefs of the early Hutterian church; although the Brethern do trace their ideological history back to the early 'Essene' communities during the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

"After Christ's ascension, the apostles continued living as He had taught them, - having all their goods in common sharing with one another. New members sold their possessions and gave the price to the common treasury from which all members received according to their needs. In other words, they lived in Christian community, enjoying and sharing the fruits of their labour as one large family. As true apostles, we also today strive for this way of life, regardless on whichever part of the earth we may

be, that we may bear each other's burdens in love
as did the apostles of old....."²

As much as the Brethern seek Biblical support for their way of life, they rely more on early Hutterian writings for a more specific Weltanschauung and code of ethics. The Hutterians are named after Jacob Hutter who first instituted communal living among a group of persecuted Anabaptist refugees in Moravia in 1528. Although I will not go into Hutterian history,³ suffice it to say that the body of common faith shared by these early Hutterian Bruderhofs was set down by their missionaries and theologians, and now constitutes the body of doctrine adopted by the Brethern. Three early Hutterian writings of Peter Rideman's 'Confession of Faith', Peter Walpot's 'True Surrender and Christian Community of Goods', and Andreas Ehrenpreis's 'An Epistle Concerning Communal Life' are the main sources of doctrine for the Brethern. One other example of devotional should be mentioned; it is a fundamentalist work called 'Az Egyhaz'(the church) by J. R. Caldwell⁴ which denounces the evils of the world and posits communal life as the only solution. The Brethern have published this work in Hungarian and included pictures of their own community.

The major basic postulates which are adhered to by the Brethern, and which play a dominant role in controlling their behaviour can be grouped in the following classes:

(1) Both the social structure of the Brethern community and the values and doctrines which underly it are absolute and unchanging. The Brethern have an absolute certainty in the rightness of their system which they believe has been supernaturally sanctioned by God.

They feel that a code specifying the rules and regulations of communal living was dictated by God to various inspired individuals on earth. They believe that a code preceded the system; men simply implemented God's code. The Brethern do not accept the notion that their way of life gradually developed in response to social and cultural changes. This code exists in parts of the Bible⁵ and in their doctrinal literature; since it is absolute and unquestionable, man must, if he is going to be in good standing with God, unflinchingly obey this ultimate authority. In order to be a good Christian one must completely resign himself to the 'will of God'. All choice is pre-determined by this code; and the Brethern are proud of the amount of suffering and martyrdom that was required to carry out God's dictates. All man's faculties ought to be directed towards the fulfilment of God's demands; All critical thinking and speculation directed at the doctrines is totally out of place.

(2) Only a Gutergemeinschaft (Community of Goods) is the type of organization within which a Christian can follow God's decrees and receive supernatural support. This community must be communistic both in its productive and consumptive aspects. The entire design of such an enterprise is conceived of as somehow existing on a supernatural plane, but will emanate or materialize on earth when a receptive group of believers assemble for that purpose. God only makes his presence known by activating and supporting the community; the people as a whole somehow become endowed with a sort of corporate inspiration.

"Whenever there are two or three gathered together in common belief, whether at work or at worship, the Lord is present. He who desires the presence of the Lord ought to seek this through his Christian brethern."⁶

The Brethern believe that personal communion with God is impossible; the only channel of communication with the deity is through the community as a whole. Prayers are directed towards each other; God does not answer personal prayers because he has given all the answers. One simply follows God's dictates which are found in their doctrinal literature; to the Brethern obedience to this code is a form of worship. Working together for the maintainance and advancement of the community is a 'religious experience' whereby God's plan is fulfilled. The idea that the 'good' will be rewarded in heaven and the 'wicked' punished in hell is not particularly prevalent among the Brethern. As long as one mechanically obeys doctrinal authority one will automatically go to heaven at death. According to the Brethern, death is not feared for the transition is not considered very great, because heaven is vaguely conceived as like another Brethern community, albeit more perfect, where everyone conforms to the doctrines. Hell is the exclusive abode of 'outsiders' for those who have rejected community life on earth. It is pictured as being much the same as the 'outside' world constantly aflame with everyone involved in some insidious rat race; wars, violence, sexual perversion and like horrors are rampant. God does not reward individuals, instead communities that serve him are thought to be rewarded. The Brethern believe that rewards (blessings) somehow lay buried before them; only by rigidly following the cognitive map supplied by doctrinal authority can these rewards be uncovered. The Brethern believe that God has strategically placed rewards along 'the way' as a result only meticulous conformity to doctrine will bring them to these rewards.

(3) All men are by nature selfish; their primary instincts are egotism, acquisitiveness and personal ascendancy. Men are not born without innate characteristics; instead God has endowed all men with Original Sin (operationally defined as selfishness) at birth. These 'natural instincts' are incompatible with the type of characteristics required for co-operative communal living. Consequently, man must surrender his natural inclinations and obey communal authority; surrender his 'self-will' in return for the common will of the group. This is considered a difficult transition, the Brethern conceive of it as a 'test of faith' devised by God to separate the 'worthy' from the 'un-worthy'. The majority of mankind have been 'damned' claim the Brethern because not only have they failed to surrender their selfish propensities but they reject the validity of doing so. The Brethern believe that 'natural' man is completely self-interested and it is extremely unnatural for him to give up his original state and replace it with altruism. An 'appropriate' social conscience, according to the Brethern, is the product of many years of intense training. To the Brethern, the purpose of education is to 'break' the individual of his obstinant self-will and transform him into one who will subordinate himself to the rest and become loyal and obedient to the community. Adult baptism is the specific ceremony which demarcates this transition where the person 'sacrifices' his old self and is 'reborn' as part of the corporate whole.

"Seed had to die for the unity of the loaf. Only in this way was it able to take root and grow in the field and withstand all the storms. Only in this way could it bear fruit. In the same way each individual must give himself up, must die to himself, if he wants to follow Christ on his way. Then the grain must be crushed and milled if it is to be turned into bread. Our self-will undergoes the

same for community.....Grains that remain whole are only fit for the pigs or the muck heap."7

In a true Gutergemeinschaft individuals do not exist as separate identities, but as part of a collective identity.

(4) The world is dichotomized into two opposing and forever incompatible sectors. The Brethern are able because of their dualistic outlook to categorize all objects (both animate and inanimate), ideas, and supernatural entities as belonging to either one side or the other. On one side we have 'this world' which is populated by sensual, self-willed individuals who have rejected God and have chosen to be ruled by "the prince of this world, Satan". On the other side we have 'the other world' which is God's Kingdom on earth made up of 'believers' who have sacrificed their lives in order to live in obedience to his will. In this type of Kingdom theology the concepts of 'secular' and 'sacred' have a different meaning than that which is usually assigned by more orthodox religious institutions. The concept of the secular applies only to the society outside. The exception within the community is that part of the 'secular' which, in spite of opposition, has permeated from the outside such as the elementary educational system. Everything within the community has been surrendered to God and is therefore His possessions which, of course, are sacred. 'This world' is constantly attempting to seduce members of the Kingdom of God into its evil ways. As a result a complete separation from this world is warranted. 'This world' under the rulership of Satan uses various ploys to entice believers away from the Kingdom; their favourites are governmental authority and 'false christianity'. Periodically God will test the faith of the community by driving the

people of the world against the community. Hence, the Brethern have an understanding that the citizens of the Kingdom of God will necessarily meet suffering and persecution. The Brethern will not retaliate, but should accept their suffering with passive non-resistance. They should, in fact, welcome it as an opportunity to testify for the 'new' spiritual world through suffering and supreme sacrifice. One might speculate that hostility on the part of the outside society serves as a confirmation of identity with their religious doctrines and enforces their security of being right. Hence, we get the 'martyr-mindedness'⁸ which characterize many Anabaptist sects.

Increasing hostility and persecution from the outside is also a sign that the world is in its last days when the earth will come under direct supernatural authority and all the inhabitants of the world will be judged according to how well they have conformed to the Brethern's doctrinal authority. Nothing is more discouraging to the Brethern than when the outside society persists in ignoring the Brethern rather than persecuting them.

The basic postulates of Brethern religious system are given different degrees of importance. They exist as a hierarchy of importance whereby the individual must understand and accept the first step before he can go on to successive steps.

The Brethern feel that a person must first accept their doctrine as an eternal verity before man can understand the necessity of living in a Gutergemeinschaft; and in order to be purged of one's self-will, one must live within the community where he can be socialized into their altruistic value system. And in order for one to be fully

atune to the evils of the outside world and reject its authority, one must have lost all identification with it and lost all desire to function in it by 'sacrificing' ones' own self. The Brethern will, however, admit that some exceptional individuals (such as the founder) are able to inaugurate such a system without going through these steps. This is perhaps one of the reasons that the Brethern once felt that their founder was 'inspired'.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Philosophy of the Navaho Indians", in F. S. C. Northrop (ed.), Ideological Differences and World Order, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949, p. 359.
2. "A Brief Account of Early and Present Day Christian Communal Living", date unknown, a pamphlet published by The Brethern of Early Christianity.
3. For an analysis of Hutterian history, see Robert Friedmann, Hutterite Studies, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1961.
4. J. R. Caldwell, Az Egyhaz, (The Church), translated into Hungarian by Dr. Ferenc Kiss, newly published with some corrections by the Brethern of Early Christianity, Nov. 21, 1964.
5. Especially the Acts of the Apostles.
6. "A Brief Account of Early and Present Day Christian Communal Living", op. cit.
7. Andreas Ehrenpreis, An Epistle Concerning Communal Life, translated and paraphrased by Robert Friedmann, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, 1960. The Brethern consider this manifesto first written by the Hutterites in 1650 the best summary of the motives and arguments for their way of life.
8. This concept is taken from Robert Friedmann, op. cit., p. 99.

PART III

THE COMMUNITY

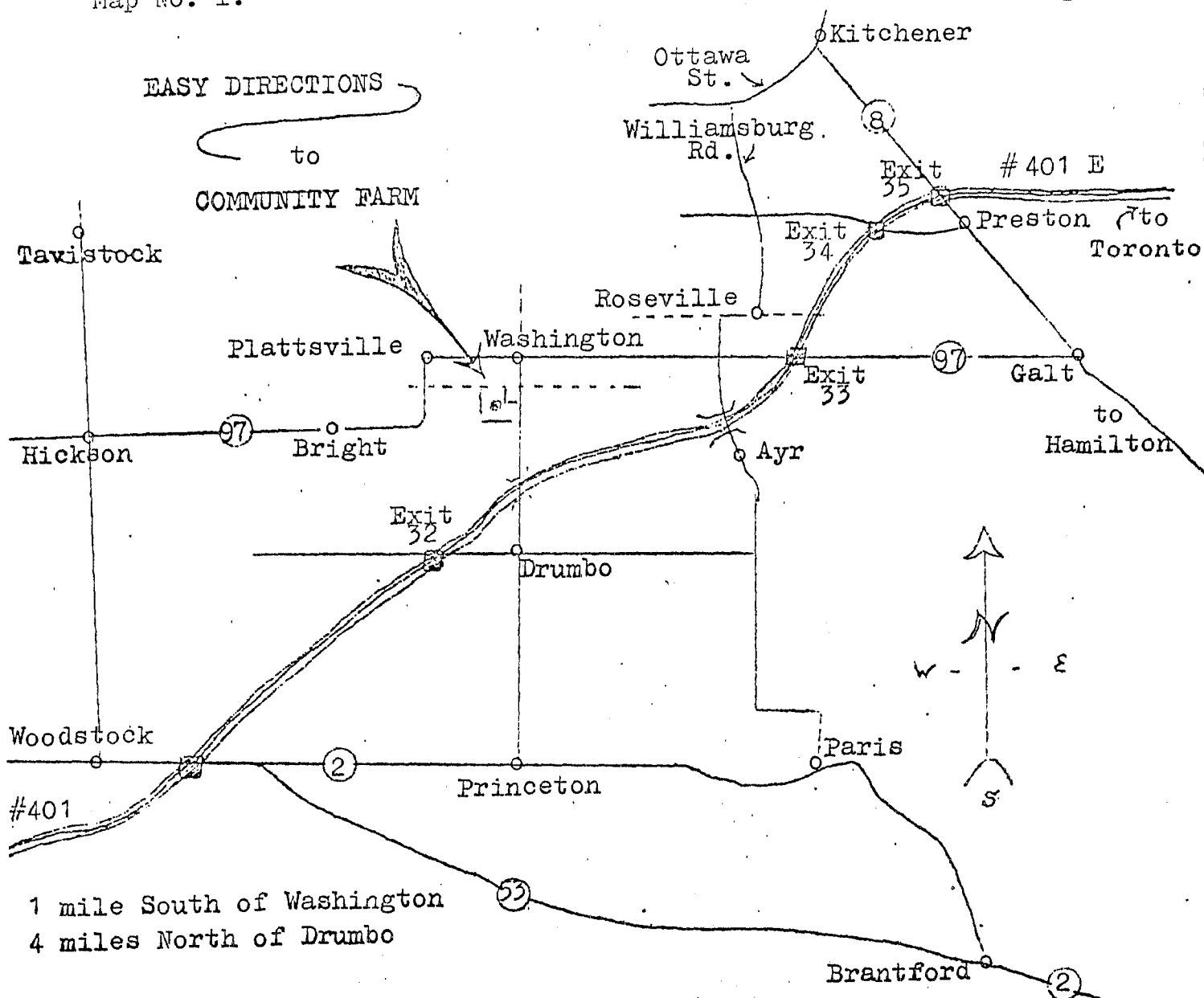
CHAPTER 4

THE SETTING

The Community Farm of the Brethern of Early Christianity is a rural collectivity located in Southern Ontario (Blenheim Township, Oxford County). It is situated 15 miles southwest of Kitchener, Ontario on Highway 97. (see map #1.)

In all, the community consists of 1190 acres of land of which approximately 800 acres is regularly cultivated, and the remaining 390 acres is either permanent pasture land, wood lots or swamp land. This land is bound on the north by a gravel surface concession road (12th concession, Blenheim Twsp.), on the west by a dense swamp, on the south by a conservation site (Oxford County Forest) and more swamp land, and on the east by a paved township road and neighbouring agricultural land. (see map #2.)

Generally speaking, the surrounding country-side is largely comprised of low rolling hills, but the land tends to be swampy in most low points. The community nucleus itself is free of swampiness because it commands a topographical high point on a fertile knoll of land; however, other parts of the community farm do not fare so well, in that they consist of totally unusable swampy land, - this is especially evident along the Nith River which runs the full length of the community farm land.



Note: This map is taken from "The Christian Challenge,"
No. 5, Sept. 1966.

As a choice of site, the community seems to enjoy several distinct natural advantages. The most obvious resource is the agricultural fertility of the land. The soil seems to be able to support timothy, alfalfa, sweet clover, wheat, oats, corn, and sorghum as main crops, and various market garden produce. The fertility of the land is an important advantage in making the community financially self-sufficient in its early stages and providing a secure economic base for later industrialization.

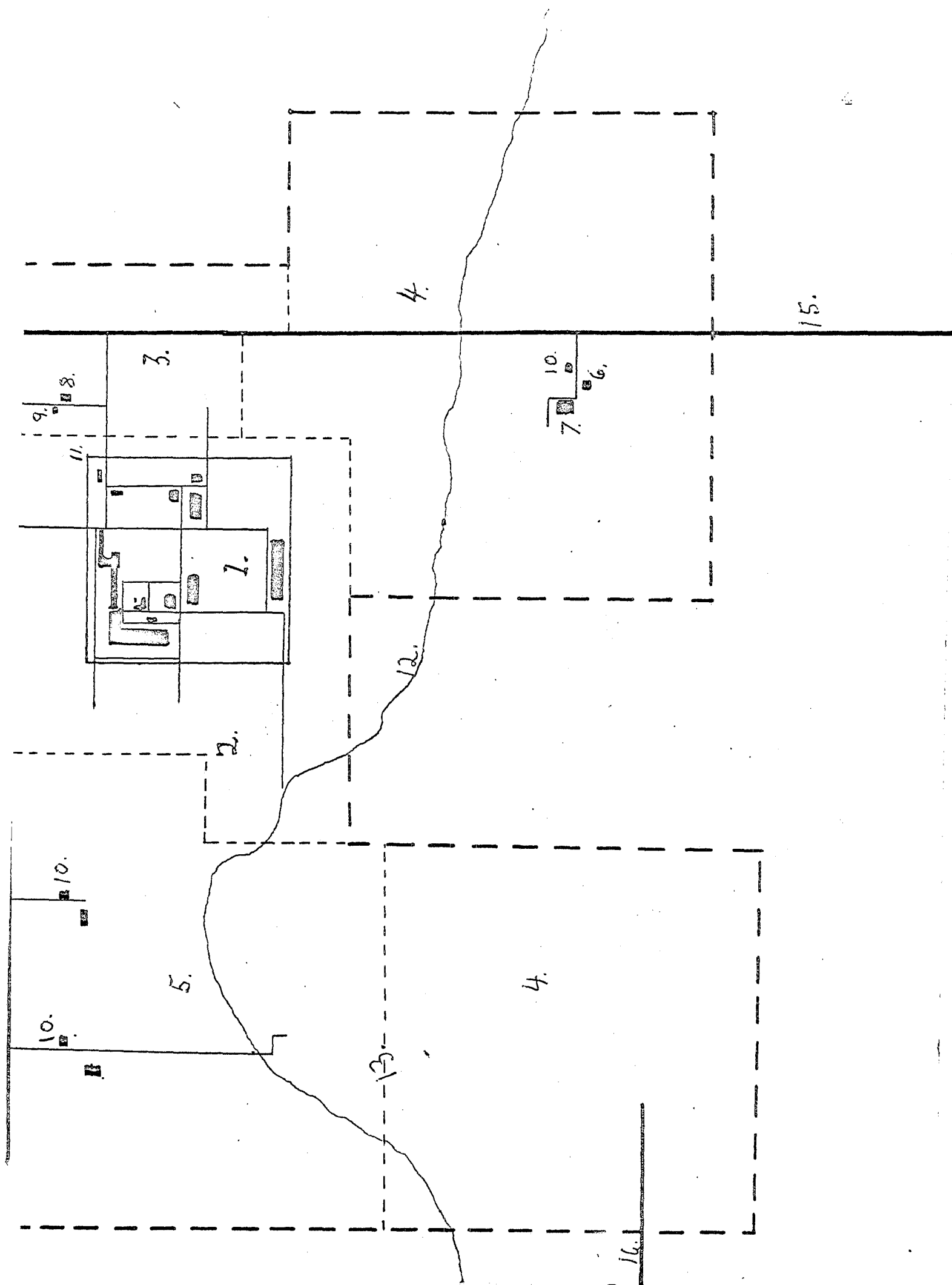
Other natural resources of note are a plentiful water supply in the form of the nearby river and several deep spring wells which not only provide for irrigation during the drought prone summer months, but also make possible the central water works which provides water for drinking, washing, drainage, and steam heating. Another natural mineral discovery which although affords less advantage is still of note. In 1964 gravel deposits were found on the south end of the farm, although quarrying began in 1965 to serve community roads it has never mined commercially.

Geographical proximity to a major highway (Highway 97) is of some advantage in that it provides access to a large city, - Kitchener-Waterloo (85,000 pop.). This city serves as their main wholesale supplier and market for their goods.

There is one other noteworthy natural advantage which I will simply mention here, * - physical isolation. This particular 'advantage' could only be considered as such because of the peculiar organizational

* See last Chapter for a discussion of this point.

imperatives of a religious sect.



MAP NO. 2COMMUNITY FARM

1. Community Nucleus
2. 365 acre Farm (purchased 1941)
3. 150 acre Farm (purchased 1944)
4. 375 acre Farm (purchased 1944)
5. 300 acre Farm (purchased 1957)
6. Chopping Mill
7. Dairy Farm
8. Heifer Barn
9. Old School House
10. Rented Houses (to outsiders)
11. Grave Yard
12. Nith River
13. Swamp
14. 12th Concession Road, Blenheim Twsp.
15. Drumbo (south) - Washington (north) Road
16. Deadend Sideroad

CHAPTER 5

THE PHYSICAL PLANT

The living quarters of the Brethern community consists of a 15 family unit, cement block motel-like structure radiating out in two directions (east and west) from the centrally located communal dining hall, kitchen, laundry and chapel. The east wing has 23 rooms of which 19 are dwelling units, and the west wing has 17 rooms of which 16 are dwelling units. The number of rooms occupied by a given family is entirely dependent on the number of children in that family. On the whole, this motel-like structure presents an austere appearance both because of its grey concrete block building materials and the almost total absence of exterior decorations. The severe appearance of the edifice is perhaps accentuated by the general 'well scrubbed' look which characterizes the entire community.

Each self-contained apartment has its own washroom which consists of white enamel bath tub, toilet and sink. Each washroom is also supplied with communally owned wash rags, towels, soap (their own product) and other toilet articles.

All of the apartments are supplied with electricity which is used almost entirely for lighting. Each apartment is serviced with steam heating from a centrally located boiler room; the temperature of the dwelling units is also controlled from here, - there are no individual thermostats.

The inside walls and ceilings of the units are faced with plaster and are generally painted a light pastel.

The floors are usually covered with vinyl tiles which even extend into the washroom.

As previously mentioned, the allotted room space varies directly with the number of children; but in every instance the extra rooms become bedrooms. The number of bedrooms per family may be as high as three, but only one living room is allocated to each family no matter how large. Each bedroom has from one to two steel beds, each furnished with a feather mattress, a feather pillow and a heavy feather blanket. This warm feather bedding never varies whatever the season. Also in the bedroom we find a bed table and lamp and a small clothes closet. Of some interest is the large number of plain wooden trunks which are pushed against the wall at various points in the bedrooms and living room; these trunks contain bed sheets, books, papers and in many cases they are empty. These trunks are usually used as tables and stands and are typically covered with the same artifacts as are found inside. Dressers and bureaus are rarely found in the Brethern apartments, consequently it is not uncommon to find clothes piled on these trunks and in other areas of the room. Mirrors are also noticeably missing, and on the rare occasion where a piece of furniture was purchased with an attached mirror it was either taken off or boarded over. Full length mirrors are considered an unnecessary vanity and are hence not permitted.

The living room consists of one square topped arborite kitchen table and several modern kitchen chairs. Other than the inevitable trunks the only other large piece of furniture is a small cupboard.

used mainly for books and papers. Large families who find one living room inadequate often make some attempt to transform one bedroom into a second living room. They do this by covering their trunks with bedding and using it as an admittedly hard couch. There is often a similar attempt to disguise a bed as a couch.

The overall lack of furnishings and simplicity of design produces a rather bleak appearance which is only slightly off set by such aesthetic adornments as a few potted geraniums and ferns. There are very few pictures or paintings displayed on the walls of the apartments (even though several members of the community paint); the only exception was a few calendars with a religious motif (pictures of Jesus and the nativity scene were favourites). A few paintings of natural scenery could also be found on wood chips and pieces of wood fungi. One family was also noticed to covet a long, slender, and strangely twisted tree trunk which extended from floor to ceiling. The preacher also had on prominent display on his living room table a brilliantly coloured artificial flower made out of old plastic "Javex" bottles. The preacher once remarked concerning this object,

"This, I'm afraid may be my greatest vanity."

Although stated in a half humorous manner, this quote largely reflects the community's attitude towards artistic decorations.

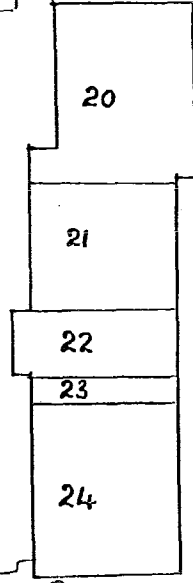
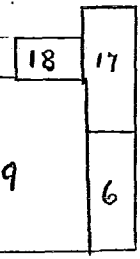
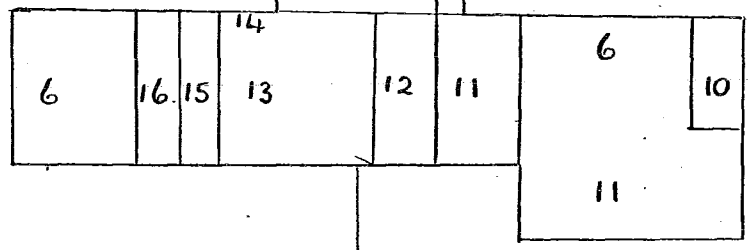
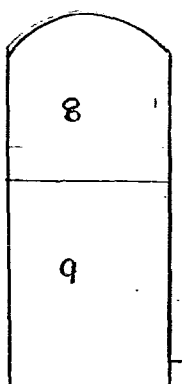
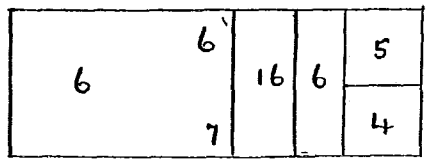
In contrast to the more modern apartment structures which were constructed in 1961, is a large 13 room stone building which was erected over 100 years ago. Formerly the home of an elderly veterinarian, this edifice remains architecturally distinct from the other concrete

and metal structures which typify the community. The building boasts of two massive stone columns on each corner of the east side of the house; it also had a spacious veranda running the full length of the building, but the Brethern have walled most of the piazza in, presumably in order to make more efficient use out of this extravagance. This structure contains two more families as well as two single adults. This structure also houses the school teacher, an elderly widow and non-member of the community; she occupies a room only during week days during the school session. This building also has three or four vacant rooms which are kept in preparation for visitors. The rooms seem to be furnished in the same manner as the other apartments although generally a great deal older.

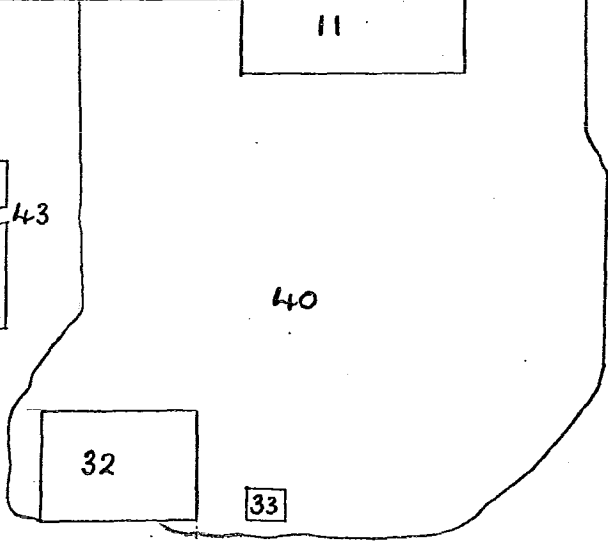
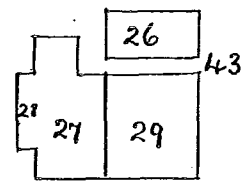
Interconnected with both of these dwellings is the communal dining hall, kitchen, laundry, chapel, shower, library, and business office. (see map #3.) The communal dining hall is constructed with the same materials as the motel-like structures and generally has a clean antiseptic appearance. Two long rows of oaken tables with hard back chairs extend the full length of the dining area. A large black and white sign posted in a prominent position on the wall at the head of the tables commands 'Silence During Meals Please.'



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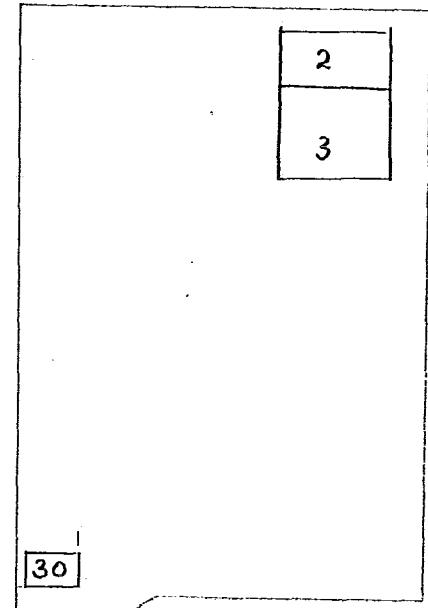


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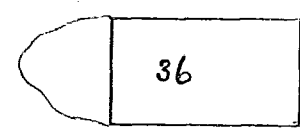


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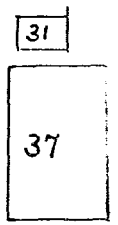
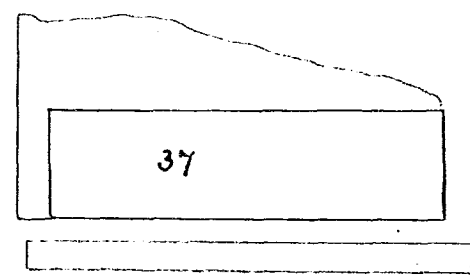
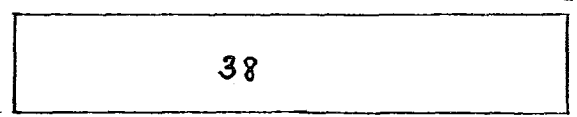
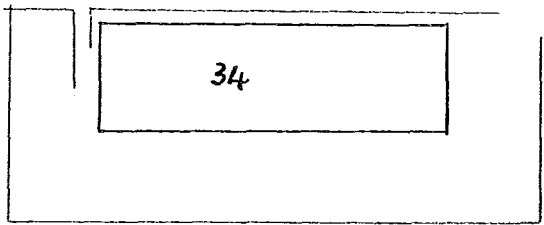


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42

COMMUNITY FARM
OF THE
BRETHERN.



50

MAP NO. 3COMMUNITY NUCLEUS

1. School
 - a. senior grades.
 - b. cloakroom.
 - c. junior grades.
2. Carpentry Shop
3. Horticulture
4. Library
5. Business Office
6. Dwelling Units
7. Nursery
8. Church
9. Dining Hall
10. Stock Room
11. Guest Rooms
12. Common Room
13. Kitchen
14. Pantry
15. Laundry
16. Showers and Washrooms
17. Cold Room
18. Deep Freezer
19. Pillow Factory
20. Egg Noodle Factory
21. Geese Evisceration and Preparation
22. Geese Killing Room
23. Egg Grading
24. Chicken House
25. Feed Mill and Grain Elevator
26. Shoe Factory
27. Machine Shop
28. Generating Station
29. Boiler Room
30. Fuel Station
31. Storage
32. Egg Hatchery and Incubator
33. Pump House (water)
34. Brooder House
35. Children's Menagerie
36. Mechanic's Shop
37. Farm Implement Sheds
38. Goose Barn
39. Orchards
40. Gardens
41. Visitor's Parking
42. Truck Parking
43. Fire Engine
44. Grapery

The only other significant object in the dining area is a bulletin board which is generally devoted to world and regional news. News such as local traffic accidents, the decreasing length of women's dresses, bad weather and natural disasters, the uni-sex look and the war in Viet-Nam all went under the general title of 'Signs of The Last Times.' Supposedly, this was intended to impress upon the members that the Second Coming was close at hand and that they had better prepare for the forthcoming event.

On a typical day breakfast is served at 6:30 A.M. for the adults and 7:00 A.M. for the children, dinner is served at 11:45 A.M. for the adults and 11:15 A.M. for the children, supper at 6:00 P.M. for the adults and 5:00 P.M. for the children. In addition to this coffee break or 'tea time' is held for the adult men at 9:45 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. A 15 minute advanced warning for all of these occasions is given by means of a shrill blast from a centrally located factory whistle. The meals are held in shifts because the dining area is not large enough to service the entire community at one sitting. In addition to this the opinion was expressed by certain members that the children's vocal natures might detract from the solemnity of the adult's 'bread breaking', - meals were considered a semi-religious occasion.

The partaking of food is organized in a distinct fashion by the Brethern. The most noticeable feature is that the men and women sit at separate tables. This eating arrangement also holds true with the children as well. When asked for a rationale for the separation of the sexes during meals, the answer is invariably that the presence

of the opposite sex would provide a fatal distraction from the religious tone of the occasion. It might preempt the flow of the discussion somewhat, but one can scarcely understand why the sexes are segregated during meals unless one understands why meals are considered sacred events by the Brethern. To the Brethern commensality symbolizes community unity where individual desires are foregone or surrendered to the larger community interest.

"The seed had to die for the unity of the loaf. In the same way each individual must give himself up, must die to himself, if he wants to follow Christ on his way. The grain must be crushed and milled if it is to be turned into bread. Our self-will undergoes the same for community. It must be broken if one is to belong to the community of the Supper and to the service of communal work. Therefore he who will be a brother, he who wishes to join in the breaking of the bread and in prayer, cannot refuse community. Never do we ask with Christ for my or thy bread. When we ask for our bread, our daily bread, we ask for the opposite of private property."¹

Instances of sexual attraction during the 'breaking of the bread' ceremony would indicate that ones selfish interests were more powerful than ones concern for the community. To the observer's knowledge this arrangement was transgressed on one occasion when a young man hazarded to wink across the room in the direction of a particular young female. This action caught the attention of several of the elders who deeming the action highly inappropriate, immediately informed the young man that he was to sit, there after, with his back to the women's table.

Another noticeable feature is that both the men and women position themselves along their respective tables according to their age. So that the table appears as a physical continuum from oldest

to youngest, with the eldest at the head of the table and the youngest at the other extreme. An associated feature is that not all of the food supplied for the meal can be found within ones reach, as a result one requires assistance in that some commodities must be passed to you. However it seems to be a general rule that all food moves down the age grading scale and never up it. Just as your seniors next to you command certain foods which you require and will be served, so you command certain articles which you are required to serve your juniors. As a result the seating arrangement is not only a physical presentation of social rank by age, but also reinforces the idea that the young are dependent upon their elders for assistance.

Before one can begin to eat one must wait for a verbal cue, this comes in the form of grace which is a short prayer which sets the mood for the occasion. A typical prayer runs like this,

"O Father, we thank thee for this food which you have so bountifully bestowed before us, but more so we thank thee for the opportunity to live together in peace and love in these evil days. In the name of our Lord we pray.

Amen."

A similar prayer is the verbal cue that the meal is over. The actual 'grace giver' rotates among all of the baptized brethern.

Three very significant and interrelated features must be mentioned: the haste of consumption, the silence of eating, and the spartan diet. The actual time taken to consume the food as measured between prayers averages approximately five to seven minutes. Some, in fact, have perfected this art so as to reduce the length of time even

less; however, everyone present must finish before a signal for the prayer can be given. It appeared to this observer that it was considered a greater crime to dawdle over ones food than to bolt it down. Those who lagged in their speed of consumption often met the disapproving glances of those who had already finished. This is not to say that those actively engaged in an eating contest would not meet with disapproval, but that tardiness at the table was considered an irritating inconvenience to the entire community.

Nimble eating habits was not the only factor which gave the meals their characteristic brevity; it was also in large part due to a system of signs and cues whereby the completion of the task of eating and the delivery of the prayer were remarkably well coordinated. Upon finishing their meal the Brethern would signify their achievement by placing a mug or soup bowl on their plate. This made it readily apparent who the slow ones were. Rather than be thought slothful a member would often prematurely signal his completion and thus be forced to swallow his food furtively during the prayer.

Complete silence during the meals also facilitated the speed of the meals; since even the most aborted conversation would increase consumption time and thus possibly inconvenience other members. Visitors unaccustomed to these patterns of behaviour would often greatly irritate the Brethern by attempting to keep a 'polite' appreciative chatter going and making a point of savoring the rustic country style cooking.

The frugal diet which I will discuss later also greatly added to this utilitarian approach to dining. To leisurely enjoy ones meal

is considered improper; as one member put it,

"I eat only to stay alive, not for pleasure."

Tea time is a somewhat different occasion in that it is often noisy and rather sociable. It seems to be habitually attended by all males no matter the import of the task that they might be engaged in. It seems to have the chief function of providing an occasion for coordinating the work tasks as well as relief from work fatigue.

The kitchen consists of the kitchen proper, pantry, bakery, and refrigeration lockers. One is immediately impressed with the array of modern kitchen equipment such as automatic dish washers, automatic mixers, electric meat cutter and a large baking oven. The kitchen is used primarily for the preparation of their own food although they also prepare some food for market such as yogurt, cottage cheese, horseradish and bread (they bake approximately 400 loaves of bread per week).

Each meal is planned at least one week in advance and four women are required to prepare and serve a meal at any given time. Kitchen duties are rotated in such a way that each adult female works in the kitchen seven days every fifth week. The rotation system works in much the same manner for the preparation and sale of the goods to be marketed. Pre-adolescent girls also assist in the kitchen on an apprenticeship basis.

As mentioned earlier, the meals were very frugal, not only in sense of being quantitatively small, but also in the near absence of luxury food stuffs. An average breakfast would consist of toast, eggs (sometimes with bacon), either fruit juice (usually tomato juice) or

porridge and either coffee, tea, milk or Instant Postum as a beverage. The dinner which is the main meal of the day might consist of a beverage, one vegetable, plain bread, meat (usually goose) and some form of dessert (rhubarb was a favourite). The supper meals were much lighter consisting of juice or soup, a sandwich (cheese or meat spread), raw vegetable (eg. celery stick, raw onion, or spinach leaves) and a beverage.

Most of the food is self produced from their vegetable gardens; only a few items are purchased wholesale such as 100 lb. bags of flour, sugar and salt and occasionally meats and canned goods. As a result food constitutes only 5% of the communities expenses. This attempt to make use of foods that they themselves produce leads in large measure to a monotony of diet in that goose is practically the only meat served and egg noodles in various combinations are used every day.* This often leads to such bizarre items as chocolate coated egg noodles, egg noodles rolled in poppy seeds, cinnamon covered egg noodles for dessert.

Sunday meals are extremely light and in fact resemble a fast: breakfast for example might consist of milk, one piece of toast and spinach leaves or celery. It is felt that this sort of self-denial (especially on Sundays) helps

"to chasten and subdue the body, that the flesh may
be humbled and the more easily controlled, mastered
and overcome."

* Geese farming and the manufacture of egg noodles are their two primary industries.

And that,

"the devout may crucify their flesh and overthrow its lusts; and thereby cleave the more freely and joyfully to God."²

Except in the case of illness (sugar diabetes) participants at meals must eat the food presented on the tables or go without; members are not allowed to choose their own menus.

"While due regard is made for special needs such as in sickness, the Community endeavours to provide wholesome food and does not make a point of catering for private whims and tastes at meals. Hence, we give thanks at each meal for all that God has graciously provided with thankful hearts, be it little or much, for many in these times have bare necessity or less of food."³

The opinion is often given by some members that catering to private tastes would run counter to their espoused collective equality by emphasizing individuality at meals. It also would present great difficulty for the efficient running of the kitchen economy.

Asceticism, collectivism and equality are the main values which are underlined by the various social and physical arrangements operative during meal-time. John Lofland maintains that such devices as fasting, restriction of choice of food, etc. reinforces the believers adherence to the system.

"The strongest faith may be produced where adherents experiment with the conditions of biological life itself. Such experimentation may greatly heighten feelings of investment in the enterprise and the faith it represents."⁴

The laundry which consists of automatic clothes washers and dryers, is another enterprise which operates on a communal basis, but

with a different system of organization. Instead of making use of the rotation system as with the kitchen, the laundry operates on a family basis; whereby adult females are responsible for the cleaning and repair of their own families clothes. Although, in fact, the clothes of single males were washed by women who were haphazardly assigned to various sections of the dwelling units. The community originally operated the laundry, but met with problems in the distribution of the clean clothes in that people were often allotted ill fitting clothes.⁵ The members, also, indicate the spread of contagious skin diseases as the reason for the discontinuation of this system. Most of the ironing and mending of clothes is done in the individual home; one of the few work tasks performed there. The women report deficiencies in clothing to the farm manager who orders replacements. The cleaning and sweeping of residences are also done on a family basis.

Showers for both men and women are located in the west and east wings respectively. Although they were erected to be used communally they are, in fact, rarely used, except in emergencies. It was felt that they were not only too crowded, but was a factor in the spread of disease, as a result individual bathrooms were constructed in each dwelling unit. A large sign over the showers reading,

"Please Do Not Leak On Floor,"

perhaps testifies to their concern with disease and personal cleanliness.

The library is a minute enterprise housed in the extreme east end of the east wing of the motel-like structure. It operates only on every second Saturday evening from 7:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M. Each book

is thoroughly numbered and indexed by the librarian during her spare time. Most of the books never leave the shelves and except for a few notable exceptions, children seem to constitute the main readership. The books are largely religious in orientation, but are of several distinct types.

(a) on display are a number of Hutterian chronicles, devotional writings and sermons. These books are hand bound in leather and copied by hand in green, black, blue, red and purple ink in the Tirolean language. Most of these writings date back to the 16th and 17th century and have been meticulously copied throughout the centuries. The Brethern, although approving of the general content of these books feel that nothing profitable can be gained by re-copying them by hand, in fact they are rarely, if ever, read.

(b) Hutterian escatological works and books on Anabaptist church history represent a sizable majority of the books. Examples of these books are: "The Bloody Mirror of Christian Martyrism", (with 500 illustrations); Peter Rideman's "Confession of Faith"; John Oyer's "Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists"; and George William's "The Radical Reformation". Except for children's books, these are probably the most widely read.

(c) A small, almost insignificant number of orthodox Christian writings are available. The only ones to my knowledge were: Thomas 'a Kempis' "Imitation of Christ", Berdyaev's "The Origin of Russian Communism", and Bonhoeffer's "Ethics." There were no works by such modern theologians as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Rienhold Niebuhr

represented; in fact, they are despised. The Brethern claim that

"had the theologians of 'false Christianity' like Luther before them, found the time to have sought out and listened to those gathered in Christian Community, they could possibly have been shown that political maneuvering has no place as a vocation for Christians."⁶

(d) Children's books constitute an innocuous assortment of stories, usually with a Biblical or religious emphasis, such as; "A Hive of Busy Bees, - A Collection of Stories on How Little Children Ought to Bee", "Martyrs of the Catacombs", and "Sunny Hour Stories", plus a host of other stories about dogs, horses and prophets designed to be equally innocent and inoffensive.

(e) There can also be found an insignificant smattering of inspirational religious literature which purports to be guides to inner peace and spiritual well-adjustment. Although these are obviously products of 'State-Church Christianity' they are generally considered harmless although sentimental and religiously sterile.

(f) The final type of books which deserve notice are sociological and quasi-sociological works on the Hutterites and other communal societies. Examples of these works are: Victor Peter's "All Things Common, The Hutterian Way of Life", John Hostetler's "Hutterite Life", Robert Friedmann's "Hutterite Studies" Dr. D. Vaughan Rees' "The 'Jesus Family' in Communist China" and Joseph Fretz's "Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay". Although these studies are felt to hold very little that is religiously relevant; however, they seem to

be enjoyed because of the gossip which the Brethern can glean from the contents and the comparisons which they can draw with themselves.

The Brethern feel that they have a responsibility to their children to protect them from exposure to alternative religious beliefs as well as secular belief systems. As a result all library books have been strictly censored before they reach the library shelves. In order for a book to be considered it must first be ordered by a reputable adult member. This is, perhaps, the most important stage in that it limits the choice to those books which members already have a knowledge of. However, the book store with which they deal issues order lists with extensive descriptions of their stock; the lists are eagerly read by some members and thus are often tempting.

The book store (Providence Book Store, Kitchener) specializes in Anabaptist literature for the local Mennonite market and publically guarantees it's customers that nothing in their store will offend their religious beliefs. This in itself restricts the possible choice to 'safe' literature.

When a book is selected it is first taken only on approval, never purchased. In order for the final step to be made, the book in question must pass the scrutiny of various 'screeners' who are members in good standing of the community. Even if they pass this stage, we find that there are degrees of approval, in that some books are felt to have some merit, but are deemed inappropriate for children, - these are exclusively circulated among adults. Caches of these dubious works are kept well hidden in closets and drawers in the adult's homes. They

include Biblical interpretations sponsored by the 'established' churches, "The Book of Mormons", John Robinson's "The New Reformation", Rudolf Bultmann's "Primitive Christianity", and a book entitled "Twenty Years A Watch-tower Slave". Most of the books in this category were acquired by way of a gift from some outsider (who presumably was trying to win the Brethern to some cause); the book itself was probably not deemed offensive enough to be destroyed and was therefore kept. Mennonites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Spiritualist and others are wont to visit the community and attempt to disseminate their propaganda at various strategic points such as the communal dining hall. This has caused some concern among the Brethern as the following rule illustrates,

"It is forbidden that Religious literature and doctrines be spread about together with books, tapes, and recordings without the knowledge and consent of the council. 'Behind the back' criticism of others will never build Christian Community and we ask one and all to guard against this in a straight-forward manner." 7

The only religious literature that is regularly kept is the product of other communal attempts.

Also housed in the library is a small 'gestetner' designed to reproduce the 'printed word' from stenciled material. This machine is used for the transcription of open letters, Christmas cards, and especially their monthly tract 'The Christian Challenge'. I will describe this publication in later sections.

A central heating system in the form of two large boilers generate enough steam to heat the entire nucleus of the community. This is an elaborate and costly enterprise in that the furnaces require approximately 57,000 gallons of oil per year and necessitated one member

to undergo training towards obtaining second class stationary engineering papers in order to operate the system. Also under the management of the engineer is a drilled well and pumping station which supplies the necessary hot and cold water for the community. The engineer is also responsible for a large Diesel generator which is put into operation during hydro failures in order to ensure a constant supply of electricity at all times.

Although the church, school and productive facets of the community have not as yet been discussed, one general observation can be made at this point. The very proximity and interconnectedness of the buildings in the Brethern Community, in large measure fosters a high degree of interaction among the members and reflects the high value placed on communality and the low value which privacy and individualism rate.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Peter Rideman, Confession of Faith: Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith, Bungay, Suffolk, U.K.: Plough Publishing House, 1950, p. 124. This is a translation from the original German edition (1565) by Kathleen E. Hasenberg. This is the Brethern's primary religious text.
3. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", Bright, Ontario, 1965, Rule No. 6.
4. John Lofland, Doomsday Cult, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966, p. 222.
5. Other communal groups also have this problem, see Melford Spiro, Kibbutz, Venture in Utopia, New York: Schocken Books, 1956, p. 21.
6. "The Christian Challenge", Bright, Ontario, No. 5, Sept. 1966.
7. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit., Rule No. 2.

CHAPTER 6

THE PEOPLE

The population of the Community Farm of the Brethern numbers approximately 100 people, comprising three generations. The entire population is supported by the community's 1190 acres (1.86 sq. miles) which gives them a population density of 53.7 people per square mile, compared with the population density of the rest of Ontario which is 13.36 people per square mile.¹ In all the community includes 16 nuclear families with a mean of 6.3 people in each family. This figure may be highly misleading in that the population is very young (the mean age of the community is 22) with only 7 of the 16 married women past menopause. Since most of the married females are relatively young and still capable of child bearing; it is difficult to say anything definitive about the birth rate. If the founding families were to strike the precedent, then the community would average 11 children per family. We might say tentatively that the Brethern's birth rate is similar to that of the Western Hutterites, whose birth rate is unequalled in the Judio-Christian world (their birth rate per 1000 is 45.9 compared to 27.4 for the rest of Canada.)² The Brethern feel compelled to reproduce at biological maximum, as one of the members put it,

"A woman should bear children as long as she is physically able. If childbirth should threaten her health then we advocate measures of birth control."

Since the founding of the sect in May, 1931 the population has increased by 94 members from the original 6. From 1941, when the Brethern

first moved to their present site the increase has been 73 members. (see Graph #1.) The population growth has not been a simple case of natural increase (births minus deaths), but in fact, a large proportion was gained through immigration from the outside. The following chart illustrates this:

59 births	3 deaths	natural increase (births-deaths	56
67 immigrants	29 emigrants	immigration - emigration	38
		original members	<u>6</u>
		TOTAL -	100

From this we can see that 59% of the communities growth in population can be accounted for by natural increase and 41% can be accounted for by migration.³ Of the immigrants 46 came from 'Big Bend' colony near Cardston, Alberta in 1961. These people were ethnic Hutterites (the Entz family) who had been excommunicated by their former church. A family of five came from Brazil, 3 from other Hutterite colonies, 1 from England, 2 from Hungary, and the remaining 10 were recruited from various places in Canada. Of those who left the community, 17 went 'into the world', 11 joined Hutterite colonies, and one took on the status of permanent missionary. It is interesting to note that of those who left 20 were men and only 9 were females.

At present the mean age of the community is 22; 25.5 years for the males and 18.5 for the females. As mentioned before the Brethern Community has a youthful population with 62% of its members under the age of 19. (see Graph #2.) A comparison with Canada's age distribution

90

80

70

60

50

40

30

20

10

0 1931

'41

'51

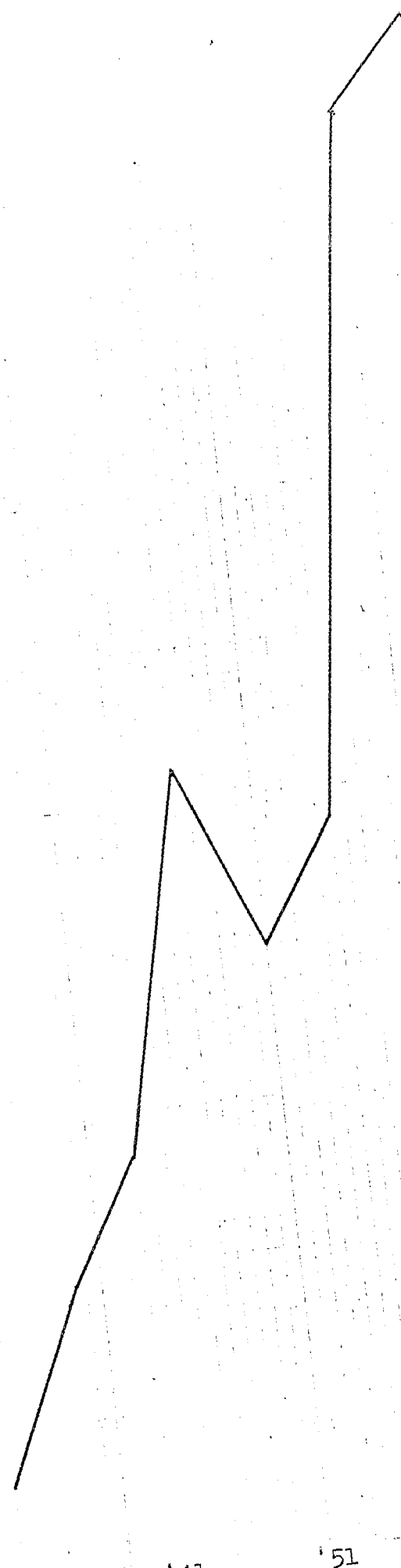
'61

'66

Year

GRAPH #1

POPULATION GROWTH FROM
1931 TO 1966.



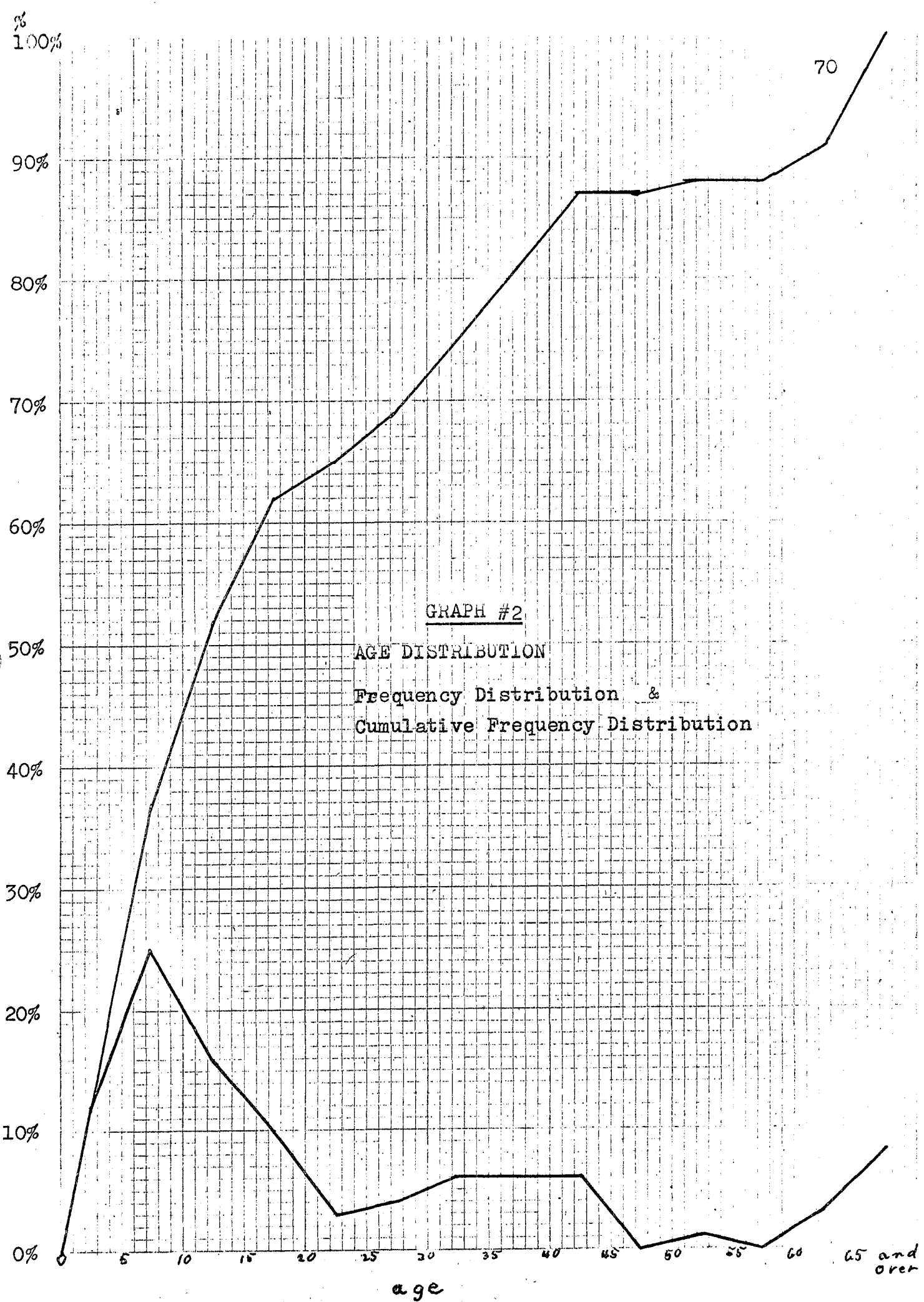
will illustrate this:⁴

	CANADA	BRETHERN
% under the age of 15	34%	52%
% between the age of 15-64	58.4%	40%
% 65 and over	7.6%	8%
TOTAL	100%	100%

If we look at the age distribution of the community together with the sex distribution several interesting things come to light. (see graph #3.) Although the sex ratio is exactly 100, that is 50 males and 50 females; the females are disproportionally represented in the 19 to 34 age group. This points to two things; first it is much easier for males to leave such a community than females and second, nine Brethern girls are left with only the remotest prospect of marriage.

From the age-sex distribution, we can see that there are only ten men between the ages of 19 and 64 who constitute the main productive working force and must support the remaining 90 people. This disparity in the age distribution is further aggravated by the fact that one of these men is a missionary who adds little that is productive to the community and in fact costs it \$7,000.00 per year.

The child dependency burden that exists in some societies has often been pointed out as being a resultant of industrialization; with the decline in child mortality resulting from the medical advancements accompanying industrialization.⁵ However, I would suggest that one look at the reverse of this relationship in this case; that a disproportionate number of youthful dependents in the population might be a factor in the



transition from agriculture to industry in order to support the large number of non-producers in the community. I will discuss industrialization more fully in the next section.

The Brethern community practices endogamy, thoroughly prohibiting marriage outside of the sect. As a result a surplus of single females over single males exists in part due to this rule against exogamy and second due to the relative ease by which males can extricate themselves from the community. The following chart concerned with the distribution of the population according to marital status will illustrate this:

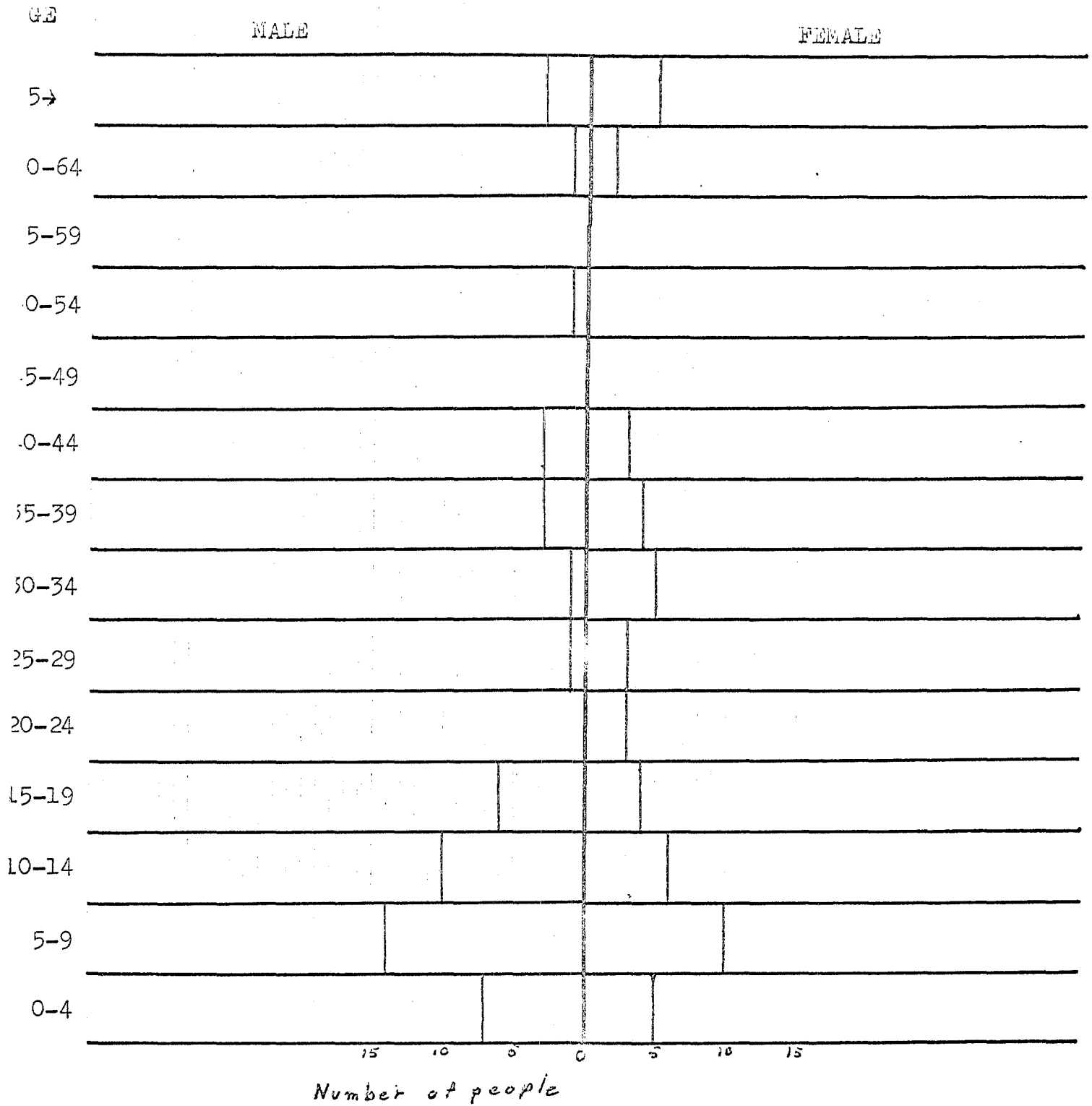
	MALE	FEMALE
Single over 14	11	15
Married	11	11
Widowed	0	2
Divorced or Separated	0	3

One can easily be misled by this chart into thinking that the discrepancy between the number of marriageable males and marriageable females is not that great; however, if one takes into account the fact that the mean age for marriageable males is 17 and 22 for the females, we can see that is is fundamentally an age differential which operates as a barrier towards marriage.

In ethnic background the Community Farm presents a rather diverse and cosmopolitan air. The following break-down indicates this diversity of ethnic origin:

GRAPH 73
AGE-SEX DISTRIBUTION

72



COUNTRY OF BIRTH	NUMBER
Canadian	86
Hungarian	5
Brazilian	5
English	1
Serbian	1
Czechoslovakian	2

This, however, underestimates the ethnic diversity of the community because of the 86 Canadian born members, 49 were born in Hutterian colonies and could be considered a distinct ethnic group. It is interesting to note that all of the remaining 37 members were either born on the community or were the offsprings of the founding families, no members have been converted from the surrounding society. A history of the community reveals an even richer mixture of ethnic background; since a Russian family (Dornn) and a German family (Baer) once lived on the farm. The present family names have the following distribution in the community.

NAME	ETHNICITY	NUMBER
Kubassek	Hungarian	23
Kurucz	Hungarian	11
Bagó	Hungarian	3
Gábor	Czechoslovakian	7
Iscycki	Serbian	2
Entz	Hutterian	44
Gross	Hutterian	3

(family name distribution - cont'd.)

NAME	ETHNICITY	NUMBER
Hofer	Hutterian	1
Corea	Brazilian	5
Kemp	English	1
		<hr/>
	TOTAL	100

The ethnic background which is mainly Hungarian and Hutterian is underlined by the languages spoken on the community. The community is officially tri-lingual, speaking English, Hungarian and German. The German which is spoken is the official language of the Hutterian communities and was adopted in order to gain acceptance from the Hutterites. The German itself resembles the near extinct Tyrolean dialect. Deets described this tongue as,

"a conglomerate of words, many of them corruptions, from most of the countries in which they (Hutterites) have lived, Moravia, Transylvania, Ukraine, the United States and Canada, superimposed upon a German base of Bavarian, Tyrolese, and Carinthian admixture. Probably less than half of their speech is German."

Most of the community except some of the older foreign-born women can speak fluent English; however, none of the former Hutterites can speak more than a few words of Hungarian, but the majority of the members except the children seem to have a good understanding of German.

The community has endeavoured to foster the usage of these languages by teaching their children the three tongues in their public school and conducting their church service in all three. The Monday evening service was held in Tyrolean, the Wednesday service in

English and the Friday service in Hungarian. None of these attempts met with much success because; firstly, the Hungarian school teacher was frequently absent because he was otherwise occupied in missionary work. Secondly, the Brethern discovered that church attendance was declining because people only attended when the language with which they were most familiar was used. Finally, it was felt that it was necessary to conduct the service in English because it was common to everyone in the community and it was more likely to attract potential converts. Since 1965, church services were conducted entirely in English, although many of the members still sing the hymns in German and Hungarian while the majority are singing in English. At present, Hungarian and German are mainly used to convey messages between one another in the presence of outsiders, so that it will not be understood. However, the future of these two languages looks rather bleak as far as existing on a community wide basis.

Almost as diverse as the ethnic background, is the former religious affiliation of the members. Two of the founding families were Roman Catholics and three were Nazareans.* Pentacostals, Spiritualists, Lutherans and Mennonites have at various times during the history of the community, been members (often baptised members) but are no longer with them. All of the converts, however, came from other communitarian sects, such as Hutterite colonies, Koinonia Community, Georgia; and the Society of Brothers.** The Brethern have met with most

*The Nazareans are otherwise known as 'The Apostolic Christian Church,' and was founded in 1850 by Rev. S. H. Froehlich, a Swiss immigrant.

success in gaining converts from peoples preconditioned to communal life. The problem of getting such a heterogeneous assortment of people to conform to one strict pattern of behavior and to forsake their old way of life will be discussed in a later chapter.

The Brethern feel that they are a 'peculiar' people and have consciously adopted a distinct style of dress to underline their separate identity. The women as a whole are the more conservative dressers, sporting very subdued ankle-length dresses, thick black kerchiefs, white blouses, aprons, and heavy oxford shoes. Although all of the women from age two onwards conform basically to this style; a generational difference can be observed in some of the apparel. The 'uniform' of the older women is quite often a drab grey full dress whereas the younger women wear a more brightly colored half dress and blouse carrying a variety of subdued designs. The older women wear black work boots, while the younger women can be observed sporting sandals, especially in the summer. A more important difference between generations can be found in their head covering, the elder women wear a more opaque ker-

* cont'd. - See E. T. Clark, op. cit. p. 70

** The Society of Brothers is a series of communities founded in 1920 on the Hutterian model by Dr. Eberhard Arnold. They are found at Rifton, N.Y., Farmington, Penn., Wheathill, Eng., and Primavera, Paraguay.

chief which they tie under their chin while the younger girls are outfitted with more transparent kerchiefs which are fastened around their hair and knotted behind their neck. The kerchiefs are rarely taken off in the presence of others, in obedience to Paul's demand that,

"a woman brings shame on her head if she prays or prophesies bareheaded: it is as bad as if her head were shaved. If a woman is not to wear a veil she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for her to be cropped and shaved, then she should wear a veil."⁷

However, some of the younger females claim that they are not 'in the church' at all times, hence feel under little compulsion to have their heads covered in their own homes; the older women, on the other hand, adhere rigidly to a belief in the identity of the church and community and take off their kerchiefs only to sleep.

Another part of the uniform which appears to have little or no deviation is the apron. Aprons characteristically extend the full length of the dress and usually are of a brighter hue in a checked pattern. Aprons are also worn at all times because they are felt to symbolize 'the female's duty within the community'. A great deal of the deviation in uniform occurs beneath the dress. Instead of the approved cotton underwear, younger girls often managed to obtain brightly colored silk under-garments. Since underwear had to double for pyjamas, this type of apparel was highly coveted. Since this occurs beneath the uniform and not readily visible to others, this type of trans-

gression goes unpunished and is probably not felt to be a great danger to the united front presented by the community.

The Brethern feel that their style of dress denotes such ideals as humility, rejection of the world, and communality. As the Brethern themselves explicitly state,

"the scripture says that the believers should be dressed in modest apparel. We feel that proper modesty means both in length and height of one's apparel. Jewelry, make-up, and slacks or shorts are not approved of. A humble spirit will not express pride or vanity. Complete consecration and surrender is the yielding of absolutely everything, including one's own will in its entirety."

They are also acutely aware that their mode of dress is a visible form of rejection of the customs of the dominant society. This sentiment is expressed in their religious literature:

"Christians should not strive to please the world by means of outward decoration as the world does, in that one lures another with such outward show or seeks his own pleasure therein, thereby forgetting God and concerning himself with vanity, until Satan has them firmly and utterly within his power."⁸

Their dress is a uniform in every sense of the word, varying very little in style and cost, so that invidious distinctions could hardly be said to exist and their basic values of equality and common property are physically demonstrated. All types of external decoration including; cosmetics, deoderants, jewelry, wedding rings, wrist watches and hair do's are strictly taboo for both men and women alike and the rare offenders are often suspected of having taken on a demonic status. One notable transgression met with just such a response. One boy of 15 decided to innovate the style of dress by refashioning his work pants

into shorts; this evoked a sentiment close to horror among some of the elders and he was quickly told that 'such carryings-on (would) send (him) straight to Hell.'

The men's clothes are much more akin to their worldly counterpart; in that they are merely regular work clothes usually a drab green in colour. The only generational difference of any note was that the older generation supported their trousers with braces while the younger men preferred the belt.

However, unlike the women the men have another distinctive set of clothing used solely for designated religious events. For weddings, baptisms, burials and on Sundays all of the males over fifteen would appear in jet-black suits and white winged-collar shirts; a neck-tie would not accompany this particular costume. I was never able to obtain a rationale as to why they should see fit to demarcate religious events from other events, since a distinction between the sacred and the secular did not otherwise exist in the community. I can only venture the opinion that this custom persists as a cultural holdover from their Eastern European heritage.

One distinguishing feature in the appearance of the men which draws a line between the baptized and the unbaptized is the cultivation of a beard. This is justified on the grounds that,

"when God made man He was pleased with His creation, and when people want to look different they are criticizing the works of the Maker."

The Brethern also expressed the sentiment that they found it abominable that men should try to imitate women by shaving. Such practices they felt would ultimately lead to 'the confusion of the sexes.'

The Brethern are very adamant⁸ in their denunciation of various personal habits and amusements such as smoking, drinking, dancing, singing, and listening to music. Their exclusion of these activities from the community again reinforces their central belief in communality, asceticism, and rejection of the world. In an early document, the founder of the community stated,

"We forbid against the use of tobacco, worldly songs, and card-playing; which are not scriptural mentioned sins (which in themselves are not sins unto death) but in reality are not becoming for Christ's disciples. For such we cleanse from the Church with proper severity,- punishment and even excommunication."⁹

When asked why dancing was disapproved of, the Brethern replied,

"If a member has sufficient energy at the end of a day, he should put this energy to a more constructive use."

Drinking liquor is frowned upon, but is tolerated in moderation as the following suggests:

"We do not approve of alcoholic beverages, but a member may indulge in a drink or two for medicinal purposes."

The Brethern also insist that visitors abide by these customs, as the following passage shows,

"we are aware that a big responsibility lies on the Community for the upbringing of its children, and to help in this respect we earnestly ask that no swearing be heard, and that habits of smoking, drinking, or drug addictions are refrained from while with us."¹⁰

It is argued by the Brethern that their type of social system can not support these personal habits because all of the members would be required to pay for the 'vices' of a few. In a communistic system such as this, what would be commonly thought of as a private vice would, in fact, be a socio-economic problem. The Brethern have expressed their concern with the social repercussions of this habit in an open letter to the Hutterian communities.

"We protest against the evil habit of smoking in a Christian Church. It is unhealthy, unclean, costly, and bought with money that is obtained through the breaking of other Church orders."ll

Much the same type of problem arises with regard to the various types of mass media: radio, television, movies, newspapers, tape recorders, and record players. I was originally told that;

"our religion does not prohibit us from listening to a radio, watching television and reading newspapers. Since too much precious time could be wasted, the Community does not possess any. We have, however, educational and religious recordings for everyone."

I was also told that the possession of a radio or television would require an adult control element who would have to censor all broadcasts lest their children be over-exposed to worldly concerns. It was felt that the introduction of these medias would unleash an uncontrollable influence in their midst. Some of the older boys managed to view a couple of programmes on a neighbours T.V. set; the elders when they had heard of this asked the neighbour not to admit the boys into their home unless on official business. Another incident involved a dismantled car radio which was to be found hidden in the mechanics shop; it was never to my knowledge put in operating condition, but was nevertheless a source of

great pleasure to several teenage boys who would explore it's parts with great wonderment. Suddenly, without incident it disappeared.

The community does possess a camera and movie projector which are used mainly for religious and educational purposes. Only three films were ever shown, all were documentaries; two by a local T.V. station and one by the National Film Board of Canada.¹² All of these films depicted the Brethern at work or otherwise involved in everyday affairs. The screening of these films took place in the communal dining hall and most of the community attended. Since the films are only about themselves, I don't believe it is too great a speculation to suggest that their function is to reinforce the members distinctiveness as a communal sect and to enhance their self-image. In fact, this very sentiment is voiced by some of the more conservative elements within the community who cite biblical evidence¹³ to back up their contention that

"the adoration of graven images is very corrupting and provokes self-idolatry."

This has led to a great deal of uncertainty regarding films and seems to have lent them a marginal status within the community.

In general, the inward flow of communication via various media from the outside world is selected on the basis of it's consistency with the community's world-view and collective frame of reference. Materials diverging from their point of view are rejected and those that conform to it are accepted. Newspapers and magazines afford a good example of this. The community subscribes to one innocuous local weekly

newspaper,* - it is claimed that the classified section is valuable for the business opportunities which it affords. Except for religious literature (which I have previously discussed), the only other type of publication which is received on a regular basis is technical and farming journals. However, even these are perused for things which may be deemed offensive and improper; an extreme example of this occurred when a horticultural journal was held up in the business office until the farm manager had carefully drawn a full length dress in black ink over the bare limbs of 'Miss Horticulture.'

Most of the leisure time pursuits with which 'the people of the world' fill their spare time are noticeably absent. Participant and spectator sports, games, and entertainments such as movies, music, literature and social drinking are nearly absent. When asked what one is expected to do with one's leisure time, they often respond with the view that a member is not supposed to have any; it is conceived of as a time when all sorts of 'mischief' could be created and felt to be a potential source of social disruption. They feel that the time allotted for recreation and leisure should be minimized, not maximized; this attitude as one might guess is thoroughly consistent with a strong belief in a work ethic. Many hobbies which are perceived as having some utilitarian value such as sewing, wood working, machine work, and gardening are for this reason tolerated. Other non-utilitarian hobbies are usually forbidden, although some do exist, but are viewed as questionable activities at best. Painting is engaged in by several women, although it is a

* "The Ayr News."

suspect activity provoking cries of worldliness and vanity. As a result the pictures are rarely hung, but are simply piled upon a shelf.

Philately is a hobby engaged in by a great majority of the young people. The stamps are steamed off letters from their missionary and other communities. A great deal of stamp trading is carried on in the evenings, so much so, that the preacher, alarmed at it's frequency pointed out that although collecting postage stamps may appear harmless enough

"through trading they can take on the value of money
itself", -

the use of which is forbidden by the community.

Participation in the recreational activities and the use of the facilities in the surrounding society invokes an even harsher reaction. Not only is the activity itself to be avoided, but participation would involve exposure to worldly people which would make the endeavor unthinkable. The following quote illustrates this viewpoint.

"We protest against the practise of drinking strong drink in hotels or taverns, which is a poor example to the world, and leads many into the sin of drunkenness. Such examples plant this evil habit into the following generations who will also learn these customs, and hear the unclean language spoken in these places".¹⁴

Competitive sports is likewise conceived of as a method of training for war and thus directly contrary to their passivistic tendencies.

In summary, the Brethern avoid most of the luxuries, entertainments, and human amusements which often play an important role in the surrounding society. These are seen as entrapments of an iniquitous

world which keeps it's flock

"dazzled with baubles, in a bright cloud of joy-loving slogans. Yet nothing is more empty and more dead, than the vapid grins on the billboards and in the magazines".¹⁵

The Brethern, writing on their rationale for curtailing personal pleasures, put it this way,-

"Should one feel these requirements of us all to be too stringent, narrow or, say, an alleged curtailment of human freedom, it would be best to ask what is our greatest concern. Do we seek the greatest fulfilment in pleasures which perish or are we concerned with the ultimate to which the message of the Gospels speak and point, for which cause we desire to give ourselves with joy in self-sacrifice with Him who taught us to seek those things which do not perish?"¹⁶

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

1. Canada Year Book: 1966, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966, p. 188.
2. Robert C. Cook, "The North American Hutterites", Population Bulletin, 10 (1954), pp. 97-107.
3. This data was gathered from (1) the author's own queries, (2) Gracia D. Booth, "A Bruderhof Comes to Ontario", op. cit. and (3) Herbert F. Nemeth, "A Geographical Study of the Brethern Community", unpublished B.A. thesis, Waterloo University, 1965.
4. Canada Year Book: 1966, op. cit., p. 198.
5. See, for example, Kingsley Davis, "The Demographic Transition", in Amitai Etzioni (ed.), Social Change, New York: Basic Books, 1964, pp. 185-94.
6. Lee Emerson Deets, The Hutterites; A Study in Social Cohesion, Gettysburg: Time and News Publishing Co., 1939, p. 13.
7. I Corinthians, 11: 5-6.
8. Peter Rideman, op. cit., p. 134.
9. Julius Kubassek, op. cit.
10. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit., Rule No. 7.

11. An open letter entitled "Our Answer Concerning Our Relationship With the Hutterian Brethern", Jan. 1965.
12. The National Film Board production is called "The Brethern Sect", produced and directed by Chic Young, 1965.
13. Exodus 20: 4.
14. "Our Answer Concerning Our Relationship With the Hutterian Brethern", op. cit.
15. "The Christian Challenge", No. 4, August 1966, p. 26.
16. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit.

CHAPTER 7

THE ECONOMY

The Brethern practice a system of communal production as well as communal consumption. Presumably following Karl Marx's dictum, 'From each according to his ability, and to each according to his need;' this however is qualified by the additional 'but he who doesn't work doesn't eat.' The Brethern however prefer the Biblical quotation,

"All who had become believers held everything together in common: they would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required."¹

This type of economic communism means that none of the members receive private wages; money is not distributed according to the work one does, but as all of the facilities and resources are collectively owned so the income is corporate rather than private. A member put it this way,

"We have more ambition to work for the Kingdom of God than for the dollar. We expect our wages in Heaven, not down here. A man cannot take his worldly things with him when he dies and he should help others as much as he can on this earth."²

All of one's private possessions must be renounced as a requisite for joining the sect. Private property is considered the absolute antithesis to their way of life; and is unquestionably perceived as the greatest threat which the outside world offers.

"Passion for money is the root of all evil just as much for the miserly as for those who spend for pleasure, and those who love property should never forget that greed is in essence nothing but idolatry. For men cling to it as they should cling to God. They are dependent on money as they should be dependent on God. Their idols are silver and gold. Therefore a man cannot come near to the Kingdom of God who is in

idolatry or impure passion or love of money.....Common property excludes private property. Life in community means the contribution of life and all working strength to the service of all. The door stands open. Come out of your private nests! Out of your private houses! Away from self-will! Sell everything! Leave your goods and chattels; let go of yourself. Will you not come because of your field, or your work or your household? Do you hold on to those little things? Do you love your own way and property so much? Then, of course, you cannot sit at the table of My community. You do not fit in with Me."³

Equally abhorrent is the discovery that private possessions have entered the confines of the community. The Brethern

"protest against privately owned possessions in a self-denying Christian Community Church, be it money, clothes, furniture, tools, or anything that brings the practise of 'mammon' or private property. By allowing private money, some sell Community goods, and have the cheque made in their own name, and keep the premium for themselves, further adding to their private possessions."⁴

On joining the community, a prospective member must either give up or donate his entire worldly possessions to the community. Nor can one own property outside of 'the Church' and at the same time remain a member.

"No one can go two ways at once. No one can set his foot on more than one place. No branch can stand on two stems. No one can boil two soups in one pot. He who will have the one must let the other go. No man has more than one heart. Thus no one can love God and serve Him, and at the same time temporal things and possessions, riches, money, and lands."⁵

Similarly, members cannot retrieve their former possessions once it has been made communal property, if and when they decide to leave. The Brethern's constitution makes this quite explicit,

"All property, real and personal, of the congregation or community, from whomsoever, whensoever, and howsoever it may have been obtained, shall forever be owned, used, occupied, controlled and possessed by the congregation or

community for the common use, interest, and benefit of each and all members thereof, for the purposes of the said congregation or community."⁶

In fact, the potential convert is warned prior to the surrendering of his property not to expect anything returned to him.

"This we now plainly state to everyone beforehand, so that we may be under no obligations to return anything to anyone afterwards. Therefore if anyone should undertake to join us and later feel it impossible to remain and wish to have his returned, let him now stay away, keep his own, and leave us in peace. We are not anxious for money and possessions, but desire Godly hearts."⁷

However, members who do depart seldom leave entirely empty-handed, but their gift rarely exceeds transportation costs to the nearest city and one nights lodgings. The Brethern, in fact, own and pay taxes on unused land holdings in Northern Ontario, which were donated to them by an over-zealous ex-member who left when his passion cooled.

True faith is operationally defined by the Brethern to mean surrender of one's property and one's desire for possessions (self-will) and the realization that all worldly goods in fact belong to God. The Brethern perceive themselves as God's 'stewards', who must endeavor to protect and care for those of God's possessions which have been given back to him. The attitude towards property takes a complete about-turn if the Brethern own it collectively, from the most heinous of all things it becomes 'the Lord's vineyard' which requires all the energy and diligent attention which the community can muster. All productive work is looked upon as a duty and is carried on almost as an act of devotion.

"He who wants to build for salvation and love and keeps his eyes on the Church will never be confused or hindered. Urge and zeal drive us to a building up of a living building, to sacrifice in accordance with the Spirit. This sacrifice

means that all property, the whole life of the body, must be given as a true service to God."⁸

It has been argued, albeit unconvincingly, that the absence of the profit motive inevitably leads to the collapse of communal sects.⁹ Not only is the individual profit motive inoperable, but the associated interpersonal competition from which social rank accrues is discouraged. This, however, is difficult because the work rotation system structurally facilitates interpersonal comparisons and thus interpersonal ranking. Two rotation systems are in operation (one for the women and the other for the young men) whereby work tasks are assigned to these members on the basis of a regular and rotating schedule. In a 'gemeinschaft' such as this the relative achievements of individuals is immediately noticed and as a result prestige is accorded to those whose productivity in the community's interest is greatest. This cannot be disregarded as a powerful motivating force and most members seem to feel some pride in succeeding in a task better than their fellows. However, according to official policy¹⁰ all members should work for a love of labour in itself. All work is considered equal regardless of its intrinsic difficulty or amount of satisfaction which it affords, as long as it is directed towards the avowed interests of the community. By advocating a work ethic of this sort, the community is faced with a dilemma for it can scarcely fail to supply some rewards to its hi-achievers and by the same token discourage low achievement. But the accumulation of such rewards as acquisitions, power or privilege could easily become the informal basis of a differential ranking system which would contradict their central belief in social equality. The dilemma is some-

what resolved by structurally restricting the rewards to those which are more or less invisible and impermanent such as prestige in return for hard work done in the line of duty.

Most of the members are quite conscious of the fact that such benefits as social and psychological security will be provided by the community if they all work for its prosperity. Members will often make this point by alluding to the worries and frustrations of individuals involved in the 'rat-race' of the outside world. Financial considerations impinge upon them as a group rather than individually. Similarly, the shirking of one's duty effects the entire community since all work interdependently rather than independently. Laziness is considered one of the gravest sins because a drone would effectively hinder others in the completion of a task as well as consume more than he produces.¹¹

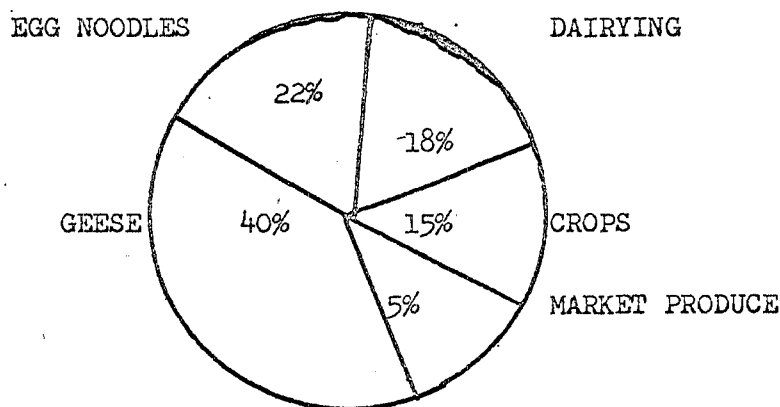
The constant and all pervasive force of this work ethic is so great that some members can be observed spending long, labourous hours doing some patently useless task in order to maintain a front of busyness to all members that might see him. The farm manager is in fact obliged to make work on slack days for not to do so would relegate someone to an inferior position where his prestige would indeed suffer; not to be included in the work force on slack days would appear as a sign that one's usual contribution to the community was of a marginal status similar to children who are only recruited into the work force during harvest. Only sickness, disability, and old age excuse adults from a full days work; exhaustion is not considered a good excuse, for I was told that,

"when you think you're tired, it's just the Devil's way of making you lazy."

Agriculture is considered the only legitimate productive basis for the community. To base their finances on another footing such as commercial pursuits would be regarded as iniquitous; for only nature is God-made and the commercial city man-made (worldly and evil). Their religious works testifies to the condemnation of non-agrarian pursuits.

"We allow none of our number to do the work of a trader or merchant, since this is a sinful business; as the wise man saith, 'It is almost impossible for a merchant and trader to keep himself from sin. And as a nail sticketh fast between door and hinge; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.'"¹²

Although the Brethern community has still to some extent retained their agrarian foundations, they have greatly industrialized and diversified their economy. A percentage breakdown of their gross income will reveal this diversification.



DAIRYING

Perhaps the most purely agricultural sphere is the dairying industry. The Brethern own a head of approximately 102 Holstein-Fresian cattle (31 milk cows, 44 heifers, and 27 bull calves). This herd of

cattle produces approximately 380,000 lb. of milk per year; averaging 12,700 lb. of yield per cow. Of this 80% is shipped to a local dairy at Bright, Ontario; and the remaining 20% is consumed by the Brethern themselves, with a small percentage made into cottage cheese and yogurt for marketing. Since their entire herd is artificially inseminated they have no need for bull cattle, as a result the unwanted bull calves are sold as veal. The Brethern however do not raise cattle solely for beef. The dairy farm is spacially separated from the community nucleus by approximately one mile. (See Map #2). The dairy industry does not appear to be an abiding interest to most of the Brethern although its importance is recognized. The Brethern feel that it is more profitable to industrialize upon the base provided by dairying since it supplies a constant reservoir of monies from which they can draw for other ventures. Thusly, the Brethern have planned no great improvement or expansion of the dairy industry in the future.

CROPS, MARKETING, AND CUSTOM WORK

The Brethern grow large fields of hay, oats, corn, and sorghum which is not sold commercially, but is used as fodder for their own livestock. In addition to these basic crops the community also operates truck gardens of vegetables and fruits which is used for their own consumption and for marketing. Potatoes, tomatoes, strawberries, horse-radishes, grapes, apples, plums, peas and cut flowers are just some of the commodities which they sell at Kitchener market. One crop for which the soil is well suited, but which the community has declined to grow, is tobacco.

"We do not believe in its use, so why should we grow it?"

said one member.

Eight percent of the income from crops comes not from their own crops, but from using their machinery to harvest other farmer's crops. Three quarters of the income from custom work comes from combining grain crops, the remainder from silo filling, irrigation, and water hauling. The Brethern have operated six combines within a radius of twenty miles during the peak harvest season. Although this venture was extremely profitable both because of the low initial expenditure on impliments and the cheapness of labour, it has recently been curtailed. The Brethern cite two reasons for this. Firstly, the Brethern feel that custom work involves too much exposure to the outside world for the younger members of the community. They feel that it is their duty to protect their children from such worldly influences.

"As a result of poverty there arises trouble in the guiding of the youth. Many who know the way and try to follow it give their own flesh and blood into the service of men who have no faith. Children are the highest and most beloved, the foremost and best of all that is entrusted to us. We must look after them with holy care."¹³

Secondly, the Brethern endeavor to lessen their dependency on marketing, custom work and agriculture in general which was once their mainstay, and to concentrate their efforts upon industrialization.

GEESE

The Brethern have the largest goose flock in Canada, and the second largest in North America.¹⁴ They have succeeded in breeding a special hybrid goose which they have named 'the greaseless goose' a Chinese-Enden hybrid noted for its low fat content. They hatch as many

as 30,000 goslings per year of which 12,000 are kept; the remainder are sold to smaller geese farmers who cannot afford to maintain a hatchery and incubators of their own. Some are also sold as weeders; that is geese which are used to weed such garden crops as strawberries by making use of the fact that they will not touch the berries, but have a fondness for most weeds. Each Fall, the Brethern process approximately 9000 birds in their killing plant.¹⁵ At the eviscerating plant, the fowl move along an assembly line where they are in turn killed, cleaned, trimmed, packaged, and finally frozen in preparation for market. The eviscerating plant requires approximately 21 workers (mostly women and young boys) when in full operation. The plant only operates for about two months of the year, the rest of the year it is used for storage. Other facilities in the raising and processing of geese such as hatchery, incubators, brooder house, and a 320 ft. goose barn are used year round and require the services of three full-time men.

Geese farming is by far the Brethern's most profitable field and is the industry which has seen the greatest expansion. This appears to have occurred because geese farming requires a large initial capital investment and a large seasonal yet talented work force which, because of the peculiar nature of the Brethern's economic structure, they could provide, but which few other farmers could, thus severely limiting the competition. Secondly, their bacon-type goose is in itself a unique product duplicated by no other brand, and is considered a delicacy on the local market. The superiority of this product is evidenced by the fact that it consistently wins top awards at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. Before the market for their geese was secured, the Brethern

entered advertisements in newspapers, radio stations and agricultural journals. This concession to the commercial world was discontinued because of adverse criticism from the Hutterian communities and certain members within their own fold, but only after a large market had been gained. Thirdly, geese have the characteristic of having a great number of by-products.

"We use everything except the squawk,"

the Brethern are fond of telling interested parties. In addition to goose eggs, the Brethern appear to have some success in marketing certain commodities which would normally be classed as waste. Geese fat and grease is used in the manufacture of soap or sold wholesale to soap companies. Wings are sold as dusters at Kitchener market and geese feet are considered a delicacy by local Hungarian ethnic groups. Perhaps the largest and most profitable by-product is the feathers. The Brethern operate a pillow factory on a full time basis which is staffed entirely with women. They turn out approximately 100 feather comforters and bedspreads and 400 pillows a year. These products are noted for their fine needle work and careful craftsmanship, as a result they are considered a prestige item on the local market. Consequently a feather comforter will sell for about \$80.00. The Brethern however, refuse to use any of these luxury items themselves; more utilitarian items are produced by the pillow factory for their own use.

EGG NOODLES

Of the major industries on the Brethern community, the production of egg noodles is perhaps the furthest removed from their agricul-

tural base. 'Brethern Egg Noodles' come in ten different varieties such as pellets, postage stamps, cockle shells, etc.; they are marketed in eight-ounce sealed cellophane packages. Since goose eggs are too strong to use in the production of egg noodles, the Brethern maintain their own flock of chickens for this purpose. Approximately 300 hens eggs and 950 lb. of flour is needed for every 1000 lb. of noodles; the Brethern produce approximately 72 tons of egg noodles per year.¹⁶ The finished product is sold to a retailer who distributes them to 600 stores both locally (20%) and in Toronto (80%). This releases the Brethern from the unwanted task of distribution. The egg noodle factory only operates three or four days per week; this is not because of a lack of demand for their goods but mainly because of the shortage of labour. Seven women and two men are needed to operate the egg noodle plant; women are constantly needed elsewhere as a result the plant often has to fit its operating schedule to periods of time when a sufficient work force can be marshalled. As a result the egg noodle industry has not been able to expand to its full potential.

MINOR INDUSTRIES

A number of minor industries and services haphazardly thrive within the community. The Brethern operate, primarily for their own use, a well-equipped garage and machine shop, which are furnished with several machine lathes, drill presses, electrical and acetylene welding equipment, and hydraulic lifts. Much of this equipment is far beyond the means and technical ability of most of the local farmers; the Brethern, however, offer their facilities and services at a cheaper rate than the

nearby privately owned repair shops. Although it is official policy that repair work be done for the community first and for outsiders second, actual practice often seems to work in the reverse. The Brethern are renown for their repair of electrical and gas powered generators, engines, and motors, body repair, the rewinding of old motors, and arc welding, as a result their services are usually in high demand.

The Brethern as a rule are very reluctant to provide services outside of the community except for custom work. However, one women has a rare ability; she is able to differentiate between the sexes of newly born fowl, for this talent she is paid up to \$30.00 per hour outside of the community. The Brethern seem to make an exception in her case.

SERVICE INDUSTRIES

Almost every section of the economy has its productive aspects, machine work, kitchen economy, and gardening although primarily maintenance work are of this type. The preacher, secretary, and the teachers are considered nonproductive occupations of this sort in that they yield little direct income for the community. The only industry which clearly falls in this category is the shoe repair shop. The shoe shop is a highly inefficient endeavor. Footwear is produced and repaired at such a slow rate and of such dubious quality that the Brethern look on it as a source of embarrassment. The shoemaker himself is literally an isolate within the community, refuses to adopt any suggestions from the other Brethern for improving his product, and probably has the lowest social status of any adult male. Shoes are manufactured on such

oddly shaped lasts that the large bulbous end products could 'fit' any foot within a large range of sizes. Until recently this was the only footwear permitted by the community; however, the farm manager finally relented to the complaints concerning these heavy, ill-fitting shoes and the council passed a motion that commercially produced footwear could be distributed within the community. At present the shoemaker's services are rarely called upon.

As has been pointed out, the Brethern carry a heavy child dependency burden (See Graph #3). This may be seen as one of the stronger pressures which forced them to industrialize. Through industrialization a more efficient and more profitable use of the available land and labour could be gained than through a simple agrarian economy. The problem, however, is by no means solved for the Brethern are still hampered in their economic growth because of the lack of personnel. The scarcity of labour prevents them not only from expanding their present enterprises, but beginning new ones. In 1952, for example, the Brethern were forced to cease hog production because of the labour shortage. Later the apiary became defunct for the same reason. In 1965, the Brethern began to utilize their natural resources of sand and gravel, but again what might have been a highly profitable enterprise had to be discontinued because of the labour shortage. Of course, the obvious solution is to employ an outside labour force, but this is strictly against their faith, and avowed separation from the world.

DIVISION OF LABOUR

The job of coordinating the work activities of the community rests in the hands of the farm manager and vice-farm manager. Members

are elected to these positions by the vote of all of the baptized brethren; they are carried out in addition to a regular work activity. There is no clear-cut division between the duties of these two elected positions, yet the vice-farm manager is expected to act in a smaller capacity than the farm manager and replace him in his absence. These two roles were, however, differentiated in terms of the degree of emphasis they placed on certain activities. The farm manager's chief concern seemed to be the community's financial health, external business considerations, and the distribution of goods within the community. The vice-farm manager, on the other hand, was mainly involved with allocating the labour force within the community and coordinating the various parts.

The job of assigning people to various posts took place directly after breakfast each morning. All of the men would, after leaving the breakfast table, file into an adjoining hallway and remain there with their backs to the wall. The vice-farm manager would arrive last and the farm manager not at all. The vice-farm manager would start with the oldest and go down the age scale to the youngest in the group, assigning each to areas on the community which required their services. For the older members the assignment would be a token allocation only for they would be so highly specialized in one field that without their presence that activity would cease to operate. As a result, the older men would simply be told to carry on with whatever they were doing. The vice-farm manager might at times engage an older man in a discussion concerning the progress of a certain task, this was usually in aid of

ascertaining whether younger men were needed to assist him. Younger men are distributed wherever they are most needed usually placed under an older man in a relationship akin to apprenticeship, except that none of the younger men are permanently assigned to any one position. Frequently young men are given unsupervised posts of some responsibility in the simpler activities such as clearing bush, harvesting, and straight forward clean-up and repair jobs. The community endeavors to circulate the young men throughout the entire economic complex of the community, so that they will become acquainted with all aspects of the economy and will become socialized to the entire community rather than become experts in one restricted field and ignorant in all of the other areas. A similar, but much more routinized system operates with the women. The vice-farm manager does not individually assign women to various positions, but simply issues a schedule whereby the women are rotated in a systematic and standardized manner. The women will regularly take their turns in the kitchen, laundry, garden, and market. However, even among the women specialities interfere with the rotation system; the secretary and the teacher are exempt from much of the kitchen and garden work because they could not be replaced if they left their positions.

It may be seen as one of the consequences of industrialization, that occupational roles become more differentiated and specialized. As jobs become more complex, enabling members to personalize their positions in such a way that it would endanger the economy to replace them, the rotation system becomes largely inoperable. The dairy man, the goose man, the engineer, the mechanic, the egg noodle man and to

some extent the gardener are jobs of this sort. Members occupying these positions usually become virtual bosses of their activities and can, in fact, reverse the direction of authority. Only they have the professional competence to assess what improvements are needed, what help is required and when and how to carry out their tasks. Since no-one else feels knowledgeable enough in the field to seriously question his wisdom, thus he is able to dictate decisions to the council without resistance. Even when one of these men makes, in the estimation of the rest of the community, a foolhardy decision, the community is very hesitant in interfering with it. A case in point occurred when the gardener refused to spray the apple trees with an anti-insecticides and fungicides. He had come under the influence of a school of thought called 'organic agriculture' which claimed that preventive sprays and synthetic fertilizers were slowly poisoning human beings and animals alike. Of course, some members of the community became highly perturbed when faced with the prospect of having their fruit trees destroyed by disease. The Ontario Department of Agriculture was also disturbed to learn that its regulations concerning the care of fruit trees had been ignored. They issued a warning stating that fruit harvested from untreated trees could not be marketed. The gardener met censure from all sides for causing the government to interfere and endangering the apple orchards. The gardener would not relent and finally the entire episode was forgotten. This is very much the exception, in that most of the men will not try to over reach their authority, but will attempt through informal means to ascertain the opinion of others before embarking on a course which could

upset the entire community.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

1. Acts: 2:44-45
2. Bruce Murdoch, "'Brethern' Shun the World on Own Farm", The Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 2, 1963, p. 25.
3. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit. pp. 19-21.
4. "Our Answer Concerning Our Relationship with the Hutterian Brethern", op. cit.
5. Peter Walpot, True Surrender and Christian Community of Goods, translated from the Gross-Geschichtsbuch, Third Article (1577), translator and date of translation unknown. This is considered a major devotional work among the Brethern, as well as among the Hutterian communities.
6. "Constitution of the Hutterian Brethern Church and Rules as to Community of Property", 1950, Article 37. The Brethern use much the same constitution in an amended form.
7. "What the Church of Christ Is and How One May Join It", 1966, Section 9.
8. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit. p. 13.
9. See, for example, D. H. Davis, "Amana: A Study of Occupance", Journal of Economic Geography, 12(1936), pp. 217-230.

10. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit., p. 22.
11. A similar finding was found by Melford Spiro, op. cit., pp. 83-90.
12. Peter Rideman, op. cit., pp. 126-27.
13. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit. p. 29.
14. Cited in "Electricity Helps in Community Farming", Electrical Farming,
Winnipeg, June-July 1957.
15. Some of this data comes from Herbert F. Nemeth, op. cit.
16. Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

THE POLITY

The Brethern believe that the only absolute authority is God himself and mankind must live in obedience of His divine rulership.

"you no longer belong to yourselves. Nobody belongs to himself. He must do whatever he is meant to do. This vocation comes to us through men who are called. In the church of the Lord, zeal and obedience as the working of the Spirit are needed constantly in every part. Everybody does joyfully and with a good will what he is asked to do. Disobedience is disbelief; disobedience is demonic sorcery, nothing but the selfish ends of self-will."¹

However, sects which allow complete equalitarianism in designating who is the chosen repository of God's will are noted for their notoriously unstable organization.² For the purposes of stability, 'God's will' must be operationally defined and interpreted by a recognized individual or body. The Brethern know that the only word of God is the Bible; visions and modern day revelations are discounted as works of the Devil. Oddly enough the Brethern feel that the only type of supernatural communications which are likely to be received are from Satan. The Bible, however, is highly prone to diverse interpretations, consequently the Brethern rely upon certain Anabaptist devotional writings for a more specific guide. Yet this is only a partial solution leaving too much to the capriciousness of individual interpretation. As a result, the responsibility of constructing a standardized policy and implimenting defined goals is put in the hands of an administrative body which endeavors to govern in conformity with

traditional writings. Authority is essential within the community as a means of living in accordance with their basic beliefs. Aside from devotional texts authority is of two types; ultimate authority which is in fact the common will of the members of the community, and authority delegated to those members elected to an administrative superstructure.

Ultimate authority is not expressed by all members of the community equally; unbaptized personnel can only exert influence through informal channels; they are not allowed to sit on the council. Children and other unbaptized persons must bring issues before a council member on an informal basis; consequently their power is very weak. There are three councils in all, a council of all baptized Brethern, a council of all baptized male members, and a council of elected trustees. The larger extended council which consists of all baptized members has no voting power, is rarely assembled, and is mainly considered a 'talk house' where domestic affairs are discussed. This council is also convened when a crisis concerning the entire community occurs; it lacks the power to elect anyone to a higher office or to vote on issues, but issues generated here may be passed on to the council of baptized male Brethern for a vote. Unlike the Hutterites,³ who forbid their women to sit in on any of their council meetings, the Brethern have created a council where they are encouraged to attend, but are given no voting power.

The council of baptized male Brethern is the real nucleus of ultimate authority. The administrators are elected by and are answerable to this electorate body. This council delegates its authority

to three administrators or trustees. The farm manager, the vice-farm manager and superintendent makes up this administrative superstructure which acts as an executive council to the other assembled body. Any baptized male member can be nominated to any one of these positions as a candidate for election. The election itself is carried on by means of secret ballot; the names of the two members who got the highest number of votes are written on slips of paper and placed face down on a table, the preacher then draws one of the names at random. In using this method, the Brethern believe that God has selected the correct administrator. Thus not only are capable men chosen by democratic procedure, but they receive a religious sanction at the same time. These men receive tenure for life under good behaviour. Aside from its function as an electorate, this body deals with matters pertaining to the economic welfare of the community, matters of discipline, and external affairs. In 1965 this council underwent a small change. Previously when a motion was brought to the floor, everyone was required to express his opinions on the matter under discussion. Starting at the eldest and going down the age scale to the youngest, each member was expected to carry the burden of conversation equally. However it was finally discontinued because younger men would simply restate the older men's opinions or simply express their agreement with what had been previously declared.

The trustees meet at the same time as the council (directly after the church service) and preside over the latter body. The entire property of the Brethern community is registered under the names of

these three trustees; if one of the trustees die, another is elected, in this way property is prevented from being passed on to relatives and children through inheritance. Only these three members are given 'cheque signing powers', thus regulating the outward flow of monies. They are also responsible for carrying out all legal transactions, making all purchases, allotting expense money to members who have to go beyond the bounds of the community, and making general policy decisions.

Generally the preacher occupies a position as one of the trustees. However, at the time when this study was made, the farm manager and the vice-farm manager were also the preacher and assistant preacher respectively. The position 'superintendent' was purely an invention; a role with no defined rights or duties; it was merely added to make a third party. Apparently the Brethern feel that the role of preacher can co-exist simultaneously in a person occupying another administrative position. This situation came about because God (or random selection) is given greater scope in the choice of preacher. Candidates for preacher are nominated orally, but no election takes place. Instead, all of the names are put face down on a table and an elder selects one at random. From 1961 to 1965, the preacher was a separate administrative figure, but during this period his function on the council was more clear cut. From discussions on this point with the Brethern, it appears that the preacher functioned as a conservative force on the council constantly interpreting present problems with reference to the past and old doctrinal works. Younger men com-

plained that when a man becomes preacher it

"goes to their head"

and they are wont to bring to the fore biblical authority to overrule what the rest of the council considers unalterable economic factors. It appears to this observer that at present the farm manager-preacher is largely unchecked in his policy suggestions and business dealings primarily because all of his proposals carry with them automatic religious support. In lieu of the fact he is the religious expert as well as the most powerful administrator, he is able to suggest a plan which will be received as bearing a stamp of legitimization as a matter of course.

Although the Brethern claim that they base their enterprise upon the spirit rather than the letter of the law, they do feel the need for a regularized statement of policy which embodies rights, duties and expectations of the members.

"Hence, with those who desire to seek this way, if we are to be new man and women in Christ, much will depend upon what moves in our hearts, rather than of an outward attempt as of some 'blue print' to mould Christians. It remains, however, to maintain an organic Church Community consistent with its integrity and doctrine. Even as a city without walls or gates, or a field without a proper fence, so must the Community safeguard itself against that which is of the old Adam and is not of the Newness of the New man of the Spirit."⁴

Consequently the Brethern have adopted a constitution which specifies the objectives and powers of the community, its internal organization, the rights and duties of various members, grounds for admittance and expulsion and rules specifying relationships with outsiders - especially in matters concerning property, - work relations and membership in

outside associations. The constitution itself was borrowed in a slightly amended form from the Hutterian "Articles Of Association".⁵ It would be a mistake to view the constitution as merely an effort to protect the membership from arbitrary decisions, to codify a policy consistent with their belief system, and to provide continuity through time by acting as a cautionary force in checking proposed radical changes. Although these functions can be seen to operate, in large measure the constitution was created as a necessary concession to the outside world, they needed a constitution to become a legally incorporated body, thus protecting the trustees from incurring personal financial responsibility in the case of economic bankruptcy of the community. Because of this move, the community pays only corporation and land taxes; the members are exempt from personal income tax because they do not work for wages. In this matter the community acted much like any 'rational' business enterprise endeavoring to maximize its profits.

The community's relationship with the federal and provincial governments could be best characterized as one of avoidance. Although they feel that they ought to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,"⁶ they endeavor to minimize all meaningful relations with outside governing bodies. At best the government is seen as an unfriendly force, with which the community must always be on guard against forming any binding ties. The founder expressed this sentiment in an early document;

"That Christ's only Church which is built on the spiritual rock of God's love and light is a spiritual strength set above all earthly power. By the working together with the fleshly government (whose power is based on armed violence) by which subordinate circumstances in return she is lawfully acknowledged as a 'Church' (enjoying lawful power and lawful protection with man's laws and fleshly rights) and is sunk to a religious institution and political party. 'And be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' (II Cor. 6:14) which does not refer to one believer uniting with an unbeliever through marriage (nothing but flesh) but rather refers to the working together of Christ's spiritual Church with the governing power. This union which is always contradicting each other and is of unmatched spiritual natures and is a chief spiritual fornication which in appearance is as a union but is false for it can just exist, if the first of these two (with opposite goals and powers of nature) either through hypocrisy or in reality denies her very essence."⁷

The Brethern feel that governmental authority stands in clear opposition to the Church; they have even constructed an explanation for its creation. According to the Brethern,

"Governmental authority hath been ordained by God because of the turning aside of the people, in that they turned away from Him and walked according to the flesh. For this reason, after the flood, he ordained governmental authority for them to be a rod of the anger and vengeance of God, to shed the blood of those who have shed blood. Therefore the government is a picture, sign and reminder of man's departure from God, and ought well to be to all men an urge to retire within themselves and to consider to what they have come and to what they have fallen, that they might with all the most haste turn back to God to receive again the grace they had lost."⁸

Since the government is conceived as the antithesis to the community, it follows that a person can not be a member of the community and at the same time be affiliated with a political organization. The Brethern have never exercised their franchise in any of the local elections.

"We do not participate in the elections of government. Different political philosophies could lead to discord in the Community. We do however, pray for them."

Voting or any other form of political commitment would have the effect, not only of creating opposing factions within the community, but causing divided loyalties.

Recourse to judicial authority in the settlement of internal community affairs is strictly forbidden; laws and judicial machinery operate for worldly people, not for the Brethern.

"We must shun all offices which are connected with judicial authority having for their purpose vengeance and punishment of transgressors. We should leave all these things to the worldly authorities and their servants."⁹

To make use of judicial powers to settle community matters would be considered tantamount to giving the Devil authority to settle controversies between angels in the Kingdom of God. Even if the Brethern were likely to gain considerably from taking an issue to court, it is highly unlikely that they would do so.

Indeed, compromises with political authorities in order to obtain financial or other benefits is always considered in and of itself to be a danger and threat to the 'integrity' of the community. The Brethern, for example, severely criticized the Hutterites for attempting to become officially recognized churches in order to be eligible for the tax free status granted to organized religions. This letter expresses the horror with which the Brethern viewed these actions.

"Dear Christian Brother,

Your news that you want to make a spiritual corporation with the Lehrerleut' colonies and the Schmiedeleut' colonies, just like the Catholic and Lutheran Churches, only to be free of income taxes, caused me and all our brothers terrible heartache and such a fright, that I can not fully describe it.

In our opinion, but also by the word of God, this is an inexpressible mistake, indeed a deviation from the way of Truth, when a community of God, a Bride of Christ is as one of the world: acknowledged, confirmed ratified, and accepted as a world-church, under the worldly despotism, power and government of the world. Indeed to beg the government for birth, stature, and existence; to accept the permission, protection, and support of the power as some falsified or worldly state-church, is essentially nothing else, but prostitution. Where the state and the church cooperate we find the secret of godlessness; it is a picture of Christ and his Church, but in truth, it is not; in name it is Christian, in form it is church-like, in pretence it is church-service; but in truth it is law-dictated compulsion; in nature it is earthly and devilish."¹⁰

Taxation is another form of governmental contact which they regard with great suspicion because they believe that some of the money which is collected is used to gain ends which are contrary to their belief system.

"To pay income tax, which is not used for wars, is not against our religion and teaching and that which is used for blood spilling we do not have to pay. If the government wishes, she could make us pay that also, but only with force, but then our conscience would remain clean."¹¹

To my knowledge, the Brethern have never withheld a percentage of their taxes; however, they frequently express the opinion that they are being duped into supporting 'armed violence'. As religious passivists they

"wish only to express brotherly love towards mankind
and therefore refuse to take up arms or show violence
to anyone."

But the government has more subtle forms of extracting support for
'war mongering' which the Brethern are constantly on guard against.

"We forbid against ... being a help in the increase of the
shuddering wars by helping in the manufacturing of the
murderers' munitions by the purchasing of Liberty Bonds,-
of which sins most either do not know or do not want to
know a way and method to cleanse."¹²

Indeed, as innocent a contact with politics as voting in local
elections is claimed to assist in if not provoke wars.

"In human or secular politics a man may be led to believe
that he is exercising influence and responsibility in
voting, and at the same time other men in other countries
will be feeling likewise about their own politics. But
this responsibility is in essence concerned exclusively
with his own (assumed) well-being and protection, the
ultimate outcome of these narrow national interests,
pursued at the expense of the well-being of other men
of other nations, leads ultimately, as all history
shows, to war."¹³

Since the primary role of government, as seen by the Brethern, is to
act as God's instrument, - consisting of evil men punishing other
evil men by involving each other in endless battles and shows of
violence; consequently all 'true Christians' ought to avoid involve-
ment with it and refuse to recognize its authority.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII

1. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit., p. 27.
2. See, for example, Hugh Herbison, "Doukhobor Religion", in Harry B. Hawthorn (ed.), The Doukhobors of British Columbia, Vancouver: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1955, Chp. 4.
3. See Lee Emerson Deets, op. cit. p. 29.
4. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit.
5. For the Hutterian Constitution see, Victor Peters, op. cit. pp. 193-201.
6. Mark 12:17.
7. Julius Kubassek, op. cit.
8. "The Christian Challenge", Sept., 1966, No. 5, pp. 6-7.
9. "The Christian Challenge", June, 1966, No. 2, p. 15.
10. An open letter sent to the Brethern of Early Christianity to Bon Homme Colony, Elie, Manitoba (date unknown).
11. Ibid.
12. Julius Kubassek, op. cit.

13. "The Christian Challenge", Sept., 1966, No. 5, p. 3.

CHAPTER 9

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Children are of course the perennial deviants in every society; they can be counted on to flout even the most sacred rules and conventions without the least sign of remorse. The Brethern are quite aware that the ultimate survival of their community depends on the planned transformation of their young from unsocialized animals into adults who display only the appropriate socially defined character traits and who can be relied upon to act out the socially approved patterns of behaviour. In order to understand the procedure with which the Brethern train their children, one must also understand their conception of 'human nature' to which they gear their education system.

The Brethern believe that all babies are born innately evil; they are selfish creatures, tainted by original sin.

"All of us have by nature a tendency toward evil and an inclination to sin. This inheritance manifests and shows itself in all of the children of Adam-all who are born after and according to Adam..."¹

Whatever the theological meaning of original sin, the Brethern use it to mean an inborn tendency towards egotism and acquisitiveness. All Children are supposedly born with these character traits, which are incompatible with those they will be expected to display in later life. Operating from this premise, the educational system is designed to 'crush' these early propensities and replace them with more altruistic and 'compassionate' motives. Human nature is not simply conceived of

as evil, but is considered malleable and through the continued efforts of teachers and the preacher the child's personality can be fashioned into the approved mold. Ideally the education system will continue to indoctrinate its trainees into approved patterns, and purge them of unapproved characteristics, until it culminates in a ceremonious rebirth. This rite of passage, baptism, where the individual is symbolically born again marks the end of his education and the beginning of his adult status. Unlike the first birth, the individual's second birth is theoretically accompanied by approved social propensities. Conscience is conceived of as a social product acquired through education; up until rebirth the individual is considered somewhat less than human.

"We must be constantly seeking in all seriousness to find the best ways of education. Not only in the later youth but also from the earliest time of childhood the damaged element in human nature is active. From the beginning it starts to grow. We can compare it with the iron that tends to rust, or soil that encourages weeds to grow. Only with constant care can they be kept clean. It is a fact: children from their youth up love all kinds of unrighteousness. They have within them the covetous will and the tendency to selfish desires."²

The objectives of the educational system are three fold. First, suppress all signs of the student's selfish inclinations; second, obtain voluntary acceptance of and conformity to the communities norms and values and third, acquaint the student with the rudiments of the four R's, - reading, 'riting , 'rithmetic, and religion. The main didactic techniques employed are rote memorization, repetition, and recitation in unison. Critical thinking is considered a threat to the prevailing order and smacks of individual ascendancy.

School begins at the age of two and a half, when the child first enters the kindergarten; he will remain there until he is five or six when he will start the public school. Three middle-aged women alternate the duty of supervisor or nurse on a weekly basis. The kindergarten itself is located in one of the vacant rooms in the motel-like structure; it is modestly furnished with small green and pink tiny-tot chairs, a small table, several bed mats layed out on the floor, a large rocking horse, and an assorted mixture of smaller toys in various states of repair. There is also a playground with a sand-box, swings, and a teeter totter. The curriculum mainly consists of children's and Bible stories, hymn singing, and non-competitive games. The children eat all three meals in the kindergarten, including a snack during mid-morning and mid-afternoon. As a rule the children take an early afternoon siesta on the mats in the kindergarten. The children are excused at approximately 6:30 P.M. when the adults have finished eating supper. In the kindergarten the children become familiar with the discipline of the public school and acquainted with the communities' basic religious frame of reference.

Upon graduation from the kindergarten, the children enter the private elementary school. However, the more genuine continuation of the kindergarten is the religious school which is strictly in accord with the objectives of the Brethern educational system. The religious school is held in the public school for an hour before 9:00 A.M. and for one hour after the elementary school students are dismissed at 4:00 P.M. The religious school also operates in the

mornings during the summer months when the regular school is temporarily closed. The main goal of the religious school as the name would suggest, is the indoctrination of their children into their avowed ideological scheme. It also, no doubt, functions as an effective counter-indoctrination to the regular school session which is regarded with suspicion by the Brethern. The curriculum consists of lectures on Anabaptist eschatology and church history, question and answer periods from various Anabaptist catechisms, and the recital and memorization of prayers, hymns, and Bible verses. The children were formerly taught the rudiments of the German and Hungarian languages; this has now been discontinued except for a few German hymns which are taught by rote. The religious teacher has had no special pedagogical training and holds the position only by merit of his respected status in the community. The preacher, assistant preacher, and missionary (when available) have conducted the religious school in the past. In these classes the emphasis is on 'teamwork'; the teacher will ask a question from a catechism and he will receive a collective response; all prayers, hymns, and Biblical passages are repeated or sung in unison; and all rewards (such as letting school out early or handing out treats such as apples or cherries) are given on a group basis. Individual effort is not anticipated or desired; it is not considered as a legitimate part of the structure of the Brethern education system. The only manifestations of individualism which appear in the system are considered disruptions or anti-social behaviour such as day dreaming. In the religious school obedience is a form of worship; the obedient are con-

sidered the faithful, and the disobedient are the unbelieving.

In order to obtain obedience, the teacher may have to employ various disciplinary techniques. The favourite is a gradual black listing of the disfavoured pupil which consists of three different degrees of severity. If a student commits a delinquent act his name is put on the blackboard; if the student refrains from any further misbehaviour, no further action will be taken. However, if this form of public embarrassment is not sufficient a star will be placed beside his name and he will be asked to kneel on the floor beneath the blackboard at the front of the room. In fifteen or twenty minutes time the teacher will ask the wayward pupil to deliver a public apology for his misdemeanors and then he will be allowed to return to his seat. If he still persists another star will go up beside his name and he will again take up his position at the front of the room where he will remain until the class is dismissed. The teacher will then take a long leather strap from the desk and deliver several blows to the young deviant's fingers which are held along the desk top. Corporal punishment is never administered in view of the rest of the class. However, the young offender can be relied upon to exaggerate the horrors of his experience to the others when he is released.

The bulk of the Brethern's education takes place in the elementary school; this is a privately owned institution built in 1961. It has two rooms for both junior and senior grades and has a seating capacity for approximately 90 pupils, although only 40 pupils attended in 1966. Before the construction of this school, classes were held in a vacant farm house one half mile from the community nucleus.

The Brethern claim that they will undergo any hardship to retain a private institute of learning.

"No matter how poor we become, that will be last to go", explained the farm manager as he pointed towards the school house. In the early 1940's the Brethern children attended a local public school but were withdrawn because it was felt that they were

"picking up the ways of the world".

The Brethern clearly recognize the necessity of insulating their children from outside influences if they are going to retain their distinctive way of life. Their religious literature makes this abundantly clear,

"A covetous will and the tendency to selfish desires come most strongly to expression when children have bad examples before them every day, which harm them. With their inborn propensity for imitation they will always follow these things. In this way the desire grows in them to do everything in imitation of what they see. In the end it will no longer be possible to combat their rottenness Therefore their is cause, indeed thousandfold cause, to seek Christian community for the children and to keep them in clear separation. In this way it can be prevented that ungodly children bring shame upon honest and otherwise good people."³

Although the elementary school exists in isolation from the outside culture, it represents a compromise to the outside world and possibly stands as the greatest sustained threat to the Brethern community. The Ontario government insists that compulsory education be given to children up to the age of fourteen in a school that complies with certain codified standards. These standards spell out not only the basic curriculum to be followed, but also the credentials of the teaching personnel. In order to act in accordance with these standards

the Brethern were forced to hire a teacher who held a Teaching Diploma from a recognized Teacher's College. Since the Brethern do not allow their members higher education, they have found it necessary to introduce an alien into the system. This appears to be the greatest encroachment of the outside society on the Bretherns' system, for the role of teacher, now held by an outsider, stands in a pivotal position in the very institution which is responsible for the transmission of values and beliefs in an organic community. The danger is that the teacher will socialize the children into outside life. The teacher, of course, brings into the community well engrained opinions on the objectives of education and the role definition of a teacher. There is a fundamental difference in orientation. Whereas the Brethern feel that education should have the function of fostering their major cultural values and inculcating community loyalty in the young people, the teacher usually takes a wholly different view of the matter. To the teacher, her role is to prepare the students for a competitive world where they must succeed, individual intellectual prowess is rewarded, one must compete for marks as one will later compete for materialistic objectives and social status, and a general demeanor of curiosity, scepticism and inquiry into the nature of the existing natural and social order, is encouraged. Individualism and the success pattern is entirely incompatable with the style of life which they will later lead; and the Brethern feel that the speculative or scientific approach to life may bring into question religious beliefs which are regarded as eternal truths which should be immune from all criticism.

Realizing that the elementary school had the potential of adversely affecting the future of the community, the Brethern have sought to minimize its effects. First, the Brethern Council which acts as the School Board takes an active interest in the school curriculum. The teacher was asked by the Brethern to avoid religious questions, since the children would get their religious instruction from their own teacher. She was also told not to use history books which depicted acts of violence and battles. In this respect the teacher has more than satisfied the Brethern by instructing the children in the geographical and economic aspects of the various parts of the globe, rather than the usual chronology of battles and political contests. The Brethern, vaguely aware of the theory of evolution, asked that it be omitted from the curriculum, the teacher complied. The Brethern also asked her not to include competitive sports in any physical education program which she might undertake. As a whole the relations between the School Board and the teacher has run very smoothly.

Secondly, the selection of the teacher herself is another aspect which the Brethern can control. The grade school teacher reported that she had answered an advertisement for an elementary school teacher specifying that only elderly widows or spinsters need reply. The present teacher, a spry widow of seventy-five seemed to fit the bill perfectly. After satisfying themselves that she had no religious or social prejudices against them, the Brethern employed her. The teacher appeared (to this observer) to be very sympathetic to both the Bretherns' religious view and social organization; during week days she stays at the community, eats in the community dining hall, attends religious

service and participates full measure in the womens' gossip circle. She seems to have adjusted herself completely to the Bretherns' demands and community values. From previous schools she had learned that the best method of sparking interest and enthusiasm in a subject was to make it into a competitive game. However, the Brethern children, having been conditioned to cooperate rather than display individual prowess did not respond as she had expected to these games. One particular game, in which colored stars are awarded for meritorious work and the child with the most stars wins the contest, did not work out as planned because the children felt that the object of the game was that everyone should endeavor to end up even. The type of cooperation which this game (as it was redefined) entailed was at first mistaken for blatant cheating. Rather than go against the grain of their conditioning, she now encourages them to cooperate and help each other in their school work.

"Most people would think I had a class room full of cheaters, but I think its beautiful the way they help each other", reported the grade school teacher.

Thirdly, the Brethern use their own members as assistants. Even though these girls lack a teaching diploma they are allowed to teach under the principal's diploma as supply teachers on a short term basis. Consequently, two girls alternate teaching duties. As a result exposure to an alternative value system is drastically reduced. Generally, the Brethern seem to have effectively contained the potentially adverse influences of this outside socializing agency which has been forced into their midst.

The Brethern children are also required to go to Sunday School every Sunday afternoon at 2:00 P.M. All unbaptized children above kindergarten age must attend; consequently, many teen-agers who have completed elementary school will go to Sunday School. The preacher provides the instruction on church doctrine and related subjects. Both the content of the subjects and the method of teaching is identical to that of the Religious School and need not be discussed further. Its function like the Religious school is to inculcate community loyalty, foster a religious problem solving perspective, and offset the antithetical influence of the elementary school.

After completing elementary school at fourteen, the Brethern children seldom undergo any more advanced training.

"You don't need any more schooling to work on a farm", is a frequently expressed platitude. Some, however, have taken correspondence courses sponsored by the Ontario Department of Education; the highest level ever attained in this way has been grade ten. Although the community does not actively discourage education through correspondence, it certainly has never encouraged it. People engaged in correspondence courses are frequently released from the normal work activities so that they can work on their lessons; however, many people on the community feel that this merely provides the lazy with an excuse for avoiding hard work. The Brethern believe that higher education will lead to dissatisfaction with simple community life; they especially are afraid of the effect of higher education on their females,

"the new emancipated woman with all her education would not make a good wife".

Not only do they suspect that higher education might 'open the door' to the 'evils of the world', but that it would destroy their essentially classless society.

"People with a lot of learning think themselves higher and better than the rest", observed the preacher.

However, the community has involved itself in a dilemma as it has grown into a highly technical enterprise since the necessity of training their children in highly specialized fields has increased. The performance of specific roles within the structure of the community require funds of knowledge which can not be acquired either in the elementary school or by means of apprenticeship. For example, the secretary had to take courses in bookkeeping and business practice, the mechanic found it necessary to take a course in welding at a local technical school, the engineer was forced to acquire Second Class Stationary Engineering papers in order to run the boiler room and several of the Brethern had to take a mechanics course in order to repair some of the machinery in the egg noodle plant. This knowledge could not be handed down from generation to generation and had to be acquired from outside institutions. Grudgingly the community has had to permit correspondence courses limited to purely technical training and special outside courses for baptized members who are deemed 'safe' by the community. The dangers however, are great, for it is feared that the know-

ledge which is transmitted from the outside world however technical might carry with it elements of the outside value system. But a greater danger seems to be the introduction of the 'expert' whose technical proficiency cannot be questioned by the rest. This not only endangers the avowed equalitarian nature of the sect, but also threatens absolute loyalty to the community. Commitment to an occupational role and the possible identification with outsiders occupying the same roles has weakened the solidarity of the sect. During my period of observation on the community, two boys left in order to further their education in mechanics; this bitter incident arose because the boys felt that they had out grown the community as mechanics and the mechanics in the city

"could show us (them) a lot".

With respect to higher education, the Brethern have been unable to decide on a clear policy which will satisfy both the instrumental needs of the community and at the same time safeguard its distinctive normative and structural characteristics.

Brethern education functions as a system of preventions designed to check non-conformity before its inception. The Brethern's primary mechanism of social control is self-discipline along with a good measure of unthinking obedience to traditional authority. Although the Brethern rely on the implantation of the community's norms and values during childhood as the dominant mode of insuring conformity, it has had to depend upon penal discipline to check the system's failures. Punishment is graded according to the seriousness of the crime. Generally the seriousness of a crime requiring penal discipline

varies directly in accordance with the extent to which an individual has come under the influence of the outside society. Another type of crime which the Brethern have had to cope with is sabotage or attempts to break up the community; the punishment for this is immediate excommunication. Minor crimes of 'worldliness' usually lead to a visit from the preacher who tries to persuade the wrong-doer into rectifying his behaviour. Misconduct such as immodest dress and budding courtships usually evoke this type of response. A public admission of guilt is required for more serious crimes of 'worldliness'.

"Man is by nature inclined to sin. To keep a people of God pure it is highly necessary that order and discipline are maintained through the exercise of clearly graded measures of discipline. Evil has to be warded off. The coarser vices have to be publicly unmasked before all other members of the community. This is the only way to put men to shame for the worst sins and sharpen the conscience. In case of hardened obstinacy the extreme step, separation, becomes unavoidable."⁴

After their exposure, all major crimes are brought before the council of the Brethern not so much as a trial, but as an attempt to bring the 'sinner' into a realization of the effects of his transgression on the community's social structure. If the council is satisfied that the transgressor has become aware of the consequences of his crime and seems 'truly repentant' they will forgive him. However, he must then voice contrition before the entire congregation at the end of the church service. By making the crime community knowledge, the group as whole acts as a regulator of future behaviour. This seems more restitutive than punitive because the individual becomes so indebted to the others for not allowing past misdemeanors

to be the judge of his present behaviour that he is likely to become a rigid conformer.

During my observation on the community, two boys took an unauthorized trip to a local city; their public apology can be taken as typical,

"I'm sorry that I left the community without permission; for it is necessary that we tell the community where we are so that we can be called upon when we are needed."

Total exclusion from the community is deemed the only way that the sect can be safe-guarded against incorrigible individuals who seek to destroy or take over the community. The following extended quote from a letter written by the founder describes such an incident.

"Our beloved God protected us through 16 years so that there was not one exclusion in our community, but now it is evident, that the bad enemy of our souls was at work from many corners and sides to weaken us through faithlessness and hypocrisy. But our omnipotent and true God, who observes all, who can look into the hearts and kidneys, would not endure it any more and brought the malignity to light. In consequence, one of our brothers was totally excluded. Two other young men, one of whom was here for 6, the other for 8 years without being christened, were sent away. These two believe themselves to be very fine and pious persons. Oh yes, so wise and just that we stupid and bad people could not teach them anything, or make them more pious. All of the other brothers were convinced that these men, under the cover of their remarkable and malicious hypocrisy, behind our backs, tried to corrupt and hinder our young people, so that we brothers had to admit before God unanimously, that we must be found guilty for knowingly tolerating these men in our community. One wanted to be nothing else than a preacher, the other (the deceitful one) even wanted to be a bishop and to reach this end he tried to organize a party among the young people, mostly through his malicious and insane hypocrisy. these two deceived us for years with their hypocritical black arts. If needed, they could make themselves look like crying angels of the light....."5

All of the cases of ostracism and excommunication from the community have been due to heresy. Usually zealous individuals who have attempted to revamp the basis of the community or purge the community of what they deem worldliness, by organizing a group of supporters with the intention of taking over the leadership of the community. One particularly fervent ex-member became imbued with the belief that the sect should be transformed into an active missionary community. He claims that he

"just could not avoid from clashing with some of the elders, who through their self-conceited righteousness and self-centred attitude have been and still are a great hinderance to the growth and progress of the little group a community without mission work is nothing. Fourteen years have now past, since the time of establishment in 1940, and still no mission work. Instead of spiritual progress and growth, a stale condition prevails. It is a sad picture, especially to me, because I once had great faith in the group and served the community with hard work for almost eight years. However, I still hope for the day when things will make a change, but this will hardly occur while Julius and also Fred (to a much lesser extent) have their present psychological influence over the group".⁶

Another man was excommunicated for advocating that the community should follow the example of the Shakers⁷ and that marriage should be forbidden.

"I denied myself marriage of the flesh between man and women because it is nothing else than an earthly, fleshy work of Adam, not a blessed and spiritual work; it is just a way out for those, who are weak in their flesh and can not reject their fleshy desires; although for some it is better to be married, than to suffer rut."⁸

The last excommunication took place in 1963, when a man was told to leave for 'false prophesying'.^{*} The situation became complicated

* See the next section for a fuller discussion.

when the man refused to leave; he claimed that it was his duty to remain within the community in order to enlighten potential converts about the past iniquities of the community. The Brethern offered to give him financial assistance if he would only leave, but he refused. During my visit this man, although he still physically remained within the community, had been excluded from all social intercourse. Few of the Brethern would speak to him, he was forced to eat alone, he was given no voice on any community affairs, and he was not given work assignments (although he did work with his brother on the dairy farm). In this case, 'shunning' was put into practise as the functional equivalent to physical exclusion from the community. In general, there is first an attempt to reform members whose behaviour or beliefs openly threatened the stability of the community, if all else fails then the incorrigibles are either physically or socially excluded from the community.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IX

1. Peter Rideman, op. cit., p. 57.
2. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit., p. 29.
3. Ibid, p. 29.
4. Ibid, p. 27.
5. Julius Kubassek, an open letter to Joseph Waldner, Wilson Siding Colony, Lethbridge, Alberta, Jan. 24, 1948.
6. John Gabor, from a letter to Hans-Herman Arnold, Society of Brothers, Woodcrest Bruderhof, Rifton, N.Y., Sept. 26, 1954.
7. For a description of a Shaker Community, see J. W. Eaton, Exploring Tomorrow's Agriculture, New York: The Free Press, 1943.
8. Elmer L. Baer, "To the Brothers Who Are Called the Hutterians", a testimony of belief sent to a Manitoba Hutterite Colony, date unknown.

CHAPTER 10

KINSHIP

The Brethern agree with the Pauline doctrine that it is better that man marry than undergo the frustrations associated with the sexual frustrations of celibacy. However, sexual desire, although recognized as a basic need is felt to be highly dangerous to the community. They fear that exclusive sexual access to a particular mate may generate more mutual loyalty, than that which is directed towards the community. They feel that mate choice can not entirely be left up to the individual, rather it is considered a community responsibility. The range of potential mates is severely restricted to include only those who are loyal to the community.

Temporary sexual or romantic alliances commonly called 'going steady' by the outside society is strictly forbidden. Sexual or quasi-sexual access outside marriage is likened to laying claim to certain objects in the community as private possessions. Perhaps because of their 'puritanical' cultural heritage they have chosen to restrict sexual access for everyone rather than allow complete access for everyone. Consequently the Brethern

"protest against the practise of 'Stubela'.* We protest against the ways of courtship which leads to kissing, hugging, petting, even unto immorality. We also protest against the exchange of photographs between boys and girls, and against disorderly letter-writing".¹

* Dating

There is some evidence that the Brethern have become somewhat more permissive in this regard. In the 1940's and 50's the unmarried men and women were completely segregated from each other. In fact, one man reported that he had not been able to speak more than five or six words to his wife before they were married. Although young men and women can and do talk to each other they can rarely do this unchaperoned. In fact, the preacher counts it as one of his duties to ferret out areas on the community which are being used as "common courting houses".

The possibility of amorous attachments developing between a member and outsider is perceived as a greater threat to their solidarity.

"Because we believe that true Christian marriage involves any two persons contemplating it in a life committal of faithfulness to one another and to the Church of which Jesus is the Head, the courtship which the world is familiar with between individuals, as an approach to marriage, is not permitted, and in this guests are particularly asked to observe what we believe to be a straightforward Christian approach to marriage, and to family life in general."²

To entertain marriage with an outsider is a grave crime warranting immediate excommunication from the Church. Their doctrine is very explicit concerning marriage between members and outsiders,

"In the light of divine order it is a dirty stain, a serious fault when marriage is permitted between believers and unbelievers. From such a marriage injustice and evil circumstances of all kinds arise, trouble and pain, confusion and distraction, disorder and apostasy. Such a marriage is contrary to the most definite word of the Lord, 'If you marry strange people you will go to ruin.'³

The Brethern make it quite clear to potential converts that the community does not tolerate split loyalties between an 'outside' marriage partner and the community.

"Any person who intends to become part of the Community should see that all matters concerning his or her affairs outside are first settled. Anyone who is involved in matters of marriage or engaged to another should first make straight these affairs before, not after, becoming a member."⁴

The community rigidly practises endogamy; ostracizing those who have taken marriage partners outside of the sect. The Brethern seem to feel however, that their responsibility is to ensure that all marriages that do occur are between baptized members of good standing within the sect; they do not feel responsible for arranging marriages for the available single people. If no marriage possibilities exist, then that person will have to remain single. Before becoming a baptized member each candidate must pledge that they

"are willing to commit (themselves) in all purity to the Church, and if (they) do not have an opportunity to marry those of the same faith (they) will still desire, with the help of God, to remain faithful to the Church".⁵

Although the Brethern do not have arranged marriages as such, they still exercise a large amount of control over the final choice. The initial selection is made by the male who expresses his desire to the preacher, who then goes through the motions of warning the young man of the seriousness and gravity of the step. The preacher then brings his request before the Council of baptized Brethern for approval. After ensuring that the applicant is truly serious and that there are no legal hinderances, the preacher will be delegated

to inform the chosen female about what has transpired. She will then tell the preacher whether she accepts or refuses the offer. If she does accept the couple will be officially engaged in the presence of the whole congregation. A brief engagement period of about one month will follow. Since the preacher cannot legally perform a marriage ceremony, a local magistrate is called in to perform a civil ceremony which is immediately followed by their own ceremony. Weddings rings are not given in marriage, because they are felt to be nothing other than jewelry. Although the male is not supposed to confront the female in question, before he consults the preacher, he will usually try to ascertain how receptive she is to the proposed idea by enlisting mutual friends to broach the idea to her. This is usually done most indirectly; children in their early teens are most often used to transmit the news to the right sources. Children are frequently used for this because it is only at this age that the communication separation between the sexes can be bridged. For example the males younger brother will tell a younger brother of the girl, who will then relay the information to a younger sister who will in turn tell the girl or an older sister. This seems to be carried out because one man suffered the embarrassment of being refused by three different women; he finally left the community and tried to start his own sect in which members would remain celibate.

Marriage has become an extremely difficult problem for the Brethern. Faced with a very limited pool of potential mates, many men will leave the community in order to find a better selection.

Females find it much more difficult to leave, and thus are left with even bleaker prospects of marriage. At present nine single Brethern girls have been left with little or no marriage prospects. Since the Brethern rely on a high birth rate rather than immigration for their supply of potential members; there is a quite justified fear that this source may soon dry up. The future of the Brethern looks dismal indeed if one considers that with the exception of one family which arrived in 1961, all of the third generation are at least first cousins. The Brethern are very much concerned about whether inbreeding will produce hereditary defects. Although they feel confident that first cousin marriage does not constitute incest; they agree that an influx of outsiders will become necessary in the future.

The Brethern have tried to form marriage trading alliances with other communitarian sects; this has turned out to be difficult since most of the other communities have similar rules concerning endogamy. In all cases of intercommunity marriage, the rule of residence has turned out to be virilocal. Reba Place Fellowship, a communitarian sect in Evanston, Ill., now has four women formerly from the Brethern community; the Brethern have none in return. Periodically parties of young men from the Hutterian colonies will pay a visit to look over the marriage prospects. As a rule these men have been unable to find a spouse in their own colonies, and have gone outside of their sect as a last resort. A number of these are mentally or physically defective; quite often a Brethern girl will be faced with the decision of whether to run off with a mental handicap to the

Hutterian colonies or remain unmarried. Many of the unmarried females hold very little hope for ever getting married. These females seemed to be highly prone to long periods of depression, often requiring psychiatric care. The Brethern, themselves, often voice the sentiment that if these girls had been able to get married they would not have become 'double-minded'.

By restricting marriage to the baptized members, the Brethern have attempted to prevent loyalty from being deflected away from the community as a whole. However, other kinship bonds also present a problem; ties between parents and children, siblings and extended kin also have the potential of being stronger than the allegiance demanded by the community. Deets has recognized the same problem in the Hutterian system.

"Those in authority in the Hutterite communities recognize the home as a place not as easily controlled as the rest of the community. Some utopian communities have met the problem by adopting the practice of celibacy. Oneida community tried to meet it by abolishing the conventional family. The Hutterites meet it in part by stripping the family of many of its functions."⁶

The functions performed by the nuclear family in the dominant society such as reproduction, sexual satisfaction, economic cooperation and the socialization and disciplining of children are greatly curtailed in the Brethern community.

Its greatest and most important function in the Brethern case is procreation; the Brethern are almost totally reliant upon the nuclear family to produce new members for the sect. It is the duty of the married couple to be 'fruitful and multiply' and populate the sect. Economic cooperation is completely absent within the nuclear family;

both production and consumption of goods and services are performed outside of the family under the direction of the community. Since all wealth and property is communally owned, members of the family unit are not dependent upon the father for an income and the social status associated with it. Since family inheritance does not exist, one's status can not be ascribed in this manner. Since the offsprings are not dependent upon their parents for wealth, social status, or education, their investment in the family is very low and their attachment to the community greater. Similarly from the age of two and one-half, all child training, education, and discipline is conducted outside of the nuclear family. They are in fact, children of the community, rather than children of certain parents. From the time the community was established until 1961, all lived in dormitories rather than in their parents homes. It was discontinued because a supervisor was necessary to keep order and more important peer group allegiance became so strong that the generation gap became difficult to bridge. Although dormitories no longer exist, children often do not live in their parent's residence, but with single adults. Although this has not completely destroyed the formation of strong peer groups; it has been instrumental in preventing peer group loyalties from overriding allegiance to the community.

Attachment to one's spouse is extremely difficult for the community to control for the mutual satisfaction of sexual desires is conducted exclusively in the intimacy and secrecy of the home. However, a strong attachment is somewhat averted because of the sexual mores of the Brethern. Sex is not considered an honourable motive for

devotion. The very word 'flesh' which they use synonymously with sex, carries with it the connotations of being a degrading animal-like experience. What the outside society considers to be love and romance, the Brethern feel is

"nothing but flesh".

A society such as this may be considered one large extended family.⁷ This appears to be so not only because most of the functions normally delegated to the family are performed by the larger community, but because the members perceive each other psychologically as kin. The children are considered 'spiritual' children of the community and adults are addressed as 'spiritual brothers and sisters'. The Brethern also feel that the entire brotherhood is the 'spiritual bride of Christ'. The Brethern community can be considered as functioning as an extended kinship unit whose kin relationships and system of classificatory kinship terminology is based on neither consanguinity nor conjugality (although these are recognized), but on psychologically generated 'spiritual' ties.

One of the most serious threats to community solidarity has come about because not only is the community a 'spiritual' brotherhood, but it is also for the majority a kinship unit based on blood and marriage ties. Although this has added to the cohesiveness of the majority, it has made many newly converted families suspect that the founding families are favoured. In one case, the validity of the spiritual brotherhood was rejected because it was felt that it merely cloaked close family ties.

The case of the Entz brothers is the most important example of this, although it is intermixed with other considerations such as cultural background. The Entz brothers joined the Brethern community after being invited to do so in 1961. The Entz brothers consisted of six nuclear families who had been forced to leave the Hutterian colony of Big Bend near Cardston, Alberta. These people had been branded as 'outlaws' by their fellow Hutterites. The Entz brothers had accused the Hutterian church of 'worldliness' and insisted that they

"will have no part in certain old and deeply rooted unchristian doings within the communities; against which we raised our unworthy but well-minded voices, but after repeated efforts and troubles we found no understanding among the communities or their leaders. Thereby the frivolous and faithless youth as well as the weaker, older, and carnal members got the upper hand in many cases; the situation got so bad that all favoured them."

Because of these happenings, we lost our trust, first only partly, then completely. They burdened us for such a long time with such heavy and unjust burdens which shocked not only us but many of the worldly people too, and marked the community so shamefully; such things not only existed but were justified by our elders and leaders. We will no longer have any part in such things, whether in front of God, or the world."⁸

However, after the Entz brothers had joined the Brethern community, they soon accused it of worldliness as well. Primary among their complaints was the accusation that the founding families were acting as

"rulers and dominators in the church".

They also objected to the clothing patterns and styles, the type of hair coverings, council organization, missionary work and many other

practices which the Entz found to be different from the Hutterian style of life. The Brethern describe their problematic situation in the following:

"Shortly after the arrival of the Entz group here, our goodwill and intentions were rewarded with secret and 'behind the back' criticism of the elders. This has not ceased but has been carried on to the point where they wrote such letters of accusation against this little church which would even be too much to write of total unbelievers. The result of this much accusation and blaming is that they do not want to reconcile or even take part in our council. They haven't attended any councils since Feb. 1963. After their refusals for reconciliation we came to the conclusion that their main leader, namely John Entz Jr., must be excommunicated. This step only hardened them to the point that none of them would any longer attend church worship service with us..... Otherwise, we are very satisfied with their work. They are ambitious and thoughtful workers. They are easy to get along with, and would be more so if self-righteousness were put in its place, (on the dunghill). But if not, then nowhere on this earth will they be able to live peaceably even among themselves, much less other people. For in all our lives we have not met men as self-righteous as these, who can find no man or men to whom they would submit."⁹

At the time of field work during the summer of 1966, the situation had not improved. In fact, the split between the two factions had only become more crystalized. The situation was now characterized by a strict mutual avoidance in all but certain work situations. What appears to be most interesting is that the Entz family have set up their own religious sect. They hold their own religious services, their own councils and adhere to a strict group endogamy. This community within a community is in the true sense of the word, a religion drawn along kinship lines. A strongly unified brotherhood can hardly be said to exist within the Brethern community because of the opposing loyalty demanded by kinship ties.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER X

1. "Our Answer Concerning Our Relationship With the Hutterian Brethern", op. cit.
2. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit.
3. Andreas Ehrenpreis, op. cit., p. 30.
4. "The Rules of the Brethern of Early Christianity", op. cit.
5. "A Spiritual Pledge To Those Who Desire to Make a Full Commitment Towards the Community Church", pledge No. 7.
6. For a discussion on this point, see Melford E. Spiro, "Is the Family Universal?" American Anthropologist, 56(1958), pp. 839-46.
7. A 'send brief' or open letter sent by the Entz brothers of Big Bend Colony, Cardston, Alberta to the Lehrerleut Colony of Rockport, Magrath, Alberta, 1956.
8. "The History of How We Became Acquainted with the Entz Group", an open letter by the Brethern of Early Christianity, April, 1964.

CHAPTER 11

RELIGION

Functional analyses of religion often put forward the case that religion in its various rites and activities performs the function of providing normative integration for the assembled believers. The ends of the society are symbolically acted out thereby re-establishing in the believer's mind the rightness of his sentiments and the collective solidarity of the group. Basic values are reiterated by engaging all members in their presentation, thus eliciting more commitment to those values than would be offered by a mere spectator. Not only in the Durkheimian sense is it the mechanism by which society justifies, legitimizes and reinforces itself, but the reality of a supernatural world is upheld as the ultimate source and final justification of the avowed group ends.

In the Brethern case there is no dividing line between the sacred and the profane, except that the outside world is entirely profane. Even the most instrumental activity is a form of worship, a working out of God's plan. Liturgical activities such as praying and hymn singing differ only in the degree to which societal ends are brought into focus. All of the Brethern gather five times a week for their religious services, - from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. on Sunday. In addition to this Sunday school is held Sunday afternoon for the children and a young people's meeting is held on Thursday evenings.

All of these activities are held in the Brethern's own church, except the Sunday school.

The church itself presents a noticeably bleak appearance, with a complete absence of religious imagery and symbolism. Conventional hard wood pews are arranged in two rows facing towards the altar. The altar is a simple wooden table, completely devoid of any aesthetic embellishments. When assembled, the Brethern take on the same pattern as during meals, with the sexes separated (the women on the right and the men on the left) and each pew occupied with different age groups (the young near the front and the elders at the rear). It may be noted that kinship relations play no part in the seating arrangements as they do in orthodox Christian churches.

Each service is started by a series of hymns, the main body of which are taken from a hymnal called "Zion's Harp".¹ Although the hymns are sung without musical accompaniment, they are nevertheless performed with a great deal of gusto. Such energy is put into the hymns that one suspects that singing is a form of catharsis for the Brethern. Most of the hymns are so well known to the Brethern that they rarely need consult the hymnal. The vast majority of the hymns focus on their belief in communality, self-surrender, separation from the world, the absolute nature of their doctrine, and their distinctiveness as a people. The following hymn will illustrate this:²

"They had all things in common, Each in the other saw

The image of the Master, The spirit of the law.

The mystery of all ages, Long hidden was revealed.

The Christ life manifested, Each by the spirit sealed.

Chorus: All things, all things in common, So doth the Bible read.

All things, all things in common, The spirit gently pleads.

All things, all things in common, The life the truth the way;

All things all things in common, 'Tis just the same today.

The hymn singing is enjoyed so much that the Sunday evening meeting is completely devoted to hymns.

Immediately after the opening hymns, the preacher will announce the Biblical passage upon which the sermon will be based. He will read the passage through as the congregation follows using their own Bibles. He will then go back and dissect each verse individually frequently illustrating it with examples taken from experiences within the community. Unlike most homiletic services conducted by orthodox churches, no theme underlies the sermon except for the structure provided by the verses themselves. Each verse is treated individually and tapped for whatever moral content it may have, with an eye to its applicability to the community. As would be expected their central beliefs find their way into every verse.

After the sermon is completed one of the baptized male Brethern delivers a long prayer of about 10 to 15 minutes in length. The rest of the congregation kneel on the tile floor throughout the prayer. Prayers are spontaneous not ritualistic; yet they are not in the form of

a personal communion with God, but seem on the contrary to resemble progress reports. God is not expected to answer, for he has already given the last word; they simply must carry out his grand scheme. A typical prayer might run something like this; the difficulty of the 'struggle' often seems so great and discouragement often sets in, but this is simply the devil at work putting but another obstacle in our path. Obedience to the doctrines is the only solution; it will overcome all tests and dispel all doubts and in the end communitarianism will win out against all odds and God will be most pleased with the results. The articulation of these feelings not only reflects but reinforces the sentiments of the rest of the members and in turn communal solidarity. This congregational act reaffirms their belief that the entire community is in the same struggle together.

Important transitions in status such as marriage, death, and rebirth are also major concerns of the church. A ceremony marks this transition period wherein the new status is consecrated or dedicated to the service of God. All have been mentioned before, but baptism deserves special notice because it is considered the most important rite of passage. The baptismal ceremony is deemed so important because it designates a complete transformation, a rebirth into a totally new life with no necessary continuity with ones former life. The Brethern realize that the ceremony itself does not change anyone; consequently prior to baptism one must make a public testimony in which one testifies that his life has been futile and sinful and that only complete surrender to the church will redeem him. A further precaution is taken

in order to insure that the candidate for baptism is a 'sure bet'. He must publicly pledge full commitment to a number of articles. The following are a few of the more significant articles:

"Are you convinced that this Church's strivings are in accordance with the pure Apostolic teachings of Jesus Christ?

"Are you willing to let yourself be admonished, to accept counsel and be directed in both spiritual and material matters, to accept the decisions of the Church and be obedient, even in cases where there are no clear scriptural references?

"Are you convinced that you do not desire to bring this unworthy but well meaning Church into dishonour or sorrow by your leaving so as to weaken the remaining youth and other members and thus direct them against the true will of God?

"Are you decided that you would be willing to put aside all personal interests for the sake of peace and unity of the Church should it seem unnecessary or even harmful to the majority, - even if you cannot find any scriptural proof against it?

"Are you convinced that you will not oppose the Church with your own opinions or justify those who are of a different doctrine and thus accuse the Church?

"Are you convinced therein that for every Christ-seeking soul it is necessary to confess all sins and to be baptized as did the early believers; that to deny this truth is as much as to crucify Christ anew?"³

When the Brethern are convinced that the person is sincere he will be baptized with water. If the person is a convert who has been previously baptized as a child the ceremony is slightly altered.

"Since they have been baptized into the same foundation, we, as a church will not use water baptism, but the practice and example of our Brethern who went before us, which is the laying on of hands to witness that what has been promised is true before God and the Church."⁴

PROSELYTING

The Brethern rely mainly on natural increase as the main supply of new members for the sect. However, they have realized that this is not sufficient to man their present industries much less future industrial expansion; the sect has also become increasingly concerned with the future prospect of having to intermarry in order to maintain their number. Consequently, since the late 50's the sect has begun to look outside of their community for potential converts. Such a project is laden with difficulties. Initially the sect must somehow attract potentials; to do this it becomes involved in the danger of having to dilute its policy to fit the demands of likely prospects. If the Brethern remain rigid in their doctrines, they are on the other hand in danger of not attracting anyone and of wasting time and energy in a fruitless activity. Similarly, if they do attract some possible converts by painting an appealing picture of the community, they are then in danger of introducing heterogeneous elements into the community⁵. By doing this they are leaving the way open to the dissemination of alternative value systems which could weaken the cohesiveness of the sect. Another secondary threat is that the proselytizer himself might defect into the fold of those he is trying to convert.

One method the Brethern have used to procure converts is by gaining what Lofland⁶ calls 'disembodied access'. This is the attempt to gain the attention of potentials by means of pamphlets, circulars, and journals. This has the advantage of being inexpensive, easy, and not requiring the involvement of the members outside of the community;

it also is completely ineffective. Nevertheless the Brethern have published a series of pamphlets and open letters outlining their religious perspective and the rules and intentions of the community. Their most elaborate effort was a journal called "The Christian Challenge" which ran nine issues from May 1966 to January 1967. For these months, this journal was the main vehicle for disseminating the Brethern's belief system; it expressed the Brethern's views on a variety of religious issues from child baptism to amillennialism. The Brethern, of course wanted to choose the most receptive audience; consequently, most of the issues were sent to Anabaptist and communitarian sects who operated with them in the same religious framework. Most of these sects quickly took advantage of the situation by returning some of their own religious literature in exchange. Unhappy about the increase in 'outside' propaganda and uncertain about their actual readership, the Brethern requested that those who wanted to continue to get their journal should respond by mail. The Brethern received approximately five replies (including the author's); the Brethern subsequently abandoned the periodical. However, the Brethern continue to print small circulars and open letters for distribution.

The Brethern also use another tactic to interest people in their community. The Brethern realized that the very existence of the sect attracted a great number of tourists who would drive up just to look at the 'peculiar' people. As a result, the Brethern set aside Tuesday evenings for the expressed purpose of taking interested guests on tours of the community. Most of the groups were local women's leagues and church groups from neighbouring towns and cities. After

taking these people through their buildings, they would top the evening off by treating them to a lecture on their basic beliefs. The Brethern anticipated some dialogue with their visitors, but were frequently disappointed. Discussions on the importance of self-surrender and the necessity of avoiding the world must have been perceived as being either unfriendly or so hopelessly esoteric that their guests seemed stunned into silence. On one occasion, an embarrassing silence of approximately ten minutes followed the lecture until one lady 'broke up' the group by asking,

"How many cows ya got".

The Brethern will immediately concede that such efforts are complete failures; but claim that the community must continue to be

"a beacon of light unto the world for the few who still seek the narrow way of true Christian life".

Their major and perhaps most effective proselyting has been what they call 'missionary work'; that is, gaining direct access to peoples outside of the community. Their main targets are other communities and sects which are preconditioned to an ascetic communitarian life and predisposed to their religious perspective. However, one difficulty arises when one restricts one's activities to this limited selection of potentials; in that very many of the other sects suffer from the same chronic problem of lacking personnel. Consequently they all become involved in keen competition for a small supply of people. Because of the strong competition within communitarianism and because each sect considers that it, and it alone, is the Kingdom of God on earth, intercommunity relations are often quite strained.

Political intrigues, temporary alliances, and open hate campaigns rage on a small scale in the same fashion as they do in international relations.

Most of the baptized Brethern engage in some missionary work at one time or another; this usually takes the form of short 'friendly' trips to other communities. Two men, however, have been entrusted with missionary work on a full time basis. One man lives and works in an affiliated community in Hungary near Dunavecse. The other has been especially active among the Israeli Kibbutz and in Hong Kong. I will not attempt to outline all of the relations with the various communities, but will only attempt to cover some of the highlights.

Relations with the Hutterian communities has been one of mutual suspicion essentially because excommunicated members from one sect are usually taken in by the other. In 1948, when a group of excommunicated Brethern joined Hutterian communities in Manitoba, relations were officially terminated. Matters only deteriorated when the Brethern accepted the Entz brothers; the Brethern report that,

"this Church took power and courage to help the Entz people from their distress at Big Bend Colony, because they were not treated in a Christian manner. Also, we did not see much improvement in those things which were given testimony against. We do not have the power to send them back to where we ourselves could not go, as long as these evils still exist there".⁷

At the present, diplomatic relations are strained: they will often refuse to shake each others hand, refuse to eat at the same table or even refuse to allow each other on their respective communities.

Here is a typical incident,

"Once we had two Hutterian brothers here from Manitoba, George Vetter and Jacob Vetter from Sturgeon Creek Colony,-- these we did not receive in a brotherly and friendly manner, for which we are especially sorry now, because George Vetter was very weak and sickly. Nevertheless, we did allow them to stand and stroll in our yard but did not invite them into a room."⁸

One of the Brethern recalls how another bitter relationship began with the visit of another Hutterian brother:

"When I first heard that he had arrived he was already in the kitchen and our people prepared already his supper. I hastened in to greet the old brother with a conciliatory heart; I pushed my way through to him to greet him with friendly words and a hand shake. But he did not offer his hand to me and he said: 'I can not, I just can say, good evening.' I was very much surprised because in my heart I hoped for something entirely different and I felt hurt, because I saw in the other the old, self-righteous pharisaic spirit. Then in my disappointment and anger I also said some words, which again did not come from the right charity and humility, I said, 'I did not know that you became such a saint.' He said then to me that I should not mock him because he has to do according to their regulations and as he was bidden by his preacher."

The Brethern's relations with the Reba Place Fellowship is another case in point. The Reba Place Fellowship located in Evanston, Ill. was founded by Dr. John Miller a professor of the Old Testament at Garrett Biblical Institution. It differs from the Brethern community in that it is completely non-agricultural, all of the members are engaged in occupations outside of the community and it is only communistic in the sense that all of the members pool their incomes. Most of the members are well educated and are for the most part teachers, nurses, social workers and doctors. Reba Place Fellowship seems especially attractive to many of the young people on the Brethern community; six have already left and several others have expressed a desire to do so. The pattern of recruitment is as follows: the

minister from the Fellowship pays a 'friendly' visit to the Brethern community; he leaves a few days later with yet another youthful Brethern under his wing. The Brethern who do defect, are also highly persuasive in getting others to do the same. The educational, occupational, and marriage opportunities seem to form the major attractions of the Fellowship; the Brethern have not gained one convert from the Fellowship. The Brethern finally arrived at an 'if you can't beat them join them' attitude and tried to affiliate themselves with the Fellowship. But the Fellowship found that many of the Brethern's customs were annoying:

"So far as we can see a church does not cut itself off from the Kingdom of God if its men fail to let their beards grow, or its women do not wear a head covering, or if it is in the city rather than in the country, or if it does not have a community work program, or if it does not have its own school, or function with a system of centralized buying and selling, or it does not rebaptize those not formerly baptized in a communitarian system, or it does not arrange its marriages. But on questions of this kind, which we might call 'house orders', we feel each community should have the freedom to adapt itself according to its particular situation and the particular need of its various members. We believe you will understand our point of view here, for we understand you expressed a similar conviction and desire in your efforts to reunite with the Hutterian church."⁹

The Fellowship rejected the possibility of forming a union with the Brethern and the community has resigned itself that it is going to lose a great number of young people to the Fellowship.

In 1964, the Brethern decided that the competition for the available recruits with the neighbouring communities was too intense and too often led to a termination of diplomatic relations; consequently they decided to look for untapped fields. The Israeli Kibbutz seemed to hold some possibilities; although they were not Christians they

seemed to be good communitarions. On October 27, 1964 one of the Brethern left for Israel armed with propaganda especially printed in Hebrew for that purpose. The Jewish Kibbutzim, however, did not appear to be too receptive to sectarian Protestantism, for the missionary writes:

"I sincerely feel that an important field has opened before us. Truly, the 'harvest is great, but the labourers are few.' I personally feel that it might be wise for us to start a small community in Israel; so that those, who through disappointment leave the kibbutz, yet still desire Community, might find a place of refuge with us. It is unlawful for a Jew to take an interest in the New Testament, and those who do are persecuted, - usually losing jobs, family, friends, and even being maltreated by their enemies. Because of this, the reading and spreading of the Gospel must be done mainly in secret."¹⁰

A modicum of success was attained when the missionary later discovered that a small Christian Kibbutz had been founded near Nahariya in Northern Israel. Friendly relations were created between the two communities; but aside from this the Israeli venture was unproductive. Yet, the Brethern continue to sponsor yearly visits to Israel by the missionary in the hope that they will have a change in fortune.

With the exception of a Hungarian commune near Dunavecse which has become affiliated with the Brethern community, the Brethern have not had any notable success in their intercommunity relations. They have had and continue to have near unions with the following communities: The Society of Brothers, Rifton, N.Y.; Forest River Community, Fordville, N. Dak.; the Children of Jesus, Hong Kong; the nearly defunct Panin Farm, Ancaster, Ontario; Koinonia Community, Georgia; a miniscule Anabaptist sect near Vlaardingen, Holland; Bethal Fellowship, Minneapolis, Minnesota; former members of the Amana Society; and some

of the local Mennonite and Amish sects. Relations with most of these sects is so highly transitory because increasing friendship with A sect may well alienate B sect who has never been on good terms with A. Consequently, communitarianism is unlikely ever to crystalize into a unified movement, for although they all operate within the same frame of reference; they must at the same time regard each other as competitors in contention for each others members.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER XI

1. The Apostolic Christian Hymnal: A Compilation of Hymns for the Believers in Christ, Chicago, Ill: The Apostolic Christian Publishing Co., 1940.
The hymnal contains the entire Zion's Harp and Heft in English and Hungarian.
2. "All Things in Common".
3. "A Spiritual Pledge To Those Who Desire To Make A Full Commitment Towards The Community Church", op. cit.
4. "Questions Put To Baptized Persons Being Received into the Church", date unknown.
5. See Bryan Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development", op. cit., p. 14, for a similar analysis of the hesitation with which Introversionist and Adventist sects engage in recruiting members from the 'outside'.
6. John Lofland, op. cit.
7. "Our Answering Concerning Our Relationship with the Hutterian Brethern", op. cit.
8. "A Letter to the Hutterian Brothers of the Schmiedeleut People", an open letter from the Brethern of Early Christianity, April 8, 1963.
9. An open letter to the Community Farm of the Brethern from the Reba Place Fellowship, 727 Reba Place, Evanston, Ill. Nov. 12, 1962.

10. Alexander Bago, "General Report on Experiences in Israel", Printed at Community Farm, Bright, Ontario, 1965.

PART IV

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

In previous chapters I have mentioned that the isolated, world denying sect may well operate as a problem solving mechanism for its members. I have pointed out that the founders of the Brethern community had been members of another otherworldly sect called the Nazareans in Hungary. In terms of the value orientation of this sect, these members were of high social standing. However, I would tentatively suggest that on immigrating to Canada, they tried to remain within this church system, but they soon learned that the Nazarean church in North America operated on a different value orientation than it had in Hungary. In the Hungarian situation, a low rank in income and political power (as evaluated by the dominant society) meant a high rank within the church. But in the Canadian situation, they found that the rank evaluation assigned by the host society was identical to that which was assigned by the church in Canada. The Nazarean church, far from being an other worldly sect, endeavored to socialize its members into the dominant values of the host society. The Brethern who had operated successfully within the value scheme of their former reference group had invested a good deal in its perpetuation. The complete ideological reversal on what constituted meritorious and commendable behaviour, however, had relegated them to a low social position. They no doubt received a low rank in religiosity for not accepting the churches' ranking scheme as valid. Since they had been pre-

conditioned to operate within a religious problem solving perspective, one can understand why they choose a sectarian solution to their problems.

The isolated religious sect provides one particular solution to this problem by (a) partitioning themselves off from the rest of society and thereby preventing intergroup comparison. It is assumed here that comparison of relevant social ranks must exist in any socially stratified system. By isolating themselves, they attempt to avoid this comparison process and thus are not ranked in the larger, external social system. (b) Once isolation has been attained the criteria by which one is ranked is redefined. An alternative set of values, directly antithetical to those of the outside society, are provided with which they can evaluate each other. This could be called a 'contraculture' for not only are the validity of outside values denied, they are often reversed within the sect.

This solution, however, creates another problem of economic survival. The sect cannot be completely self-subsistent; consequently it must compete in the more or less 'capitalist' society with other economic institutions. In order to remain economically solvent it must to some extent conform as an organization to the values of the outside society. Complete withdrawal from the world would lead to its disintegration.

In order to maintain themselves they must (a) increase or at least maintain a labour force from which they can draw needed workers. (b) Some level of economic prosperity must be attained in order for the community to at least subsist. (c) Some degree of role differentiation or division of labour must exist in order for the organization to

function effectively. The sect finds that it must fulfill these demands placed upon it, in order to enable it to maintain an insulated, cohesive group living according to an ethic at odds with the outside culture. The danger to the sect is that the means by which they maintain their 'separateness' become the ends of the community, resulting in a dissolution of their separate identity and a gradual introduction of church-like attributes into the isolated sect. In other words, it becomes a 'world-accepting' rather than a 'world-rejecting' religious organization.¹

This can happen in a number of ways. In the first place, the necessity of recruiting members from the outside society, in order to form a viable labour force increases the possibility that their value system will become diluted, since the new members are more likely to be more heterogeneous in their cultural make-up than the original members. Conversion of the new members into the doctrines of the sect is likely to be incomplete and much of the convert's old value orientations will be retained. Henry Cooperstock,² for example, has shown people socialized as children into 'individualistic' norms have difficulty in operating within a communal setting and often add to its break down.

In order to attract new members to the communitarian sect, they are forced to proselytize, thereby involving themselves more and more with the outside society and thus decreasing their isolation. In order to recruit new members, there is a tendency to water down their policy to make it more attractive to outsiders. The necessity of competing with other organizations for members often leads to a relaxation

of entrance standards and a less rigid doctrine.³

Secondly, in order to function as an efficient economic organization, the sect must undergo some differentiation and specialization in its work activities. No society is devoid of some form of status differentiation; for the Brethern it is derived from religiosity and loyalty to the community. Achievements in the economic sphere cannot be used as the basis for rank evaluation since it would lead to a negation of their own ends. If a parallel prestige scale based on economic skill were established beside the one based on religion, this could have the effect of undermining the religious focus of the sect. The fact that status is based on religion makes the sect distinguishable from outside organizations. However, a danger arises that increasing bureaucratization within the sect enable members to use the sect for their own particular ends rather than the universalistic ends of the community. In other words, they might learn a specialized trade within the sect that might be highly evaluated by the dominant society. An individual may become identified with his particular occupation and find that he compares well in terms of outside expectations. It must be pointed out that the sect as a 'perpetuative'⁴ movement must keep its members in a lowly social position in terms of the outside scheme of evaluation, or it would cease to exist as a sect.

Thirdly, financial prosperity for the individual members must be curtailed to a considerable extent because such a condition leads to a reactivation of the comparison process with the outside society, since wealth is a dominant secular value. If great status differences develop in terms of wealth, the member will undergo upward social

mobility with respect to the outside value system.

It would appear that the isolated religious sect is in a very unstable state, balanced between assimilation into the outside society on one hand and economic collapse on the other. If the sect were to attempt to maximize membership by more efficient recruitment techniques, to bureaucratize, or to maximize individual prosperity, it would be no different than any other voluntary association with complete accommodation to secular values. But if the sect completely ignored these mundane, but necessary aspects of economic survival, it would soon end in financial failure. By necessity a very narrow band of organizational patterns must be used to keep the sect from going to either of these two extremes. Essentially the conflict is between the boundary maintaining mechanism employed by the sect to protect the community's distinctive culture and separate identity, and the adaptive mechanisms by which the sect adjusts to the exigencies imposed upon it by the surrounding society.

The following are some of the organizational patterns employed by the Brethern in an attempt to preserve both their identity and at the same time their economic well being.

(i) Geographical and social isolation:

Complete isolation would lead to difficulties for the sect to maintain itself. They would have great difficulties in recruiting new members, obtaining necessary medical aid, obtaining certain staple goods, and generally meeting economic exigencies. However, the absence of any separation from the outside society would lead to a re-activation of the comparison process, encourage exogamy by opening up

more avenues of communication, and generally exposing the sect to an alternative value system. Deets, for example, noticed of the Hutterites,

"Almost without exception, the disorganization in the Manitoba colonies varies directly with their closeness to Winnipeg."⁵

The Brethern community has taken the middle road by settling in a semi-isolated rural region in Southern Ontario; this area, however, is within easy driving distance from several small cities. Contact with the outside is restricted to a few who have been specifically elected to handle external affairs (the farm manager, the assistant farm manager, and the preacher). Communication with the outside world is censored; only selective literature (mostly technical) is permitted, radios and televisions are banned, and all mail is read by the farm manager before given to the addressee. Trips outside of the community are only permitted for business, medical, and in some cases missionary reasons. The communication of information is via the elders who act as fact selectors and interpreters for the younger members. Since the sectarian value system is a reaction to the outside secular values, it becomes necessary that hostility towards them is perceived in the outside society. It must appear as an unfriendly, and evil realm where a brother could not survive if he chose to leave. Yet, the sect would not be able to survive if an impervious screen separated them from the world; consequently, ideas from the outside may be accepted if they concern such peripheral areas of the culture as technology, but immediately rejected if directed towards their religion.

(ii) Role Differentiation:

Very little role differentiation would put the sect's survival in doubt. Only very primitive economies such as subsistence hunting and gathering bands have been known to exist without some degree of specialization. The Brethern Community would perish if, in fact, it were based on mechanical solidarity. The age distribution is so heavily skewed in favour of the children, that the Brethern were forced to industrialize in order to support them.

However, a high degree of role differentiation would lead to a bureaucratic hierarchy which would allow occupational specialization and the pursuit of interests particular to the individuals. I mean by this that the bureaucratic framework provides the opportunity to proceed with interests at variance with the interests of the community. One could, for example, identify oneself with an occupational role rather than with the community, or one could enhance one's occupational standing relative to the dominant value pattern.

The Community Farm seeks a compromise although the roles that they fill are complex and specialized since they attempt to train all members how to operate within each occupational role. This is done by rotating the individuals through a variety of role assignments. (There are two rotation systems, one for males, the other for females). Often, the roles are too complicated for novices and as a result the older, more loyal men become informal bosses of certain work areas. In addition to this all work is reviewed by their administrative council to ensure that all jobs are performed in the best interests of the

community. Administrative posts are filled by democratic elections to prevent elite formation.⁶

(iii) Recruitment:

An active recruitment policy geared to attract the greatest number of people would lead to a dilution of membership standards, the introduction of heterogeneous elements into the sect, and an exposure of several members to the alternative dominant system.

A very inactive recruitment policy would, on the other hand, lead to a decline in the population of the sect and put its survival in jeopardy. Recruitment for the sect is always a dangerous risk; hence they have relied upon an extraordinarily high birth rate which has given them a constant supply of devoted members and allowed them to keep outside recruitment at a minimum. They in fact, challenge the Hutterites for the title of having the world's highest known birth rate.⁷ However, since most of the members of the community are kinsfolk either through marriage or blood ties, it is clear that new recruits are a necessity. The Brethern, however, proselytize only to potential converts who are preconditioned to their way of life, such as the Hutterites, the Israeli Kibbutz, and several other utopian and communal attempts.

(iv) Distribution of Goods:

If the distribution of goods were left up to private enterprise, that is, competition for monetary rewards on an individualistic basis, this would undermine religion as the sole basis of prestige within the community. If goods were parcelled out on the basis of

individual achievement, invidious distinctions would be made on the possession of goods. Even in tight-knit religious communities where private enterprise is allowed, the religious core of the community is not threatened, because compulsory patterns of charity nullify differences in wealth.⁸

On the Community Farm hard work can not be rewarded by property, since everything is collectively owned. Yet the Brethern must reward their members for diligent work in order to reinforce them into work habits which will make the community as a whole financially solvent. Consequently, work becomes a form of worship, the rewards for which are indistinguishable from other religious activities. Not that work is 'good' in itself, but it must be work for which there is a collective consensus that it is directed towards the advancement of the community.

(v) Kinship Loyalty:

Kinship loyalty presents another problem for the sect. The family is necessary as a unit of reproduction that provides new members for the colony, that handles the early child training of the infants, and provides sexual satisfaction for the members. It is obvious that the family has important functions that cannot be disregarded by the community. Yet it involves several dangers when the loyalty directed towards the kinship unit is greater than the loyalty directed towards the community. Favouritism based on familial ties directly conflicts with the total allegiance demanded by the community. The sect is intolerant of divided loyalties, especially if it were

directed towards members of the family who have left the sect and live in the outside society. Loyalty directed towards them would be completely at odds with the demands of the sect. Slater has reasoned that,

"We may hypothesize that the more totalitarian the collectivity, in terms of making demands upon the individual to involve every area of his life in collective activity, the stronger will be the prohibition against dyadic intimacy."⁹

The Shakers tried to meet the problem by adopting the practice of celibacy; the Oneida Community by adopting group marriage; the Brethern by stripping the family of most of its functions. Although it is by no means completely devoid of functions, it is greatly restricted in its economic, political, and educational powers.

For the same reason pre-marital relations such as courtship are not permitted. The Community Farm prohibits any form of courtship in order to lessen the chances of divided loyalties developing. They fear that a single member might become enamored with someone who is only a potential convert and who later leaves. The sect limits marriage to baptized members and it is largely supervised by the community elders.

(vi) Socialization of Children:

In order to make the community a successful enterprise, the children must be trained in technical fields which will further the development of the community. But in a world of rapid technological change this knowledge cannot simply be passed down from generation to generation; it must come from the outside. But there is a danger involved in this transmission of knowledge from the outside,

because it could carry with it elements of the outside normative system. It also involves the possibility, that once this technical proficiency has been acquired, the member may realize that he compares quite well relative to the outside value system, thus reducing the social costs involved in leaving. A greater fear on the part of the Brethern is that their children will become 'over-educated'. They feel that their children will be socialized into having a high level of expectations which the community will be unable to satisfy, or in developing an interest in something which lies outside of the capabilities of the community to supply. The Hutterites suspect higher education for much the same reason.

"The Hutterians remain opposed to higher education because they are convinced that it makes for dissatisfaction with a simple, homely existence, and with manual toil."¹⁰

For these reasons, the sect operates their own community school and restricts education to the grade eight level. Correspondence courses are mainly limited to purely technical training which would be immediately instrumental to the community as a whole.

(vii) Social Change:

In order to compete successfully with opposing organizations, the community must be flexible enough to allow change; it must be able to adopt some changes from the outside society. Change often involves unpredictable ramifications for other aspects of life than was originally intended; consequently if their value system is going to remain intact, the change must take place outside of the cultural focus (religion) of the community. Predictably technology is considered to lie on the periphery of the community and receives the most change. This type of

acculturation is limited to innovations which are deemed to have a minimal effect upon other areas (such as a new method of harvesting crops). Nevertheless before any change is introduced it is thoroughly discussed in a meeting of all the baptized Brethern, where its functions become conscious to all of the members. The same process which Eaton calls 'controlled acculturation'¹¹ will take place in areas close to the cultural core only if deviation becomes so widespread that not to do so would destroy the cohesiveness of the group.

(viii) Social Control:

The sect must have at its disposal the means of controlling deviant behaviour. However, punishment of transgressions cannot be too severe because the deviant member might choose to leave rather than face the charges. Generally the nature of the deviant behaviour is such that it reveals a pre-disposition towards disloyalty towards the community, in effect 'worldliness'. If social control were too repressive, the community would lose members to the world which it can ill afford to do. As a result ostracism is rarely used directly as a mechanism of social control, but only as a threat.

The Community Farm as a whole attempts to restore the deviant to his role by persuasion and shaming. Peter suggests that,

"not only does every member of the community know about the violation of a norm by some deviant member, they determine his future status by withholding or granting forgiveness. No Hutterite therefore can be indifferent towards his fellow member".¹²

In addition to this any crime committed by an individual member will reflect upon the entire community, as a result the deviant will carry the burden of the community's shame. Most transgressions characteristical-

ly occur in youth; as a solution the community advocates early marriages in order to increase the individual's dependency upon the community.

In this essay I have tried to show how an isolated, world-rejecting sect came into being, and how its distinctive contraculture functioned as a problem-solving mechanism for a common tension-producing situation in which the members found themselves. However, in the process of maintaining an ethic at odds with dominant values, the sect, at the same time, had to conform as an organization in competition with secular organizations. The sect is forced to meet external exigencies in order that its contraculture can be safeguarded. Yet if the sect were to meet the demands imposed upon it by the physical and social milieu, in the most efficient manner, employing all of the skills and requisite knowledge at its command its sectarian characteristics would soon vanish. Yet, if it ignores reality it will soon become extinct. Consequently, the Brethern must continue to balance themselves precariously between assimilation on one hand and economic collapse on the other. In Biblical terms the correct balance is when the sect is in the world, but not part of the world.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER XII

1. See, for example, S. D. Clark, "The Religious Sect in Canadian Economic Development", op. cit.
2. Henry Cooperstock, "Cooperative Farming as a Variant Social Pattern", in B. R. Blishen et al., Canadian Society, Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Limited, 1961, pp. 256-274.
3. This analysis derived from Robert Michels, Political Parties, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949, English translation, Part Six.
4. See Stanley A. Freed, "Suggested Type Societies in Acculturation Studies", American Anthropologist, 59(1957), p. 55-67.
5. Lee Emerson Deets, op. cit. p. 9.
6. For an analysis of a similar problem in the Kibbutz, see Eva Rosenfeld, "Social Stratification in a 'Classless' Society", American Sociological Review, 16(1951), pp. 766-774.
7. Robert C. Cook, "The North American Hutterites", op. cit.
8. The east European Jewish Shtetl and the Old Order Amish are two examples: see N. F. Joffe, "The Dynamics of Benefice among East European Jews", Social Forces, 27(1949), pp. 238-47, and W. M. Kollmorgen, "The Agricultural Stability of the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites of Lancaster County Penn.", American Journal of Sociology, 49(1943), pp. 233-41.

9. Philip E. Slater, "On Social Regression", American Sociological Review, 28(1963), p. 349.
10. Edwin L. Pitt, "The Hutterian Brethern in Alberta", unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1949, p. 74. cited by Victor Peters, op. cit., p. 150.
11. J. W. Eaton, "Controlled Acculturation: A Survival Technique of the Hutterites", American Sociological Review, 17(1954).
12. Karl Peter, "The Hutterites: Values, Status and Organizational Systems", Variables 3(1964), p. 8.

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