

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

CONTENTS INCLUDE

CHALLENGE

COUNT ZINZENDORF

COMMON CONCERN

FRANCIS B. HALL

ARTUR METTLER

DEREK WARDLE

VOLUME V 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

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THE NATURE OF HOLY OBEDIENCE

Meister Eckhart wrote: 'There are plenty to follow our Lord half-way, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends and honours, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves.' It is just this astonishing life which is willing to follow him the other half, sincerely to disown itself, this life which intends complete obedience, without any reservations, that I would propose to you in all humility, in all boldness, in all seriousness. I mean this literally, utterly, completely, and I mean it for you and for me—commit your lives in unreserved obedience to Him.

If you don't realize the revolutionary explosiveness of this proposal you don't understand what I mean. Only now and then comes a man or woman who, like John Woolman or Francis of Assisi, is willing to be utterly obedient, to go the other half, to follow God's faintest whisper. But when such a commitment comes in a human life, God breaks through, miracles are wrought, world-renewing divine forces are released, history changes. There is nothing more important now than to have the human race endowed with just such committed lives. Now is no time to say, 'Lo, here, lo, there.' Now is the time to say, 'Thou art the man'. To this extraordinary life I call you—or He calls you through me—not as a lovely ideal, a charming pattern to aim at hopefully, but as a serious, concrete programme of life, to be lived here and now, in industrial America, by you and by me.

This is something wholly different from mild, conventional religion which, with respectable skirts held back by dainty fingers, anxiously tries to fish the world out of the mudhole of its own selfishness. Our churches, our meeting houses, are full of such amiable and respectable people. Many of us have become as mildly and conventionally religious as were the church folk of three centuries ago, against whose mildness and mediocrity and passionlessness George Fox and his

followers flung themselves with all the passion of a glorious and a new discovery and with all the energy of dedicated lives. In some, says William James, religion exists as a dull habit, in others as an acute fever. Religion as a dull habit is not that for which Christ lived and died.

There is a degree of holy and complete obedience and of joyful self-renunciation and of sensitive listening that is breath-taking. Difference of degree passes over into utter difference of kind, when one tries to follow him the second half. Jesus put this pointedly when he said, 'Ye must be born again.' (John 3, 3) and Paul knew it: 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.' (2 Cor. 5, 17).

George Fox as a youth was religious enough to meet all earthly standards and was even prepared as a student for the ministry. But the insatiable God-hunger in him drove him from such mediocrity into a passionate quest for the real whole-wheat Bread of Life. Sensible relatives told him to settle down and get married. Thinking him crazy, they took him to a doctor to have his blood let—the equivalent of being taken to a psychiatrist in these days, as are modern conscientious objectors to war in Belgium and France. Parents, if some of your children are seized with this imperative God-hunger, don't tell them to snap out of it and get a job, but carry them patiently in your love, or at least keep hands off and let the holy work of God proceed in their souls. Young people, you who have the stirrings of God Himself within you, be faithful to Him until the last lingering bit of self is surrendered and you are wholly God-possessed.

The life that intends to be wholly obedient, wholly submissive, wholly listening, is astonishing in its completeness. Its joys are ravishing, its peace profound, its humility the deepest, its power world-shaking, its love enveloping, its simplicity that of a trusting child. It is the life and power of Jesus of Nazareth, who knew that 'when thine eye is single thy whole body is full of light.' (Luke 11, 34).

THOMAS R. KELLY.

CHALLENGE

FRANCIS B. HALL

The religious press is full of the story of the spiritual awakening that is stirring America. Enthusiastic fingers point to soaring statistics of church attendance, church building, and church giving, to the popularity of religious themes in literature and cinema, to the tens of thousands pouring out for evangelistic campaigns, to the wide usage of a religious vocabulary in political speeches and activities. But from the hallowed halls of theological seminaries and college campuses and from many pulpits comes a word of caution, a pointing to the superficiality, the individuality, the danger of a nation-cult in the place of a profound and prophetic Christian gospel. The theologians in turn are criticized as being weighty speculators unable to frame their concepts of Christianity in terms that call the mass of people to Christ.

The issue does not rest, however, between the profound and subtle theologies of the few or the trite and occasionally near-blasphemous psychologisms of the many. The real power of Christ rests in a word that is seldom being spoken anywhere and when it is spoken is either lost in superficial definitions or in theological circumlocutions. That word is the word of Christ himself, 'Follow me!'

Here is the real challenge of our day as well as of every day since the time Christ began to preach. Here is the real call. Here is the real source of power to change the world. Here is embodied the whole gospel of Christ. It contains but does not stop at the evangelists' call to individual salvation. It contains but does not stop at the neo-orthodox emphasis on the grace of forgiveness. It contains but does not stop at the liberal Christians' implementation of the teachings of Christ in the practical world. It is the application of the gospel of Christ to the whole individual and the whole society and it is the discovery of peace and power in a faith that is given and given ever again.

There is nothing vague about the meaning of this call. It means first of all to put God and his kingdom infinitely higher than any other loyalty—to love him with the whole of one's being, without reservation, without qualification; to know that his kingdom is of more value than the world itself with all its wealth, honour, and power, of much greater value than life itself. To give oneself to it may well mean the loss of all that the world deems to be of value, including life itself, but this is as nothing. To be quite specific, to put God above all is to put him above the nation in which a man has his citizenship, above the race of his ancestry, above the family in which he was born. The conscience of the American church is finally becoming alive to its sin against Christ in segregation and discrimination but the great danger is its temptation to identify the welfare of America with the kingdom of God. Here, too, it

must be absolutely clear that God is no respecter of human boundaries, that he has no chosen nation, and that those who demean his revelation in Christ to a cult of nation-worship will receive his judgment. This is not to say that a nation is evil, but simply to say that as a society it is human and subject to evil as well as good, and also to say that if America, or any nation, claims a loyalty higher than loyalty to God, it becomes a representative of Anti-Christ, and then the follower of Christ must part ways with such nation-worship, even if this means imprisonment or death.

Ordinary Religiosity not enough

To follow Christ means to love our neighbours in a way that is thoroughly foreign to most of us. This love-commandment of Jesus cannot, on the one hand, be reduced to a mere law of justice, to living honestly and trading fairly, to a private life of self-respecting decency. Nowhere in the words or the example of Jesus do we find justification for the idea that ordinary church-going Christianity is the following of Christ. He calls men to be his followers in a life guided by absolutes, by a love that—once entered upon—does not count costs. Surely ours is a time when ordinary religiosity is not enough, when only harkening to the absolute call of Christ offers any real hope.

Love does not mean, on the other hand, a sentimental optimism about evil in men, for it knows men, and being inseparably bound up with truth it will not gloss over this knowledge. It must work for truth as well as for love and the claims of both may often mean spiritual pain. The prophetic though loving words of John Woolman against slave-owning Quakers often hurt deeply and lost him many friends but they were proclaimed in the true spirit of Christ and were a powerful force in ridding the Quakers of the practice of slavery.

As the follower of Christ attacks evil, however, he must reject all violence. He must forsake the help of the police, he must refuse to bear arms in any conflict, he must be ready to suffer all and to lose all and if he must give his life he must die with a prayer of forgiveness on his lips. His whole trust is in the Spirit, in love, in truth, in him who came to seek and save, not to destroy.

Not only does the full following of Christ mean the rejection of violence but it means the rejection of all private possessions, all claims to personal rights. The love of God and the love of others has the inevitable corollary of the forsaking of self—the taking up of the cross daily, the renouncing of all (included in the all is self-will and private opinions, perhaps the most difficult to relinquish), the selling of all and giving to the poor. The claim of Christ is the only genuinely absolute claim, and it is absolute—absolute in an outward, physical sense as well as an inward, spiritual sense. If we do not love our brothers, we do not love God. If

we do not share all that is ours with our brothers we do not truly love them in Christ. If we draw any line between our family and other families and say that our standard of living is our business and their standard of living is theirs we do not truly love them in Christ. We may make a loan and even give gifts to those in need, but if we have complete love all that we have is theirs and there is no question of loans or gifts—we are one in economy as well as in spirit. Charity, the sympathetic concern for our neighbour, is not the following of Christ's call to love. No amount of thinking 'realistically' nor of exalting grace as the forgiveness of our inadequacy can do away with the obvious consequence of love as an owning of all things in common.

The first Christian Church in Jerusalem saw quite well all the implications of the full following of Christ, and with joyful hearts the followers put it directly into practice in a total way of life. They were a living brotherhood, a fellowship of the followers, and they lived as one—one in faith, one in hope, and one in baptism. They were one in their spiritual life, worshipping, praying, praising God together. They were one in their social life, taking their meals together, having fellowship with one another. They were one in their economic life, selling all they had and bringing the proceeds to the feet of the apostles and making possible a distribution which guaranteed that none was in need. They were not without problems, for they did not cease to be human, but they had a basis for solving their problems.

This example of the first Christian Church in the full following of Christ was never lost. Even though persecution, and in a later generation the dilution of the faith that came with success, brought an end to a general following of this intensive form of total living, yet the realization that total discipleship meant nothing less than this concrete reality never died. Through the centuries group after group arose with the determination to be so absolutely surrendered to Christ that this life in his Spirit would prove practicable. To this day the hope has not been lost and the proof is still being given.

Men can live in Peace

What is not possible for men is possible for God. Here lies the answer to most arguments against this effort to live as God wants men to live. There is no denying that men's fallen nature militates in innumerable ways against the life of absolute surrender to Christ. There is within all of us a force tending towards egoism, pride, self-centredness, opinionatedness, greater concern for our own comfort and well-being than for that of our neighbour. Those who are called good in the eyes of the world are not free from these tendencies but they have them in subtler forms and keep them under greater control. It is surely no wonder that the full following of Christ has been rare in the history

of the church, but it has been rare only because men have failed in faith. The grace of God that is given to those who are faithfully devoted does not make them perfect men and women but it does give them the power to rise above themselves and unites them in the only way in which they can be really united, in the body of Christ.

In a world that exalts the false unity of nationalism, of racism, of any number of ideological isms, it becomes urgently important that a witness be given to the only unity that rises above all man-made barriers. In a world that is threatened by revolutions of colonists and of oppressed masses it becomes urgently important that there is a witness to the only revolution that can endure, a revolution of the inner man and its result in a revolutionary way of life in the fellowship of the followers of Christ. In a world that is threatened by violent destruction it becomes urgently important that a witness is made showing that men can live in peace. In a world being divided by race, by nation, by class it becomes urgently important to witness that all men are brothers in Christ. In our day it becomes clear that the most important task of the church is not to create a monumental theology, not to conduct mass evangelization, but to become a practical, living community of people dedicated to heeding Christ's words: 'Follow me!'

DOWN the years a murmur runneth,
Bleeding hearts that wince in pain,
While the boasting politicians
Vaunt the claims of man in vain:

Building cities, stone on stubble,
Seeking safety in their might,
Till they grind the men to rubble
With their bombers of the night.

Through the earth there runs a challenge
Clearer than the trumpet call
'Oh, forsake your ancient folly,
Build the brotherhood of all.

Seek the city that God buildeth,
City of the heart and hand,
Not beyond the grave of shadow—
Here on earth, in your own land.'

PHILIP BRITTS

COUNT ZINZENDORF

This year, 1957, marks the quincentenary of the Moravian Church, founded in 1457 in Bohemia. Bitter persecution in the 17th century all but wiped out the movement, but it was under the care and inspiration of Count Zinzendorf that a new beginning was made. Readers who are not familiar with the life of the count may find it helpful to read the review of John R. Weinlick's book 'Count Zinzendorf' on page 94 before reading the following article in which Artur Mettler considers three movements that influenced Count Zinzendorf's character.

Much has been written about Count Zinzendorf. He has been claimed by the Lutherans, he has been regarded as an Inspirationalist and an Enthusiast, he has been dubbed the liveliest representative of the sentimental person, the Pietist, the Humanist. But in the end it remains true, as Friedrich Gaertner wrote recently of him, that he cannot be 'put into one mould' or be classified. Obviously he was in his lifetime a man whom 'the rest of the world did not know what to make of'. Zinzendorf himself spoke of those who 'are granted the miracle of living through faith—faith in the free grace of God in Christ' (Gaertner).

To understand Zinzendorf it may be a help to consider the important movements which contributed to and influenced his character. There is, of course, always the inexplicable remainder, the ineffable quality of each individual which he in particular emphasized so strongly and regarded with such reverence in others. But it is not unimportant to look into some of the influences which helped in their particular way to make this particular individual at this particular time what he finally became. There are essentially three spheres of influence to be distinguished: the Pietistic, the Lutheran, and the Moravian. Each one of these movements received its special mark from the other two and from the Count himself, but each also left its undeniable trace on his life and thinking.

Influence of Pietism

The earliest and indeed the most lasting influence was Pietism. We know enough about the earliest environment of Count Zinzendorf to get an idea that this sensitive and gifted young man neither wanted nor was able to escape from this strong yet subtle influence. The image he formed during his early years of Christ's suffering at the crucifixion, had impressed forever on his mind the question: 'This I did for you; what are you doing now for me?' This question contained the entire concern of the future 'winner of souls'. In it lies hidden both the Lutheran idea of the grace that hastens to save, and the specifically

Pietistic idea of activity through and in this grace. But at the same time the question embodies the narrow-minded element of that day. The single soul had dealings alone with its Lord and Friend (Augustine's, *The Soul and its God*). The emphasis was put too strongly on *our* or *my* doing, before it became clear—as Zinzendorf himself later understood—that what we call *our* or *my* work can after all be nothing other than God's work in us. Here already a way appears out of the tangle of Pietistic tradition. At all events Zinzendorf took with him from Pietism a feeling for the essential value of faith, and a tendency to realize faith in action. But a few other things must be added to give an approximate picture of the living richness and fullness of the Pietistic movement. There was a general tendency to concentrate personally on the sufferings of Christ (blood and wounds), there was the tendency which led to quite a new attitude towards other creeds (tolerance), a further tendency to private gatherings (*ecclesiola*), and finally, an emphasis on the rights of the individual when advocating what is common to all. This all had its influence on Zinzendorf.

Lutheran Heritage

More questionable is the influence of his Lutheran heritage. We must take into consideration the fact that the Count had to spread his wings in a country that was Lutheran. In other words, it was *compulsion* that first caused him to accept the doctrine of free grace. We have to grasp this paradox fully to understand something of the secret of his inner growth. To be sure 'the first Pietist', Spener, had called himself a dwarf standing on Luther's shoulders. The new movement of Pietism never considered itself an attack on Lutheranism; but only time has been able to show that Luther's real concern cannot be understood except through one's own corresponding inner experience. It was given to the Count to discover within his own soul the traces of his great predecessor, Luther. Barth points out that the watchword of the Reformation, 'justification by faith alone', appears in Zinzendorf where it had hardly been looked for until then, where perhaps it must always be sought for with much 'care and patience', but where it can nevertheless be found in the 'strange and abstruse' garment of the 'blood-and-wounds' doctrine. Somewhere, Zinzendorf calls the distinctive mark of his doctrine the devotion to the person of Christ, and in this, for example, he went far beyond anything even Ignatius Loyola could afford. Maybe for a time this caused men to lose sight of the differences of their particular denominations, but did it go deep enough? Was it broad enough in its conception? Should there not here be recourse to the young Luther, and should not his exhortation to 'climb further through the heart of Christ to the heart of God' be followed? (*The Contemplation of Christ's holy Sufferings*, 1519).



Nic. Ludwig Graf v. Finzenhof

In all other points of the Lutheran heritage the tension was less. Zinzendorf did not find much difficulty with its scriptural foundation because, in his freedom from literal interpretation (which he shared with Luther), he still knew himself more deeply bound to the spirit of the Word than were all his opponents to the right and left. The teaching of grace for *all* men was firmly anchored in what Luther professed in his public writings if not in his personal ones. (In Zinzendorf's day this was something which had to be represented against the strict predestinators and even some Methodists.) Strict observance of the law was no hardship for the young Count, even though later he often groaned under it very much.

The Moravian Brothers

From the Moravian Brothers Zinzendorf learned to love and value some things of real significance, though at first they loaded a new and heavy burden on him—and perhaps it is just these things which still distinguish the Herrnhuter from all other churches. The emphasis is on fellowship, on established rules of conduct, and on church discipline. Zinzendorf made a distinction between his own attitude and ordinary *individual* Pietism by using the expression *community*—or *brotherhood*—Pietism. He credited no life of faith without community. To be sure, when he was speaking of legalistic communitarians, as for instance the Hutterites, he could emphasize the other side very strongly. Then he even went so far as to say, 'The community is not our first concern; rather each member should find the basis for himself—on that we found our brotherhood' (1727). Further, there is an emphasis on brotherliness; this came very forcefully and effectively to expression in the life of the Herrnhuter wherever they happened to be. Manual labour was considered to be just as holy as mission work among the heathen, so that the wrong distinction between clergy and laity (or between so-called first and second class Christians) was done away with. Thus a point was clearly gained which Luther had long striven for. It was with just this same accentuation that Luther had been concerned for a general priesthood of believers. In principle 'the barrier between secular and spiritual activity' had been breached by him. Spiritual works counted no more than ordinary work. 'The lowest service could be in the highest sense a spiritual deed' (Karl Holl). Zinzendorf shared with the Moravian Brothers an innate broad-mindedness concerning denominational boundaries. In constant conflict with this was a tendency to narrowness which is characteristic of all who belong to small churches. Barth points out humorously that the Brethren congregations of the Herrnhuter with their special categories within their churches present a wonderful picture of the ecumenical church.

Without question Zinzendorf belongs to the general movement of Pietism, which on its part was a revivalist movement—a necessary antidote for a dead (or dormant) church. Whether or not it was given to him ‘to lead Pietism back to Luther’ (Betterman) is unimportant compared with the question whether this ‘poor sinner and prisoner of love’—as he liked to call himself—was able to give and to be the necessary corrective for the Pietism of his time. It must be acknowledged that he had a firm grasp of central truths. One who can say, ‘The discipleship of Christ’ consists not in ‘legalistic duty’ but is ‘our element, our life, our joy’, one who can say, ‘When the heart is in order, one need never look in a spiritual mirror’, is not far from him who said, ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom’. One who dares to live with others according to the dictum, ‘It is not the moral man but the new man who counts’, must know where the strength for such a life is to be found. And when, against his will, a seeker after truth like Oetinger had to say about a community, ‘It is a city on a hill. . . . I recognize behind its uninviting appearance its glowing fire, its glory’, then such a community although so small need not be ashamed before the great church organizations. Perhaps the time has come when the once notorious Count can exert an awakening influence beyond the limited circle of his followers and adherents.

ARTUR METTLER.

From the Writings of Zinzendorf

It is in the nature of our religion to have companionship. A Christian ought never to be a *spiritus particularis*, never happy to be just by himself unless from necessity he has to be a hermit, living in a corner where there is no companionship and he can only unite with others in spirit. On the contrary, whoever feels like souls around him feels it most essential to find companionship.

It has been our experience that in the farthest corners of the world and in the darkest pagan lands we can accomplish nothing unless in the people’s hearts there is already some understanding—or they can get some understanding—for what we are trying to say. But if they do really feel and sense what we are speaking about, if they really become aware and experience in their hearts the warmth, desire, appeal, and urgency of love which we ourselves have felt, then we are drawn together and united. So Peter and three thousand people found themselves united in one day. It went straight to their hearts (Acts 2, 37). It was a happy hour in that day when all hearts were so free and open that Christ could enter.

COMMON CONCERN

DEREK WARDLE

During the month of August and early September, I had the privilege of travelling in West Germany, attending a number of conferences and visiting people who share our concern for finding a right way through the confusion of modern life and its problems.

The first week at the Evangelical Academy at Iserlohn, in the Ruhr, I attended a conference of the Evangelical Church of Germany and the Historic Peace Churches—Quaker, Mennonite and Brethren—on 'The Lordship of Christ over Church and State'. There followed a week in Karlsruhe at the 6th World Mennonite Conference, with the theme: 'The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the World', and a few days at the Bethel Institution near Bielefeld, where our Dr Ruth Land and her husband are gaining further experience for their medical work in Paraguay.

I went twice to the Harz, visiting a youth conference at Sonnenberg. The last week was spent in Bremen, where I stayed with the minister of St. Stephen's Church. The rich experiences of these weeks have been a great stimulus and have given me much to reflect on. The more important of these reflections I should like to convey in what I have to say to-night. And the sense in which I should like us to consider this is: In what way are we Christians called upon to act in the world now? That is a question which this journey posed to me personally again and again, and which faces us all in the bruderhof communities, whether we are members or guests. I believe this is our common concern. And if any of our guests do not profess to be Christians, I should still put the question: In what way must we act as decent men and women?

I do not intend to paint a gloomy picture of our world, but it may suffice to give two quotations from the last newspaper I bought on September 2nd as I left Germany: 'The atom "mushroom" shot up ten kilometers high after the sixteenth explosion on Monday of this year's series of American tests in the atomic weapon trial area in the Nevada desert. The test was combined with the investigation of the physical and moral effects of the explosion on men and animals. During the course of this test the question was investigated: How does a trained soldier react to the explosion of an atomic weapon in his immediate neighbourhood? Can he still think clearly, or does he collapse under the nervous shock? So far, no results of the investigations have been published.'

During the last two weeks, Soviet Russia has claimed to have produced an inter-continental atomic rocket. To this, Nehru, Prime Minister of India, in a recent speech in New Delhi, said: 'What one nation produces the others will soon produce. We have achieved the ultimate weapon. There seems, however, to be no limit to the ultimate folly of men'.

This is our world, as we know it from the daily news, a world in the grip of tensions and fear.

But one thing that became clear to me during these weeks in Germany is what a terrible thing it is when the name of Christ is used to cover and support this evil in the world, and I should like to mention a few examples which were brought to my attention.

An American Mennonite told us that in the Southern States of the United States segregation is most pronounced at 11 a.m. on Sunday!

Rumours of the use of electric torture on the 'primitive' Arab population in Algeria were found on investigation to be substantially true. But worse, perhaps, than the torture was the fact that a Catholic chaplain had sought to calm the consciences of the French soldiers about such measures by quoting the similar treatment of the 'primitive' Canaanites by the Israelites.

In Western Germany, the party which has re-introduced conscription and seems to be prepared to equip its army with atomic weapons, bears the name 'Christian'.

During recent years in India, 200,000 former Christians have become Buddhists. 'Christians wage war', they say.

True Character and Function of the Church

'How can the name of Christ be so abused?' This was a question which was raised again and again, especially at Iserlohn, and in Karlsruhe among the Mennonites. It became apparent that this question had to do with a fundamental *misunderstanding* of the *conception of the Christian Church and its function*.

Many at these two conferences pointed out that the identification of church and state at the time of Constantine was the point at which the Christian Church lost its true function and character—from the time that soldiers of the state bore the Cross of Christ on their breast; when the functions of church and state went hand in hand, and a child born into a state was baptized into the state church a day or two afterwards.

At the time of the Reformation, this error and misunderstanding of the church was continued also by the reformed churches, and the fortunes of church and state continued to be one; so that to-day we talk of the 'Christian' West, and we speak of values such as 'democracy' and 'freedom' which, valuable though they may be, are not first and foremost Christian values.

The Mennonites at Karlsruhe were members of a church which at the time of the Reformation saw clearly that men and women had to make an individual decision for Christ, and upon that decision, and upon the confession of their faith, were baptized into a Christian church.

At this conference there was much searching back to the original inspiration of these 'dissenters' who were dubbed Anabaptists because they did not recognize child-baptism but only baptism of adults.

The American Mennonite, Harold Bender, reminded us that the history of the Anabaptists had not been given due attention by students of religion. He commented that the Anabaptists should no longer be regarded as a sect, but that they had something very vital to contribute to Christianity to-day. The newly published book, *A Rediscovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, edited by Guy Hersberger, makes this contribution available to all.

Voluntary Decision essential to Church

We were further reminded how the radicals of the Reformation, those who were called fanatics and idealists by their enemies, went back beyond Constantine to the source, to Christ himself and to the early Church; and how they found the need for each one to surrender himself utterly to Christ; how each had to be ready to suffer in his discipleship, to take this suffering and cross upon himself. Such radicalism often brought conflict with the state and led to martyrdom. So on the last day of the conference many delegates went out from Karlsruhe to Rothenburg to unveil a tablet to Michael Sattler, who had been martyred there in the sixteenth century. He was just such a Christian who would not bow to the unjust demands of the state and its church, and he paid for this with terrible physical suffering and with his life.

It was very remarkable to hear from members of different churches that this question of the conception of the church was still a vital issue to-day. Had not a church into which a man was born, into which he was baptized as a child, without free and intelligent decision, a church which went hand-in-hand with the state, had not such a church lost its true nature and function? To-day, just as at the time of the Reformation, men must make an individual decision. A pastor of the Evangelical Church said that child baptism was a real problem for the church inasmuch as it obviated the need for a voluntary decision.

In our generation the members of the Christian churches have indeed had to decide. During the Hitler dictatorship they had to make their choice: whether they should continue to go with the stream, to bow to the demands of the state, or whether they should make a clear stand for Christ at all costs. It was a particular joy to get to know the members of St. Stephens Church in Bremen, men and women who had made that decision in 1933 and who had suffered for it through the years. Here a distinction was made between the congregation and the smaller circle of those who had made a confession of their faith and an individual surrender.

'Whole Discipleship of Christ'

Another theme which was repeatedly spoken about is expressed in the words, 'the whole discipleship of Christ', meaning a discipleship which extends to all spheres of life, to the personal and social, to the inner and practical.

Harold Bender reminded us that the early Anabaptists' prayer and surrender to Christ brought an experience of personal redemption, and along with this a new life of activity among their fellow-men. And yet the separation of personal redemption and one's daily life was astoundingly evident in a number of the sermons given at the same conference, where, for example, the love of the Gospel could be spoken of for an hour or more in a most uplifting way without any reference to this loveless, cold world, and with little challenge to our own unloving, cold selves.

A similar tendency towards a separation of faith and works could also be noticed at Iserlohn. The Evangelical pastors tended to speak theologically and abstractly, whereas the representatives of the Historic Peace Churches, especially the Americans, were all for deeds and showing one's love in daily life. But at Iserlohn there was an earnest attempt to bring the two trends together. A Quaker professor said: 'Have we not to learn from each other? Have not our Evangelical friends to learn the importance of justification by works, and have not we practical people to learn more of the other side—justification by faith, so that by deepening our knowledge of God we can become better instruments of the Spirit?'

The Word and the Spirit

The theme of the word of God and the Spirit came up on many occasions. Harold Bender reminded us that the early Anabaptists were Christians of the Bible; the Bible had been opened anew to them; they were determined not to depend upon men, but to trust God and his word. Where the Bible was read at a conference or in a family at the beginning and close of the day, there was frequently an earnestness and firm direction through life lacking elsewhere. Of course, such reading can also be abused. The French chaplain quoted the Old Testament to justify torturing the Arabs.

I felt the fruits of the Spirit were shown in many ways among the different groups I was with and besides being a very great joy it forged an immediate bond between us.

Where God's Spirit works with men, where they are open and search for it, they are given clarity. They may well have to work hard, study, and above all, pray for it, but it is then granted. Especially at Iserlohn this clarity was given, and we could unite at the end of the

conference in a declaration that the way of Christ means the renunciation of all violence and all war.

During the Iserlohn Conference, John Yoder told about Karl Barth as a Christian pacifist who nevertheless spoke about the 'border-line case' where it might be allowable to use violence. Such an attitude was only possible because Barth stood not wholly as a Christian but, shall we say, three-quarters as a Christian and a quarter as a Swiss who would defend his homeland, and with this he allowed a loophole.

It is so very important that we Christians stand a hundred percent in the discipleship of Christ—unconditionally. As soon as we want to save our country or democracy and freedom more than to follow Christ, we get off the track. We must realize that the Christian Church is a suffering church, and leave politics and the consequences of discipleship in the hands of God. This does not mean that we do not care a hang what happens to the world, whether we have dictatorship, or whether the world is blown sky high, but that we feel our better service is to call men to a radical way of complete love, come what may.

Unity and Solidarity

Another fruit of God's Spirit which I rejoiced to experience is the way it leads men together and unites them. At Iserlohn, unity was achieved because all present were prepared to be quite ruthless with themselves. They were prepared for the sake of the truth to abandon their opinions and traditions. At Karlsruhe, different traditions and conceptions hindered coming to a deep unity. The reference in the conference statement to a Christian's attitude to war therefore lacked clarity and resolution.

At a Y.M.C.A. workcamp in the Rhön hills one evening we had a lively discussion with the young people there and felt there was a real seeking for truth. Such ecumenical work in the sense of an unconditional seeking for the truth is something we can only support, whereas the kind of ecumenical movement which talks about being brothers in Christ, knowing well we are not united on vital issues, we have to reject.

God's Spirit also brings with it a sense of responsibility for one another, a solidarity, a sharing of inner concerns and the material things of life. So during the very difficult hours of the church struggle in Germany, when the father of a family was taken off to prison, the pastor of a dedicated congregation could go round his people and say, 'Who will fill my hand?' and receive more than enough for the family left behind. In those houses where the Spirit dwells there is indeed an open door, and the beggars and the poor enter and are not sent away empty-handed.

Just among these more earnest and radical Christians I found a deep joy and also much humour. There were many good, hearty laughs when we were really struggling through to a unity, whereas the laughs were few and far between where there was not a resolute striving, and a pseudo-unity sufficed. This is a challenge to us all. Have we the joy which comes from complete surrender? In Bethel, where there is human need enough among the mentally sick and physically deformed, there was a deep joy among the young people who had devoted their lives to the care of these needy ones. Also there was a quiet confidence and joy among the young American Mennonite Pax boys who took their lives in their hands as, unarmed, they built houses in hate-filled Algeria—surely a monument to love.

And finally, in all the groups that were earnestly seeking to follow Christ, I found a great love and concern for their fellow-men. These were people whose eyes were wide open to see the way the world was going; many felt that their church and nation had not learnt from all the bitter experiences of the last years and were not ready for a deep repentance and a new way. They felt an obligation to call, above all, their fellow-Christians back to their profession, to withstand the upsurge of evil. For some this meant also unmasking the real forces behind the coming elections.

These proofs of the spirit: clarity, unity, sharing, joy in surrender, love and concern for one's fellows—these are the characteristics of the Christian and the Christian church.

The gathered Congregation

Paul Peachey, one of the 'Concern' group of radical Mennonites, said that what was needed more and more was the local congregation of all members who had decided for Christ and had surrendered themselves completely to his way. Such a gathering had a power and authority beyond the individual. Further, it was said by some—although not accepted by all—that the individual conscience needed the correction of a higher authority, the common recognition of all.

I was very thankful to know that such a gathered congregation existed in the bruderhof communities. I could testify to this in the knowledge of the endeavour that was made each day to allow God's Spirit to find expression and bear these fruits among men.

But the question for us all—for me on this journey and for us all, whether we are guests or bruderhof members, is, 'How far are we true to God's Spirit? How far do these fruits show among us, in our lives?' This is the only way we as Christians can give any sort of an answer to an unbelieving world. We can do little about atom bombs being made—perhaps we should protest the more strongly; perhaps we should find

more ways of influencing the social life of our country, too. Obviously we ourselves can't stop these things happening, but we can live in a spirit that is in radical opposition to them. We have to ask ourselves again and again how far are we doing it.

We members of the bruderhof communities say to ourselves that community of goods and the particular social order we have here is no guarantee that the spirit of love moves among us, and we have to seek continually. To our guests we have to say, 'You, too, should seek to live in this spirit, and it will break down the barriers and lead you to share—yes, also your goods.'

In this world, where the powers of destruction are being stock-piled ready for use, it is absolutely vital that those who seek unity and the Spirit of God rally together, hold together, and strengthen each other.

From the Writings of Zinzendorf

When people dedicate themselves to Christ their love for one another certainly does not diminish, rather it becomes more fervent. It also makes a man so humble that he believes that even yesterday's beginner can teach him something today.

I say that true divine 'learnedness' consists in having love.

All community which is founded merely on uniformity of opinion and ways of procedure, without a change of heart, constitutes a harmful sect.

Whoever says, 'I must start communities', has no understanding of God's plans. If he imagines he must hasten to form communities in order to save souls he is talking foolishly. All the days and times of the Church-community are recorded, and the Lord knows well enough how to bring about in the community all that belongs there, and nothing can possibly hold back a soul who belongs to it.

And so no church order should be introduced, but from week to week, from month to month, only that which is holy and necessary should be done, and if it is seen that something which may have been a blessing over a period is becoming a custom, then it should cease promptly for a month or two.

FORUM

We are devoting the Forum of this number to the questions of a young Friend concerning the Christian's part in politics and in the ecumenical church movement to which a member of the bruderhof has written an answer.

WHAT IS OUR TASK?

My first difficulty concerns whether we as Christians should take part in politics or not.

We all send our children to public or local schools and training colleges, we pay taxes in direct and indirect ways, we buy the products of a system in which we find terrible evils, at the same time trying to found a new order and society. We are concerned with establishing peace, and we try to protest more than at other times at such crises as the Suez or Hungary disasters. These latter are due not only to the evil in all men's hearts but also to misapplied and bad government. We all are partly responsible for such occurrences. The position has changed since the time of the Anabaptists when government was by the few at the top, to whom concerned Christians like George Fox could speak. Now every man has a share in the government and the responsibility is on all of us. Is this a part of life that God needs our service in, or should we leave it to those who do not seek to obey God directly and so hinder his working in government?

We *must* be concerned with the gross misuse of taxes, the terrible discrepancies of wealth in the world, the suffering and want of some countries, and with the removal of the causes of war. We should surely be concerned about the right administration of the schools and colleges we send our young people to, about better conditions in the factories and lives of the workers whose products we use. We are involved in this whether we like it or not. A Christian in society today is like the absolute pacifist in a country in total war, in some ways. We are part of the doings inasmuch as we are members of the nation. Does God wish us to bring his light and order into immediate government as well as turning men's souls to him, the only source of true order? I have no clear guidance on this as I have on the need for a real dependence on God's leadings, and a true committed discipleship—but I do feel this is an area where we can serve God by serving our fellow men in need of better living. The most important thing will always be to turn men to him. But can God do this without his church, his body, in the government of all his people? At present I don't believe he can. But I should appreciate your feelings on this.

Another point I should like to raise for your views is that of working for the unity of the spirit, aim, and organization of the Christian churches. I feel one of the great movements of today, which is of God's

doing, is this movement for greater understanding between the different denominations. I believe some of the effects of this new turning to seek his will in this situation is already bearing fruits that show God's mark. The churches are now doing things together—though on a comparatively paltry scale to what they *could* be doing—in relief of refugees, world poverty, and removing misunderstandings between nations. What a way they have to go yet! But the general feeling in this great international interracial movement is healthy. Because of its international character, the supra-national nature of the church is becoming apparent, and war has been pronounced as contrary to God's will—a great step considering the number of national churches who are party to this declaration—but this is only a small step along a long, painful, prayerful road. It has not been recognized locally where it begins to matter. Is not God calling to us to seek his unifying Spirit together so that we may all be one that the world may be helped to believe? M.J.

‘SEEK YE FIRST . . .’

The Christian calling is a calling to a single-minded service of the kingdom of God, an order created and ruled by the love of God. In every other order of life we must obviously distinguish between what is relatively good and what is relatively bad. For example, it was a relatively good thing that the exploitation of child labour was stopped by force of law. But that was not the absolute goodness of the kingdom of God, for this must be a society that excludes all force and every sort of exploitation. We must be glad when governments make better working conditions, better housing, and better schools, but we must recognize that all these things take place within a society which is still based upon force, competition and exploitation, and therefore we cannot say that it is God's final will. God wants something more—something basically different. He wants the righteousness of his kingdom where men and women live and work with and for one another in the strength of his spirit of love and service. Christians must practise and proclaim this righteousness because it is what God wants. ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven’.

There seems to be a contradiction between practising and proclaiming the righteousness of the kingdom of God and working for better conditions within the present unjust order of life. Even if it is said that the Christian need do nothing more than cast his vote for the relatively better political party rather than the relatively worse party we still meet this contradiction. For if it is important that Christians should vote for the relatively better party it is also important that they should try to persuade everyone else to do so. And so we should find ourselves obligated to give time and strength to campaign for the relatively better party, to justify and support its programme, although neither this nor

the relatively worse party represents the righteousness of the kingdom of God.

If we recognize that all economic competition and exploitation is a denial of the brotherhood of man and therefore of God's will, we can have nothing to do with it. We must protest against it and testify against it with our lives. We see the necessity of doing this in other spheres of life where we come up against something we recognize to be absolutely wrong. In the matter of war we know that as Christians it is not our task to advocate the use of more humane weapons of destruction. We know we have to reject all killing or harming of men. We know it is not our task to make laws enabling marriages to be broken, or for a more considerate regulation of brothels. We have to represent and practise a completely different way in these things—a way of love to our enemies and a way of absolute purity. Why then do we not stand for a way of absolute love and justice in the economic sphere? Certainly we should be concerned about conditions in the factories, but it should be our chief concern to represent the only right condition—that of working and sharing together. We should be concerned about our schools and colleges, but it should be our concern that they are schools and colleges which educate for the life of fellowship and sharing of God's kingdom or society. What other sort of schools should we want?

If there is a political party which does stand for all these things then we should join it, but surely the Christian Church as Jesus intended it *is* that political party. It is the political party that stands for the policy and programme of the kingdom of God, and nothing else. It is the party that stands for the love, justice and righteousness of the kingdom of God in all human relationships and activities. When we ask the question, 'Should Christians take part in politics?' we are really asking, should they take part in making laws to try to control and limit the evil effects of a competitive and unbrotherly life based upon a self-seeking spirit? That is certainly the task of the governments of the world, but Christians have the task of representing an entirely different world order based on a different spirit. They are sent out into the world with the only political programme that is right and good, and therefore the only one that will really work because it is realistically based upon the recognition of the need for a transformation of man's inner life. Without this transformation there can be no true order in human relationships, no peace, no justice, and no brotherhood. But with the surrender of self to God's love, to his will, the new order comes into being. And it is in the truest sense a political order—a real society of men and women who are one in heart and mind and who share all things. As the Christian Church it stands opposed to the other unjust order based upon self-seeking, an order where men and women are related to one another as separated individuals competing for existence. And it has the task of going to the

people of that other order with the glad tidings: Here is a good and true life—the peace, justice, and fellowship that God wants for you and for all men.

Why do Christians today not seek, or even see, the righteousness of the kingdom of God as something basically different from the political orders of this world—even from the relatively good political orders? Certainly, it is true that the love of God is at work everywhere—even in the darkest corners of the world. But this fact should not be allowed to obscure the call of Christians to live and work for that 'wholly other' order of God's kingdom.

Why do we not go to men with the good news of this kingdom, with this totally new political programme for a new world based on the love of God? Why do we give our time and strength trying to improve the present conditions of a basically wrong society instead of standing for and proclaiming the one true righteousness of the kingdom of God? Do we lack faith that men are capable of turning to it? Do we think it is being unrealistic to hope or expect that the lives of ordinary men and women in our ordinary towns and villages can be transformed and ruled by the love of God? But are we, then, not faint-hearted and unbelieving Christians? What do we really want for humanity—or, rather, what do we believe God wants for humanity?

Jesus believed and represented only one thing—the kingdom of God. He believed in it as the only way for humanity. He believed that men were created for it and he wanted to draw all men into it. He said that the house built on any other foundation would fall. He sent his disciples out to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and he gathered them together into a community church that represented in all its activities only the law of his kingdom. Is it not high time that we who want to be Christians let ourselves be gathered together again to live and work for the gospel of the kingdom—and for nothing else? Is it not high time we went out to men with this gospel of the kingdom as if we really believed it, as if we believed it to be the only hope for men, the only right foundation upon which men can build their lives, as the only thing worth winning men and women for? If we do not do this, we allow our half-heartedness and disbelief to stand as a hindrance to the coming of the kingdom. We are not open to receive it for we do not believe in it and we offer men the alternative of making the best of the old unjust order of this world.

The movement towards greater understanding and a greater working together between the churches is something which should be welcomed as evidence of a growing realization on the part of church people that disunity is a contradiction of the Christian message. But it is important that this movement towards unity comes to the recognition that the disunity of Christendom which has to be overcome is not only

the disunity *between* the churches, but the disunity *within* the churches. It needs to be recognized that members of the same church are divided by the same barriers of race, nation, class, property, and economic competition as the rest of humanity. Members of the same church, in obedience to national and political interests, go to war against one another, although so many churches have declared that this is against God's will. Without the recognition of this essential disunity we shall fall into the danger of supposing that the overcoming of the doctrinal differences which exist between the churches would bring about a united church bearing witness to the uniting power of the Spirit.

The Spirit that calls us to unity calls to each of us personally to surrender *all* that divides us from God and our fellow men. It calls us, regardless of what our church or national or social or family connections are or have been, and we dare not wait until every member of such a group receives or is ready to answer the call. For the Church of the New Testament is always the gathering of those who hear the call to leave everything for the sake of the gospel—to surrender all ties and obligations binding them to the old order of divided and conflicting personal and group ends so that they may be gathered together as a missionary church bearing the gospel of the kingdom of God. S.F.

NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord (Is. 55, 8).

During the last months our life together in three different continents has often brought these words to mind. Our experiences in South America, in the U.S.A., and in Europe have been very varied and not at all according to plan so that we have often stood astonished with deeply thankful hearts seeing all that God is able to accomplish which is beyond the power of man. And we are thankful not least of all for the unity of his spirit that can span ocean and mountains.

At *Wheathill* we have been very glad for the joyous working together with our summer guests so many of whom were young people from Germany and Holland as well as England. They willingly accommodated themselves in the school buildings, barns, and tents, which so often was all that we had to offer, and this only made more urgent our search for a place where a second bruderhof community could be established. The proposal to do this was made earlier in the year at the inter-bruderhof conference in Paraguay, and in anticipation of reducing our numbers at *Wheathill* we have now sold the *Cleeton Court* farm. This is to make *Wheathill* more compact and to facilitate a more economical use of labour in the farm work. The 17th century farmhouse at *Cleeton Court* was used as a home for our war orphan children and the community school, but these have now both been transferred to *Lower Bromdon* where all the central buildings of the community are situated.

We have felt urged to have a community near to the main centres of activity to enable interested people to make short visits especially from the Continent and the south of England and when passing through England on the way to Europe. We have therefore been searching for a property easily accessible from London, and although the right place has not yet been found we believe also here in God's leading and are continuing negotiations and waiting expectantly for a clear direction.

From the *Sinntalhof*, three young men have been taking turns travelling and speaking in Germany over the last months. Two of them, who were sent over from Paraguay to help in this way, attended conferences in the East Zone and West Berlin. As a result the Sinntal Bruderhof has had many stimulating and interested guests this summer and now four families are wishing to join. We hope to report in more detail in a later number. Wheathill and Sinntal work closely together, and against the background of nuclear tests, unrest, and the constant threat of war, we feel very much the leading of God's hand and the urgency of his call.

WOODCREST ACTIVITIES

June and July have been very stirring times for us at Woodcrest. For nearly four weeks our sister community lived only sixty-five miles away, spending the interim period between leaving North Dakota and taking possession of the Gorley Lake Hotel in Pennsylvania. They were housed in an abandoned summer resort and were able to support themselves by day-labour jobs in the vicinity. Just at this time we acquired a second-hand fifty-two passenger school bus which made it possible for both groups to visit back and forth and to share picnic days as well as festival meals and even a joint brotherhood evening. This unexpected chance for both brotherhoods to consider our future in America together was a thrilling occasion. We understood first-hand now the joy of the more frequent communal brotherhood meetings which are possible for the three communities in Primavera.

When the time came for the big move to Pennsylvania the bus made two trips filled with families and luggage (in addition to the few community cars). Six of the back seats were taken out so that mattresses could provide beds for the children—who didn't sleep all night anyway from the excitement. We look forward to vacation trips to Oak Lake for some of our older children's groups this summer. As some prepare to move permanently to Oak Lake and as brothers responsible for our shops travel back and forth to work out details of the Community Playthings industry, we feel bound together in a very practical way as we have always been in an inner way.

Many interesting visitors to Woodcrest have stimulated us during these two months: workcamps from Pendle Hill, Church of the Master, New York branch of the American Friends Service Committee, New

Paltz Friends Meeting, Eastern Mennonite College, Gardner teen-agers—to mention a few of the groups who came to help us rebuild after the fire. During July a number of children from near-by camps have hiked over to spend the day and our bus took a full load of our children for a return visit to the Pioneer Youth Camp. There is a State Teachers College in New Paltz and during July two different summer classes of about twenty adults each came to visit us.

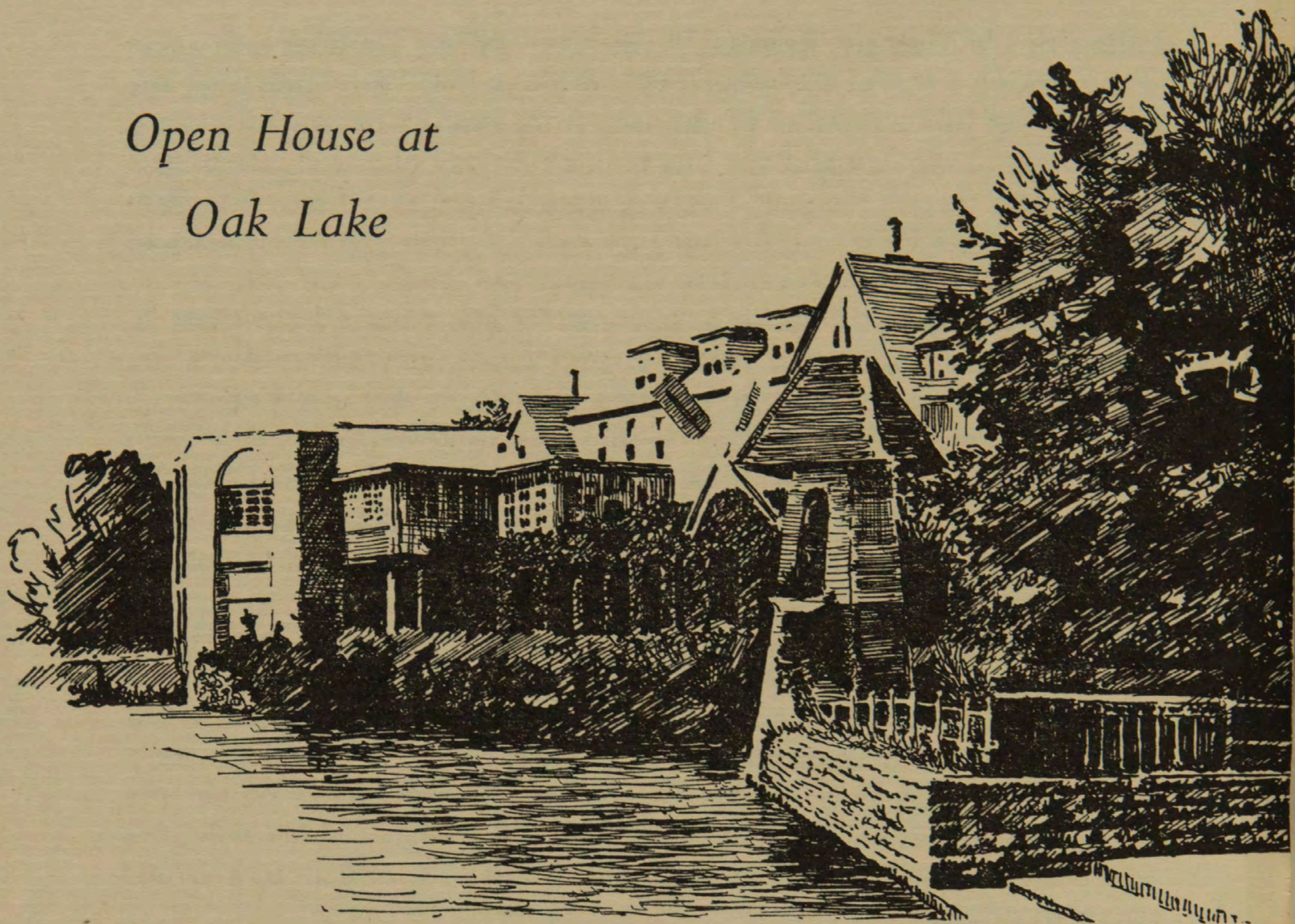
Individuals and families have come for short stays from Canada, Kansas, Puerto Rico, and many eastern cities. Several students are spending their summer with us—two girls from Antioch College on their work-period time. One of the most exciting weekends was when Joshua John, a visitor from India, turned up and described the Christian community he belongs to there. The more we heard the closer we felt to this small group in India who also commit themselves to a life of full sharing under the leadership of Jesus.

Early in June we invited the near-by neighbours to an Open House to see the new central building. We wanted to thank these folk for their wonderful help at the time of our disaster. The school children had arranged a number of displays to help interpret our life, and the shop led tours to show how the toys are made. After a picnic supper the young people put on the play 'The Travelling Man', which tells in a very powerful way the need for open hearts and an open door to welcome the spirit of love.

Recently the public press has been taking an interest in us and reporters and photographers have gathered material for *Time* and the *New York Times* as well as the local Kingston and county papers. Two free-lance journalists are preparing articles. The Community Playthings products seem to be attracting notice by the press as well as among teachers and school circles. We are very pleased that the demand for these toys is increasing rapidly and we expect that this year's sales will be double 1956. Several new products will be ready for the autumn catalogue now in preparation. Some of these are doll-size furniture, a big bus, and building units which fit together in various combinations to make apartment houses, ranch-type houses or conventional homes, fire stations, garages or even airplane hangars. This is in line with requests for unstructured materials which give the child scope to use his imagination and ingenuity. Our shop brothers have fun designing these products and our children have fun testing them before they are ready for the catalogue.

We continue to marvel at the gifts that have been given us this summer: the successful move of a whole community across 1,500 miles, the rebuilding of our centre house after the fire, the growing industry, and most of all the continued opportunity to spread the witness of our life to ever wider circles of seeking men.

Open House at Oak Lake



'And now you can all come and live in my castle at Oak Lake!'

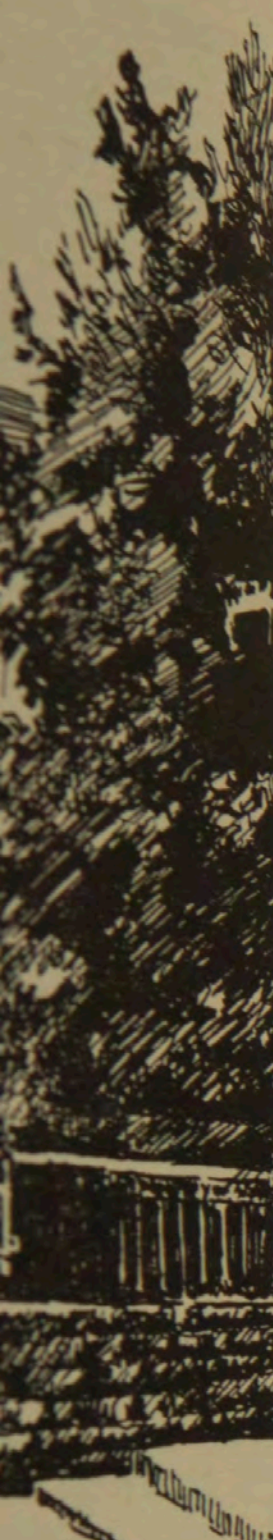
For the second time in two days, Snow White and the Prince danced merrily off the stage to the tune of 'Greensleeves', followed by the seven dwarfs with their funny caps and long beards. . . . And for the second time we said good-bye to the many guests who had come to our Open House at Oak Lake.

Saturday, August 3rd. The July 30th edition of the Uniontown, Pennsylvania, *Evening Standard* carried this notice on the front page:

The Society of Brothers announced today that they'll hold Open House this Saturday, August 3rd at Oak Lake. Hours will be from 3 to 6 p.m. Members of the Society are inviting neighbours and friends from all over the district to visit at the Farmington site, formerly Gorley's Lake Hotel, to get acquainted with the group and its activities.

We at Oak Lake were not sure what to expect. Would twenty people come, or two hundred? How would the children's play go in

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front of so many people? How should we organize the parking, the serving, the tour of the place? Should we have enough cookies, or so many left over that we'd be eating them for days afterwards? . . . There was much to think about and much to plan. The day finally came and the atmosphere was one of great anticipation to meet our new neighbours.

At two, the first guests arrived, and from then until seven there was not a dull moment, nor scarcely, indeed, a moment to sit down! At three, the front lobby was a real bee-hive of laughter and activity. Doug Moody, guest warden, came during a few moments' lull, to the corner where I was displaying the wooden bowls made in Paraguay.

'Where are all the guides? They're taking too long to show their groups around. I'll have to hunt them up and tell them to get back here more quickly. Can you take care of the flow for a few minutes?'

When he came back I had seated people in all the available chairs and was wondering whether very many more could comfortably stand.

At five, we ushered everyone into the 'ballroom'. There were a few hectic moments as we found there weren't enough chairs and had to send for all those in the dining-room—carrying them all the way across the three hundred feet from one end of the building to the other. But finally all was quiet and the programme could begin. First came the play 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', done by the school children—then three folk-songs by a choir of young people and adults ('The Ash Grove'—English, 'O Shenandoah'—American, and 'Es dunkelt schon in der Heide'—German). After this, Hardi Arnold said a few words about our life and why we were gathered together in this way. The choir ended the hour's meeting by singing 'We Would be Building' to the tune of 'Finlandia'.

There was much more visiting before everyone left. We surely felt a warm and friendly response from all those who came—about six hundred in all—and were very glad for this opportunity to get acquainted with our neighbours.

Sunday, August 4th. At 8.30 a.m. Oak Lake was humming again!

'Can you begin making sandwiches? We'll need three or four hundred for dinner.'

'Be sure the lounge and lobby are cleaned again.'

'Hey, the veranda needs another sweeping.'

'We need to bring all those chairs back from the ballroom into the dining-room.'

This was the Open House for friends farther away—those who were especially interested in our life. It was to begin at 10.30 a.m. and last until after supper. We had sent out many invitations but again had no idea how many to expect. At nine, Rachel came by while I was vacuuming the lobby rugs.

'Did you know that some guests are already here? They arrived in the night and are still asleep in their car.' These folks turned out to be two families from the Unitarian Church in Pittsburgh. As soon as they had awakened we brought them in for breakfast on the veranda—and so the second Open House had begun.

At ten, several carloads arrived from the Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale and some from the Friends Meeting in Pittsburgh. Actually, people kept arriving all during the day, and again our 'hotel' was alive with the sound of many new voices, with happy laughter and serious seeking, with meal-times together, with singing and silence and the delighted shouts of children as they tried out the various Community Playthings in the display room.

We also enjoyed showing friends our very nice new home with its long, sprawling main building, lovely lake surrounded by densely wooded land, and the Community Playthings workshop (recently converted from the former bathing-house).

Especially on this day there were times when we thought together about the meaning of life on this earth and what God calls men to do.

The children's story in the morning told of seven kingdoms on an island where a source of pure fresh water was found only when the people had torn down the seven walls which had so long separated their kingdoms and when they had taken their guards away—thus at last following the words in their Great Book: 'One for all and all for each'.

In the household meeting we heard these words from T. S. Eliot's *The Rock*:

*What life have you, if you have not life together?
There is no life that is not in community
And no community not lived in praise of God.*

We also saw the symbolical meaning of the play 'Snow White', for in the end only love overcame the evil of jealousy and envy.

We felt very close to many of the folks who came on Sunday. Some were earnestly seeking something different for their lives. Especially Sunday night in our final meeting there was a real togetherness. Several stayed afterwards until midnight, asking questions, sharing ideas and concerns.

And so these two days marked a beginning to our 'outreach' from Oak Lake. We hope there will, from now on, be many guests in our household and that this will be a gathering place for all who seek an answer to the destruction and violence and separateness of men—particularly in this moment of history. . . . As we said good-bye to each one who came to our Open House I'm sure many of us were at least silently echoing the words of greeting that had been spoken earlier: 'Come back *any* time, for a week, a month, a year—or your whole lives.'

The work that is going forward in the United States is a great joy to all the bruderhof communities, and particularly in these days we have shared together the joy experienced through the decision of the full and provisional members of the Macedonia community, with whom we have had a close relationship for many years, to seek full unity with our movement. This has resulted in an exchange of families between the Woodcrest and Oak Lake communities and the Macedonia Community in Clarkesville, Georgia.

PRIMAVERA

'We are passing through hard and strenuous days but are not borne down by them.' This message came from our communities in Paraguay at the end of August, and the many letters and reports that followed showed what an intense struggle with life and death was being enacted there. Just at 'a joyous and meaningful time when two marriages were about to take place and an engagement was announced' two of the members became dangerously ill. A little five-year-old baby from one of our young married couples had to be taken by plane to Asunción where the doctors gave no hope for her life. A Paraguayan from the neighbourhood was brought into the hospital at death's door with terrible wounds from a brawl in which his own half-brother had died, and our doctors fought for seven hours continuously for his life and then had to attend to emergency cases of scalding and acute appendicitis and the birth of a little child. So it was with a special sense of victory after a week of fighting for the lives of various patients inside and outside the community that all came together for a joint wedding ceremony at the Ibate community. To quote from a letter which was sent to us: 'Strenuous and exacting as these days were, however, we all had the feeling of being drawn very closely together, deeply united in an inner experience. All over the community one has felt a quiet earnestness, but also the strengthening power of a faith that holds us firmly together. Wonderful also has been the sensing of the active standing by of the other two communities at Primavera. We have felt conscious in a particular way that we are really one bruderhof here and that applies not only to the economic but also even more deeply to the inner life of the communities. This has come to expression in a very special way at his time and it is a gift for which we can never be sufficiently thankful.'

It was during these weeks of struggle when God's wonderful power of healing was revealed over and over again that our brother Gunther Hohmann passed quietly from us on 6th September. He had been ill for some weeks but his death came suddenly and unexpectedly. Gunther had joined the community as a student in 1933 at the beginning of the Nazi regime in Germany. His joy in serving God and his neighbour came to expression in a great humility and countless little services rendered to old and young alike. This was especially the case in his work with the library and archives where he bore all requests and needs on his heart with a tireless zeal. This was a particularly valuable service for the community situated as it is in the heart of the Paraguayan *campas* away from all centres of culture. His passing was a real challenge to us all to be faithful in everything we do.

BOOK REVIEW

COUNT ZINZENDORF by JOHN R. WEINLICK. Abingdon Press, Nashville, U.S.A., 1956. \$4.75.

A vivid account of the life and work of Count Zinzendorf has recently been written by John R. Weinlick, professor of historical theology at the Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Set against the historical background of eighteenth-century German Protestantism, the biography of the pilgrim count gives a narrative of the radical rebirth of the Moravian Church. Although he has been described as the 'spiritual father' of the Moravians, Zinzendorf never forsook his vision of a 'congregation of God in the Spirit'—something more than a merger of the various Christian churches or a federal union, but rather an attempt to make visible the invisible or true Church.

Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born into a family of nobles and rulers, but although he held state posts during his early manhood, his eyes were turned to the church and he even denounced his lordly position when it became a hindrance in mission work in North America. In turning from state to church, he became a Lutheran minister and later a Moravian bishop, but his vision remained and dominated all his enthusiasm for mission.

Whilst still in his early twenties he planned a religious community, although his first contact with the *Unitas Fratrum* (Moravians)* came through giving shelter to several refugee families. This beginning developed into the famous Herrnhut community which became the centre for the Renewed Moravian Church. Zinzendorf ended his state service and entered the life of the community in 1727.

Zinzendorf was a gifted speaker and his enthusiasm infused vitality into the group. When he brought a Negro slave to Herrnhut to tell the community about the need for the gospel among the slaves in the West Indies, the first Moravian missionaries were sent out. They were followed soon after by a mission to the Eskimos in Greenland. The foundation had been laid for what has become the most mission-conscious church in Christendom.

Every effort was made to prevent the Moravians becoming a sect; Zinzendorf did his utmost to keep them within the Lutheran fold but he was over-ruled when the Moravians themselves decided—by lot—

*The *Unitas Fratrum* had begun in Bohemia under the inspiration of John Hus, who was burnt at the stake in 1415. The first group formed a society forty-two years later, seeking to live a pure life, in sincerity and peace. They obtained their episcopal order from a Waldensian Bishop. The Roman Catholic Church in the so-called 'Counter Reformation' stamped out the *Unitas Fratrum* by slaughter, burning and exile. It was a hundred years later that some of the families in which the faith of this group had been retained took refuge on Zinzendorf's estate.

that they should remain apart, convinced that God had a special mission for them.

Because of state opposition to the continual stream of Moravian refugees entering the country, Zinzendorf was banished from Saxony and this was for him the sign to gather his 'pilgrim congregation' and preach to the whole world. A broken-down castle became his new centre and within a few years the community of Herrnhag had begun. It was to outgrow Herrnhut. This 'pilgrim congregation' was regarded as the itinerant executive conference of the Moravians. Some of the members travelled with Zinzendorf through England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. The life order which had been established at Herrnhut was maintained and all differences of class and status were erased through the common purse.

Zinzendorf laid aside his bishop's office and later his position as a count when he made his journey to the Moravian groups that had settled in Pennsylvania. It was there that his vision of the 'congregation of God in the Spirit' became even more predominant. 'I cannot restrict myself as a witness to one church', he said.

He was the prime mover in calling together a series of conferences to seek church unity, with delegates representing all the various groups in Pennsylvania. At first there was much optimism, but bitter divisions were apparent and by the fourth conference only the Lutheran, Reformed and Moravians remained—most of the former being, in fact, Moravians.

Zinzendorf then devoted himself to the building of the Bethlehem settlement and to mission work among the Indians. In the latter he was not a success and after eighteen months in North America he returned to Europe where he was again faced with the problem of sectarianism. Christian fellowship for him was not to be on an intellectual level or in the realm of polity, but on an experiential level.

In 1749 the British parliament recognized the Moravians as 'an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church'—a great step forward for the Moravians themselves although yet another blow to Zinzendorf's conception of an interdenominational 'congregation'.

This official recognition carried with it exemption from taking oaths and bearing arms.

Middle age for Zinzendorf was accompanied by various sentimental excesses which became a serious embarrassment to the Moravians. He remained the centre of authority for the church, no constitution being introduced until after his death. Thus his own excesses led to dangerous extremes in some of the communities and pressure was brought to bear upon Zinzendorf to put an end to it. The refusal to take an oath of allegiance led to forced emigration for many of the Moravians and this seemed to jolt them into a more healthy and sensible attitude.

But their difficulties were not at an end. Zinzendorf continued his visionary outlook which went far beyond the capacity of his followers. The churches' funds could not meet the high costs of mission journeys—but this same outlook of his saved them from disaster. His boundless faith inspired confidence in the creditors.

A bitter attack upon Zinzendorf and the Moravians followed in England. They were accused of being heretics and deceivers. But through all this the mission work continued and the churches grew in number.

Zinzendorf did not relent in his enthusiasm. In his beloved Herrnhut he passed his last months, ill in bed, writing and briefing missionaries for their arduous work abroad. He died on May 9th, 1760.

John Weinlick is well versed in the history of that time and he treats his subject with accuracy and zeal. Zinzendorf himself is extensively quoted. For anyone who wishes to know the background to this important episode in the history of Protestant reform, this book is well worth reading.

D.P.F.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The conflict of loyalties in human society has led many sincere and even dedicated people to a frustrating struggle of conscience. Personal, business, family, community, national, and social loyalties all tussle for the soul of each man and woman who seeks to live a full and useful life. For the Christian, the words of Christ are clear enough—'Follow me!' But the man who is to respond will need to do so with an *undivided* heart and soul, undivided in interest and undivided in loyalty. Either he will attempt to fit his loyalty to Christ into the mosaic and calm his conscience, or he will seek to make Christ his first loyalty. The latter is possible, not by a reclusive rejection of the world and its demands, but by discovering a unity in life that includes all our responsibilities in service to Christ.

In this number, Francis B. Hall says something of what this undivided loyalty means and stresses the urgency of the need for men to discover that unity in the critical days ahead. He shares with Derek Wardle, who gives his impressions of conferences and gatherings he has attended in Germany, a deep concern regarding the issues that divide the churches and the churchmen themselves. Derek Wardle's account is a transcript of a talk he gave at the Wheathill Bruderhof at which many guests were present.

This same concern is expressed by a young Friend who has visited us on several occasions. His letter is answered in the Forum by one of our members.

The very appropriate extract from the words of Thomas R. Kelly are printed with permission of The Friends' Book Committee, Pa., U.S.A.

As Moravians the world over are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the founding of their church, we have given some of our pages this time to an appraisal of the life and work of Count Zinzendorf. Artur Mettler has contributed to this, and we have included a number of extracts from the count's own writings as they were published in *Zinzendorf—his Faith and Life*, compiled by Otto Herpel (Eberhard Arnold Verlag, Sannerz, 1925). The woodcut is by Karl Mahr.

SPIRITUAL AND ANABAPTIST WRITERS, Volume XXV in
THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS, S.C.M. Press, May, 1957. 35s.

We welcome the appearance of this volume in the series of *Christian Classics* which the Student Christian Movement publishes. The book is in two parts: 'Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation' (edited by G. H. Williams), and 'Evangelical Catholicism, as illustrated by Juan de Valdés' (a Spanish reformer—this part edited by A. M. Mergal).

The term 'Radical Reformation' is used to define those movements of dissent in the sixteenth century which held apart from the main stream of Protestants represented by Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, and which sought a more vital fulfilment of the gospel. A number of volumes in *The Library of Christian Classics* are devoted to these well known reformers; it is an excellent thing that this volume now comes to give a picture of that side of Reformation history which is little known and has been badly misrepresented. Here such leaders as Conrad Grebel, Hans Denck, Ulrich Stadler, Menno Simons, and others are represented in selections from their writings, each selection prefaced by a short introduction in which the editor is concerned to use the facts to present a true picture. The section contains a full bibliography of all original material available in English, mainly translated works, but includes a few English Anabaptist and early general Baptist tracts. We believe that our readers who are concerned with the mainsprings of modern seeking for a more radical Christian way, will find this volume both illuminating and helpful.

TRUE SURRENDER AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF
GOODS—*Being Article Three of the Great Article Book of the
Hutterian Brothers written by Peter Walpot about 1577, translated
by Kathleen Hasenberg, with an introduction by Robert Friedmann,
1957.*

This notable document deals with the important questions of the community of goods and its necessary pre-requisite: free surrender of self to Christ and the Church-community. Everybody interested in the bruderhof communities and personally concerned with their challenge, should read this. Recommended, too, for serious group study.

Copies of this reprint (48 pp.) are available, price 1s. from:

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