

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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A NEW GENERATION

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUNG MEMBERS

VOLUME III NUMBER 3



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THE PLOUGH is the quarterly journal of the Bruderhof Communities in Europe and South and North 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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STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

EBERHARD ARNOLD

II. 'BUT I SAY UNTO YOU . . .'

Until Jesus appeared the greatest goodness man could offer his God was moral endeavour. He could strive only towards an ethical ideal, scrupulously trying to obey commands and prohibitions. He had to repress contrary inclinations, and attempt to deny and mortify himself and life as such. It was as if he had to gather all his human strength for a laborious ascent or frantic rush up a mountain where the light would not be obscured nor the atmosphere polluted. Jesus brings a righteousness better than any of these human strivings. His righteousness is different in every sense from all that the law and prophets had to say. Certainly these contained a revelation of God's will and character, and Jesus in no way wished to obscure or destroy this truth. If anyone presumes to oppose and break down God's clearly defined will in these moral laws, he sins against that holy thing which God has placed within the human conscience. And, apart from this sanctuary, men have no refuge or security when powers of falsehood, hatred, or greed hound them from place to place. Eventually, having nothing to rely upon, they fall a prey to death. Indeed, not a letter of these ethical laws and moral prohibitions will be struck off for men until the essential reality hidden behind them has become manifest, has been embodied, and has fashioned its own manner of life. These commands and prohibitions are a legalistic mode of expression of the holy 'thou shalt' which calls within us, of the holy 'must' which seeks to determine us within, of the 'unconditional' which dwells in the souls of men. He who belongs to the growing number of those who wish to reject and explain away these commandments, one after another, will be ill-prepared for the future reign of God.

Before the decisive hour when God's word was embodied in Jesus, God had to choose, one might say, a rigid form - expressing the essential character of his holiness as demands and prohibitions. For there was no being in whom this same holiness, this same undiminished

clarity, could find a more living form. The purity of God's will had to fall back upon the letter of the law because there was no pulsing human heart where it could find a true, living expression.

Wherever the simple truthfulness and purity of Jesus' heart and the generous love of his spirit have not yet found a place, the law must step in if everything is not to be destroyed. The state with its violence and the law with its statutes are a necessary safeguard against complete anarchy. As steam would burst a boiler and blow it to bits, so contrary and conflicting elements in mankind would explode and destroy society if it were not for the armour-plating of state-power with its safety-valve laws.

It is very different when, actuated by God's love, men are drawn together and become organs of the wondrous unity of an animated, mystical body, governed by one unifying spirit. Here the necessity of force and coercion, of law and moralistic striving, is done away with, for the underlying spirit – of which the law was only an imperfect expression – has won supremacy. The better, quite other, righteousness brought by Jesus is goodness of heart, a power of growth rooted in the nature of God, a power which expands from the soul outwards to embrace man's whole being. It is the righteousness of a future mankind which does not reckon any more with the mutual restraints, the constraints, and the injurious effects of our present legal system.

This new righteousness, being the goodness of God himself, is unconquerable. It can neither be weakened nor altered because it is the manifestation of a life-energy which seeks to unfold and become active in all spheres of life. This righteousness is goodness itself, for God is good. His goodness is love; his righteousness reveals the strength of his love. Every attempt to be just as good on the basis of legal regulations, principles, or traditions is doomed to failure right from the outset; for that kind of righteousness can never be overflowing, vigorous life. It can produce nothing more than tedious effort or an endeavour to fit into rigid forms which do not spring from the heart.

The scribes and Pharisees held firm convictions, they had moral determination and their will was inflexible. They were better than they were reputed to be – morally upright figures commanding respect. They were devout men who had a very strong feeling of responsibility towards their people, tradition, and religion. What they lacked was the free spirit which comes like a wind from God. What they did not possess was the gift of divine life which inevitably grows and bears fruit because of its very nature; they lacked God himself. God cannot be imitated. There is no substitute for his power. His nature cannot be manufactured. A man cannot compel himself to love. The first works of the first love cannot be fabricated. No amount of intelligent reflection, moral resolution or effort of will can produce the warmth of heart which

comes from God. Jesus has overcome moral law and moralism with something better – which the law can but faintly foreshadow – the life of God himself. In his sphere, warm, active love takes the place of dead moralism.

Jesus brings us a completely different righteousness, he brings the goodness of God because he brings God himself – God who encompasses everything and tolerates no isolation. He brings the living God who only desires life, the God abounding in riches whose being exists in giving, the God of flooding light and radiant warmth. Only he who loses himself in God possesses the new righteousness; only where God himself lives and works does the righteousness of the warmly-pulsing heart take the place of the stony tablets of the law.

ADVENT

Under the gathering gloom we are together.
Out there past the circling miles of field and sea,
Under a sky of ominous bitter weather,
Councils of men confer in secrecy.

Fear is among them, death is in their speech,
Nothingness mounts the guard in the night beyond,
Peace is a phantom dancing out of reach:
But there will be no light when the day has dawned.

People on all the continents lie waiting,
Dreading the thing they are about to see.
Like sheep that have no shepherd, hesitating
Whether to flock in terror or to flee.
And we are together under the gathering gloom,
The flicker of lightning, the intermittent thunder,
Waiting for Jesus in a white-walled room,
By candlelight, with hearts of childlike wonder.
And he will come though the night be terrible,
Though the beast rage within the hearts of men,
Though life be ashes, time unbearable,
His sign will burst the heavens even then.
Peace on earth will be his majesty
And love will flower where his heart has bled;
For Christ is warm and alive and will ever be—
Light and a spring, a mustard seed and bread.

JERE BRUNER.

PARAGUAYAN REFLECTIONS

I. BEHIND NATURE

Here in this wild land we have many opportunities to sense the power of God in nature.

When the great thunderstorms roll up, and the lightning splits the sky above us, with thunder like the crack of doom, when flash follows flash, and explosion follows explosion, each one mightier than the last, and the wind rises with increasing violence – in our hearts is the whisper, 'How much fiercer will it get, how much stronger *can* it get, is there a limit to this awful display of power?' And we do not know if there is a limit, but we know we are utterly helpless to stop or change it.

But God is over all.

Here we can feel our smallness and helplessness before God. Here all our illusions of strength and sufficiency wither, wilt and vanish in the realization of our nothingness.

'What is man that thou shouldst heed him?'

But let us stand also in a field of maize in flower, watching the sheen of sunlight on the leaves and the nodding tassels, remembering how, four days after we had planted the grain, the soft green feathers pushed through the soil.

Here is life, here is something far beyond our greatest achievements. Here is a mystery we do not understand. The more we know about it, the greater is the mystery. As we stand there we realize how the roots are drawing water and nutriments from the soil, how countless micro-organisms are preparing those nutriments from the tissues of other dead plants, how the leaves are taking carbon from the air and manufacturing starch and sugar and cellulose and vitamins, how tiny things, so small that no one has seen them yet passed on from parent to progeny, are controlling the ability of the plant to do this. The more we realize all this, the more keenly we are aware of this mystery; the deeper we have pursued knowledge of these things, the greater must be our wonder and humility before the mystery of life.

Here all our pride of achievement and understanding dwindles to nothingness in the perception of a vital force, a wisdom that surrounds us with the unspoken words I AM.

'I cannot believe in miracles,' said a young man once to a young woman who was preparing vegetables for cooking. She cut a cabbage in half and showed it to him, with all the pattern of the folded leaves.

A young child believes in miracles as a natural or normal part of life because it sees the miracle in everything. And in that seeing, that seeing of miracles to which our older eyes have become dim, the child is very near to God. Verily, unless we become as a little child we cannot see the kingdom of God. Let us beware then of doing anything that

can pull any child away from its vision, away from God. If ever we find that we have no time for the children, that we are too busy to talk to them, or too tired, let us consider well what is that business we are about – is it really more vital than to share time with a child, is it really *more* our Father's business?

It takes much less than a thunderstorm or a field of growing corn to make a child stand in wonder before God. Who has not seen a child transfixed with wonder at a butterfly, a beetle, or a mouse-nest in the grass? A corn plant, a stalk of kaffir, or a tall flowering reed is a thing to be carried aloft and waved in the sky: it is a banner, a torch, a lantern.

If we can capture some of this childlike astonishment, we shall learn more of the kingdom. PHILIP BRITTS.

II. PLANTS IN THE TROPICAL SUNLIGHT

We go forward in faith, on tasks which we know are humanly impossible, in the face of opposition so powerful that our human courage droops like a plant in dry soil.

Our activity, our human works, are like the life of a plant. You have all seen a field of maize wilting and drooping in a blazing sun. Each plant is active, each plant is growing and maturing to produce fruit. If there is not enough water in the soil, the plant withers in the heat of the midday sun, because it is giving out water faster than it can find it with its roots. The sun is sucking water from the leaves and the roots cannot replace it. But if water is given to the roots the plant revives and grows and turns that very sunlight into cells and chlorophyll, and finally into flowers and fruit.

We are like plants in the tropical sunlight. The fierceness of the sun is like the judgment of God, revealing everything, burning, purifying. Here faith is like water at the roots. If we have faith we can face the sun, we can turn the heat and the light into life-giving fruits, into love.

Here we must remember a vital difference between faith and taking things for granted. Faith is always a gift, while the other is human confidence which leaves the working of God within the scope and grasp of human imagination – which forgets that his ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts higher than our thoughts. Faith is a gift like the rain, and like the rain it is something to be watched for, and prayed for, and waited for.

We cannot produce it, and we cannot make it come, but in fellowship of community we can help each other to find it. He who has received faith can encourage the others, as one can give a plant water with a watering can. But ultimately we are dependent on the grace of God for faith just as plants are dependent on the grace of God for rain.

No plant can live without the rhythm of day and night, and we, too, as human beings, need the rhythm of rest and action. Just as the plant uses the hours of the night to recover from the giving out of strength in the day, and to refresh itself with dew, so we also need these times of withdrawal and of quiet.

But the plant does not cease to live or to grow in the night, and for us, too, the times of relative quiet and withdrawal should be times of activity, though of a different kind. We need to seek times when we quieten our hearts and minds in order to receive and absorb the refreshing word of God, the voice of God calling to our hearts, the spirit of God moving in our minds.

At such times our activity is one of listening and of prayer, from which we draw both clarity and courage for further action. Then we go out strengthened and resolved to carry on the battle, to walk in God's ways, to bear witness to the cry of the prophets, in the strength of the Son of Man.

This is the meaning of our meetings together, that the heart meets God and experiences the power of him who is for us being greater than that of him who is against us.

We need to do this more often than we can meet together – especially when we are parted from each other, on long and hard journeys, when we are placed almost alone among the powers of the world, when we are surrounded by that power which does not repent of the works of its hands, nor cease from the worship of idols of gold, of silver and of stone. On such tasks we need to turn often to the refreshing dew of the meeting with God.

Just as many plants perform their most important work at night, in the hours of quietness, like the sorghum or kaffir, which flowers during the hour or two before sunrise, so in our time of turning to God in prayer our most important task is done. In these hours the decisive thing happens which governs all that we may do in the heat of the day.

All our running around and speaking with important people cannot bear the true result unless God works with us and for us. 'Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'

These two things alone can maintain us in that love which overcomes the world: the meeting with God in our hearts – in the heart of each one of us and the united heart of all – and faith which is given as the rain from heaven. We must watch and wait and pray for faith, we must open our hearts for faith as water that feeds the roots.

In these times, when so many are constantly away from us on journeys, when we are parted from others for an unknown time, we are keenly aware of the sorrow and burden of separation. We are aware of the thousands of miles between us, and that the only way we can

overcome this distance is in the unity of our common task, is in turning together to our one God.

We are still more painfully aware of the greater separation between us and our fellow men, who are called to live as brothers in the peace of God, but who have not found the way. We cannot help feeling the great gulf that is fixed between the way of God and the way of the world, and therefore all our prayers must include that cry of the Church – How long? How long? – that prayer for the final triumph of Christ when the kingdom of God shall cover the earth, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor the peoples learn war any more.

PHILIP BRITTS.

III. DROUGHT

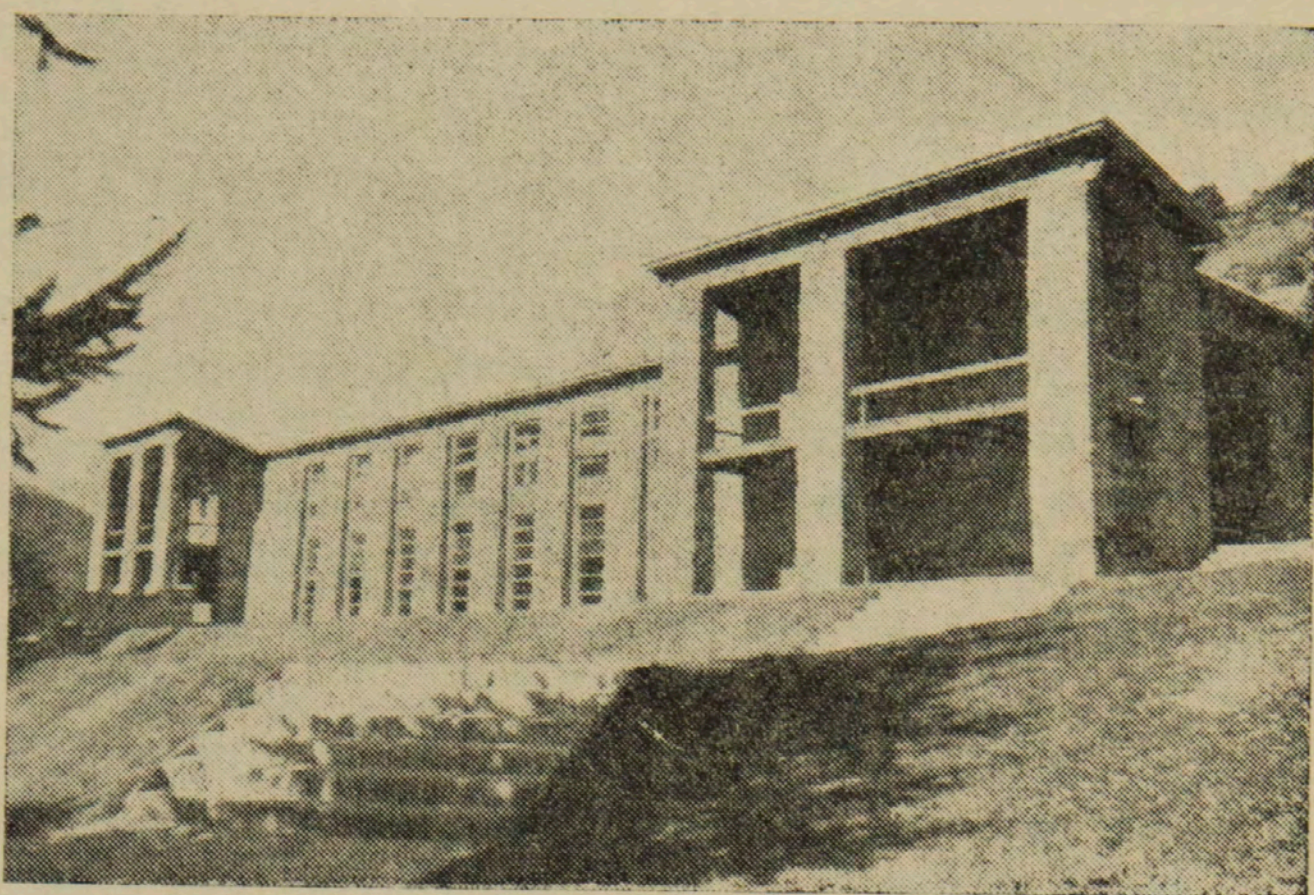
We sleep to the tired wind's dry whisper.
The farewell which a reddened sun spoke
is our lullaby, and the crisp leaves sigh
as evening dies in a haze of dust and smoke.

We dream of soft rain sifting through branches,
of peaceful cattle drinking on the plain.
We see green shoots piercing dark humus
and smooth earth moisten against the grain.

The morning wind is hoarse.
Parched trees wilt and shed curled leaves over the grass.
Even a rose bud dare not open at noon
and birdsong grows subdued as days pass.

Yet in our dreams we have heard the wind sing
through rain-drenched forests over the plain.
The smell of laid dust and soaked earth is ours again.

JOHN RIDLEY BROWN.



AGAPE: A COMMUNITY IN ITALY

I. IMPRESSIONS OF A VISIT

Nearly five thousand feet up in the beautiful Italian Alps, on the grassy hillside above the Waldensian village of Prali, stand the austere stone buildings of Agape. For three hours, Hugo Brinkmann and I zigzagged our way by 'bus into the mountains from Turin to make the first contact between this Christian community and our own. Although Agape is a post-war beginning in community life, it is closely linked through the Waldensian Church with the hard and often bitter struggle of Christian groups in the Middle Ages for a radical discipleship.

During the week we were there, we experienced something of the Christian fellowship that has drawn young people from many parts of the world to take part in Agape's programme of workcamps, study groups, and conferences. The experience of living together, for a shorter or longer time, in peace and brotherhood has sharply challenged many of these young people, and the seeds of the embryo community that is at the heart of Agape's life and activity were sown in that same experience during the initial workcamps in 1947 when the large dining hall and three terraced blocks of bedrooms were built.

The members of this little group dedicate their whole lives to the service of their fellow men. This service takes the form of those workcamps and study courses, during which the members, through example and personal contact, seek to bring the spirit of brotherly love to the participants, or – when no camps take place – of work amid the surrounding population, in the parishes of the Waldensian mountain valleys. One of them went to Sicily to join Danilo Dolci in his work among destitute people there. Others, who have joined the community without becoming resident members, have dedicated

themselves to Christian service in their home neighbourhoods, while maintaining a very close contact with Agape. All members, after a year's probation, commit themselves 'to live together spiritually, and also materially, where possible, in order to be able to serve Christ in the whole of life.'

Their position high in the mountains presents a problem. Much as the 'open door' for all who seek to join their common life is seen by the members as an ideal, it has not yet been found wholly practicable. It is felt that the size of the resident group is at present determined by the accommodation, maintenance and work available. If the would-be member's calling to serve in the community is felt to be a genuine one, however, a way may be found outside the resident group. The difficulty involved in such an arrangement is well recognized in *The Order of the Community*: 'However it should be observed that for the member living in isolation from the community, there is a special difficulty in performing some tasks in the spirit proper to Agape, when he is living in a society whose economic principles are the normal ones of self-interest and competition. In this case it is necessary to maintain a spirit of special watchfulness and prayer.'

The resident members of Agape rise early in the morning while the workcamp is still at rest and share a time of worship and meditation before their individual tasks begin. Campers do most of the cleaning and household chores, but the members lead working operations, carry out the administration, meet and talk with guests, prepare the study programmes and many other tasks. Meals are served in the communal dining room, where members and campers sit together in groups of eight at three sides of each table, leaving the fourth side open to the centre of the room as a symbol of their unity. This summer the workcamp has been extending the kitchen and laying the foundations for offices and library. The subjects of study groups included 'The Value and Meaning of our Life' and 'Individuals, Masses and Communities'.

While we were there, we exchanged views and experiences with the elected pastor, Tullio Vinay, and other members of the community, all of whom – about a dozen – are Waldensians, for the most part by conversion. Among them are two married couples and two unmarried women, the remainder being single men. Openly and frankly, we talked together of the practical details of community life and were not surprised to find that they were tackling the same sort of problems that had faced our own members in the Bruderhof in the earlier years. When men and women are dedicated to Christ, there is always the constant conflict between the human and the divine. That conflict can only be overcome when we are ready to stand united against all obstacles and opposition for what we know to be God's will for us and all men.

As yet the members of Agape have not felt the need to be completely united; for instance, they have not felt it necessary to reach unanimity in their decisions, nor to establish community of goods as a principle, although in practice they come very close to this. They regard themselves as a small group still in the infancy of community life. They spoke freely of their questions and told us that they remained open to learn from advice and experience and would humbly follow the guidance of the Spirit.

Life commitment in Christian discipleship is clearly seen as the ultimate demand and it was inevitable that the gathering of such a radical community should arouse some criticism and opposition in their own Waldensian Church. The members realize they have been hindered by their fear of this situation and its consequences, and now they feel urged to step forward in faith.

In the *Document of the Community*, which formulates the commitment of Agape members, they declare: 'We confess that only the living Lordship of Christ creates a community, as at all times it summons men, from the despair in which they live, to become one people, renewed and open towards a lively hope and a fruitful interrelation with others. According to the message of the Bible, this fundamental experience has three aspects: the recognition of the Lordship of Christ, the gathering of a community, and the service which follows upon this. To confess that Christ is the Lord means to accept, with thankfulness, the radical transformation of the human person that results in a new relation of love between God and men. Inevitably, then, a community is created, because to confess Christ means to be reborn in his spirit, a spirit which transforms our mentality from one that is egocentric to one that is corporate, that identifies itself with others: it means that we stand before others in a new relation to them – no longer of mistrust but of trust; it means that we let ourselves be led by Christ's Word. . . . We ask the Lord to guide us with his Spirit, and not to leave us at the mercy of our own common sense, or of the wisdom of men. Thus we live in the quiet confidence that God's love will not abandon us.

'So we are led to seek for a form of living in community. But in this search we are admonished by past experience, such as we had in the period when Agape was being built. For then, more than once, we were forced to recognize that only the watchful guidance of the Lord could save us from the danger of building a tower of Babel. He then used to admonish us through his Word, and we learnt that every community was but a sign and a preliminary proclamation of the true community which would not pass away, the kingdom of God. For this reason we are now forming a community; but it is only provisional, because the kingdom of God is coming. We wait for this kingdom, and we recognize

it as already present among us in faith. We know that all our labours received their authentic value from the presence of the kingdom in us, and it is to this kingdom that we desire, insofar as it is given to us, to bear our witness.'

We were encouraged and heartened by the determination of this small group in Italy, but one very busy week in their midst was not enough. That together we may attain a deeper awareness of each other's convictions, hopes and strivings, our members look forward to longer visits to Agape, and we trust that members from that community may soon find it possible to spend some time among us at the Bruderhof.

A clear expression of Agape's concern for a true community life as an answer to human strife and self-interest has been given in the following article by Tullio Vinay from *News from Agape*.

DERRICK P. FAUX.

II. SEARCH AFTER COMMUNITY

The experience we have had during these last years of life together would tell, even had we not sensed it right from the beginnings of Agape, that it was impossible to separate this work we are doing from a search after community life, or, even more, from a concrete expression of community. Agape has aimed at being above all and first of all a preaching of the love of Christ and a witness borne to this, even though its witness be uncertain and feeble. But despite the difficulties which our own nature and the structures of the world place in the way of this calling, the preaching of Christ's love, if it was heard in sincerity, had to change substantially our relations with our brothers who are placed by our side, and with all men. If we discovered 'in fear and amazement that God loved us', we had also to discover or rediscover the persons of our brothers in a new light, and know them under a new economy. We had also to realize that that brotherly communion which, in Christ, unites us to them is the greatest of all gifts that there is for us at this time, and is a 'true consolation upon earth' as was said, which must be sought after as something by which each helps the other and is helped on the path of their common Christian calling. Recognition that Christ had not called *me* but *us* to preach his love already made us into a community, even if its outlines were not yet clear and its status not yet recognized. In the unity of our calling was already to be found the cohesive power of the community that was to be.

All this was more than sufficient to move us to search after a form of community life. Nevertheless, at that time two contributory factors were also operative, and of them, one is active even today. It must be remembered that we were in a time just after the war. Harsh experiences had left their mark on our spirits – experiences of grief and human wickedness, of our weakness and sin, of hatred and death. In all these,

however, there was not lacking the preaching of him who alone is merciful and good, to summon us back, and in him and through him a way was open to men whereby we could hope for new relationships, and a new communion of man with man, and of man with God. Hence arose the search after that community life which he was setting before us, as a means of living and as a parable of his kingdom. In the second place we were aware of something which even today we experience: how our parishes become progressively more bourgeois, how in them there reigns a complete individualism, and the families themselves, which should be living cells of the Church, too often become dangerous tumours which sap away its vitality. The churches are dying from this disease, and unless they can find again the true meaning of brotherly communion and the life of a community with its overflowing and self-renewing vigour, their power to bear effective witness will gradually become dissipated and finally extinct. Here, for us, it became an inescapable necessity to seek after, and bear witness to, this community life.

Preaching the love of Christ in the world of today inevitably led us to take seriously human brotherhood in this tormented generation of ours, and again to take seriously the community of the churches, amid the stifling atmosphere of indifference which characterizes contemporary Christianity. But this preaching could not continue being abstract and academic: it had first of all to be directed against ourselves, so that we could take up a position with regard to our own Christian calling, and clarify to ourselves what it means to be in Christ today, here, among our brothers and in human society. If, afterwards, this personal decision and clarification of our own calling became, or should become, a voice that summons the whole Church, this is, or will be, obviously in God's hands, because he can do what he wills with the weakness and nothingness that we are. Although we shall never cease to be amazed at it, this is not the first time in the history of the Church that he has shown forth his strength by means of human weakness, and made men of no worth into implements and vessels of his grace.

Of the three points of Agape's programme (ecumenical encounter, community life, and study of the scriptures) the second was at the beginning certainly the least clear, and yet it was of this that we got more and more experiences, this that most of all became part of our flesh right from the first exhausting days of the workcamp, and it was this that brought us most anguish in the darker periods and yet consoled us the most. It demanded of us that we should examine our consciences and confess our sin, it pushed us on with burning hopes and plunged us into despair, it compelled us to face and face again the problem of the Christian calling and of our own criticisms and those of

others. We can say that this has been the thorn in our flesh: we have passed stormy nights on the banks of the Jabbok, and we still continue to walk limping, but perhaps God will be willing to create glory to his great name out of our experience. At least, so we hope.

It is difficult to write the history of the experiences in community living that we have had at Agape. Often they are personal facts – even though there seems here to be a contradiction in terms – and for this reason they have been evaluated in various ways. In the first autumn (1947) we all felt the presence of community – but was this called forth merely by our common struggle, or by a real consciousness of unity in Christ? To what degree were these two elements mixed with each other? And to what point did one or the other predominate in the mind of each of us?

Or again: can we say that what is given us is immediately understood and evaluated? Is it valid even if not fully understood, or only when one is fully conscious of its meaning? Nevertheless, it is a fact that at the end of the first workcamp we were closely united with each other, and our talk and thoughts were ever again turning towards the community that was to come into being, even if this was as yet very imprecisely envisaged.

In the years that followed one went further. But then some of us had spent the winter together while others turned to evolving personal critique of the happenings in the camp and of their spiritual consequences for us and for many others. Then the desire to attain to a deeper understanding of men within their own personal and social problems led us often to think about communities of production or communities of service in more depressed regions, almost in the line of the work now done by Danilo Dolci, but combining with this an emphasis on a more explicit evangelizing work in the pure sense of the term. Then, at last, came the dedication of Agape (1951) and, with this, the necessity for us to make an honest decision about our own position with relation to the preaching that had taken place during the former years. The result was a resident group with the very provisional characteristics of being a community for service, committing themselves for a period of between four and twenty-four months. That each member should stay longer was not considered opportune by reason of our fear of the risks to which such a community might be exposed from a theological point of view, even though from consideration of our witness and service a longer period of commitment was ever more loudly being called for. A 'definitive' community was envisaged more easily in some more distant region, Calabria for example, or Lucania, where the extremities of human misery around us would have kept us from institutionalization, and would have demanded from us that we 'die' every day with our brothers who were dying of hunger or despair.

But a disquieting question arose: why make plans to serve the Lord somewhere far away when it is here that the Lord has set us and here that he requires our service from us? Was it not that we had to become implements of his purpose, in a work in which we had spiritually grown up together, and which now was needing us? Blessed are the little children, who do not know how any experience may have been tested already by history and abated by it, and therefore are not afraid to encounter it. We saw then that the conflict between theology and daily life was due not merely to weakness of the flesh, but also to the fear to stain the one with the other, and our course did not coincide with ecclesiastical orthodoxy. The risks were numerous, we were men far more prudent than many thought we were, and we saw more our own coming deficiencies than we did the Lord's help, which was able to guide our feet down even this thorny path.

The community of Agape cannot be understood except as an answer to a calling to which, in the end, we had to bow ourselves, a calling in no wise greater or more valid than other Christian callings, but nevertheless one that we had to answer. The tension became ever stronger until before it the risks, the theological qualms, and the fear of outside criticism became less important than the compulsion to come to a clear apprehension of our position and to take a common decision. Had the 'fig tree' not given fruit in that season when it was visited, it would have been cut down. The 'fig tree' was not the work of Agape, but our own selves. We should have been cut down.

Certainly we had often felt strongly the conflict between our calling as Christians and the facts of our daily life, between the 'I can do no other' and the sad, daily 'the evil that I would not, that I do': but the moment came when this conflict became so acute that it finished in a cry of despair: 'Who will free me from this body of death?' Some of us retired into a chalet at Orgeveaux in Switzerland, to seek to clarify the particular calling, and to sketch the outlines of the community that was to be formed. Orgeveaux represented the collapse of all our programmes, and of all that our strength could accomplish, and our abandoning ourselves to the programme and strength of the Lord. The last words of the document that we wrote there express the spiritual attitude of the community that was coming into being: 'We ask the Lord to guide us with his Spirit, not to leave us at the mercy of our own good sense, or of the wisdom of men. Therefore we live serene in the confidence that God's love will not abandon us.'

This *Document of the Community* was received with joy by others because it expressed their common feelings: so was born the community of Agape, uncertain on a human plane, but joyful in Christ.

TULLIO VINAY.

A NEW GENERATION

I. BUILDING TOGETHER AT WHEATHILL

A new Bruderhof school had to be built before the next winter set in. Cleeton Court, the beautiful old manor home, has served our community well for many years, but its rooms are no longer adequate. The house is full to overflowing and another class is due to move up from the Nursery School in September.

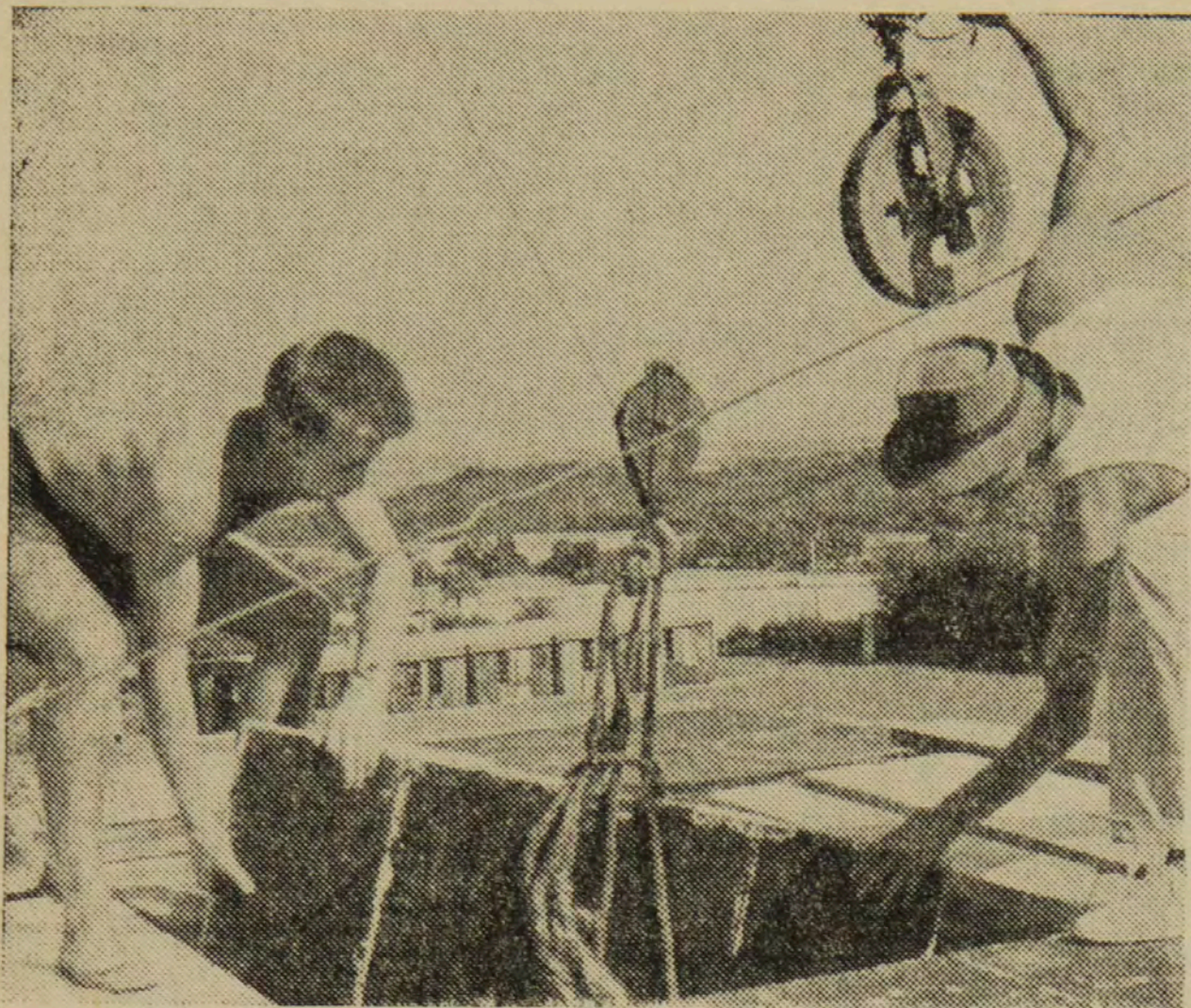
Five large sectional buildings were bought at a sale, and the plans were made and approved by all. Things were ready for the work to start, but who was to do it? Workers had to be found, for the Bruderhof building team was straining to complete other urgent jobs. That is how the idea of a work camp first arose. It was actually made possible thanks to Paul Krahé of the *Nothelfergemeinschaft der Freunde* in Frankfurt, who arranged to send an international group of young people, all eager to lend their strength to some worth-while project.

One of the buildings was put up quickly for the accommodation of our helpers, the four rooms to be used as dormitories, common room, and kitchen. We young people of the community painted the rooms with a light distemper so that the whole house looked quite inviting. The land for the school buildings was measured and pegged out. With the help of good friends the necessary tools had been got together, and the first building materials were also there. Work could begin!

Friday evening, the day before the official opening of the camp, the first young workers arrived. Members of our Bruderhof youth group were on the spot to receive them and later were in turn freed from their other duties to live and work at the camp. Two Danes drove up on a motor-cycle. A young girl travelled from Germany by plane, others hitch-hiked, arriving at all hours of the day and night. Many were students and a number still attended high school. There were apprentices, teachers starting their careers, boys going into business. An engineer came, an interpreter, an artist, and a jolly young tax collector.

On arrival we work-campers were complete strangers to one another, but this was not to last. A huge pot of tea was brewed, we gathered round and soon exchanged experiences and ideas. One or two girls inspected the kitchen and started planning menus; a couple of enthusiastic boys strolled over to the building site. A little group had collected outside on the grass, singing folk songs to the accompaniment of a guitar. We were all very different, but we had this in common: enthusiasm for the work, and a great hope that the camp might be an experience to enrich our lives.

Monday morning. The sky promised a fine day. We gathered in silence before breakfast. In the course of such early morning meetings



one of the group was sometimes able to speak or read a word of significance for us all.

After a hearty helping of British porridge, we all trooped out to the building site. The work went with a good swing and plenty of fun. Lorries came and went trying to keep up with their deliveries of bricks, sand, and wood. The work was a joy and so were the meals. Coming in tired after a hard day's work, with the glorious sense of having achieved something, there is nothing so good as a well cooked meal.

We soon got to know one another through living and working together. Right from the beginning there was an atmosphere of mutual trust and frankness. Any criticisms we had were spoken about openly so that tensions which arose were quickly resolved. 'Having things out'

in this way led us very much together as a group and helped towards a mutual understanding. The days were all too short to do everything we planned.

In the evenings after work all the young folk of the Bruderhof community came up to the camp to do folk-dancing, play games, or sing to the accompaniment of a banjo until it grew dark and cool and the moon rose behind the old Clee Hills. Often we gathered brushwood, lit a camp fire, and sat around it singing our evening songs and ballads. Other evenings we just sat together and read or talked. The first theme we debated amongst ourselves was 'friend or brother?' These words were used so often because our helpers called themselves friends whereas here at the Bruderhof we talked about brothers. We tried to determine the actual meaning of these words, going back to their origin, and asked ourselves if we can honestly call a man brother if we do not treat him as such. Should not recognition be followed by deed? Should we not revolutionize our lives if brotherhood is to be the goal of our strivings? The talk went deeper. 'You try to live that way at the Bruderhof - tell us more about it.' Then questions came thick and fast. Most of the helpers in our group had little idea of the Bruderhof community. They had just come to England to a work camp to help where there was need and to learn English. So they were astonished to find a group of people living differently from anything they had so far known, a group who had departed from the usual pattern of living and were trying to create a new order, in which each worked for the others, as it is in a large family.

Is such a thing possible? Isn't communal life contrary to human nature? Doesn't individuality get lost in the community? - Digging ditches, carrying bricks and building foundations, we discussed our questions and our views on life. Surprisingly enough this often gave quite an impetus to the work. Particularly when there was a sharp difference of opinion, an increased effort in the work seemed to support the rightness of the point of view that was being represented. Each would tackle his job with grim determination while he pondered the next point to prove his argument.

In order to understand one another better we asked different people to tell us something about their country or their own personal life. One had experienced life in a warehouse, another in a tax office, the next in a home for children suffering from mental disturbances. One young man had wandered through Lapland, had watched the Northern Lights and the Midnight Sun. Another had lived in the Sahara, worked with the Berber Bedouins, and experienced the monotony of the burning heat by day and the splendour of the desert sky at night. A young girl told us about the Japanese occupation of Java. She had been interned with other Dutch settlers and had been

forced to worship the god of the sun. Every morning they had been lined up to bow before the rising sun. After the war the Indonesians had risen with ruthless determination to regain freedom and had taken revenge on their Dutch overlords. She had had to leave the country.

A young artist left Eastern Germany to find freedom in the West. He was disappointed. He felt that Western Germany had no time for creative freedom. 'This is not the place for dreamers. We are living in 1955 and the gods of our day are the bank and cinema, the private car and the well-paid job. Live and be happy for tomorrow we die.' So he left Western Germany and emigrated to Finland. Here, he felt, was a country of the future.

A Quaker told us about the Society of Friends. The longing to be quiet and listen was something we all appreciated – that was why we began our day with a silence. But how do we know that what we hear is really God's voice and not our own? Is there not a danger of confusing the two? Is it possible that there are contradictory truths or should it not be said that God wants men to unite in serving him? Should not the same truth come to us in a communal, listening silence if each puts his own ego in the background and is really honest with himself?

An American student was waiting to be recalled to the U.S.A. for trial. He was one of the twenty-five young pacifists who refused to take part in a Civil Defence drill. He believed in passive resistance and said it was important that men not only recognize war as something evil but that they stand together to resist it. Only in this way could there be world peace. There were different opinions about this. In fact, during the whole work camp the questions of war and conscription were what occupied us most, also in personal talks.

Everyone thought that war was horrible and hoped for peace. But how could it be brought about? Is it possible through international understanding? Surely pacifism is just cowardice, an escape from reality. Don't you people at the Bruderhof withdraw from it all, or can it really be that everyone must begin with himself so that under the highest law of love an entirely new order of life can be created?

A young boy said, 'I think I shall come and join you one day, perhaps when I am old and can find no other way through'. But one of the girls answered quickly, 'No, that is not right. If you are going to build a new kingdom, then start while you are young and strong'.

II. OPEN AIR SPEAKING

This is an extract taken from a letter written by our young people to their friends in Germany.

The Bull Ring is a large open place in the centre of Birmingham where everyone has the freedom to stand up on a box and speak freely. Passers-by often stand and listen, but sometimes the speaker is just

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talking into empty air. There are Conservatives, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Methodists, Communists and others, wishing to put forward their particular philosophies and each trying to shout the others down.

All sorts of people stand round the speakers. Here rich and poor gather together. Only too often one sees traces of real suffering and need on the faces of the listeners: bitterness, sorrow, boredom – hardened and sometimes hopeless faces. . . . Weather seems to make no difference, in sunshine, frost or rain people stand under the open sky listening first to one and then another. Every now and again little groups of ragged children wander in and stand in front of the speaker, unconcernedly chewing gum and listening intently.

Many of you know that some members of the Wheathill community speak at the Bull Ring most weekends. Naturally we young folk like to go too. A few weeks ago we had an idea. We would brighten up the old Bull Ring with folk dances and songs, and perhaps we might get courage to mount the soap-box. So we set off one rainy Saturday, six girls, their heads garlanded with flowers, and six boys.

Although the place was empty when we arrived we had hopes of attracting a crowd. It kept on raining, but we were not to be put off and danced bravely through the puddles. People soon came from all sides, eager to know who we were and what we wanted. It was not usual to see a group of young people folk-dancing in the Bull Ring!

We stopped dancing and one of us got on to the box and told about our life of peace and community of goods as an expression of the radical discipleship of Jesus. . . . A few voices were raised among the crowd, 'Just more pious talk'. 'Be quiet we want to hear about it' . . . Our speaker went on: 'This life makes us joyful, as you can see by our folk dances and songs. All who want to share this life and joy are heartily welcome to come to us.'

An old workman turned to his neighbour: 'It seems to have something genuine about it – not only talk.' – A warm discussion followed and several of us took turns on the box answering the questions put to us by the crowd. 'What do you say to the State? What about war and re-armament? Can't we change the world through politics? Why has it got to be a *Christian* community? Didn't Jesus come to save men's souls, not to change the order of the world?'

We could have talked for hours but we had to stop at 10 p.m. Many still plied us with questions or bought copies of *THE PLOUGH* as we made our way back to our car, and when we drove off singing they waved us goodbye. What had been said seemed so improbable that some decided to come and visit our community to see for themselves whether such a life was really possible.

FORUM

A Navajo Indian writes:

Your cordial and welcome letter, plus the issue of THE PLOUGH, were both well received. Yes, I would be glad to try and send you a few facts and eye-witness accounts of my Navajo friends and neighbours. However, I must warn you that I'm practically uneducated and the writing will be rough and coarse, requiring much editing.

Of recent weeks very little time has been spent at home, Navajo Mountain. A crisis situation has developed among the Hopi people (who live about 100 miles south of Navajo Mountain) and I've been running around trying to 'help out'. The Hopis are the only Red Indian Conscientious Objectors to war, and many of them have served in prison rather than aid or abet war.

Since Hopis advocate, and have practised for well over 2,000 years, the truly consistently *peaceful* way-of-life which many peoples and nations profess to seek but very few have found; since Hopis have always had a nearly perfect example of that most nearly perfect environment for the fullest development of contemporary man; since Hopis preach and closely practise the small, self-sufficient, agro-industrial community, religiously oriented; and since because of recent and long prophesied 'signs' Hopis have finally started to wake up and stretch and are preparing to stand up and speak to the world (as prophesied) the words which will help said 'world' to shudder and crumble and really begin the founding in earnest of 'the Father's Kingdoms on earth as they are in heaven', the following notice may be of interest to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO WHOEVER CAN READ

The traditional Hopi Indians (of the North American Continent); who were the very first inhabitants of this land; who received the full instructions of the Creator's Divine Plan for Earth Life at the time they arrived on this world; who were warned to never depart from that Plan lest destruction of *all* life come to this island; who were given the responsibility to hold in trust for all Indian people (and righteous non-Indians, I understand—c.) this territory of North America; who received tokens of authority and responsibility for that land and that peaceful way-of-life; those very same Hopi ('Hopi' means 'peaceful' or 'the peaceful people') have not forgotten either the Creator's Instructions or the Creator's Trusteeship. Neither have they ever, by treaty or agreement, or any other manner, with the United States of America, or any other people or government, actually relinquished those divine gifts and responsibilities. Hopi still have sovereignty of self and land. Because of recent events, Hopi have decided *this is the time* to make known to a people perched on 'the precipice of hell' certain facts which

have long been hidden and kept secret. With the wish to have an audience with the President of the United States, four Hopi spokesmen plan to start for Washington, D.C., on May 9th, 1955, and expect to arrive in that city on May 20th.

HOPIS APPEAL FOR INDEPENDENCE

Adapted from the Washington Post, 19th May 1955.

Six Hopi Indians, disturbed by an ancient prophecy, came down from the mesa tops of Northern Arizona to Washington last week to seek their tribe's independence from the United States. The atomic bomb, together with strangling bureaucratic restrictions, will destroy their people and all American life, they say, and so the Hopis want independence. They also came to air some grievances.

Led by the Sun Clan adviser, Dan Katchongva, the six, wearing home-made mocassins and beads, made their appearance here unannounced and without pre-arrangement. They first set out to see the 'top man' in Washington, but 'he was all tied up, they told us', sighed the interpreter, Thomas Banyacya, of the Coyote Clan, Oraibi village.

They did get an interview with the top man on Indian business, Glenn L. Emmons, Commissioner of the Interior Department's Indian Affairs. From him, they obtained assurance for an unprecedented council between Washington and Hopi. A commission will investigate Hopi grievances in July and talk with the traditional leaders in their own villages.

Their A-bomb concern is based on the old Hopi prophecy that goes something like this: 'Someday there will be a road in the sky, a machine will ride this road and drop a gourd of ashes and destroy the people and boil the land. There will be ashes all over.'

Regarding the Hopi stand for independence, the interpreter said the surviving 4,000 Hopis want 'to live in peace as brothers' (Banyacya has served two terms in prison as a conscientious objector to war). 'We cannot have everlasting life by destroying the life or property of anyone.' The Hopi villages deserve their independence he said, 'because we never joined the United States, and we were here almost 2,000 years before the United States "claimed" us. We have never been in a war with the United States and therefore have never been conquered or subdued, neither have we ever signed a treaty or agreement with Washington or anybody else which would limit or abolish our original sovereignty.'

As for the persecutions of Hopis by Washington, Katchongva's father spent time in Alcatraz because he held true to the Creator's instructions and therefore refused to comply with the government's instructions. The Sun Clan adviser himself had 250 head of sheep when

he resolved to continue living the Hopi-Way and ignore the bureaucratic grazing regulations. He ended up with a literal 'ball and chain', working on a prison road gang four years. Now he has no sheep, nor even horses, with which to work his gardens. All this because he holds to his ancient traditional religion – a truly peaceful way of life – and refuses to accept doles, pensions, subsidies, rules and regulations of Washington, D.C.

The Hopis also objected to recent legislation permitting States to sell liquor to Indians.

Arizona, U.S.A.

C.

A Bulgarian questions Community:

I am impressed by the life and work of the Bruderhof and of the Tolstoyans here in Bulgaria. I believe that the basis of human relations should be love. I accept Christ's teaching: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. But I don't believe in divine power, only in the power of reason. The experiments such as the Bruderhof, Tolstoyans, and others can only be examples – practical examples to show that one can live in a brotherly way – but look! – many people live on the earth – millions – and only a few hundred members of the Bruderhof, Tolstoyans, and other similar organizations. Are they enough to transform the lives of all the others?

I believe that all organizations that believe in brotherhood and peace and the rule of love among men must spread the ideas as widely as possible by every available means. Imprisoned in the work communities of the Bruderhof, Tolstoyans, and others, we should be like monks in a monastery. You say that the doors of the Bruderhof are open – is that enough? How many people visit the communities? Certainly hundreds, thousands – do they all understand your fine life? After the visit, do they make an effort to transform their own way of life? The egoism which rules among men is the parent of hate, ignobility and hypocrisy – three fundamental columns of human unhappiness. One must fight against the cursed human vices not only by communal societies but by all human means – in the first place by the wide distribution of printed publications and the personal example of an honest life.

I do not refute the excellent example of your organization, but I think that it is not strong enough to change the way of life on earth. I'm a friend of all who work for the rule of love and brotherhood among men and I seek the means by which we bring the heavenly kingdom on to the earth more quickly. I shall be happy if we may continue our correspondence.

Pazargik, Bulgaria.

Translated from Esperanto.

L.L.

Paula Thijssen replies:

Dear Friend: We cannot feel that what you call the 'cursed human vices' can be overcome in the first place by the wide distribution of publications, or even by the personal example of an honest life alone. After all one must not forget that the teaching of Christ which you quote has received more publicity than any other message and has been translated into more languages than any other writing. It speaks very clearly against the egoism which rules amongst men, yet people continue to live in a competitive society where we have found that 'to love one's neighbour as oneself' was impossible for us. Innumerable individuals have read 'Love thine enemy' and yet they set out to kill him with whatever weapon their reason can think of. The social and economic environment as well as individuals must give an example of how life can be lived in the spirit of the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount is not for the individual soul alone; Jesus says 'we' and 'us' and 'our' and points out clearly that the most important thing is the kingdom. Therefore we find it necessary first to do what we want to proclaim – to try to live as brothers; otherwise we have nothing to say. And in the doing of this we have found that reason alone is not sufficient.

The Christu Kulam in Ceylon:

I am very interested in a community leaflet from the Society of Brothers in U.S.A. which a friend has sent me. My own home being in Yorkshire, England, I decided to write to you at Wheathill. . . . In the *Christu Kulam* (a family of Christ) there are two ministers' families, a teacher's family, and myself a deaconess – seven adults and seventeen children. For six years we have been in close fellowship, though living and working in different places. Now, through no planning of our own, we are stationed within ten miles of each other. We join in evangelistic work as well as living a disciplined life. This year we have begun to have 'all things in common' and to live to the budget we have drawn up for each family. The government has given us ten acres of land which we have to clear and cultivate. This is the beginning of our project.

In 1958 I hope to retire from my work here and settle in our farm. We hope to get more land, we hope others will join us, we hope to serve the colonists around us, and in everything live a life of sharing. St. Matthew, 5, I Cor. 13, and Acts 2, 44 will be our guide. . . . I have been a missionary in Ceylon since 1931 – the others in the *Christu Kulam* are Ceylonese Tamils.
Puttur, Ceylon.

E.B.

NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

Grace Rhoads of North America, who joined our community in Paraguay in December 1954 and who came to Wheathill in August of this year to help with the publication work, has written about her first experiences at Wheathill.

Two kindergarten children have just brought a note to me to the office. Actually, the note was about our weaving – we are planning an advertisement for insertion in *THE PLOUGH* – but they added blithely that I was wanted in the kindergarten, where I work in the early morning. So I have had to hop-skip-and-jump down hill with them from the Upper Bromdon to Lower Bromdon farm and plod back alone to the typewriter, where I was just going to write about impressions of Wheathill. Children have imaginations, and no doubt they thought that was what the note contained, or else just wanted me to come, and it is nice to be wanted.

Welcoming the kindergarten in the morning is one of the happy duties which may come to a single sister at the Bruderhof. Sometimes it is hard for a child to leave the family, especially when father may just be starting off in a car or mother passing through on the way to duty in the toddler house. But kindergarten is fun, too, with the pet lamb, the sand-box, and the Triangle set and building blocks from Woodcrest for rainy days. Then there are errands such as fetching fresh towels and bibs from our fine new laundry, and walks to some good trees to climb.

When I first came I kept stopping to look out at the hills. After New Jersey and Paraguay it is so exciting to gaze across at the patchwork of fields sewn together with dark green hedges; it reminds one of the Berkshires in Massachusetts. And what a wonderful sunny September it has been – the driest summer in years, people say. I was almost sorry to go so soon to the International F.O.R. Conference in Switzerland, but the weather has continued warm even after three weeks away, the last two spent in making contacts in Geneva, Berne and Zürich, with friends and organizations old and new.

Now I am back, among the many visitors who come in summer and autumn. Muriel Lester worked in an over-night visit, bringing her colleague Amy Bishop, before setting off for Indo-China. Mary Hoxie Jones looked in one afternoon from Birmingham with her cousin Dorothy Cadbury. Frank Williams from Leicester (former Friends Service Council staff member) came for tea one Sunday, and a friend from Switzerland who worked as a nurse with Schweitzer in Africa spent three days here helping us. Showing these friends around gave me a wonderful opportunity to see all the things that are going on – the sheep-dog rounding up the flock, the lambs getting their bottles of medicine, the school house at Cleeton Court, empty because it was

holiday time, and the children picking blackberries or lifting potatoes, the exhibit the children had fixed up in their caravan with ferns around the stuffed animals and birds a museum had discarded. Test tubes and apparatus were gathered on an upstairs table for a budding laboratory. The school paper was posted in the hallway, with Spanish postcards and several letters from one of the children who went recently with her mother to Paraguay. The schoolrooms are picturesque, but the old wooden floors under the 300-year-old beams make a lot of noise when children's feet are moving around above another classroom, and one is glad that new school huts are being erected at the top of the hill by the international work camp.

In Paraguay one never felt so removed from life as people imagine, but it is good to be here, within reach of Woodbrooke Thursday night lectures, occasional events in Birmingham (our young people have been to a play about the Jesuits in Paraguay) and the children can go to the zoo or Cadbury's works or the county fair as well as making educational visits to everything from the fire department to the castle in Ludlow. On Sunday evening a van-load may go to the Birmingham Bull Ring to speak in the same place where our eggs and poultry and cabbages are sold on Saturdays.

Life is not all going out, however, for young and old. Last night, for example, three of the sisters were making blackberry jam until well after midnight, following a picking Sunday. I had helped in the afternoon to cut the little 'wood apples', as the Germans call crabapples, to get the necessary pectin. We could use several more workers on fruit and vegetables at this season. Then there has been straw to bale and pile and more hay to stack to replace that which had been destroyed by fire in August, causing such a big loss just as we were rejoicing over a glorious crop.

In between the serious events and hard work we relax over some one's birthday table setting forth clothing for the year and little extras like syrup, hyacinth bulbs, a scarf, cards or quotations copied by friends. We celebrate on the Sunday after a birthday because there is more free time at weekends.

Yes, we have little special treats in spite of being a poor community. We feel that after doing our best to earn our living by raising sheep and poultry, growing vegetables, weaving, our new little industry of tinning a special clay for schools, and various individual projects, we should have small joys, too. It is important for all and especially for those who have come from sad backgrounds, whether of health or family life or mental illness, and whether young children or older people, to share in our family life. The sense of security in being loved and cared for is one of the great things in community. Not everything is perfect – whoever saw such a place? – but there is here as in Primavera a quiet sureness of purpose, a willingness to sacrifice, a concern for the world on the deepest level. So I am not sorry to have left Paraguay, which I loved, and to have come to the Wheathill Bruderhof in England.

GRACE RHOADS.

A VISITOR TO WOODCREST

The following extract is taken from a circular letter written by Heloise Brainerd to her friends after a visit to the Woodcrest community at Rifton, N.Y. Heloise Brainerd of Washington D.C. is the chairman for Inter-American Affairs of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Climaxing an interesting summer, I had a most challenging stay of five days at Woodcrest, Rifton, N.Y., where the Society of Brothers about a year ago established an American Bruderhof or Community of Brothers. . . .

What a warm welcome awaits the visitor to Woodcrest! Even though several leading spirits were away on a special mission, everyone seemed glad to see me and right away I found myself on a first-name basis with all.

Of course guests soon ask to be put to work like everybody else – and there is so much work to do! Every able-bodied man was cultivating or picking vegetables, doing carpentry or wood-working, driving a car or truck, or working at some other vigorous task. The women, too, besides taking care of the community's children, were cooking in the one big kitchen, laundering (oh, those long lines of clean clothes *every* day!) making or mending dresses, towels, and a thousand and one other articles, nursing the sick, or sharing in the clerical and other lighter work, like driving. But always the community members had time to get acquainted with newcomers, watch the children (their own or other people's), and be generally sociable. The day started at 6 a.m. and ended after a 7.15 supper, with meetings many evenings and sometimes a social gathering, such as folk-dancing on Labour Day evening. The singing after the meals was something to be long remembered. On Sunday there was a 9.30 service for the children (and adults); about 10.0 one for the adults only. Inspirational literature was read aloud, and there was singing, mostly hymns, from a lovely song book.

What good times the children have! Always outdoors when not in school, monkeying with the tractor or whatever else they found around, taking care of each other, and often helping the grown-ups at their tasks – a perfect set-up for 'learning by doing'. The older children sometimes picked apples and did other light chores. Everyone works – especially father! and *nobody* sits around all day! I should add that the older children go to neighbouring cities for advanced schooling.

Of course there is sharing of all material things; everybody turns in his entire property and income. But far more important is the sharing of spiritual interests; complete dedication to God and one's neighbour is demanded; an absolute giving up of all self-interest and personal concern. In other words, the carrying out of Jesus' two great commandments. They 'attempt to demonstrate that peaceful and creative community on the basis of the early Christian way of living is possible today'. They really *live* their religion, and those who are there

find they can best do it by living in a community. 'The community means freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from frustration and conflict, freedom from self.' 'You can help people, meet their needs, and redeem their circumstances only in so far as you are ready to identify yourself with them. It is not enough to give your substance: you must give yourself. That was the pattern of the Incarnation.' (THE PLOUGH, Summer 1953, p. 25). As a Dutch member wrote in another issue of THE PLOUGH, Autumn 1954, 'Jesus and his early disciples lived in a communal way, and he called his followers to do the same.' (See Matthew 8, 20; Luke 15, 33, etc.) We moderns read those passages without thinking much as to what they really mean.

The matter of 'escape from reality' by not living in the work-a-day world was much discussed, and there is an interesting discussion of this in THE PLOUGH, Summer 1953, pp. 29-30. Evidently the giving up of material possessions is the least difficult; to give up your self-concern, to honour and help others at all times, are much harder. 'It is the daily struggle for each to give up the free disposal of "own time" and "own talents".' Of course, if one can really be that dedicated in ordinary places or in unusual positions of leadership – and many are so living – that is being real followers of Christ; but 'it is always difficult to maintain true Christian standards in the world as it is at the moment', and each of us has to face it, if we are honest: *am* I so living, and would this 'community' living help *me*? HELOISE BRAINERD.

BOOK REVIEWS

THREE WAYS OF LOVE

Two recent books by Pitirim A. Sorokin* represent an academic research – and it is often a pedestrian search – into all human efforts towards selfless love. Professor Sorokin explains how the conviction came to him that mankind has to find a new way for itself. When he was a prisoner in Russia for four years after the first world war, he experienced endless horrors of human bestiality, death, and destruction, to the heartbreaking point. At that time he noted in his diary: 'The only way towards a mental, moral, or material millennium is the royal road of all-giving creative love, not only preached but consistently practised.' Thirty-five years have passed and he has established the Harvard Research Centre in Creative Altruism to further his conviction by experimental study.

'Life in nature is a hidden death,' so begins this search for love; and humble love is the deliverance from this death, a love that replaces the struggle for existence with unity and mutual aid to make a harmonious cosmos. But 'such a love is now only at its beginning in the world of men, at about the same stage as is reason in the animal world.'

* *The Ways and Power of Love and Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth. A Symposium.* (Beacon Press, Boston, U.S.A., 1954).

Sorokin still has the faith to assert (p. 11): 'eventually love will grow and conquer death on this planet, in this world.' That assurance he does not win from science.

For the renewal of occidental society and of man, Sorokin presents three ways of life that embody altruistic love: Yoga, especially in the ashram of Sri Aurobindo; monasticism; and finally the 'contemporary free brotherhoods', indicating Hutterians, Mennonites, and the Society of Brothers. Remarkably, it is a communal way of life he presents in all three as salve for the ills of society.

Yoga appears as of great antiquity, arising out of the oldest culture of man. It presents an Indian memory, parallel to the garden of Eden, in the myths about the remote epoch when all human beings could mount to heaven in a physical way, when man enjoyed full liberty (when he could fly, as the myths put it) and could converse with God. The Yogi seeks to live in an eternal present in complete self-mastery, without ecstasy or magic but in full lucidity, a state realizable today only at the cost of long and painful efforts. The early Yoga is here represented as the boldest invention of man for his liberation and transfiguration worked by his own efforts of will, knowledge and desire.

If Sorokin sees Yoga as a hope for our western culture, however, the symposium states the cost. The Yogi and western man represent two opposite poles of human behaviour. No compromise can exist between the two . . . no reconciliation is possible (p. 52). If western man is to turn to Yoga, he has to go through 'the great Death' which leads to rebirth. But so long as personal non-attachment is valued in Buddhism as the supreme virtue even above love, strength will be lacking to go out to our fellows and to build a new order of life.

In Sorokin's own account of Christian monasticism, based upon the writings of Basil, Benedict, Ignatius of Loyola, and other religious fathers, monasticism emerges vividly as the one way of life out of all these studies that clearly fulfils fellow-love and spiritual integrity. Sorokin sees the monastic novitiate as 'a test of real life, more scientific and adequate than all the pen and ink tests of modern education'. Of the monastic Rules he says, 'From a purely scientific standpoint, they are to be regarded at least as effective and scientific as any therapeutic and educational system of our time' (p. 395). The monastic commitment is not only utter but without limit: 'The limit of obedience is death.' In Egyptian monasteries the word 'mine' was prohibited. Even the inmost thoughts of the monk are not his own. Benedict's rule requires 'to hide from the abbot none of the evil thoughts that beset one's heart' (p. 385). In such evangelical details the glory of monasticism shines through: 'When the day is over . . . if anything wrong has happened . . . let the sin not be hidden but be told to the brothers that the fault may be healed by the prayers of all' (p. 398). The

monastic founders all see renunciation not as an end in itself, for the goal of the monastic life is love, love of God and of one's neighbour.

When Sorokin turns to study 'contemporary free brotherhoods' he selects two groups for particular study: the Hutterians of North America and the Society of Brothers of Paraguay and England. The Hutterians he selects because of 'their capacity to maintain permanent co-operative farm communities'. While the three hundred efforts to live communally during American history have all passed away, the Hutterian system has survived four hundred years, often in face of terrible persecution, and, being now third to fifth generation American, is making a 'controlled adjustment to American culture'. The Society of Brothers he singles out both for its survival vitality and for its heterogeneous composition of races, nationalities, religions and education.

In studying these brotherhoods Sorokin has lacked access not only to the existing life of the communities but also to the writings springing from the early revolutionary time that reveal the inspiration of those communities – the Hutterian chronicles, writings of Huter, Stadler, Rideman, Ehrenpreis; or, on the rebirth of the movement in this century, Eberhard Arnold's *Innenland** or his study of primitive Christianity†. Except for E. C. H. Arnold's article on education and the family in the Society of Brothers, Sorokin's sources are either occasional broadsheets or sociological health reports. Nevertheless in Eberhard Arnold's study there emerges a key to a new social life for mankind, an answer to the whole search of these volumes. Redemptive love is shown there (p. 297–8) in the brotherly act of correction as a cement, a salve of the social life of men in place of the coercive powers of the state and police. Whereas the Yogi and the monastic orders have a special calling, the families and villages of the Society of Brothers live a life potentially for all men.

We would wish Sorokin to continue the research begun in these volumes; we would wish him to evaluate the material here presented, that he might find conclusions that could help western man to recreate his society. Do abnegation and asceticism give men the strength they need, or is there a way back to a joy in life and acceptance of the creation?

DICK WHITTY.

WAR, PEACE AND NONRESISTANCE

The third edition of this excellent handbook‡ has undergone certain revisions which were necessary to bring it up to date. Such matters as Mennonite Relief Work and Civilian Public Service have been dealt with in much less detail than in the 1946 first edition.

* *Innenland*, by Eberhard Arnold, in German. (Plough Publishing House).

† *The Early Christians*. by Eberhard Arnold. (Plough Publishing House).

‡ *War, Peace and Nonresistance*, by Guy Franklin Hershberger. Revised edition, 375 pp. (Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pa.)

Originally intended as a student manual for younger groups of the Mennonite Church, which has stood for biblical non-resistance since the days of the Reformation, Professor Hershberger's book has developed into a standard handbook which should be read by all Christians.

The appendices with Bible references and discussion of practical questions often asked by draft boards and tribunals are especially valuable to young men who have to defend their stand as C.O's.

As a community, we are very interested in the chapter on the social implications of biblical non-resistance. Like many others, the writer, who is secretary of the Mennonite Committee on Industrial Relations as well as professor in sociology and history at Goshen College, Indiana, is seriously disquieted by the fact that these implications are not clearly recognized by many members of his church. He quotes what Peter Rideman said in 1545: 'Since Christians should not use or exercise vengeance, they must not make the weapons by which such vengeance and destruction may be exercised . . . Therefore we make neither swords, spears, guns nor other similar weapons.'

Professor Hershberger then says: 'Here Rideman lays down the principle that economic life, the manner and method by which the Christian makes his living, must be consistent with his refusal to participate in war. Other statements from the sixteenth-century fathers indicate that they were concerned with the application of the Christian ethic to other areas of life as well. The social and economic life of the twentieth century is so complex, however, and its specific problems and issues are so numerous and varied, that it would have been impossible for the sixteenth-century fathers to anticipate all of them in their present form. For this reason it will profit Christians little to glorify the principles of the fathers if they fail to exercise the thought and heart processes necessary for making clear the manifold social implications of these principles to-day. . . . It is essential that each individual Christian assume personal responsibility for understanding the principle of non-resistance as it applies to his own concrete social and economic situation.'

To escape the pitfalls of industrial conflict, of investing money in factories which, even if they do not manufacture war material, still use part of the invested money for violent methods against the workers, such as lock-out, blacklist, use of labour spies and finally actual violence, Professor Hershberger has a vision for the members of his church to found communities based on mutual aid and a social security programme: 'In such a planned Mennonite rural community one would expect to find a strong spirit of Christian brotherhood. There should be a well-organized system of mutual aid. The community should have its own social security programme, well-organized and carefully financed.'

In case of sickness or death in any family this system should function so as to prevent any destitution. Members of the community should think in terms of community welfare, in terms of brotherhood, and not in terms of their personal interest. Brethren with money to spare, instead of investing it in industrial conflict, should place it in the custody of the community credit service, which would use it to assist those in financial need. . . . But most important of all, this ideal community must be permeated with the spirit of Christ. The community here envisioned is not one which exists for its own sake, or whose chief end is economic values. It is the true Christian community where men dwell together as brethren, exemplifying the way of love and peace as set forth in the New Testament, using economic values merely as a means to a greater end. This greater end is the bringing of the way of love and brotherhood to all men.'

When one reads these quotations, one hopes very much that it will be given to Professor Hershberger to lead Mennonites into an ever deeper thinking about the implications of their faith.

PAULA THIJSEN.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In publishing the second of a series of studies in the Sermon on the Mount by Eberhard Arnold, we hope our readers will be challenged by the contrast between the cold dictates of legalism which governs society and the warm, vital life of Christ's way.

Philip Britts, an Englishman who joined the Bruderhof in 1940, died in Primavera, Paraguay, in 1949. During the nine years of his life at the Bruderhof he kept note-books of 'Comments' from which we have taken two extracts under the title 'Paraguayan Reflections'. Several of his poems have been published in our journal, and his talk 'Men and Brothers, What shall we do?' appeared in Spring 1953.

During the summer two of our members made a journey in Italy to attend the Universal Esperanto Congress and visit the Agape community. Their impressions of this radical Christian group are accompanied by a statement by Tullio Vinay one of Agape's own members.

We are often asked about the activities and work of our own young people. The reports of the work camp at Wheathill and the open-air speaking at Birmingham will give some account of this.

Another letter from our North American Indian correspondent appears in The Forum. His report about the peace witness of the Hopi tribe in the United States is an important addition to our view of the American scene in the last number.

HOSPITAL AT PRIMAVERA

'Our hospital now treats about ten thousand patients a year, and though we feel it is urgent to expand if we are to cope even with this, such an extension would still be only the beginning of an approach to the real magnitude of illness and suffering in this country. But when people come, as a woman did who walked twelve miles under the gruelling Paraguayan sun with one child in her arms and two more tugging at her skirt, there is only one answer: Help them.'



A reprint of a seven-page article about the hospital at Primavera, published in *THE PLOUGH*, Winter, 1954, is now available in an attractive cover, price 6d. [U.S.A. 10 cents].

You can help to make our hospital work more widely known by ordering copies for your friends. Send addresses and remittance to any address on the back cover, or to:

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The Addresses of the Bruderhof Communities

ENGLAND

Society of Brothers
Bromdon, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

U.S.A.

Society of Brothers
Woodcrest, Rifton, New York State

PARAGUAY

Sociedad de Hermanos
Primavera, Alto Paraguay

Sociedad de Hermanos
Fulgencio R. Moreno 132, Asunción

URUGUAY

Sociedad de Hermanos
El Arado, Osvaldo Rodriguez 4755,
por Cno. Mendoza, Montevideo

GERMANY

Bruderhofhaus 'Sinnthalfhof'
Ernst-Putz-Strasse 55
(13a) Bad Brückenau