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The Bruderhof Schools *Educating the Whole Child in Community*

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The Bruderhof have introduced new private schools with a distinct education philosophy, adding to the interesting mix of American religious education. Since their arrival in the US in 1954, the Bruderhof have founded seven communities with schools covering grades kindergarten through eighth or ninth (and the students go on to local public high schools), mostly in NY state, and are growing and prospering.

Unique are their communal beliefs, where all property is owned and managed by the community; where dining, praying, and educating are done in common; and where key decisions about life and membership are made unanimously by the members. Much like an Israeli kibbutz, land, property and industrial production are owned by the Bruderhof, and even their teachers are not paid salaries but work in schools as their contribution to the life of the community. Important, too, is the philosophy of the Bruderhof schools, rooted in early 20th century German pedagogy (Froebel), romanticism, and shared responsibility. This article introduces these new US private schools, giving a history of the Bruderhof community, their beliefs and practices, and current education philosophy.

Historical and Philosophical Foundations

The Bruderhof grew out of the political and social unrest in Germany after World War I. Malcolm Muggeridge (in Yoder, 1984) noted that, "What lost the war for Germany in 1918 was not just an imperial dynasty and a military command structure; it was a civilization, the proud self-confidence of middle-class urbanity" (p.15).

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Message from the PREZ—

Dear Colleagues:

A sage whose name slips my mind long ago once remarked that "the optimism characteristic of the beginning of the academic year marks the triumph of hope over experience". So, this seems like an appropriate time to share some of my hopes for ARPE, a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), devoted to discussion and dissemination of information about developments in research, policy, and

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Disillusionment with the breakdown of this civilization gave rise to the German youth movement. Some young people turned to the nihilism of Nietzsche, but others sought new social constructs to replace those that had failed. Among these new organizations was the German Student Christian Movement, a group of Anglo-Saxon young people seeking to revitalize the Protestant faith while remaining outside of formal church structures.

In this environment of change and reform, Eberhard Arnold (1883-1935) founded his first Bruderhof community in 1920 in Sannerz, Germany. He based the organization of this settlement on his synthesis of the Sermon on the Mount combined with a philosophy of Christian communism. Arnold had a long-abiding interest in the writings of early Christian writers, specifically Tertullian and Augustine, as well as Francis of Assisi. He was a prolific writer and theologian who had links to Martin Buber and Karl Barth, his contemporaries in that troubled time. However, in seeking a more committed Protestantism than he had encountered in Germany, he turned to the Hutterian communities in North America, who were descendants of the Anabaptist movement in Europe in the sixteenth century. In philosophy and organizational structure, the Hutterites matched Arnold's concept of the ideal Christian life.

Luther's rejection of Catholicism had opened the door for more radical (i.e., going to the roots of Christian origins) interpretations of Christian belief and worship. In the sixteenth century, these Christian sects rejected the religious establishment and the concept of infant baptism, hence the designation "Anabaptist". These groups were also pacifist in philosophy. Jacob Hutter's Anabaptist groups in Moravia followed a commune pattern that he called Bruderhof

(which roughly translated means "place of brothers"). Arnold emulated this pattern in his first Bruderhof and sought to ally himself and his community with these groups, which had left Europe and settled in Western Canada. In 1930, he visited all the existing Bruderhof communities in the United States and Canada. "In December 1930, the (Hutterite) congregation at Macleod, Alberta, welcomed him into their membership and commissioned him as their missionary to Europe" (Yoder, 1984, p. 19). (Sixty years later in 1994, the Hutterites severed their formal relationship with the Bruderhof because of differences in philosophy and theology.)

After his stay in Canada, Arnold returned to Germany to continue to build his community in the 1930s; but the pacifist nature of the Bruderhof was antithetical to the Nazi movement. Arnold, fearful of his group's position in the rapidly changing Germany, addressed one of his worship meetings with cautionary words, "We seem, to our horror, to be standing on the brink of a catastrophic judgment. It is so close that it can be averted only through God's direct intervention" (Yoder, 1984, p. 25).

A Gestapo break-in at the Rhon Bruderhof in 1933 led the Bruderhof to flee to England. Eberhard Arnold died in 1935, but his Bruderhof continued to follow the model he had provided and sought to establish a combined German-English colony in 1936. However, the onslaught of World War II forced the Bruderhof members to leave England rather than face the possible internment of the German members of the group. They fled to Paraguay, where they remained for the next 20 years.

The years in Paraguay were difficult both physically and spiritually for the group as it sought to establish its identity within the Hutterite orthodoxy. In Paraguay, the Mennonites, who belonged to the same tradition, provided temporal and spiritual support for the fledgling group. Eberhard's

wife, Emmy (1885-1980), survived him for the next 45 years and was a strong force within the community as it sought to redefine itself in Paraguay. Emmy continued to advance the educational philosophy that formed the core of the group's identity. Heini Arnold, son of Eberhard and Emmy, was given leadership of the Bruderhof community, which no longer had settlements in Europe and existed only in Paraguay at that time. However, in 1954, in response to requests from pilgrims who had visited them in Paraguay, the elders of Bruderhof traveled to the United States. This visit prompted them to move their center of operation to Rifton, New York, in the upper Hudson Valley.

Growth of the Bruderhof in the United States

As of 2002, seven of the ten Bruderhof communities in existence are located in the northeastern United States, throughout New York and Pennsylvania. Of the remaining three, two are in Great Britain and one in Australia. In each Bruderhof, families and single men and women live and work together, following the prescriptions of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. They profess belief in the love of both brother and enemy, nonviolence, and service to others.

Each of the Hofs is a self-contained community that plays a specific role in the economic structure of the larger Bruderhof organization. The community as a whole runs two businesses directly related to the needs of children. The first, Community Playthings, produces wooden children's toys available for sale through catalog and the extensive Bruderhof website. Requests from neighbors of one of the Hofs led to the development of a second business, Rifton Equipment, which constructs adaptive equipment for children with special needs. School districts throughout the nation use Bruderhof furniture and devices for both

mainstream and adaptive classroom situations. The Bruderhof explain that the businesses are manifestations of their commitment to the well being of children. "Community Playthings and Rifton Equipment are more than just businesses to us. They are expressions of our faith and our love of all children, including those with special needs. We're glad to make products that help bring happiness and joy" (Bruderhof Community at Rifton, 2000, Inside Cover).

When the Bruderhof arrived in Rifton in 1954, they were a community of 37 people, 11 of whom were children. Within one year, their number had grown to 150 people. Many families with small children joined at that time. Currently there are approximately 401 Bruderhof families in the world, the majority (370) of them in the United States. Table 1 outlines the demographics for Bruderhof families and children in the United States. Showing in column 4, Pre-K through 9th grade (the years of Bruderhof schools) enroll a total of 621 children in their seven sites. Nine non-Bruderhof students also attend their schools, of whom eight have special needs. The 113 Bruderhof high school students attend local public high schools since the communities do not operate schools beyond ninth grade.

Bruderhof Educational Philosophy

"The Bruderhof is an educational community, both humanly seen and in the sense that everyone of us has to be taught by God. That process is never finished" (Yoder, 1984, p. 156). These words of Eberhard Arnold, spoken at a members meeting of the Rhon Bruderhof in Germany in 1932, crystallized the educational philosophy of their founder and characterizes the beliefs of members of the community today. All Bruderhof members strive to learn more about God and their relationship to that Supreme Being and each other. At the core of this quest for the

development of all members of the group is the care and teaching of the children. The Bruderhof believe that all adults must help the children grow in the midst of a loving adult community based on the tenets of Christ's Sermon on the Mount and a spirit of true brotherhood and service. Conversely,

single-family apartments throughout each location. From birth until Pre-Kindergarten, Bruderhof children spend their mornings in the community's day care center, while their mothers conduct their work assignments within the business and organization of the community. Mothers of newborn children are given time to tend to the needs of their children as well as taking part in the

**Table 1
Bruderhof Demographics: 2002**

Community Name/Location	Date Founded	#Families	#Children 0-9 th grade	#Children Pre-K – 9 th	#Children 10-12 th grade
Woodcrest Rifton, NY	June, 1954	65	142	90 (K-9 th)	13
New Meadow Run Farmington, PA	July, 1957	61	171	130 (K-9 th)	17
Maple Ridge Ulster Park, NY	May, 1985	55	170	123 (K-9 th)	28
Catskill Elka Park, NY	April, 1990	50	142	114 (K-8 th)	20
Spring Valley Farmington, PA	June, 1990	59	145	100 (K-9 th)	20
Foxhill Walden, NY	November, 1998	17	25	11 (K-8 th)	4
Bellvale Chester, NY	July, 2001	18	38	53 (K-8 th)	11
Totals		325	833	621	113

the adults learn from the childlike openness of the children. Members live as single adults or in monogamous families wherein children are welcomed as "...a new beginning in the light (of the Holy Spirit)" (Arnold, 1935/1976, p. 1). Moreover, the community is critical to the education and development of the child. "The strongest element in education is example...Therefore, it is true that not only our teachers and educators help to mold the children's lives but also the community as a whole" (Arnold, 1935/1976, pp. 16-17).

Bruderhof families live and work within each community. Each adult performs a job or function in accordance with the needs of the community as a whole. The children live with their parents in

communal work. From pre-Kindergarten until at least grade 8, Bruderhof children stay in the local community school, which is staffed by Bruderhof members who have been trained as teachers. Arnold had warned that "Only wise men and saints are fit to be educators," but he further advised that teachers can be effective if they become childlike themselves and enter into the child's sense of wonder (Arnold, 1935/1976, p. 13 -17). The Bruderhof train their own teachers in a complex apprenticeship-based program that conveys the basic philosophy of hands-on experiences combined with a love of nature.

Teacher Training in the Bruderhof

The Bruderhof regard all work "...as the practical way to express our love for each other...Each individual finds fulfillment and purpose regardless of age, education, and ability" (www.bruderhof.com/roots/work.htm). The Bruderhof have outlined their teacher training policies in a comprehensive teacher-training manual that specifies activities and resources for use throughout the preparation of all teachers in each of the individual Hofs. Potential teachers enter a four-year program in which the key to their training rests on their relationship with two adult Bruderhof members. The first of these is the master teacher, who is critical to the formation and development of the young teacher. "The key thing is that the master teacher cares, knows exactly what is happening, and can support and adjust to each student's needs. The whole program rests on this key factor: the master teacher." (Bruderhof Teacher Training Outline, 2000, p.1.) Second is the mentor, another teacher who takes a keen interest in the master teacher and the apprentice. This triangle of connection allows the apprentice teacher to become involved in the educational process in a supportive environment.

Before beginning actual teacher training, potential teachers become involved in a pre-apprentice program, preferably during the high school years, in which they work closely with children, either in the day care center and/or the community's school. These pre-apprentices may take Bruderhof-run child development seminars during the latter part of this preliminary year, but the emphasis is on observation and interaction. Journal writing about these experiences is encouraged but not required. The goal of this year is to determine the suitability of the young people for the teaching vocation and to allow these candidates to decide whether they want to continue their apprenticeship.

Following this pre-apprentice year, each first year apprentice teacher works as a classroom aide under the master teacher, with whom he or she begins intense observation and hands-on training. They frequently keep an observation journal to share with the master teacher for either oral or written feedback. Apprentice teachers may begin teaching classes during this year, but the master teacher must remain in the room at all times. Daily time must be scheduled for planning and discussion of the journal and any lessons taught. The master teacher also suggests readings in classroom management and discipline from a book list compiled by the Bruderhof veteran teachers for use within the schools. The first year apprentice teacher also makes one-day visits to other schools to see different theories in practice.

The Bruderhof teacher-training manual lists several specific types of schools that might provide good observational experiences: Montessori schools, Froebel schools, Pestalozzi villages, Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf) schools, Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, and even Kellenberg High School, which is run by the Marianist Brothers in Long Island, New York. Finally, the first-year apprentice may take workshops in child development and safety, as well as specific methods courses, taught by Bruderhof teachers or available through local educational agencies, such as school districts and colleges.

The second-year apprentice works full-time as a classroom aide and must meet with the master teacher each day at 4:00 p.m. to discuss progress that has been made. The apprentice continues training through workshops and seminars, specifically in methodology. All Bruderhof schools use the Orton approach to reading, so that all teachers must gain proficiency in that method. Other workshops range from expository writing to structural arithmetic to child abuse awareness, offered by the local

state department of education (BOCES), to teaching hands on science, art, and music. Apprentices also undertake research projects in various topics as interest the apprentice and deemed appropriate by the master teacher. These run the gamut from examination of educational philosophies to preparation of unit plans. Finally, second-year apprentices must also develop practical skills, like bike repair, sewing, cooking, or printing, to enhance their skills in the classroom.

The third and final year of training provides a range of experiences for the apprentice teacher, who may or may not be ready to take on the responsibility for a group of children. Working with the master teacher and the mentor, the apprentice teacher has a variety of options, from taking college courses (especially if he or she plans to teach in the higher grades) to serving as an in-house co-teacher. If the apprentice works as a co-teacher, he or she must do all the appropriate record-keeping for the class. The master teacher remains in the classroom but keeps a low profile, perhaps working with students who need extra help. The mentor also plays a critical role in this year, serving as an additional support for the novice teacher. The relationship with the mentor continues after the apprentice finishes training and embarks on his or her own teaching experience.

Curriculum

Bruderhof education has its roots in the works of Freidrich Froebel, who originated the first kindergarten in Germany. Together with his contemporary Maria Montessori, Froebel turned the attention of twentieth century educators to the needs of young children and the ways to cultivate their natural sense of wonder. After Eberhard's death in 1935, Emmy lived for 45 years, traveling with the group to Paraguay and then to the United States, where she remained a stable force in the

establishment of Bruderhof schools. Current Bruderhof educators recall Emmy's presence at the Woodcrest community and enthusiastically describe her love of children. They remember her fondly as a skilled and loving grandmother who cherished and understood children. The Bruderhof webpage on education proclaims these words of Froebel, "I would educate human beings who with their feet stand rooted in the earth, whose heads reach even into heaven and there behold the truth, and in whose hearts are united both heaven and earth." (see Bruderhof Website). These words guide the Bruderhof curriculum.

Eberhard Arnold had prescribed a level of excellence for Bruderhof schools that should exceed that of local educational institutions. "In our school, teaching should be on a deeper level, more thorough and more inspiring than anywhere else; it should awaken the children's keen interest and encourage independent and conscientious work" (Arnold, 1935/1976, p.35). While emphasizing the development of basic skills, Bruderhof teachers encourage individual and small-group explorations that develop higher order thinking skills. History, both of the world in general and especially the community in particular, is very important. Bruderhof children readily share their own personal lineage in the community as well as the history of the group from its origins in Germany. The Woodcrest community, in Rifton, New York, headquarters for all the Bruderhof communities, houses a comprehensive Bruderhof museum, with exhibits designed and executed by the young people of the community.

Hands-on experience, a love of nature, and value formation characterize the Bruderhof school experience. The Bruderhof website summarizes their educational philosophy, "Bruderhof education goes far beyond academics, for learning to work with one's hands and to be

a person of character are just as important” (see Bruderhof Website).

The children spend the morning in class instruction, learning basic skills in relatively small classes. The smallest school, in the Foxhill community, has a total of 11 children in all grades Pre-K-9, while the largest school, New Meadow Run, has 129 children. Children are valued equally for their practical, artistic, and academic skills.

Music and art are important parts of the curriculum. Bruderhof communities sing regularly at meals and gatherings, so that music provides entertainment as well as a means of transmitting culture and values. The Bellvale community, in Chester, New York, is the site of a huge mural of the New York skyline resting on a base of lilies, symbolizing peace. Older children from the contiguous Bruderhof communities created the mural to commemorate the six-month anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

After morning classes, the children join their parents for lunch, where all Bruderhof members eat a daily communal meal, seated with their families. Guests are welcome at these meals and are introduced to the community. At this time, various group members share news and announcements about the group’s current concerns and impart lessons about the group’s cultural history. The entire community celebrates birthdays and anniversaries at these communal meals, singing songs from the community repertoire and Bruderhof songbooks. Since the communities do not have televisions, music and singing are a major form of entertainment. The children are encouraged to put on plays and skits for the community.

After lunch, the children spend an hour with their mothers to discuss the morning events and relax before returning for the afternoon’s explorations. Nature walks, science projects, practical arts, games, and community work projects

complete the rest of the school day. The children then return to their homes to have dinner in their own homes with their families, unless there is a community dinner scheduled for that evening. For the younger children, the evening hours are free for family interactions and play time, since Bruderhof teachers assign no homework until grade 5, and even then it is kept to a minimum.

On the other hand, the older children are expected to be diligent about their homework assignments, which are pertinent to the work of the day. The curriculum includes traditional reading, writing, and mathematics instruction, explorations of the natural environment, history, and the study of Spanish as a second language for all students. Many of the older members of the community speak both German and Spanish, because of their history. The children also are familiar with German through the folksongs that form part of their cultural experience. When interviewed, Bruderhof parents describe their children, especially the pre-adolescents, as “pretty normal” in the range of their responses to homework assignments and class activities.

A deep trust between the adults of a community is fundamental. However, though parents instinctively encourage a tough non-whining work ethic, when children do complain about the policies or routines of a particular teacher, the parents seek to resolve difficulties and misunderstandings quickly by visiting the teacher at home in the evening to resolve any problems or concerns. In this regard, they are following their founder’s prescription of *straight talking in love*: “There must never be talk, either in open remarks or by insinuation, against a brother or a sister, against their individual characteristics—under no circumstances behind the person’s back. Talking in one’s family is no exception” (Yoder, 1984, p. 130).

The educational administration revisits and revises the curriculum regularly. The Bruderhof have an extensive website, administered by members of the community. Therefore, the implementation of technology in the schools was a logical and natural outgrowth of the community's technological capabilities. However, the teachers and parents soon found that the children were drawn to the technology more than they were to natural explorations. Teachers and administrators from all seven communities convened to discuss the problem and decided to remove all computers from use by students in their schools. Therefore, although the individual schools had implemented computer technology, they removed all computers from use by students until they reach high school, when they have computers available to them for school projects.

All Bruderhof schools follow the same policies and procedures as dictated by the community as a whole. Major pedagogical decisions result from discussion throughout all the Hofs. A comprehensive curriculum guide governs activities in all Bruderhof schools. The curriculum itself is fairly traditional, relying on basic skill building in the primary grades together with extensive art, drama, and music instruction. Current events and community service are incorporated into the daily curriculum, "...giving students a deep and lasting social consciousness and empathy for the suffering of others" (see Bruderhof Website).

Non-Bruderhof Children in the Community's Schools

The Bruderhof educational administration adopted the Orton reading method that has proved to be successful for them and has made the Bruderhof schools attractive to neighboring non-Bruderhof families seeking an alternative to the local public schools. Bruderhof schools accept a very small number of children from outside

the community, nine in 2002. Although low-profile and largely unknown outside their local areas, Bruderhof communities strive to coexist harmoniously within their local communities. Therefore, they welcome guests informally on an individual basis and for periodic large-scale gatherings open to the public. Because of this interaction, over the years, various neighboring families have been drawn to the Bruderhof educational philosophy and have sought a place for their own special needs children within Bruderhof schools. The community attributes this interest to its value-based curriculum as much as to its specific pedagogy.

Since the mission of the schools is to educate the children within their own community, acceptance of non-Bruderhof children depends upon the capability of the school to accommodate the child's needs and to help each child grow both intellectually, socially, and even physically. Critical to this goal is Rifton Equipment, one of the three main Bruderhof industries, which creates and supplies adaptive devices for children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Equally critical, however, is the interaction of the child with the other children of the Bruderhof community.

One young boy, Travis, a victim of cerebral palsy who is currently fifteen years old, has flourished in the Bruderhof school in Rifton. He interacts comfortably with his peers who readily help him maneuver his way through the day. Currently in the eighth grade at the school, Travis has been an integral part of the school community returning to the welcoming environment of the school after several extensive surgeries. His mother reports that the local school district had been unable to contend with his many difficulties. She feels that they had virtually given up on him, but at the Bruderhof school, the mother reports, "they listened to us about who Travis is and what

he is capable of' (*Rifton Equipment Catalog*, 2000-2001, p. 3).

The Transition to High School

Bruderhof schools are non-public independent schools, exempt from curriculum requirements. The children do not take standardized tests within the community school, but they must be ready for assimilation into the local high schools. Those who live in New York State must take the required Regents examinations when they are in high school, and those who plan to go to college take the SAT tests. At this time, most Bruderhof children go to the local public high school starting in ninth grade, although a few communities keep the children in their own school until tenth grade.

Bruderhof high school students, when interviewed, described themselves as having average ability but a strong work ethic that allows them to succeed in the local public high schools. However, they commented that the teachers in the public high school tended to regard all Bruderhof children as smart, perhaps due to their seriousness and diligence. In New York at the local BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), the Bruderhof high school students routinely take courses in the practical arts, like carpentry, electrician's skills, and practical nursing, that allow them to develop skills that will enhance their involvement in the community should they decide to join the community as adults.

Bruderhof teenagers support the regular activities of the public high school, but due to disrupted schedules and transportation problems they rarely participate on athletic teams. However, when the local high school was having a fundraiser for a local student who had a rare disease, Bruderhof students participated in the school's efforts. Within the public high school, Bruderhof adolescents develop friendships with non-Bruderhof teenagers

and invite them to visit the community. They also socialize on a personal and limited basis with their friends outside the community.

Bruderhof Young Adults

The Bruderhof shelter their children until they reach the age of 18 or 19 when they must then decide whether to seek entrance into the community as adults. That involvement is welcomed but never assumed, because the Bruderhof readily admit that their way of life is not for everyone, even those who have grown up in the community. However, every individual is unique, so there is no set pattern to this process. Eberhard Arnold prescribed strictly voluntary involvement when he founded the community. At a members' meeting of the Rhon Bruderhof in 1933, he admonished them that, "When anyone talks about wanting to leave, all we can say is, go then...A man cannot tread this path for the sake of a girl he loves, nor can a wife do so for the sake of her beloved husband, nor parents for the sake of their children, nor children for the sake of their parents, nor friends for each other's sake" (Yoder, 1984, p.129-130). Therefore, they encourage the young adults to enter a period of discernment before making their decision to apply for membership into the community as adults.

After high school some of the young adults return to work in the various businesses and trades of the community. Those invited to be teachers enter the teacher-training apprentice program. Others attend two-year colleges for nursing or business courses. Still others are invited to go to a four-year university to study medicine, dentistry, or law, as fits the projected needs of the community and the individual. All work relates to the needs of the community above that of the individual. All members accept the assignments they are given according to the needs of the

community, even if it means moving self and family to the work site in a different community.

Frequently, young adults will travel to other Bruderhof communities, in Great Britain or Australia, to explore their talents, stretch horizons, and determine whether they have a vocation to become an adult member of the community. Sometimes, they join missionary or community service organizations. One young man, who made the decision to return to the community after the events of September 11, 2001, had been living in a community of Catholic brothers and working in their high school as a teacher's aide. He described himself as being "at loose ends" until the terrorist attacks helped him make his decision to pursue a religious life as member of the Bruderhof. He returned to the community where he is currently working as an apprentice in a woodworking shop.

Impact of the Bruderhof Educational Philosophy on Mainstream Education

In addition to their contributions to the effectiveness of special education classes throughout the nation, the Bruderhof have sought to influence the mainstream educational community with their philosophy of pacifism and brotherly love. Johann Christoph Arnold, grandson of the founder, is a prolific writer and effective public speaker. In his recent work, "Endangered: Your Child in a Hostile World", he admonishes contemporary American society for being too busy to acknowledge the real needs of children. In the wake of concerns about school violence, he urges "laying aside our analyses about the endangered state of childhood and concerning ourselves with children themselves. It will mean starting to live as if children really mattered to us" (Arnold, C., 2000, p.10).

Christoph Arnold himself has traveled to various public high schools and

middle schools to discuss school violence and promote pacifism in daily living. He has joined forces with Steven McDonald, a New York City policeman who is a quadriplegic because of an attack by an assailant during an arrest 16 years ago. Together, these two men speak to assemblies of young people urging acceptance and conflict resolution. They are in great demand, as public schools scramble for ways to counteract the threat of violence among their students.

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, a troop of Bruderhof children has been touring local schools and other public venues to sing songs of reconciliation and peace. Called the "Kids for Peace", these young people have a large repertoire of old and new folksongs, some of them composed by the children themselves. Plough Publishing, the Bruderhof's third business endeavor, publishes a compendium entitled, *Sing through the Day: Eighty Songs for Children* (Rifton, 2000) that the children use for practice during the school days and for performances.

Conclusion

Although small in number, the Bruderhof communities continue to make a definite and increasing contribution to the spectrum of educational services available in the United States. Membership is growing slowly but steadily, but Bruderhof influence in the larger education community and the world at large is also growing. Most importantly, Bruderhof schools represent the essence of a pluralistic environment in which citizens can choose to educate their children in ways that are consistent with their personal philosophy and at the same time supportive of the good of the entire society. The Bruderhof themselves express their confidence in the freedom to choose the educational structure for their children:

"We strive to provide an environment in which our children can

remain children for as long as possible, unencumbered by the violence and materialism so rampant in our society. At the same time, we try to instill in them a sense of personal and social responsibility, so that by the time they are young adults, they are able to function as independent and productive members of society” (www.brudershof.com).

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Message from the PREZ continued-

practice in private and religious education.

First, I hope to see ARPE/AERA membership double in 2002-2003. Our numbers have dwindled over the last couple of years. AERA reports that fewer than 30 of us are currently members of AERA and ARPE. If this trend continues, our future is indeed bleak. SIG Program slots at the annual AERA meeting are determined by the number of SIG affiliates who are also AERA members. So, if either your AERA or your ARPE membership has lapsed, or both, please renew immediately. If you have never joined ARPE, consider becoming

part of “we happy few.” Membership information can be obtained at AERA’s website, www.aera.net, or ARPE’s website, www.byu.edu/edlf/arpe.

Or you can fill out the membership form attached to the MONITOR, and return it to our esteemed Treasurer, E. Vance Randall at Brigham Young University.

Second, I hope to see at least 40 ARPE members at our AERA sessions in Chicago, April 21-25, 2003. Program Chair Steve Denig of Niagara University (sdenig@niagra.edu) received five fine proposals that are currently under review. We also hope to announce a high profile speaker for our business meeting in Chicago, which will be followed by the annual ARPE dinner at a great local eatery. Entertainment, high and low brow, will be, as usual, provided by ARPE regulars.

Third, E. Vance Randall of Brigham Young University has provided yeoman service as ARPE’s Treasurer and Membership Secretary since 1994. It is time to pass the torch and the bank account. I will, therefore, form a nominating committee to solicit candidates for the office. I hope one of you will take on this important responsibility of keeping our purse and our membership listings up to date.

Finally, the recent *Zelman* decision upholding the Cleveland voucher program has thrust non-government schooling into the public policy limelight. I hope ARPE will seize this opportunity to increase its visibility. Please feel free to contact me (jcarper@gwm.sc.edu) with ideas, fantasies, and brainstorming that will enhance our role in academic and policy arenas, including perhaps a conference in the winter on vouchers and *Zelman*.

Experience alone, as usual will not do!

Best wishes,

James C. Carper,

President

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