

# THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY  
OF THE  
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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THE PLOUGH is the quarterly journal of the Bruderhof Communities in England and South America, a group of people of fifteen nationalities who live together in full community. Its aim is to unite more closely those who seek to live by the standards of justice, brotherhood and peace.

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# THE PLOUGH

The Quarterly of the Bruderhof Communities

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Autumn 1954

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## COMMUNITY THE OUTCOME OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

PAULA THIJSEN

We believe Christ taught and lived community life. He called his disciples away from their relatives and from their work to the fellowship of his Way, and the little group who followed him had a common purse. Jesus said to the rich young ruler he should give all he had to the poor and come and follow him. This was not, as is often said, because riches were a particular hindrance to this man, but it was asked of all who would follow Christ. What he says in *Luke* xlv, 33, is unmistakable: So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Jesus said this after he had told his followers the story of the invitation to the fellowship of the table at the great supper, showing how the guests had excused themselves from coming. Two of them made excuses because of their possessions and a third because of his wife.

In *John* xvi, 13, Christ says: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. And we know that after the Holy Spirit had descended upon the disciples the first thing that happened was that they became of one heart and one soul, and had all their goods in common. From this we see Christ's Spirit brings about a change of heart which results in a different relationship between men: the whole structure of their society is then changed—also economically. For this reason he refused to make rules for conventional society, saying to the man whose inheritance was to be divided between him and his brother: Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? and to his disciples: Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. He envisaged an entirely different relationship between men, one based upon love. After these sayings he told the parable of the rich fool and warned his followers not to be anxious for their life, what they should eat, nor for their body, what they should put on. And here again he ends: Sell what ye have and give alms.



We must not see the sharing of goods, important as it may be, as the main emphasis of community life. Most find the giving up of material possessions the easier part. Community of goods (maybe it could be better described as community of poverty) is relatively easy. But no-one can accept Christ's invitation who is not willing to leave everything behind, especially self-will. Some who were willing to follow Christ wanted themselves to determine the right time for doing so. They expected him to wait until they had taken care of their own concerns. Community life is not, as one of our friends sees it, 'living in congenial company and having congenial work, a place fitted to your calling'. It is a daily struggle for each to give up the free disposal of 'own time' and 'own talents'. Andreas Ehrenpreis in the 17th century gave the following warning: 'Men who hold that the New Testament does not advocate community of goods should search their hearts as to whether they really want to live in complete surrender to Christ'. An old Hutterian teaching from the 16th century says: 'For none doth any longer own anything: for one doth give oneself and surrender oneself to the Lord and his Church with all that one has and can do, as was the case in the first apostolic Church, where none said of his goods that they were his own, but they had all things in common. This we hold to be the surest way and we are assured in our hearts that this is the soundest basis.'

Love of Christ, instead of self-love, was the motivating power behind community life in the early Church, as John Wesley clearly expressed in his 'Explanatory Notes on the New Testament': '*Acts II, 45, And they sold their possessions—their lands and houses—and goods,—their moveables—and parted them to all, according as any man had need.* To say the Christians did this only till the destruction of Jerusalem is not true; for many did it long after. Not that there was any positive command for so doing; it needed not; for love constrained them. It was a natural fruit of that love wherewith each member of the community loved each other as his own soul. And if the Christian Church had continued in this spirit, this usage must have continued through all ages. To affirm, therefore, that Christ did not design it should continue is neither more nor less than to affirm that Christ did not design this measure of love should continue. I see no proof of this.

'*Acts IV, 32. And not so much as one said that ought of the things which he had was his own.* In so great a multitude this was a necessary consequence of that union of heart. It is impossible anyone should, while all were of one soul. So long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but have all things common. v.34. *For neither was there any one among them that wanted.* We may observe this is added as the proof that *great grace was upon them.* And it was the immediate, necessary consequence of it; yea, and must be, to the end of the world. In all ages and nations the same cause, the same degree of grace, could not but, in like circumstances, produce the same effect. *For whosoever were*

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† John Chrysostom  
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*possessors of houses or lands sold them*—not that there was any particular command for this; but there was great grace and great love of which this was the natural fruit.'

In view of Christ's life and teaching it seems rather dangerous to uphold that the New Testament does not teach community of goods, saying that the church in Jerusalem was the only church that practised it. Eberhard Arnold remarks on this point: 'It is very significant for the spirit which ruled in the church that, up to the time of Hermas, rich men could gain a place in the church-community only by divesting themselves of their income on behalf of their poor brothers. Many sold themselves as slaves on behalf of others and gave themselves up to be imprisoned for debt. The spirit of free spontaneity was a more essential characteristic of the movement than the working out of the communal form of life or having no personal possessions. It was pure spontaneous love that in the early Church changed the holding of private property into a communism of love, and later on made the heathen complain that Christian women of rank were changed into beggars through giving away their property.'

With this overflowing love in mind, one understands the reproach to the church of Laodicea of whom the Spirit says: Because thou art lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because though sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing (*Rev. III, 14*). Is not that communion of love a long way too from the Christian of to-day who testified with thankfulness in his church-paper that since he had started tithing God had prospered his business in a wonderful way? There seems to be a tendency to believe that the following of Christ must needs give material blessing. But is this the way of the cross? The old Anabaptists used to speak about the bitter Christ because of the suffering they had to undergo through discipleship.

A Christian may consider himself a steward of his possessions and have a genuine concern for the needs of the world, but stewardship can never mean living a comfortable life on the greater part of one's income and giving the smaller part to the needy. In the *Didache*\* the Christians are admonished as follows: Thou shalt not turn away from him that hath need, but shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that aught is thine own: for, if ye are partners in the eternal, how much more are ye partners in the perishable? And Chrysostom†, in his eleventh

\* The *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (discovered in a monastery at Constantinople by Bryennius who published the book in 1883), originated in Palestine some time between A.D. 80 and A.D. 120 and was regarded by Clement of Alexandria as part of the New Testament. It gives a most comprehensive insight into the life of the church at the end of the first and beginning of the second century.

† John Chrysostom was an outstanding teacher in the churches at Antioch and Constantinople at the turn of the fourth to the fifth century.



address on the Acts of the Apostles, exhorted the members of his church who had left this way of love with the following words: 'Grace was upon them all, because none lacked anything, because they all gave with such zeal that none remained poor. They did not surrender merely a part and retain another part for themselves as they saw fit; they gave everything, regarding nothing as their private property. They thrust inequality from their midst and lived in complete harmony. They also carried this through with great dignity; for they did not venture to press a small gift into the hand of the needy, nor did they give with a condescending manner, but they laid their possessions at the feet of the apostles; these they made administrators of their possessions, so that all need might be met from the common fund and not as from private property.'

Real stewardship must inevitably lead to full sharing, and thus to community. The complete sharing and self-surrender demanded by community life is the first step, the minimum of Christian discipleship in the world. One can hardly take 1 *Cor.* XII, especially verses 25 and 26, at full value in non-communal church life. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Or 2 *Cor.* VIII, 13-15: For I say not this, that others may be eased, and ye distressed: but by an equality; your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack. Is it not complete sharing that is taught here?

When the Christian church fulfils its high calling of being the body of Christ, the body of which he himself is the head, there must be complete unity between the members, and the function of each member can be only to serve the whole. By this is not meant the so-called unity where Christians try to convince themselves and the world that they are one, although they make life impossible for each other through economic strife and kill each other in wars, but the real unity and communion for which Christ prayed. This complete oneness is so much higher than 'good relationships' between neighbours, between employer and employees, or between nations and races.

Christ still invites all men to follow him on his way of self-surrender, of self-emptying—the way of the cross. This should never be seen as a special privilege which he wants to give to some of his followers. The monastic movement, which sprang into being when the church associated itself with the world, was seen in such a way. From that time on, people who felt they could not live a Christian life in the world, withdrew into monasteries. But this is certainly quite different from the first community in Jerusalem where the church was not divided



between those who saw their Christian discipleship as the only calling in life and those who felt differently, but where *all* the members were of one heart and one soul.

Therefore we have to testify to Christians that, although no-one is able to go the way in his own strength, a life of complete unity is still given to every Christian who will now, at this moment, listen to Christ's call: Follow me. God's promise still stands; that he will give his Holy Spirit to all who ask for it. Now, as nineteen hundred years ago, his Spirit leads to unity among believers. There is no command for community but it is the outcome of the spirit of love which urges the sharing of all things, from the least to the greatest. This desire to share to the utmost is as natural to love as the fruit to the tree. With its appearance one recognises the fruit of love. In accepting this gift of community the Christian also bears witness to him who gave it. Christ prayed for the oneness of his disciples: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

## CHING T'IENT YING'S ACCOUNT OF THE JESUS HOMES

Dr. D. Vaughan Rees, who is at present in Hong-Kong but who formerly lived in the Jesus Home at Ma-Chuang for two years, has sent us a statement about the Jesus Home, written by the founder Ching T'ien Ying. Dr. Rees writes as follows: 'The Jesus Home owed its inception in China to a Chinese Christian, Ching T'ien Ying. He was born in the province of Shantung, County of Tai-An, District of Lin-Wen, Ma-Chuang village, in the family street of Ching. From his earliest years he was "filled to overflowing" with Confucian\* teaching and practice, but he always had a definite inclination to "seek the way". The statement which follows was written by Mr Ching himself for the communists and at their command in answer to specific questions from them. While I was being examined in one of their courts I saw the Commissar reading the original. It is from a copy of this that I have translated what follows. Most of the leaders of this movement have been killed, and Mr Ching himself was stoned to death.'†

In the first year of the Chinese Republic (1911), I entered the Tsui-Ying Middle School in Tai-An. During my study I read the Bible. (He was then about twenty years old and the Bible was given him by a Methodist missionary, Miss Dillenbeck—T.N.).

In this way several years passed and eventually I came to know that Christianity was the complete and true doctrine; that Jesus was in truth the Saviour, who out of love to man surrendered his life, and with all my heart I believed and received him.

From that moment I determined that throughout life I would, in the strength of the spirit of Jesus, imitate his poverty and tread the path of bitterness and self-denial.

\* Not Buddhist as stated in the Summer Number, 1953, of THE PLOUGH.

† Dr. Rees has inserted a number of translator's notes which are indicated as follows (—T.N.).



Even before I found refuge in Jesus I was much inclined to pursue a life of poverty. Deep in my heart I knew that private ownership was the prison of spiritual life. Therefore, from the beginning of my faith in Jesus, I sold all my goods and gave them to the poor, preached the gospel and begged for a livelihood.

In the eighth year of the Republic (1919, probably in the turmoil following the suicide of Yuan Shi-Kai—T.N.) I saw the darkness which surrounded civic life. The lust and violence of man made co-operation and mutual help impossible. It resulted in immeasurable loss to my country in men and materials.

Therefore I promoted and led a few fellow believers to share in the management of a store on trustworthy lines, in order to show the true light of Christ.

By the 1st January (Chinese Lunar Calendar), the tenth year of the Republic (1921), the above work was established at Ma-Chuang in the street of Ching. We called this 'The Disciples' Co-operative Faith Store, or for short, 'The Disciples' Store. This was the basis and origin of the Jesus Home.

The statement that follows shows what our spirit was then, for I wrote it at that time, and it is the same spirit which animates us now:—  
'Profit for selfish ends has been the age-long aim of the trader. He sells his soul for material gain. In measurement he fights for the last fraction of an inch; in weights, about the level of the scale pan. He fools the old and deceives the young with glib and flowery speech. He treats the rich with flattery and the poor with disdain. Who would not grieve at this darkness? Come, let us together run the straight course, based on that life-giving spirit of Jesus who gave all for us. Let us put into practice profit for others, a new *ism*. Then there will be neither poverty nor riches, no fluctuating markets which allow the princes of commerce to hold back the rights of their labourers. Thus will they have no face nor standing room. All the earth will be classless and the masses with one accord will acclaim: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!'

In the sixth year after the founding of the Disciples' Store we started a place for silkworm culture at the Hsia Home in old Ma-Chuang. Afterwards the name of this place was changed to its present form of *Yehsu Chia-t'ing* or the Jesus Home.

When we began we had not 'an inch of land nor one tile'. The land was loaned by Hsia Chuan-Chu and, in addition to the house, we rented from him two acres of land. We also bought three second-hand wooden weaving machines and thus about twenty brothers and sisters began communal life on the principle of 'men ploughing, women spinning' (old proverb—T.N.). I have no need to enlarge on our biting poverty.

In 1930 we removed to Ma-Chuang north hill. First we built seven rooms of wattle and daub and two years later a chapel of the



same size as all the other rooms together. The more we were afflicted with poverty the more our numbers grew and our pattern and method took shape. Those who wished to join us must first have sold their goods, otherwise they were not full members. ('Sold their goods' in Chinese is really 'broken up their property'—T.N.). For our hunger we drank hot water and 'swept the mill-stone' (Chinese idiom). Not infrequently when we had no flour we did this and procured gruel for the whole family. We called it four-eyes gruel, because it was so thin the diner could see his own eyes in it. Our poverty in those days was certainly extreme but not once did we depart from our first principles of faith.

Our work was arduous. We ate the coarsest food and wore patched garments. After the great famine of 1942, because of the bitter distress around, we were led for the first time into the experience of rationing. We found by this, even in spite of our want, we could cut our needs in half. Further, because of the hunger in the countryside we made another gain by eating slowly and thoroughly masticating our food. Everyone found their health much improved thereby. Unconsciously our expenses were greatly reduced: out of several persons' meals we could save one. (When I was with them they fasted on Sunday and gave the food they saved to the poor who attended the services.—T.N.)

Now we have increased to about five hundred persons. New people are not entering as formerly but babies are born, and these births are increasing every year so that now one third of the whole community are children under sixteen years of age.

Our work in the various departments is as follows: agriculture, stone masonry, smithery, carpentry, cobbling, tailoring, dispensing, child-care, kindergarten, bible-study groups, and so on. There are specialists in each department who are responsible to guide and instruct. Then there is a General Works Committee which is composed of the various leaders; these include the head of the Home who is also the chairman (a brother named Chow was head when I was there, not Ching—T.N.), and also others such as the treasurer and the head of the literature and miscellaneous duties department. These form an advisory committee for the work of the whole Home.

We have a manufacturing plant for 'Dragon's Silk' spaghetti (a Chinese speciality made of green bean flour, truly a specialist's job—T.N.). This we sell in neighbouring markets. Through this product we have been enabled to augment our deficient diet with the by-products of the processing of the beans, such as bean milk and bean waste. (To ordinary Chinese this is food for farm animals—T.N.).

We now have other Homes to the number of about one hundred in the following provinces beside Shantung: Hopeh, Honan, Shensi, Suiyuan, Kansu, Chiangsu, Anhwei. Although the Homes vary in size the members are all one in heart and follow the same way of life.



*What is the meaning and object of foreign nationals coming to us?*

Christianity from ancient times to the present has been bound by the power and prestige of money. It was therefore necessary for us to have the baptism of poverty so that the true face of Christianity could be seen. It is for this reason that from our inception there have been certain foreign missionaries who have greatly persecuted us—those particularly who have loved worldly glory and the gain that comes from worldly power. Not only this, but they included in the same persecution such of their own countrymen as were sympathetic towards us and our way of life. For this reason the weak and fearful among them were afraid to speak openly about their agreement with us.

But those who truly loved the road the Jesus Home had taken felt it a great sin to hide their principles: without thought for themselves they courageously forsook their high living and pleasurable surroundings (i.e. foreign compounds and concessions—T.N.). They joyfully humbled themselves and became learners of this way of poverty, which is in truth the only true way. If they still had property in their own country then they hoped at a fitting season to follow the rigorous principles of the Jesus Home—to sell it and become full members.

*How do we look at communism?*

In our bones we fully know the true spirit of communal life, for we have experienced what it is to be without the distinctions that property gives. We know what poverty means and stand on the same ground as the dispossessed and the homeless.

## AN ECONOMY OF SURRENDER

Conclusion of the article by Robert Wilbrandt. To be read in connection with the article of the same title in the Summer Number, 1954, of THE PLOUGH.

### THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS

What conditions are necessary to the success of a 'dedicated economy'?

The participants in such an Economy of Surrender are first, those who give, and secondly, the administrators. Their task requires them to achieve as much as possible with the means at their disposal and somehow to complement inadequate means by gifts and services which have to be sought for. Thirdly, there are the recipients to whom all the rules of economical consumption apply and for whom too much or useless material should not be made available.

Now first, the one who dedicates himself must know how to husband his resources, because more is likely to be needed than he possesses; for it is not only his *outer* resources which have to be distributed to the various objects in view, in proportion to economic urgency



and importance; his powers and capabilities and those of his fellow-workers must be husbanded too. The first condition for success is that surrender should produce its own economy and carry it through rationally, or better still that others should take care that a limit is set to *self*-exploitation, or that a corresponding surrender on their part should preserve a man for his task by relieving him of all responsibilities where it is possible to replace him.

An even more difficult thing is to avoid giving 'caviare to the general' or casting 'pearls before swine'. Just consider (a thought far removed from the idealist) what a distance lies between the giver and the recipients: how little of what he gives can really get through to them, how little can be received and how small its effect. That is a consideration which is far from the mind of the giver—happily maybe for his work. The result of this, however, is that those who have tried to give have encountered derision and even punishment. It was only in a distorted and caricatured form that the message of a Buddha or a Jesus was able to have an effect. Small wonder then that the giving of material donations—e.g. to monasteries, which then easily became havens of idleness, or to 'paupers', who took to begging just through tasting charity—has been brought into disrepute. In short, to consider and assess correctly the maturity of the recipients is hardest of all.

Next, the administration: Kant has already taught that no 'everlasting' endowments can be administered according to the dead letter. To be successful an economy of surrender must adapt itself to the changing situation. The best economic utilisation of resources requires administrators who think like the donors themselves. In actual practice they, too, easily turn into beneficiaries. (i.e. They tend to become bureaucratic. Trans. Note).

Finally, the recipients: they must not be people who *only* receive, otherwise those who give will go bankrupt, or at least they will be overburdened, and the most dedicated and industrious of them will go under because they will be most called upon and will be ready for everything. The practicability of this form of economy presupposes what has not been expressly stated: the necessity for a corresponding dedication on the part of others. The gift or service rendered in return—the expression of thanks with its inherent promise of such reciprocation—indicates this necessity in a small way. On a large scale, ingratitude is the grave of an economy of surrender.

Yet here the wisdom of Christianity intervenes, calling us to forgive our debtors. The simplest solution is quietly to continue on the way of giving, bearing the reward within one's own heart. But this is possible only in so far as the management of human resources permits. If this is neglected to the point of undermining the working power or even the life of the giver, that wisdom fails in practice. An economy of



surrender becomes practicable only when *Communal Economy* (Socialism) superseding the stages of the economies of *Authority* (Conservatism) and of *Barter* (Liberalism) safeguards the individual so that he does not have to think of himself. Communal Economy is essential as a preliminary stage. Just as Christianity leaves it to the Father in heaven to care for us, so that without anxiety and worry we can care for others, dedicating ourselves to them, so, in a Communal Economy, the individual is provided for, and, as so much is put at his disposal unconditionally and free of charge, he is able to dedicate himself to others. This next stage of Communal Economy, an economy which provides, gives, cares for, and educates, is thus an essential preliminary to climbing further upwards to that higher and final form towards which it is leading and which it, in turn, itself requires.

Now the outer organisation is certainly a pre-condition—but not the only one. Just here, once again, the inner transformation, the development of mind and soul, is all important. This is the second essential condition. It is fostered by the training of will and feeling and by a religious attitude, above all, by the teaching of Christianity which elevates giving to a blessed deed.

So we come to this conclusion: The *sociological* significance of goodness and love—whose 'value' may, or may not, be evident to the individual—reveals itself as the essential condition for that economic relationship which gives human society its most perfect economic pattern.

#### CONCLUSION

A straight line running from economy to love—that is the outcome of our considerations. It remains to be seen to what extent it can become actual reality.

The first two economic forms—*Individual Economy* and *Barter Economy*—are historic stages which we have passed through already. At present, society is founded upon both, but increasingly upon the second. And this second stage reveals itself as economically so inadequate that it is our duty to strive further. The third form—*Communal Economy*—comes to the fore to take its place. Before our eyes it is becoming ever more reality. But like its predecessors, it is already revealing inner difficulties which are bound to increase.

So we are led on to that fourth form of economy which is developing in the womb of the third, and which—first made possible by this latter—is then nurtured by it as something indispensable to Communal Economy. Some distant future may succeed in achieving this doubtless highest, but also doubtless most difficult stage—an Economy of Surrender.



## THE NEW AMERICAN BRUDERHOF

In the tumult of a world of steel  
There's the whisper of a wind upon the street,  
Rise and come, though long and hard the journey,  
Yonder is the city where the South and North shall meet.

A chance friend climbing the hill that is Woodcrest might well be greeted by these words as they are sung by the circle gathered around the supper table at the new American Bruderhof. And if he knew the years that lay behind this moment he would experience the joy of seeing a small beginning of fulfilment. Awe and gratitude possess the hearts of us all as we glance back over the months and years and see in a panorama, so to speak, the mysterious building together of numerous individuals with their myriads of experiences into a living unit of brotherhood. All sorts of persons and circumstances are a part of the moment. And when in such reminiscence one notes carefully all things that he recognizes as coming out of the sheer goodness of God in this building up, there comes the realization that altogether they are but a token of the vast outpouring of his great love and providence.

To the brotherhood in the South was given the vision of a growing Kingdom, and in the North there was given a common yearning that drew men out of their restless individual search for the fullness of life into two small communities. And now these gifts, and innumerable others, are fitting together in a wondrous way to form the witness to a life of true brotherhood in America.

Although the vision was given many years ago and was kept bright by longing sacrifice through the time, it was not until July 19th, 1953, that members from Wheathill, Primavera and Montevideo communities met together in Paraguay to make plans for the actual establishment of a new Hof in America—a work long urged upon them by friends in the States. One year later, July 19th, 1954, the conveyance of the deed to the Woodcrest property in New York State, consisting of ninety-six acres and a possible housing for seventy people, was signed by members of the Society of Brothers. And now, by the middle of September, a circle of sixty-five people, including twenty-six children, is at home in the new community, and the number of those who are planning on joining us this year will tax all possible housing to the maximum.

The pattern of life has already taken form and a family-like ease of relationship is being experienced. Our day begins at six when 'he whose duty it is' sounds the gong. By six-thirty the fathers have picked up the family breakfasts from the kitchen and taken them to their respective rooms, and single members have gathered in the dining room. At seven all meet in a circle for a thirty-minute inner meeting, a time of silent



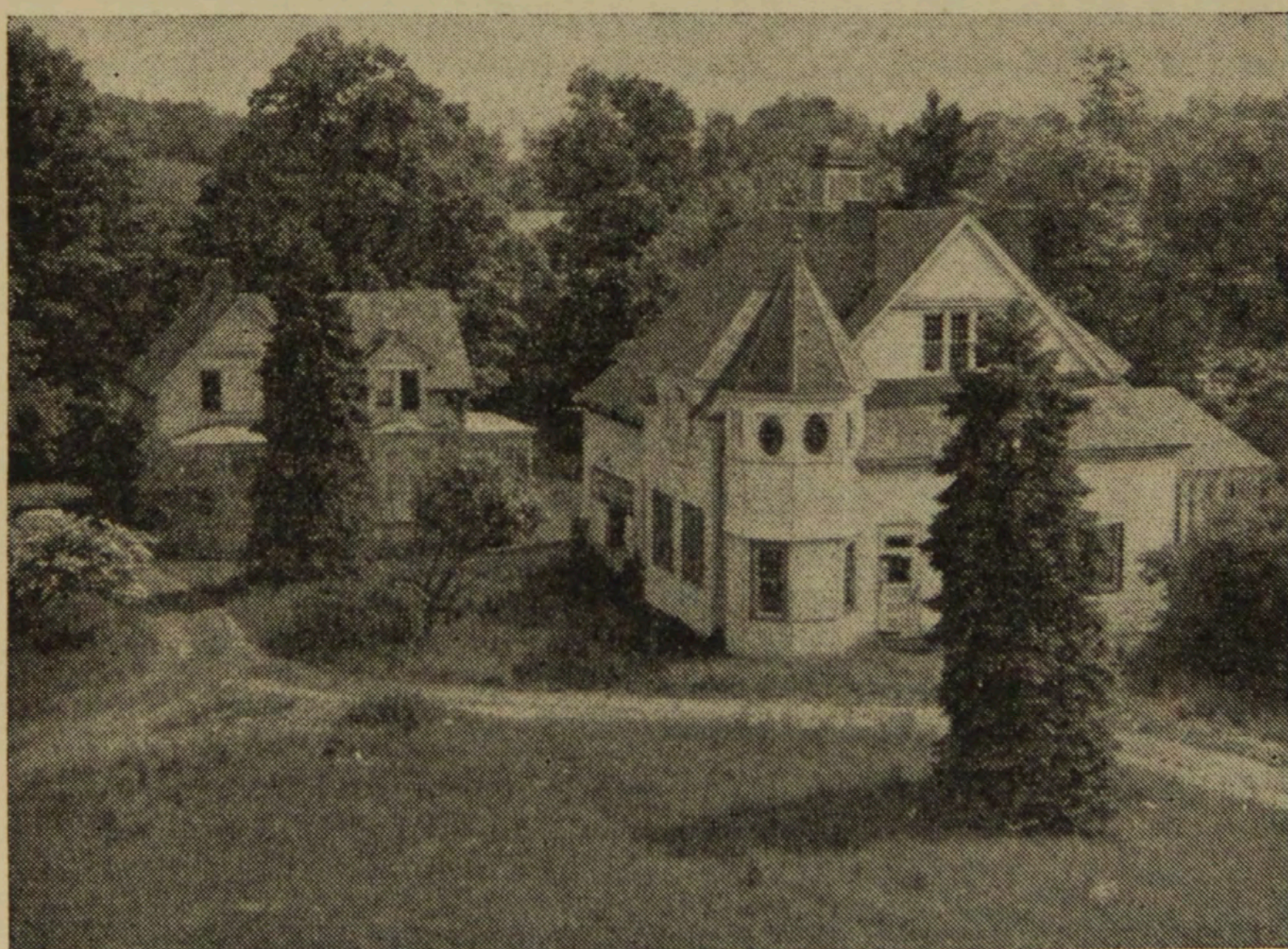
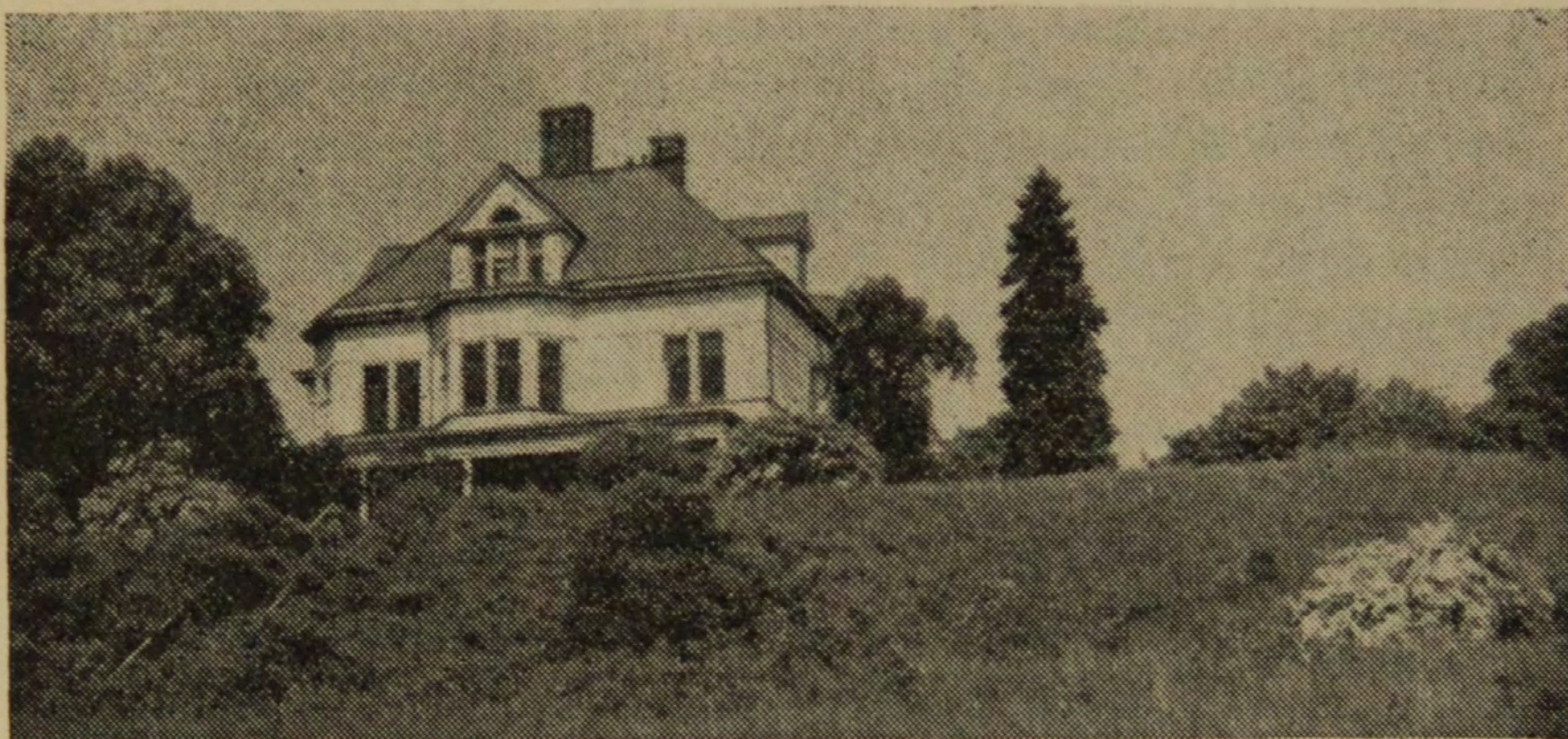
seeking and shared truth. Afterwards the group scatters and individual members take up their various duties—kitchen, shop, laundry, children, office. Lunch is a time for letters and an exchange of news. Supper is a quieter meal where we share the reading of books and articles that speak to our inner life. Then, of course, there are 'second' breakfasts and tea times that are 'enjoyed by all'. Our days often end with evening meetings on practical matters, preparation of novices for full brotherhood, answering questions of guests. We are much like other Bruderhof communities in that we have not men enough for all the jobs to be done, nor time enough for all the meetings needed. Sundays at Woodcrest begin with a family worship at nine-thirty when children and adults meet together. The morning is mostly devoted to the many guests who visit us over the weekends. Together with these friends we think and talk about man's task and destiny.

Much has already been reported about the development of this new Bruderhof in America, yet we will briefly review the circumstances that brought this group together for its founding. Two American community groups—Macedonia at Clarkesville, Georgia, and Kingwood at Frenchtown, New Jersey—were established after World War II by persons who had discovered the inadequacy of their individual pacifism and social idealism to meet the practical problems of daily living in a capitalistic society. Strangely enough those who came together in these communities were generally of an age, being in their thirties. For the most part they were college-trained men and women who had turned away from the lures of the usual middle-class home. They had been educated in the agnostic atmosphere of modern colleges and were imbued with the liberal, humanistic philosophy of the day, and all were disillusioned by the impotence of so-called Christianity to face an atomistic age. These sentences in a way describe also those who are coming to Woodcrest to find their way into a life of brotherhood. How astonishing it is that so many who come are already known to us through common experiences of the war. It seems that threads already joined are being caught up and interwoven.

Both Macedonia and Kingwood floundered much through the years, but each experienced to some degree the joy, peace and power that comes from brotherly living. Because of these experiences they understood and were challenged by the testimony of the brothers from Primavera who continued to visit the States from 1948 onward. Then in July, 1953, the arrival of Francis Hall of the Kingwood group at Primavera (see *THE PLOUGH*, Winter 1953) to explore a closer relationship coincided with the receipt of a letter from Macedonia inviting a brother and sister to go there for an extended visit so that the group at Macedonia too might seek unity with the Bruderhof. These two events occurred the very week the brothers and sisters were

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MAIN HOUSE AND CARRIAGE HOUSE

meeting to plan the establishment of a new Bruderhof in the States. Three streams meeting at one point is no accident; the Good Spirit was at work drawing men and women together in a deep-going search for truth. In February, seven from the Bruderhof, five from Kingwood and the entire Macedonia group began to live together to find unity. An exploration of the basis and structure of true brotherhood continued for six weeks when it became clear that six of the Macedonia group felt unable to join the new community that was forming.



In March, thirteen of the members of Kingwood and Macedonia communities were received as novices of the Society of Brothers, an event that was celebrated with a joyous love-meal. Soon afterwards the search for a new home in the Northeast was begun. Four brothers made the trip north for this purpose and the remaining group was occupied with practical matters, such as with building up an inventory of toys large enough to carry through the period when the shop would be out of production, and with settling the financial problems involved in the separation. This latter was accomplished in the same spirit of mutual respect and responsibility that marked the earlier period of seeking together and resulted in an equitable sharing of assets and liabilities and a joint promotion and sales office.

Looking for a location continued for seven weeks. Specifications were finely drawn: housing for seventy, sufficient land for subsistence, natural beauty, privacy and at the same time accessibility to people and markets, a shop of five thousand square feet or more, large and adequate common rooms, and all within a limited price range and available immediately! Outsize dairy farms, schools, boarding houses, fabulous estates, all offered possibilities worth considering. About seventy-five of them were inspected before Woodcrest loomed on the horizon, towering above them all. During the weeks at Macedonia the new community was in process of being welded together, and in the weeks of separation that followed when we were scattered along the Atlantic sea-board this unity was severely tested. Yet faith in the living Spirit that unites proved stronger. In June the 'great' move was carried through. The trek of nine hundred and fifty miles from Macedonia to Woodcrest was made by six semi-trailer trucks, one truck, and six cars, and we were thankful that in all this twelve thousand miles of travel there was no serious accident. By the end of the month we were all together at last and began the labour of claiming Woodcrest for the cause of brotherhood.

And this is Woodcrest:

Ninety-six acres of hilly, wooded land with scattered patches of tillable soil, about thirty acres in all, located near the village of Rifton, New York and about ninety miles north of New York City on a fine highway. It is a place of inspiring natural beauty. The Catskill Mountains loom against the horizon to the west and north, and between lie hills and valleys in harmonious lines. To the south and east is a green ocean of trees. There are acre after acre of spreading maple trees, oak, birch, chestnut and pine with here and there a rare, crimson Japanese birch shining through. Some of the slopes near the house are clear and it is easy to envision there shouting children with their toboggans in the wintertime. Around the hills of Woodcrest circles the Walkill River on its way to the Hudson three miles to the east. A private drive of a half



mile from the riverside highway spirals around the hill and makes a ring about the main group of buildings. At the north end of the circle is the big house—three storeys set on a sturdy rock foundation. A high house on a high hill gives an impression of Wuthering-height bleakness! But such is not the case. The house actually sends out a friendly welcome with its encircling veranda and wide double doors leading into an expansive hallway that extends through the house both horizontally and vertically. Its spaciousness and openness seem to say, 'See, there is plenty of room for everybody!'

Immediately one is struck by the basic quality of the buildings and the well-designed beauty of the grounds. The builder was a wealthy manufacturer who established the village of Rifton, erected factories and this home in the late nineteenth century. His aim was to get away from the encroachment of the growing labour movement in New York City where he had previously operated. Here, although he set up a paternal arrangement with his workers, he was again faced with the rapidly developing unions. He closed down his factories and until his death in 1917 gave himself to developing splendid dairy herds and keeping fine horses. Afterwards the property was bought and sold many times until about ten years ago it was purchased with the idea of developing another business here.

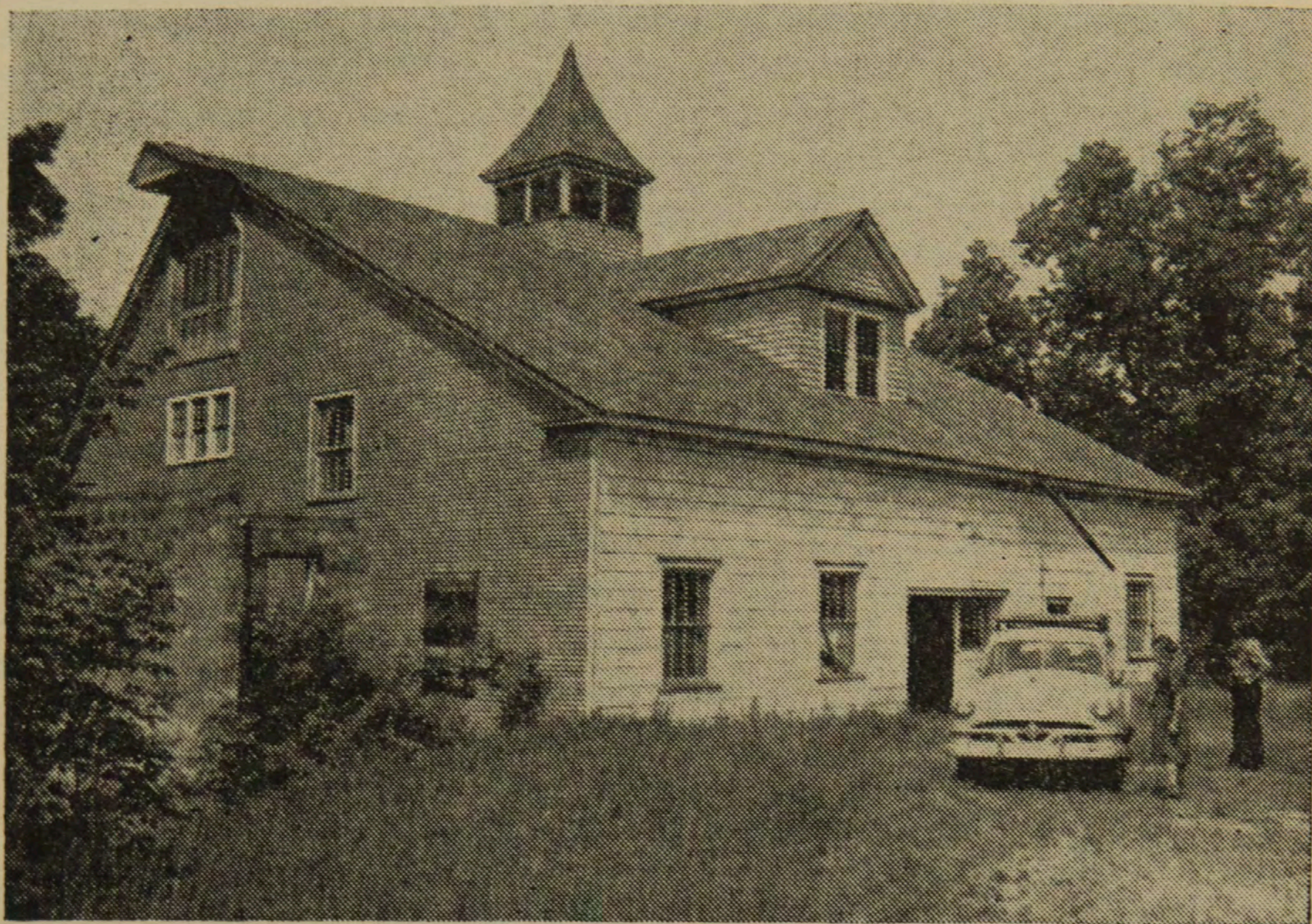
The thirteen rooms of the main house are wide and long and high. The three common rooms on the first floor are the children's play room, the dining room, and the kitchen which is supplemented by a cheerful breakfast nook. The dining room is twenty by fifty feet in size and faces the western hills. The grey walls are partially lined with the community bookshelves. Three long, rather rough tables occupy most of the space, although a pleasant living centre has been made of one end of the room. This is the spot where a large portion of our lives is spent, where not only our meals are shared but where letters are read, meetings held, songs sung and just talking takes place. The bedrooms, one on the first floor and the other nine on the two floors above are very large and easily provide room for seventeen adults, eleven children and a flow of guests.

Behind this main building is the carriage house, a two-storey structure with a drive-in basement, a place which can become many things in our growing life—school, common centre, dwelling apartments, sewing room, laundry, auto shop. Near it is a small seven-room cottage, simple and pleasant. Behind these three buildings are three others that will need remodelling and repair to make them of practical service to the community. They are ice-house, chicken-house, and a large carpenter shop currently being partitioned off to house twenty to thirty people. Then half-way up the hill from the main road is the woodworking shop—a former dairy barn that had been converted some ten years ago for a silk-screen industry. It is a fifty- by sixty-foot



building with two floors on the ground level that are ample to take care of the processing, finishing and shipping of our educational toys. It has a third floor that is partly used as an office and still has an expansive area for further housing or storage. As the old silk-screening plant has been dismantled and rooms fitted to receive the woodworking shop the high quality of the original building and its remodelling is revealed.

At one time formal gardens were laid out below the crest of the hill and were reached by a series of concrete steps, all of which had



WOODWORKING SHOP

become quite overgrown with wild honey-suckle and other shrubbery. Now these have been cleared away and a path leads down to Woodcrest's first vegetable garden. In spite of drought and rabbits the long, clean lines of growing vegetables are showing and are a token, too, that the soil as well as the buildings is being reclaimed. Reclamation of the soil means water—and that too is abundant.

As one takes this swift and inadequate outward view of Woodcrest, one is impressed with the fact that it has been prepared for just such a life of brotherhood as is now beginning here. It is a good use of an 'old thing', and symbolizes in a way what is happening to each one who is coming into the life of brotherhood. Each who comes brings with him his 'old things', so to speak, his strengths and weaknesses, himself-as-he-is, and discovers that dismantling, remodelling takes place, and

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then there comes a sense of fulfilment as he realizes he is being used in new ways and for higher purposes than he has ever known before. The joy of new usefulness especially possesses us as day by day we realize 'a city on a hill cannot be hid'. Each one has come to feel that as brothers and sisters we have a particular task for a particular age—*Now* is the time when the Lord is preparing his kingdom and the wind of the Spirit is filling the earth. A new social order is being born—a city in which joy, love, peace abound through the Spirit of Christ offering to every man who enters its gates the true life for which God created him.

He is speaking to the North, 'O come!'  
He is calling to the South, 'Withhold no more'.

PEARL HALL.

### WE WOULD BE BUILDING

**W**E would be building; temples still undone  
O'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift;  
Waiting till love can raise the broken stone,  
And hearts creative bridge the human rift;  
We would be building, Master, let thy plan  
Reveal the life that God would give to man.

Teach us to build; upon this solid rock  
We set the dream that hardens into deed,  
Ribbed with the steel that time and change doth mock,  
Th' unfailing purpose of our noblest creed;  
Teach us to build; O Master, lend us sight  
To see the towers gleaming in the light.

O keep us building, Master; may our hands  
Ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts,  
When to our ears there come divine commands,  
And all the pride of sinful will departs;  
We build with thee, O grant enduring worth  
Until the heavenly kingdom comes to earth.

*Purd E. Dietz.*

The lines quoted at the beginning and end of the foregoing article are from a song written in Primavera, Paraguay, by Philip Britts before he died in 1949. He foresaw the time when a greater movement towards community would arise in North America, and these words were written to express this hope.

The song, 'We would be building', is very often sung at Woodcrest as an expression of the experience of their new beginning, with its hope for the future.



## PARAGUAYAN CAMEOS

The two following contributions give glimpses of life as we experience it in South America and are written by members who are living at our communities in Paraguay.

### I. OUR NEIGHBOURS

John Robinson writes in a letter: Sometimes when I look around I have the impression that the hospital work must be growing fast because there are so many of us occupied in it. The buildings and equipment have also increased very much. The number of out-patients treated still continues to show an upward curve, which is interesting when one looks back to the time of our early years here. Among the patients are some very sad and neglected cases. It is usually the very poorest of the folk who come.

Paraguay is certainly going through a period of transition to a more developed country, but it is not easy for the poor folk. In Asunción the inflation goes on. More and more money is printed, but it does not find its way into the countryside. There still remain many places like '25 de Diciembre' on the other side of our river, where the people have nothing to sell. They still continue to make their *chacras* (small holdings) on the edge of the wood and grow their mandioca. Their meat they either hunt or steal; in many cases they seldom get any. I suppose that many of the men are still wearing the same old trousers year in year out. Perhaps a few more colours have been added to them by their many patches. Some come walking to us from very great distances. To ask them to pay the equivalent of a dollar is like asking them for the moon. It is quite clear that the insignificant figures which appear in our balance sheet as 'social work' nowhere near indicate the size of it. Our hospital does a big social task which is not shown in the balance sheet—much of it cannot be shown.

At Christmas time a man came to us from '25 de Diciembre'. He brought his wife to the hospital. She was twenty years old and was like a skeleton. He was also what his poverty had made him, a poor, weak, ragged fellow hardly strong enough to do a day's work. Our doctors took an enormous tumour away from the young woman, and after a week or two's stay with us she began to build up a little. Eventually she went off home, and the news spread around about her cure. That was the beginning of a series of patients who came to us from that district, all poor, and all serious cases. There was a young girl of eighteen for instance, who made medical history, for her life was quite definitely saved. Now all these folk had suffered for years and one asks oneself how many there are who are simply waiting for death in these outlandish parts, who could have been, and still could be, saved if they could get to us. It is clear that such people will never be able to pay for treatment.

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In our more immediate environment the people are comparatively well fed and clothed. Many of them have set up their own waggons and live off transport. The waggons transport the crops which the folk have grown and also the passengers who move to and fro in this comparatively prosperous district. When Leslie and I visited the Delegado (District Officer) in San Pedro more than two years ago, he told us that our district should have proper roads because it is such an important industrial area! So you see we have a different stratum of the population on our doorstep, and it is they who form the bulk of our out-patients. With their improved conditions they seem to put up much more of a fight for their health and they seek ways and means of doing it through social insurance. Any cold that their children get generally brings them post haste to our door. But there are more serious cases. I think of Rafael Riquelme, one of our workers, who, a week or two ago, brought a child along with a bit of bronchitis, which was not very serious when our doctor saw it. Three or four days later he came rushing up with his child and just had time to lay it on the doctor's table before it died. The same night the grandfather came along with a child from one of his other daughters in his arms. The poor fellow was so distraught that we admitted it to hospital even though it was not so seriously ill. He had walked about three miles through the night with the child in his arms because he was afraid that it was going the same way as the other one.

Talking about people walking long distances to the hospital reminds me of patients who appeared at the window a week or so ago. There were two women and about five small children, one of whom was about eighteen months old and carried in its mother's arms. They arrived about five o'clock in the afternoon. Now I have to try to protect the doctors from too much interference from people coming out of hours, and I began to give these the usual telling off. "Ten o'clock in the morning we finish out-patients' hours. Why didn't you come earlier?" "We did start early", they said, "but the children could only travel slowly." I found out that they had walked over twelve miles of rough camp that day, the women carrying the smallest children and the others walking beside them. This is not easy in the fierce Paraguayan sun. I got them some food out of the kitchen, and they slept the night in the old office down by the gate.

We are trying to improve the accommodation for such people. This old office is now being smartened up and a shelter built where the folk can cook their food. We are paying a woman to cook for people who have no cooking pots with them. At the moment we are charging those who can pay about 12 *guaranis* (1s. 6d. or 20 cents) a day for their food, which is just about cost price. We do not charge anything to the poor people who cannot pay.



## II. OPERATION WOOD GAS PLANT: Stevedoring in Paraguay

The story began more than a year ago when after several months of careful consideration and planning we bought with the help of the Wheathill Bruderhof a wood gas producing plant in England. The consignment arrived in Asunción and was unloaded on the quay to undergo the custom formalities before continuing its journey up the river. With the plant and 120 h.p. engine was new machinery for our turning-shop and also a second-hand army lorry with another heavy engine bolted down to the bare chassis and this, weighing four-and-a-quarter tons was the heaviest 'parcel' in a total of forty-five tons.

On Wednesday, 3rd March, news of the clearance of our consignment at Asunción came through to Primavera and we decided to leave for Rosario early next morning on the bigger of our two lorries with four of the twelve men who had been chosen for the job from a long list of eager volunteers. Rosario is our nearest river port, lying about forty miles west of the Bruderhof communities in Primavera. Those readers unacquainted with Rosario must imagine a shallow river, several hundred yards wide, with a deep winding channel along which boats with not too deep a draught can travel. The water level can fluctuate considerably. Piers, jetties and other harbour facilities there are none. The soft banks of crumbly clay are constantly retreating through the action of rain water from above and the seeping of the river below. There is a drop of about thirty feet to the water's edge from the unpaved road above. Rosario itself is correspondingly primitive: in times of drought the roads are just thick choking dust which turn into rivers of mud when it rains.

We arrived at mid-day and after a quick meal went out to select a suitable point for disembarkation. There was one little bay where the slope to the water's edge was not as steep as elsewhere, but here the corresponding drawback was the shallowness of the river. We had been told to reckon with the boat drawing five feet so I changed into bathing shorts and waded out to find this depth. Seventeen yards from the shore the water was still only three feet deep but a little further out the river bed suddenly sloped down and we found ourselves confronted with the construction of a jetty some twenty-two yards in length, strong enough to carry a four-and-a-quarter ton lorry. Certainly we had not brought enough wood for the job. . . should we even have enough time before the ship came? A much bigger task than we had expected lay ahead of us. At this point heavy rain began to fall and we drove back to our house in Rosario to plan the attack.

The rain continued all night and next morning when it stopped we ploughed our way to the port with a load of timber and set to work. A large log lay half afloat near the water's edge and we rolled it inshore and fixed beams across it, using it as our first trestle. Three more trestles



were erected during the afternoon and when evening came a rough framework jutted out fifteen yards into the river. Just as we were packing up our tools one of our boys appeared with the news that the rest of our men had arrived on the smaller lorry, having miraculously traversed the terrible roads, but were stuck a mile away from our house with a broken fan belt. We returned to the house and waited for the others before eating supper. As fan belt replacements are not within Rosario's economy, the last part of their journey was accomplished with difficulty—one of them sat on the engine cover up front and poured water into the radiator every hundred yards or so! Our brothers had the latest news from Asunción: the loading of the ship had also been delayed by rain. So we had a happy evening together glad that our team was complete and that we had reasonable time in which to prepare. The whole of the next day was spent on work on the jetty.

Sunday dawned fine and almost cloudless and we were up early. Just as we had finished breakfast, Nils, our tall Swedish engineer who had travelled up on the freighter from Asunción, was seen racing up the road. The ship had docked, and we all cheered when Nils informed us that it had tied up at the end of our jetty! In a few minutes we were driving down to the port. The conditions of shipping allowed us two days to unload; any extra time would cost us dear and we had no time to lose. At the top of the river bank we paused to fix up the big block and tackle which was to be our means of hoisting the heavier pieces on to lorries. Then we ran the lorry slowly backwards down the steep slope to the water's edge, supplementing the uncertain brakes with wooden wedges we had brought for the purpose. We had made a heavy sledge for towing up the crates and this, with all our ropes, chains, crowbars, jacks, and wooden rollers, was unloaded.

Stefan and Roland were impatient to run our lorry right up to the ship and we all agreed this would be a good test for our jetty. There was a much heavier lorry to unload later on and we had to get some idea beforehand how it might go. Stefan climbed into the cab and slowly inched the lorry backwards along the jetty. He had no lack of good advice and all went well until one rear wheel proved too heavy for a thin plank on the outside. As the plank cracked he stopped and a dozen of us lifted the back of the lorry to safety on the main track. Stefan then backed it right up against the ship and two men set to work to put the new lorry from England in order. The remainder of the morning was spent in unloading one of the  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ton crates which lay handily on the right side of the ship. Its removal presented more physical than technical problems so we engaged ten stevedores from the port. Our old lorry needed the help of all twenty men to get this load up the bank, and then we had the discouraging task of tipping it off knowing that a day or two later it would have to be reloaded.



Back at the house a good dinner was waiting for us and later we returned with fresh energy to tackle the unloading of the new lorry. The mechanics had got the engine running by the end of the morning. The weather was again causing us anxiety as well as the river, which had risen two feet since we built our jetty three feet above water level. We hurried with our work but it took us two hours to prise the new lorry inch by inch across the deck. The wheels were jammed against the hold on the one side and the top of the cab against the captain's bridge on the other. The captain protested vividly against each fresh crowbar mark on his not very white woodwork. Just as we got the back wheels on the jetty and were ready to start the engine and drive off, a heavy squall hit the ship on the far side and everybody dived for cover from the cold rain. Adolf, sitting in the cab, suddenly noticed the angle of the lorry changing and called our attention to this. Gradually we realised what was happening. The captain had more faith in our jetty than we ourselves and had lashed his ship to it, not relying at all on his anchor. Each wave brought by the storm rocked boat and lorry with a strong levering action which first pushed our structure a yard inland and then folded it up like a concertina. We shouted to Adolf to jump clear and hardly was he out of the cab when the final collapse came. The rear wheels of the lorry rested on the broken framework, partly under water, and the front wheels barely rested on the edge of the ship.

We conferred quickly as to how this situation could best be handled. To prevent the front of the lorry falling off the ship, two long beams were pushed underneath it from the front so that they rested on the jetty between the back wheels and protruded over the ship's deck at the front. Now the stevedores came into their own. They love to use a rope and suggested tying one to the back axle so that we could all pull the lorry to the shore. As about thirty men pulled on the rope, the engine leaped simultaneously into life, the brakes were released and slowly but surely the lorry reached the end of the jetty. The men on the rope scrabbled frantically for footholds on the slippery clay as they helped it up the steep bank, and once it was on top we all let off steam with loud whoops of joy in true Paraguayan style and told each other it was certainly the most unusual Sunday afternoon we had ever spent.

We worked hard all day Monday and it was a tired gang that followed the last sledge-load up the bank that evening. Another day's work still lay ahead. The two days allowed had not been sufficient.

Tuesday sufficed for the unloading of the last four pieces, two great cylinders, eight feet in diameter, and two halves of the flywheel, all lying in the prow of the ship. The wall of the prow was nearly three feet high and the captain agreed after a long discussion that no other course was possible than to unload directly over this rim and tumble them all into the water. We tied a long rope round the top rim of the



first cylinder and threw the other end to the stevedores on the shore. Pressing a few friends into service, they hauled on the seventy yard rope from a point of vantage on the bank above, while we worked with crow-bars and levers all round the base, moving the cylinder inch by inch towards the ship's side. Ping! the rope had parted and all our helpers lay in a confused heap. We had a breather while, amid much laughter, they sorted themselves out and repaired the rope, then we all set to work with renewed energy. Ping! this time the cylinder had snapped one of the mast stays. We paused to listen to the captain, although we considered it his fault for loading his ship in such a peculiar way. He fairly danced down from the bridge, collected a few of his crew, and personally assisted them to push on that side of the cylinder nearest the next mast stay. We were delighted to have this extra help and pushed for all we were worth on the other side. In another half hour or so the cylinder was poised on the edge of prow. The great splash which ensued was an occasion for more rejoicing on the part of the native population. Jacob unwittingly added to the enjoyment of the moment. He stood at the edge of the water where he had been servicing the lorry and got the full benefit of the splash—hardly a drop got past him. The second cylinder presented an even greater problem and the captain passed a very uncomfortable couple of hours, for not only the stays but the mast itself was imperilled!

Two more days—and even a night—of heavy loading and unloading until finally, on Friday morning, we drove to the port for the last time before setting off back home.

Looking back over the eight days we had spent together, we felt very thankful for many things—for the protection granted to our lives and limbs through the dangers and difficulties involved in so much heavy lifting and moving of heavy objects, also that within seven days of arriving at Rosario the whole consignment was transferred undamaged to Primavera. We were thankful for eight days of hard toil shared side by side with each other, for the companionship of our meal-times and evenings, and for the co-operation of our brothers at home who proved ready to unload lorries at all hours of the day and night and return them promptly. All in all, 'Operation Wood Gas Plant' from Wheathill to Primavera had been an experience of joyful comradeship in which we felt the strength which comes from unity of purpose.

HARRY BARRON.



## SONG OF THE HOE

This poem was found among the papers of a young Englishman, John Ridley Brown, a member of the Paraguayan community who died while working in the fields at Primavera.

There are beggars sitting hopeless in the gutters of the street,  
(Sweep clean, my hoe!)

There's the cry of hungry children and the tramp of weary feet,  
(Aching back, bend low!)

O call the million unemployed to leave their smoke and grime,  
O offer to the youth a fair alternative to crime.  
(Clear away, sweep clean, my hoe!)

The mighty politicians plan oppression and reform,  
(Steadily, my hoe!)

And anguished hearts await subdued the breaking of the storm,  
(Wearily, bend low!)

O call the mighty ones to hold from their insane desire  
Before the millions fall like grass before a sweeping fire.  
(Wearily, O steadily, bend low!)

There is shelter for the homeless in the forests of the plain,  
(Eagerly, my hoe!)

There is food among the grasslands and the scent of coming rain,  
(Patiently, bend low!)

O challenge all the millions to forsake their maddened strife,  
The mighty ones to try and solve the mystery of life.  
(Sweep away, cut clean, my hoe!)

O come and share our weariness, the sweating of our toil,  
(Work clean, my hoe!)

Come, help to build a city that is rooted in the soil,  
(Gladly bend low!)

Cut down your proud ambitions, all your miseries and fears,  
O come and share your poverty, the laughter and the tears.  
(Bend low, eternally bend low!)

*From the Con*

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## FORUM

### *From the Community at Aiyetoro, Nigeria*

We were delighted to receive your letter and are sorry we have not written to you for such a long time. Now we are glad to say we have finished digging our canal from Aiyetoro down to Mahin Lagoon and that big launches are passing through it. It is an important canal and is now being used by all Ilajes. We carried through the work without any outside financial help.

We have ordered engines for the big launches. We are building about three of these and when they are ready they will be used for transporting passengers from our town straight to Lagos. Owing to this work we have had to put our ideas of the sawmill on one side for the time being. Perhaps we shall be able to go on with this when we have finished building the launches.

We have now extended the school for our children and are very thankful that the number of our members is increasing and that we are going forward through the Holy Spirit of God who is working among us. We are receiving varied gifts of the Holy Spirit as, with the help of our teacher, we find our way through to God's Spirit every day.

At present we are engaged upon repairing the streets of our town (gangways raised above the ground on wooden piles). It has been done once but the old ways have to be destroyed and new ones put in their place so that we can use motor vehicles all over our town. We shall make the cause-ways longer and wider than the ones you have heard about before for they were only used for bicycles and motor-cycles. There is no room to speak more about the prosperity and peace of our life.

We were so very glad about the brothers and sisters that have come from other communities in North America and amalgamated with you. Just recently Mr Duckworth, the editor of the magazine, *Nigeria*, came to our town. He came to visit us on 30th January and returned to Lagos on 8th February, so he will be able to give you more news about what he saw of us as it appeared to him.

You ask us to pay you a visit. We should like to do this more than we can say but are unable to mention a date or time because we are so busy.

Nigeria.

The Holy Apostles' Community.



### *From North America*

A week ago my wife and I spent the week-end at the new embryo Bruderhof near Rifton, New York. . . . We were impressed so favourably during this visit which extended from Saturday noon to Monday noon that we felt impelled to attempt to arrange a much longer visit of the kind which might lead to our becoming Bruderhof members . . . Mr Arnold advised me to write to you to ask whether we could come to Wheathill for a longer visit. This was an attractive prospect since we are able to transport ourselves and three young children to England, and since we are at home in your country.

My wife is 29 years old, and I am 35—both citizens of Canada. We are in good physical health, and look forward to giving our energies to the Bruderhof to whatever extent may be possible. I might say that we both have been trained in the graphic and plastic arts, and are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as artists. Anne holds the Art Teachers' Diploma, and has had some experience as a teacher. Since 1947 my work has been writing and directing motion pictures of the educational and documentary varieties. We both have some familiarity with several handicrafts.

Our keen interest in the Bruderhof can be partially explained as a development of our association with consumer co-operatives, community ventures in recreational programmes, and other partial approaches to a life of brotherhood. We feel strongly drawn to your kind of life as one which goes all of the way in reaching out toward a desirable goal. I personally believe that I have compromised with half-measures for too long, and must make a change now before I become too old to change. My most urgent inquiry, if you and your brothers are agreeable to having us at Wheathill, will be toward discovering whether it is possible to become a Christian through living each day according to the example of Jesus. I have a great deal to learn.

U.S.A.

D.P.

### *Community in Australia?*

We have been very much occupied with community problems and somehow are still unclear what will be our next step. . . . We five community enthusiasts here in Sydney have been in touch with the Melbourne and Brisbane ones. Although we would prefer our community to be established in Australia, it seems to us that we are not strong or experienced enough to make a success of any venture that we may start here in Australia. Yet, we feel it is very necessary to take a step in this direction. . . . Our belief is that the individual must surrender his selfish will to God, and that in the historical Christ we have a

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Australia.

*A Letter to*

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revelation of the will of God for us in this age. We wish to be separated from the spirit of the world that leads to war and live in brotherly love, in Christ.

Australia.

E. and H.W.

### *A Letter to one of our Members*

I am glad to hear that you have found a completeness of life in the community which, as you say, can only be experienced and not described, but I am not surprised that it should be so after reading the publications you issue. It does prove to one that when you put love of God and love of man outside all thoughts of material gain, and what is more, the sordid things that material gain brings forth, it is possible to walk in the steps of our Lord. . . . It used to worry me in the old Rover Scout days that somehow, no matter how one tried to bring the love of God and love of men into the crew, it did not go far enough. There always appeared to be something unfinished about it. We never reached the high way of life. We all did our best to carry out our promise to obey the Scout Law, but the material things in life often came first and overshadowed whatever we endeavoured to do. We never climbed high enough, and in such a state there never was a completeness about it. I am afraid that in this welfare state in which we live, when it is easy to get most things without personal effort, love takes a very back seat in life. It is all a question of entitlement, a word which is used more often these days than it used to be. I hear it very often: 'I pay my National Insurance contributions, my rates, my income tax. I'm going to obtain all I'm entitled to'. No wonder the world is just crazy, for that which is obtained without a sacrifice is never appreciated.

England.

C.P.T.

### *A 'Family of Christian Brothers' in North India*

I thought of coming into contact with your community long ago. Just now I was reading your letter to K. K. Chandy which came out in the *Arunodayam*. . . . I think I have to introduce myself. We call ourselves 'Chrishya Bandhu Kulam', three words which translated from the Hindu mean 'The Family of Christian Brothers'. At present this community is composed of two families and two bachelors, who will be getting married—I hope—within this year. All of us belong to Travancore and are members of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. We came to this place (Rewa) in 1952 with a definite calling from God for missionary work in this unevangelised area. This state was closed to the gospel till 1948—when it acceded to the 'Indian Union'. The aim of the Family is the proclamation of the word in all possible ways of preaching and



practising. Of course, the life together of different families in one 'family' is to give to every member means and opportunity to know, experience, and give more of Christian love and co-operation, and to mobilise every possible strength and resource for the spreading of the kingdom of God. We expect and pray that several other such groups will come into existence in God's own guiding, that the millions of this our Motherland and other countries of Asia may know and believe the Lord and Master. So we consider our family as one of many in a Fellowship which we have named, 'St. Thomas Missionary Fellowship'.

Now I am requesting you to provide us with any magazines or other booklets which will instruct us about your community. Since we have only just started we should surely benefit by the good lessons already learned by those who have trodden the same path.

I wrote first a personal letter. But now I am inclined to write to you all because the books, the issues of THE PLOUGH, and leaflets sent by you have opened to me a large company of friends. Ever since the coming of THE PLOUGH my hungry spirit has been pouring itself into its contents and I think I am more than satisfied. I was rejoiced to know that there are kindred spirits who have advanced a long way in the very thing that my heart longs for. I have never received an encouragement for such living, *i.e.* families living in a community. On the contrary several, even those who love us, said, 'Your attempt will meet with failure, if not now in the near future'. The account of your life has given me and my friends a real 'push', and we said to ourselves, 'Yes, it is possible'. Truly this earth can be conquered for a new kingdom, and we are out for it. We feel a sort of oneness with you all, and as we read through the story of your first beginnings we thought it was almost the same as ours, and my great desire is to come and see for myself this place where Christianity is actually 'on its legs'. I don't know whether it will be possible. We are still in the initial stage and we need your prayers and all kinds of literature which may advise us on community living. After reading the books, I started talking about it to all the people who would listen to me patiently on the matter. Last Sunday in the capital city Rewa I preached on this subject to a small congregation—everyone of them doing good service—the only Christians in this once prohibited state. I referred at length to your communities. My heart is so full of it that I intend to preach on the same subject, 'Kingdom in Actuality', this Sunday, too. I shall be preaching to a different congregation in the city Kanpur, about 250 miles away from Rewa. We plan to visit parishes in different cities of N. India and now I am on such a tour.

Rewa, N. India.

A.T.C.



## NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

The new American Bruderhof at Woodcrest, Rifton, New York State, has 'come into being' at last. It has been very much in the centre of our thoughts as we have followed with great joy and interest the move into Woodcrest, the inner and outer problems accompanying the 'settling in', and the interest which is shown in North America, indicated by the very large number of visitors to Woodcrest and friends who are asking to come for a longer stay.

This can also be said of the Wheathill Bruderhof, which we regard as an outpost for Europe. As a result of various journeys on the Continent our guests this summer have come from many countries in Europe as well as from England and America, and this year has perhaps been remarkable for the number of families who have come with the intention of joining.

Primavera has had more visitors from North and South America than in other years and has been chiefly supporting the new American beginning at Woodcrest by sending members up to the United States to help in the initial stages of founding a Bruderhof community. This has meant a considerable sacrifice for the Primavera communities who are at the same time making great efforts to build up so as to keep pace with the growing numbers and requirements and also to extend their economic basis. Something of these activities can be seen from the following reports which have been received:

*Primavera.* A characteristic event of the past time was a gathering from all three villages to welcome a group of people who had just arrived—friends coming for an extended visit, new members from Wheathill, and older members returning from mission journeys. They came from Switzerland, Argentine, North America and England. It was moving to hear the experiences that had brought together all these people who, a short while ago, were separated from each other and from us by thousands of miles. In listening to them we could only feel how far-reaching is the message of a communal life and how deeply it speaks to the human heart everywhere.

In the meantime, in Primavera, we have continued to conserve and develop our resources along the lines described in the Spring number of *THE PLOUGH* in order to provide homes for and offer work to all who come. The wood-gas generator has arrived and is in the course of erection and the six new turning lathes from England are now in production.

At the celebration of Harvest Festival considerable improvements were recorded in almost all phases of our agriculture. Very important additions to the equipment for the agricultural work have been the new chain-saw from the Mall Tool Company, U.S.A., and the milking



machines from the Alfa-Laval Company, England. The chain-saw is a great success and means that at long last we are taking a big step towards cleaning up the wood-clearings—a further advance towards the time when we can apply more mechanisation to our farm work. All three communities made a big communal effort to lay a concrete floor for the dairy at Ibaté and the milking machine has now started work. We believe it is the only one of its kind in Paraguay, and we are extremely thankful to the firm for this very fine gift.

The training of our young people is also a matter that has been claiming our attention. It may interest our readers to know some of the choices taken at random from the list of seventy-two teen-agers whose training came under review this year: electrical engineer, teacher, wood-turner, occupational worker with children, farmer, baker, gardener, nurse, arts and crafts teacher, cattle farmer, dressmaker, builder, carpenter, liberal arts student, doctor and kindergarten teacher.

*El Arado, Uruguay.* One of our German families visited the Uruguayan Bruderhof on their way to Primavera and sent us a letter containing the following description of El Arado:

As soon as we had been through the Customs we set off to our new little Bruderhof, eager to get to know our brothers and sisters as well as the place itself. The car took us eleven miles out of the town (Montevideo), right down the Camino Mendoza and finally turned into the Oswaldo Rodriguez. From the entrance gate is a drive about a hundred yards long leading to the house through an avenue of orange, lemon and olive trees with vineyards stretching away on either side. Everyone rushed out to greet us on our arrival, not only our own people but guests as well—counting our family there were thirty of us altogether. In the closed-in verandah of the little farm house we had our mid-day meal at the communal table and Hans gave an account of our journey. In the evening we were welcomed with a special celebration, the tables beautifully decorated with flowers.

Next morning August Dyroff, the gardener showed us round. The garden is really in excellent order and they say it has produced very good crops. Unfortunately, everything had already been harvested, the grapes, apples and pears, which had been very large and tasted marvellous—so they told us! Peter Cavanna was taking vegetables to market for sale. August was up to his eyes in work. He was able to tell us many interesting things about the peculiarities of the country. Both sub-tropical and temperate fruits grow here. The sub-tropical fruits, oranges, etc., are certainly a bit sour, whereas our fruits grow profusely and have a nice flavour. A bunch of grapes sometimes weighs as much as four-and-a-half pounds and the vines stretch up to the roof twelve or thirteen feet high. It is really a beautiful piece of land which, however,



requires a lot of hard work from the few people available here. They have a horse to help with the work and two very nice black and white cows to provide the necessary milk. We had some interesting talks and, among other things, heard about the problems which arise for us in this Latin American country.

To see such a community in its beginning is something quite different from an established one—something quite new for us—and it was very nice indeed. There is a real little community here.

*The Wheathill Bruderhof.* Visitors have been coming all the summer, enriching the life of the Wheathill community, bringing new stimulus. This caused us not only to seek answers to the many questions but also to see the smaller concerns of the day-to-day tasks in their true proportion in relation to the wider issues that are affecting our fellow men. We heard at first-hand of problems and needs in many different countries: from Dr. Pearson the fate of a missionary hospital in China, from Michael Scott the urgency of problems caused by the tensions in Africa, from Professor Martin Schmidt of Berlin the contrast between the situation and outlook of Germany after World War I and World War II. Our thoughts were also directed to young people in post-war Germany by two young, enthusiastic German Youth Leaders, and to the boys and girls leaving school in the industrial towns in Great Britain by Elsie Andrews, Programme Advisor of the National Association of Girls' and Mixed Clubs. Dr. Muir, Medical Adviser to the British Empire Leprosy Association told us how very extensive is the worldwide scourge of leprosy and what counter measures are being taken. Modern medicine can often, with timeliness and persistence, bring healing: the only hindrance is a shortage of volunteers to devote their lives to these millions of 'untouchables'. Dr. Santra, who accompanied Dr. Muir, is responsible for a leper colony in the state of Orissa, India, where he hopes to introduce a community basis for both staff and patients.

An unusual visit was from representatives of a Dutch Radio Company who wished to make a feature programme of the Bruderhof. This was afterwards relayed from the Dutch Broadcasting Station at Hilversum following a talk by our member, Bram Burger, the previous week.

During the past months we have been making every effort to extend our accommodation and improve our economic basis and have also continued to send members out. Paula Thijssen and Ivy Carrol attended the F.O.R. Summer Conference in Derbyshire, and two younger members, Anthony and Jennifer Harries, went to the F.O.R. Young Peoples' Conference in Suffolk. Hans Zumpe and his wife Emi-Margret spent some six weeks in Western Germany, and Walter



von Hollander worked for two months at a centre in the Austrian Alps as helper and mountain guide for groups of young Germans who were spending their holidays in the Alps.

Space does not allow for fuller reports in this issue but it will be seen that our communities are passing through a period of growth and activity and that the message of brotherhood is drawing men from many parts of the world. More than this, letters published in the FORUM and also such movements as the Jesus Homes and the community at Aiyetoro show that the Spirit of God is stirring everywhere, urging men to a radically different way of life in the midst of the conflicting forces of the modern world. And this is also our experience wherever we go, that men are ready, waiting, and glad to hear the message—as our Indian friend puts it— of brotherhood ‘in actuality’.

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

A question often asked by our friends is whether there is a biblical basis for the practice of communal living. The first article in this issue, ‘Community the Outcome of Christian Belief’, by Paula Thijssen, one of our Dutch members, has been written in answer to such queries. It is, of course, impossible to do more than touch upon this subject in the short space of an article.

‘An Economy of Surrender’, by Robert Wilbrandt, is completed in this number and should be of special interest to readers who are concerned with a true economic basis for human relationships.

We are very grateful to Dr. Vaughan Rees for sending us a translation of Ching T’ien Ying’s statement about the Jesus Homes and feel sure that our readers will be interested in something written by the actual founder of these communities himself, especially as we know that his Christian discipleship cost him his life. (See *THE PLOUGH*, Winter 1953). From this account it is quite clear that the Jesus Homes arose as a consequence of a deep religious experience.

The article on the new Woodcrest Bruderhof in North America has been written by one of the newer members there, and reflects the enthusiasm with which this beginning has been greeted by those people in the States who already feel that community is a solution to problems brought up to the surface by modern tensions. The song, ‘We would be Building’, is taken from ‘Harmony,’ published by Cooperative Recreation Service, Delaware, Ohio.

‘Paraguayan Cameos’ describes aspects of life in South America. We intend to publish a longer article about the hospital at Primavera in the next number of *THE PLOUGH*.

We should like to repeat an invitation to readers to write an opinion about the various articles published.



# EBERHARD ARNOLD

FROM HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS  
A WITNESS TO COMMUNITY

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The Autumn 1953 number of this periodical was devoted to a selection of writings of and about the late Eberhard Arnold, commemorating what would have been his 70th birthday. The extra edition of this issue includes a collection of his own writings, a biographical sketch by his wife, and early recollections from friends who were in personal contact with him.

It was in the period following the oppressive years of the First World War that Eberhard Arnold, seeking to bring about a *living* expression of true Christian brotherhood, guided the beginning and the growth of our first Bruderhof community.

Now, when preparations for war threaten a third world disaster, more terrible than can be imagined, we feel that Eberhard's prophetic words can be an inspiration and a guide.

*A friend writes from the U.S.A.:* 'I've never read anything that touched me deeper and lifted my spirit more than some of those extracts from the writings and lectures of Eberhard Arnold in the last Autumn issue of your little magazine. He seems to sum up nearly everything I have learned, or thought of, or even wondered about.'

*From Switzerland:* 'The lectures and writings in the third issue of DER PFLUG which you devoted to the life of Eberhard Arnold were a great encouragement to us, appealing deeply to both heart and spirit.'

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